

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: £94 4s.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.25 p.m. until the next Tuesday.

### *Legislative Assembly,*

*Thursday, 1st September, 1898.*

Paper presented—Question: Ivanhoe Venture Company's Lease, and Forcible Removal of Ore—Question: Railway Workshops at Albany, Retrenchment—Question: German Mail Steamers at Fremantle—Reappropriation of Loan Moneys Bill, second reading; in Committee, Clause 1 to Second Schedule—Loan Flotation, etc., a Statement—Pollution of Rivers Bill, first reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Resumption, for railway purposes, of land belonging to the Postmaster-General, Correspondence.

Ordered to lie on the table.

#### QUESTION: IVANHOE VENTURE COMPANY'S LEASE, AND FORCIBLE REMOVAL OF ORE.

MR. MONGER (York): I rise to ask the Premier, without notice, whether he has received any information from Kalgoolie in connection with the recent disturbance on the Ivanhoe Venture Company's mine, in regard to the taking away of a certain portion of the property belonging to the company.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I may say the Commissioner of

Police has received a telegram, informing him that an information had been laid against four persons by the Ivanhoe Venture Company for larceny, and that warrants had been issued for the arrest of the four persons, including Mr. Burke and others. Three of them had been arrested, and one was being sought for.

#### QUESTION: RAILWAY WORKSHOPS AT ALBANY, RETRENCHMENT.

MR. LEAKE asked the Commissioner of Railways, Whether it was intended to discharge any of the workmen from the railway workshops at Albany, and whether the construction of a large number of (about 350) trucks recently in contemplation had been countermanded.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) replied:—1, It is intended to discharge a few of the employees, as there is not sufficient work for the present staff. 2, The department considered the question of constructing 125 trucks, the principal part of which would have been made in the colony, only the underframes and wheels being imported; but, there being no funds available, the matter has been deferred.

#### QUESTION: GERMAN MAIL STEAMERS AT FREMANTLE.

MR. LEAKE asked the Colonial Treasurer:—1, How much had been paid by the German mail steamers since January 1st, 1898, in harbour, light, and other dues or fees. 2, What had been paid by these steamers for the use of the "Penguin" or other Government vessel as a tug.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied:—1, £390. 2, The only occasion on which the "Penguin" had been used was when the "Gera" came in at night, and the tug "Gannet" could not alone tow her into the harbour. Nothing has yet been paid.

#### REAPPROPRIATION OF LOAN MONEYS BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

##### LOAN FLOTATION AND GOLD OUTPUT—A STATEMENT.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): In rising to move the second

reading of this Bill, I have not much to say, because I said most of what I intended to say when dealing with the finances of the colony, in making my Financial Statement a fortnight ago. There is therefore little for me to add for the information of hon. members in regard to the second reading. Of course if the Bill gets into Committee, which I feel sure it will, the details of the appropriation, both in regard to the funds from which the money is to be obtained and also in regard to its distribution, can then be considered, and full information will be given to hon. members in regard to every item in the schedule. I may say I have had a somewhat difficult task during the last few weeks with regard to financial matters, and I am sure hon. members will agree with me that there ought to have been, if there were not, some depressing influences surrounding me at the time I had to make my Financial Statement. No doubt some persons can rise superior to influences surrounding them, but I fear that is not the case with me. I had to face this House and explain the financial position, with the fact known to all hon. members that we had placed a loan on the market, on the 26th of last month, for £1,000,000, and that only £550,000 had been subscribed; a result which was very unexpected, and came like a bomb-shell upon us, especially on myself. I felt somewhat depressed, and perhaps it was not unnatural; but I am glad to say that, if good luck forsook me for a little while, it has returned on the occasion of my having to move the second reading of this Reappropriation Bill; for I have to convey to the House the pleasing intelligence that the balance of the loan has been taken up.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

THE PREMIER: And at an increase of 1s. over the minimum, the price realised being £94 4s. I am glad indeed to make this announcement, because it could not be to the advantage of the colony to have a portion of an unsubscribed loan lying about, for that would very much interfere with financial operations, and largely prejudice the holders of our stock. That difficulty has now been removed. Only this morning I received a cablegram

from the Agent-General, telling me the balance of the loan had been placed at a price equal to that obtained when the loan was placed upon the market. That intelligence will be satisfactory to every member of this House. I also have great pleasure in stating that only a few minutes before I came into the House I received the gold returns for the month, and I find that, although it is not the record month, it is next to that. The record month was, as you know, 93,395 ounces in January last; and this month the return is 89,395 ounces; so that this is, as I say, the second best month we have had.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

THE PREMIER: We now stand in the position of having exported gold during the eight months of this year to the value of £2,420,865, which is within £144,111 of the whole export of last year, although we have still four months to run. If we go on at this rate, our estimate of a million ounces for the year will be realised. The export of gold that is going on through the production in this colony is most marvellous. The amount for the eight months of this year has been 637,069 ounces, whereas for the same period of last year the export was 379,270 ounces: the quantity for the eight months this year being nearly double as compared with the corresponding period of last year. We find that the total export of gold from the time we began to export it in 1886, when a little over £1,000 worth was sent away, has been £8,662,823; and it is a remarkable fact, and one over which we ought to rejoice, that of this immense quantity of gold, close on £9,000,000, nearly £5,000,000 worth has been exported during the last twenty months, the actual value being £4,985,843, or more than half of the total quantity. These facts are very gratifying to us all, and form a very pleasing introduction to the work I have before me this afternoon in asking hon. members to agree to this Reappropriation Bill, because it must inspire in them confidence in the future of the colony. The works that we propose to construct out of these reappropriations are urgently needed—in fact, most of them are in hand, there being very few exceptions—and I think members will not hesitate to give the Government the required authority.

They will notice by this Bill that we propose to take £100,000 from the items that form part of the Loan Act of 1896 and the General Purposes Act, as we call it, and £470,000 from the Coolgardie Water Scheme Loan Act. Of the £100,000 to be obtained under the Loan Act of 1896, we intend to take £25,000 from the water supply account, on which there is an available balance of £68,244. But there are some liabilities during this year—Fremantle water supply, for one, and there are other water supplies, not very large; but still there is plenty left to carry out all the obligations of the Government during the coming year, and I think there will be something over. From the Fremantle dock and slip we propose to take £35,000, and there was £56,710 available on the 30th June, while against that there are some obligations, including a temporary slip and other things connected with the Fremantle dock vote, leaving a little balance over. I regret having to touch this dock fund, for we looked forward to the work very much, and it is also necessary; but at the present time we are not in a position to construct this dock, and the harbour works are not sufficiently advanced for it; therefore, seeing that we want the money for other purposes, I am sure the people of Fremantle—knowing that no one takes a greater interest in that place than I do, with a view of making it the great port of the colony—will not think that, in taking this amount of £35,000 I am in any way blocking the completion of the Fremantle dock and slip, which I hope will be constructed as soon as we are in a position to do the work. We propose to take £25,000 from the appropriation for dredges and barges, on which there was available on the 30th June £107,404. There is a good deal of obligation in regard to two dredges and several barges that are on their way to the colony, or soon will be, for use in the Fremantle harbour works. We propose to take £15,000 from the Geraldton-Murchison goldfields railway appropriation, on which there was available on the 30th June £129,756. There is an obligation regarding that fund, but quite sufficient money remains to allow us to take the £15,000, and that sum I propose to spend in the Murchison district. I do not know why I should do it,

but sometimes, in moments of generosity, one makes promises or engagements which everyone remembers; and, therefore, as I believe at one time I did say that, if there was any balance over regarding the Murchison railway, we would not spend it except in the district, I intend to carry it out by spending money taken from that vote upon works in the district. If the members for the Murchison do not want the money spent, they can strike out this item of reappropriation, and we will not spend it. I think it will be much better for the district that the course we propose should be adopted, in order that pressing matters may be dealt with. We intend to spend the £100,000 from the General Purposes Act in the development of goldfields and mineral resources. The details of the proposed expenditure are given in the second schedule; £40,000 being for the erection of public batteries £18,000 for expenditure on the eastern goldfields, £15,000 on the Murchison and Peak Hill goldfields, £5,000 on the Pilbarra goldfield, £15,000 on the Norseman tank, and £7,000 on other goldfields; also boring for coal and miscellaneous items. We can deal with the items in detail when we get into Committee. Some members may have anticipated that we would be able to construct these works out of revenue, and I wish it had been possible. We fully intended to provide for public batteries, for instance, out of revenue, but we have not been able to carry out some of our good intentions, and rather than put ourselves into any difficulty with regard to carrying out these useful, important, and necessary works, we have thought it better to reappropriate money for the purpose. It will certainly be better for us to reappropriate the money, than to run any risk of the works not being carried out. In regard to the third schedule for £470,000, hon. members will see the items upon which it is proposed to spend the money. We propose to take from the Coolgardie water scheme the £470,000 required for the third schedule of works; and, as to these works, I need not go into the items until we get into Committee. With regard to the £100,000 for charges and expenses of raising loans, I would like to say a word or two. There is one other way, indeed

there are two other ways, in which this matter could be dealt with instead of adopting the course which we have been accustomed to. If we arrange for a loan of say £1,000,000, and receive for it only £950,000, there is £50,000 to be made up somehow. In some places the practice of Governments is to reduce all the items *pro rata* to bring down the total to £950,000, and thus they get works carried out for £950,000 for which they have to pay £1,000,000 when the loan is redeemed. That causes much trouble, and a lot of odd figures, and I do not think the plan is a good one. Another plan, of course, is that of charging the expenses of the loan, in proportion to the amounts, against the several items; thus making up the account as if the money had been actually expended upon the works, and charging the works with them. But there is an objection to that, although the plan is convenient for the book-keeping; because whilst the cost of works may have been only £900,000, it may be shown on the books as £950,000, the other £50,000 being for the charges and expenses of raising the loan.

MR. VOSPER: So they should.

THE PREMIER: It is not a practical way. It all depends upon the price you have to give for money; for if you float a loan at more than par, you have to credit the account, whilst on the other hand, if you float it under par, you have to debit the account. I think the best way is that which we have adopted. We take note of the charges and expenses of raising loans, and put all the discounts and all the profits to this account, and we can always tell what the loan has cost; for we can see the charge for raising a particular loan has been so much, the exact cost of the works being also shown; and the book-keeping by this plan is made convenient. Of course it is a matter of opinion which is the best plan to adopt; but we have commenced this system, and I think it is perhaps the best after all. We have begun it and carried it on for many years; and I must say that, having given the matter a good deal of attention and looked into it carefully, I have come to the conclusion that the plan is very clear and straightforward.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Does this £100,000 cover the whole account?

THE PREMIER: No. It will not more than cover the discounts up to date.

MR. WILSON: For the last seven years?

THE PREMIER: Oh, no. I take it that the sum will just about bring us up to date. Last year we did not have a loan issue, and having no money available for this item of charges and expenses of raising loans, we followed for that one year the other plan of deducting, *pro rata*, and therefore we have not had the money shown against the items for that year. But, if this is passed, we will put in the schedule of the Loan Bill all the items on loan up to the full amount as far as the loans have been raised; and this £100,000 will be all absorbed on the loans raised up to date, and all the items will have their full amount. Of course hon. members can give their opinion about it. This is, after all, really a matter of account, because in one way or another the money has to be obtained, and there is no difference in the result. Seeing that we commenced about 1894 with this plan, I am inclined to advise that we should go on with it. The reason why we ask for reappropriation, as hon. members will know very well, is in order that we may not increase our authorisations. That is the object, so that it shall not be said of us outside that the Government have got more millions to borrow. We know that it is not an advantage to the credit of a colony for an impression to be created among lenders there are more millions to borrow, and that those who invest in the stock of that colony do not know when a further loan may be put on the market, and are always afraid that another loan may be put on before they can get rid of the stock they have taken up. If lenders know that we have got to the end of our loan authorisations, they will have more confidence in investing in the stocks of this colony. Of course reappropriation means the carrying out of works that are required at the expense or the curtailment of works that were thought necessary a year or two ago. All these works, from which we propose to reappropriate, were items that were thought to be necessary in 1896; but as time goes on people change their minds, and the necessity increases or decreases in regard

to particular works here and there; and in this way we now think that the items enumerated in the second and third schedules are more urgent, more pressing, and certainly more necessary, than are the works from which we propose to take these amounts. That applies particularly to the £100,000. Then, with regard to the £490,000 which we propose to take from the Coolgardie water scheme, that reappropriation will not affect the carrying out of the scheme for the time being; and it only means that, when these works are nearing completion, and if they are then found to have cost more than the amount available, we will have to go for a new loan to make up the deficiency.

MR. LEAKE: A new loan! Ah, ah!

THE PREMIER: Yes; a new loan to make up the difference.

MR. LEAKE: Robbery!

THE PREMIER: Any a.b.c. school-boy would know that if we take £470,000 off the Coolgardie water scheme at the present time, and if the cost is found towards the end of the work to be more than the remaining £2,030,000, then the balance will have to be paid out of loan, or in some other way. But I hope and have reason to think the work will not cost so much, and at any rate a long time must elapse before we shall have spent the whole of the £2,030,000.

MR. LEAKE: Suppose it costs more?

THE PREMIER: Then this House will have to find the money, and I think it will be easier to borrow the amount than than it is to borrow now. We know it will be inconvenient to borrow the amount now, but we cannot say how far it will be inconvenient when this work is nearing completion. Having only £2,030,000 available for this work after this reappropriation, we must try to cut our coat accordingly to the cloth. All these works for which we propose to reappropriate are in hand, except perhaps one or two, and I think they are all most urgent. If they were not urgent you would not find me advocating them at the present time. I would much rather go on without any reappropriation, but it is not possible to do so. I suppose hon. members opposite will agree that, do what they will, at the present time there is no room for this £570,000 to be put on the Estimates, leaving out the

£100,000 for charges and expenses in connection with the raising of loans, which we could do without by reducing the items, though I think that would be inadvisable. There is no room for this money on the Estimates this year; and, if that is admitted, there are alternatives open to us. There is a new loan open to us for raising the £570,000 which we require; or we may pay the amount out of revenue, and have a large deficiency at the end of the year as a consequence. I do not think that needs any argument, and I do not suppose any member of this House will suggest that either of these other courses should be followed. It would be impossible for me to advise either of these courses to be taken; and, as I cannot advise a new loan, neither can I advise the paying for these works out of revenue. There is this further alternative, that we could stop all the works, although they are works in progress. But that would not get us out of the difficulty. We might, for instance, stop the Fremantle harbour works, and their stoppage might suit some people in the colony.

MR. GEORGE: Why?

THE PREMIER: I do not know why, but some people might prefer that to be done. We cannot get out of paying for the railways, which are all constructed, and the obligations are due to the contractors as soon as the accounts can be completed, and we must pay them. All the other works are in hand, as a rule. I have thought this matter over, and the only proper course open to us is to do as I propose to do. I strongly advise the House to take this course, which will not affect our credit injuriously in the slightest degree, because we shall have no more authority to borrow after this reappropriation is approved of than we had before, and therefore our credit will be as good as before, and I hope it will be better. No one can tell me our credit would be as good if we were asking for a new authorisation for raising £570,000 more by loan, because every new authorisation must have an effect on our public credit.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: When did you find that out?

THE PREMIER: We found it out long ago. For my own part, I can see no

objection, from a constitutional point of view or as a financial operation, to reappropriation for these necessary works. In fact, it might become absolutely necessary to reappropriate, and the principle would be the same; for suppose we were to abandon the works now in progress, and did not carry them to completion, then surely we would reappropriate the amounts unexpended? Suppose we pass a Bill here authorising the construction of half-a-dozen railways, and to borrow money for them, and suppose that in the next year we were to think that one of these railways was not really necessary and might be delayed, then, that work being suspended in the meantime, it would become reasonable and convenient for us not to complete that work, but to reappropriate the money. Will anyone say we should not then reappropriate the money to some other work? That is what we are doing here.

MR. LEAKE: You are not abandoning the works from which you reappropriate.

THE PREMIER: We are, at any rate, postponing them.

MR. LEAKE: That is a different thing from abandonment.

THE PREMIER: If we take away money from one work, that money cannot be applied to some other work without reappropriation.

MR. LEAKE: It is robbery.

THE PREMIER: As to what robbery is, the hon. member ought to know, being a learned Queen's counsel; and if he can make himself believe that to reappropriate by the same authority which made the original appropriation, is wrong and is a robbery, then I cannot follow his reasoning in the matter. Having some knowledge of what is going on at the present time, I have no hesitation in saying that these works must go on, and must be paid for; and it is better for the colony at the present time that these works shall be paid for where we have obligations, rather than that we should put the whole country by the ears through our having to stop these works. That is what this Bill really means; because, if the House rejects the Bill, these works cannot go on, as there is no money to pay for them. My friend opposite (Mr. Leake) would, no doubt, find the money somehow; but if the works had to be carried out, he would have to

pay for them, and he would not be in a position to do so. I have given this matter most careful consideration, and I say the only proper way for us to take is reappropriation. It will do no one any harm. The only persons who will have any cause to complain are those who will not get the works in particular districts which they expected in 1896 to get, when the original loan was passed. The people of the colony generally have no cause to complain. If there is a work at Fremantle, or anywhere else, that will be postponed by this reappropriation, the people there may have some cause to grumble; but the Coolgardie water scheme will not be stopped in the slightest degree by the reappropriation of a portion of the money voted originally appropriated to it. Hon. members know we have spent scarcely any money out of the two and a half millions which we were authorised to spend on that work; and if we now take from it £470,000 for a couple of years, that will be no injury to the colony, and will not in any way prevent the work from being carried out. Anyone who refuses to pass this measure, and advocates going into a new authorisation, I should brand as being somewhat reckless. I feel sure hon. members generally will support me in this matter. It is not for pleasure that the reappropriation is proposed, and it is not because I desire to do it, but because there is a necessity to do it; and therefore I ask hon. members to give me their full support in the course I propose to take. There is no other course that would be one-twentieth part as good as the course I recommend the House to take. I am glad that I was able to begin my remarks this evening with the reassuring news that our loan has now been fully subscribed—thanks, I feel sure, to those who are looking after our affairs in the old country; and also with the good news we have received to-day in regard to the gold production of the colony. I beg to move the second reading.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): It is certainly not my intention to support the second reading of this Bill. The Bill is, to my mind, in no way justified, and for this reason. If, as the Premier tells us, these works are matters of necessity, then he is committed honestly and properly to one course, namely, that of a new loan.

He has no right to misappropriate moneys in this way. It is only repeating the sin of last session; for £395,000 went away last session, and now we are asked to reappropriate £570,000—upwards of a million of money taken from the present loan authorisation; and, in the face of our present position, the hon. member does not tell us a word as to how this money is to be repaid. Last year it was, "Oh, we will repay it some day or somehow: we will pay it out of revenue."

HON. H. W. VENN: We will pay it by a future loan.

MR. LEAKE: But the Government did not admit that last session, and they do not admit it now. But I say that is the only possible way in which we can repay it.

THE PREMIER: Do you want a new loan now?

MR. LEAKE: You must have a new loan. You have not the pluck to come down and tell us your financial position. You know you are hopelessly in debt—not from any fault of the colony, thank goodness, but through your mistaken and absolutely bad administration.

THE PREMIER: Give us some logic.

MR. LEAKE: Never mind logic. I will give you some physic. That is what you want more than anything else. I do not feel quite up to the mark to-day, or else I might say—

THE PREMIER: You might be more insulting.

MR. LEAKE: I do not care what I am, when I am discussing the interests of the country.

THE PREMIER: You might be courteous.

MR. LEAKE: I have not said anything discourteous yet. I have merely told you, and I speak as a politician, that your administration has been bad, and your finance hopeless. It is owing to your faults and your inability to anticipate or to take warning, that the country is in its present position. I say you took £395,000 last year, and you are helping yourself to £570,000 this year, and you do not tell us how you are going to repay the money. You led us to infer, last year, that it would be paid out of revenue; and now you know perfectly well that the only way in which this money can be refunded is by a new loan; that is, unless you are prepared to abandon—not to suspend, but

to abandon—the Coolgardie water scheme.

THE PREMIER: Oh, nonsense!

MR. LEAKE: In these circumstances, and only in these circumstances, are you justified in coming down with this Reappropriation Bill. A Reappropriation Bill in finance, implies abandonment, undoubtedly; or else anticipation of a future loan. There is a clear committal of the Treasury to the repayment of one million of money; and can anyone in this House say that our finances point to the possibility of repaying that million of money within the next two or three years out of revenue? It cannot be done. We know perfectly well it must be done by a fresh authorisation; and yet we are told this afternoon that the reason the Premier does not bring down a fresh Loan Bill is that he does not intend to increase his authorisation. Why, we cannot possibly refund this money to those loan funds without a fresh loan; and it is simply pledging the country three or four years ahead to these works, which, mind you, only passed the House on the understanding that they were to be constructed out of revenue—that is to say, the majority of them. Take, for instance, the Menzies railway and the Greenhills railway.

THE PREMIER: The Menzies railway was never intended to be constructed out of revenue.

MR. LEAKE: But the Greenhills was; the Bunbury breakwater was; and these jetties in your schedule were to be done out of revenue. When we fought this three years ago, and pointed out what might possibly happen, we were called croakers and traitors, and we were held up to contempt by the Ministerial supporters, who said we had no faith in the colony, and no faith in its revenue. But we merely pointed out to the House that it would mean a fresh loan at a future time. We were pooh-poohed. Now our words have come true; and now hon. members are asked to commit this House and themselves to the same difficulties which we pointed out, which they could not then possibly realise, but which, as a matter of fact, have now been realised.

THE PREMIER: And you are delighted.

MR. LEAKE: I am, to a certain extent, because nothing but a deficit could have saved this country at the present

moment; nothing but a deficit could stop the recklessness and extravagance of those two gentlemen opposite—the Premier and the Commissioner of Railways.

MR. GEORGE: There are three extravagant Ministers now.

MR. LEAKE: Oh, two are enough for me; and we will take them one at a time. I remember saying, when addressing the House last session, that the best thing we could do was to pray for a deficit. I do not know whether any hon. gentleman has been exercising his faculties in that direction, but we certainly have got a deficit.

MR. GEORGE: I have corns on my knees through it.

MR. LEAKE: It is a pity you have not got them on your tongue. The right hon. gentleman told us, and I was not surprised to hear it, that he had felt some difficulty with regard to finance, and that he was more or less depressed. Well, we all realise that. However, I do not desire at the present moment to say anything about the Budget, because I should be anticipating some observations I am going to make a few days hence; but he congratulates himself this afternoon on his return of good luck. Good luck, he calls it, in getting off the balance of the loan at the same rate at which the first half million went off. Well, it is not exactly bad luck, but it is not much to congratulate ourselves upon. Then there is the export of gold. Well, everybody is delighted to think that the export of gold is being maintained.

THE PREMIER: More than maintained.

MR. LEAKE: Everybody in this House believes that the export of gold will continue, and will not only continue but will increase; and gold is undoubtedly our great stand-by. If it were not for that prospect, everyone would be hopelessly depressed. But we had similar advantages last year, and yet the Ministry overran the constable; and we know that although the gold mines are turning out very large quantities of metal, yet there is not the same "fringe" to the gold-mining industry, there is not the element of boom which there was before, that the whole thing has settled down into what we have long desired to see—into a good, settled, and permanent industry. We

cannot expect those big increases in the revenue either to recur or to continue. The proposed reappropriation goes some distance to cripple the Fremantle slip.

THE PREMIER: That is nearly finished.

MR. LEAKE: I am referring to the slip and dock, because they were both in one boat, and were to be taken together, if I remember rightly, in the old Bill. You took, I forget how much, from that vote last year.

MR. HIGHAM: £70,000.

MR. LEAKE: And now you are taking another big bite. It seems to me that Fremantle will have to wait for its dock, after all; and one of the great advantages of the harbour works, one of the great plums of the harbour works policy, was the existence of this very dock, which should attract large steamers coming through the Suez Canal to Australia. It was to encourage them to call here for repairs and for overhaul; and yet it is quite possible now, unless we have a recurrence of that phenomenal luck which has preceded the Premier like a phantom since 1890, that Fremantle will be minus its dock for ever. It will get its harbour works, but the great desideratum of a dock will be wanting. Then there is a further difficulty about the dredges and barges.

THE PREMIER: We have two dredges on the road now, and as many barges as we want.

MR. LEAKE: Then there is abandonment there—a surplus, I suppose; but it would be far more honest if you applied that money to paying back your old appropriations, instead of appropriating it for fresh works; and there is plenty of work for dredges and barges when we consider the amount of harbour improvements we are going in for.

THE PREMIER: We have plenty of them. We have five or six dredges.

MR. LEAKE: There is work for a dredge at Albany at the present moment; and one of the Ministers promised the people of Albany that their claim for further improvements would be considered; but Albany unfortunately is represented in this House by the leader of the Opposition.

A MEMBER: That is a great pity.

THE PREMIER: Albany gets its share, as I know.



**MR. LEAKE:** It is said we must have this reappropriation. I suppose, in other words, they must find money, and this is the easiest way to get temporary accommodation; but it is more than that. It is, I fear, very bad finance. No one can deny that. It is simply discounting a long-dated bill; and if they get this money to-day, they will have to repay it some other time, because reappropriation, in the strict political sense, is not justified, unless there has already been an abandonment, which as it were released the money which was formerly appropriated for a definite and specific work. What has necessitated this present reappropriation? It is undoubtedly the reckless extravagance of the Premier and the Commissioner of Railways. It is these big works out of revenue, these railways which have been under-estimated—the Bunbury-Bridgetown railway, for instance, which crept through this House because it was “a railway towards Bridgetown,” and was to cost only £100,000; whereas, as a matter of fact, the report of the Engineer-in-Chief was in the Premier’s possession at the time, and his recommendation, I think, was that it would cost at least £180,000; and yet the Premier came down to this House, humbugged the whole lot of us, and managed to get in the thin edge of his wedge; and now he has got it in, what is he forced to do? He is forced to come down and ask us to reappropriate moneys from some other work, after reappropriating to that extent. The Government have also to meet claims for extras.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** That is all included.

**MR. LEAKE:** Do you know what they are going to be? Do you mind telling us the amount? This wonderful Government can anticipate, but it cannot estimate. The Government know they have to spend something, but they do not know how much. As long as they have a revenue flowing in which they cannot possibly stop, they think themselves rich men, and begin to do all sorts of things; but not one word has been said as to the reasons why this reappropriation must be made. I will tell the House why it is. It is through the fault of the Premier and the Commissioner of Railways, owing to their wrong estimates and their bad finan-

cing. There is no blame attaching to the Government at all—they are the creature of circumstance, the victims of misplaced confidence. They have been swindled and defrauded by this, that, and the other circumstances having occurred over which they had no possible control; and now a sort of financial thunderbolt has come up on them and burst them up.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** They are not burst up yet.

**MR. LEAKE:** It is absolutely owing to their folly that they find themselves in this position. They have incurred expenditure they could not meet; they have put their hands to too high a price on a piece of paper, and now they are in the hands of the Jews. Unfortunately, although they do not admit it, they have to borrow to pay their debts. One of the concluding observations of the Premier was bold and, to a certain extent, amusing. He asked how was this new authorisation to be avoided; and after saying he would not consider for one moment a new Loan Bill, and asserting that whoever advocated a new loan is reckless, can he answer when I tell him that his only possible way of repaying this money is to do it by a new loan?

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** A year or two hence.

**MR. LEAKE:** It is a new loan, all the same.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** They will be more reckless, perhaps, then.

**MR. LEAKE:** When the two years have passed away, the present Premier and the Commissioner of Railways will not be in the House, and the unfortunate people who will then have to govern the colony will be saddled with the responsibility of raising a new loan.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** We will all be out, except you.

**MR. LEAKE:** You will be afraid to come back. That will be your trouble.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** No fear.

**MR. LEAKE:** Yet the Premier says to-day it is reckless to do what, two years hence, must be a necessity.

**THE PREMIER:** It may be different then.

**MR. LEAKE:** What are two years, or 200 years, in the life of a nation? It is a paltry subterfuge, and I wonder the right hon. gentleman, with his experience

and knowledge of men, matters, and politics, can think to hoodwink forty men in an Assembly like this by such a measure as he now proposes. The sooner we realise our true position, the better. We know that we have to borrow an extra million, over and above that which the House has already authorised; and, if so, let us "face the music." If the Premier comes down and says, "We must have this money," we will reply, "Very well; borrow it; and to save the credit of the country we will support you, and give you a Loan Bill; but do not come down and say it is reckless to borrow, when you are forced into such a position that you must do so two years hence." The right hon. gentleman may chuckle and laugh, but the laugh is not a hearty one, I notice. Over and above this million, you know perfectly well, you will have another £200,000 or £300,000 deficit staring you in the face next year; and your only hope of keeping up your credit is to take money you have already authorised and reappropriate it, or rather misappropriate it. It is misappropriation, if you do not show how it is to be refunded, because you must admit we cannot repay it out of revenue. We could not pay out of revenue the £390,000 we borrowed last year; therefore, we cannot pay three times the amount out of revenue, nor can we consider that the circumstances justify a fresh loan to do so. What can justify this reappropriation except abandonment of the Coolgardie water scheme? If you can tell us honestly you have made up your minds to abandon the scheme, I will support the Reappropriation Bill, because under those circumstances it will be justified; or if you can show that any portion of the works for which that loan of £1,000,000 was authorised has been abandoned, I am with you; but you have not done so. What you have shown is that you have "overrun the constable." You have claims for extras on the Donnybrook railway, on the Cue railway, on the works upon goldfields, on the Niagara dam, and so forth; yet you say, "We will reappropriate part of the money for the Coolgardie water scheme." How are you going to repay it?

THE PREMIER: I told you.

MR. LEAKE: What did you tell us? I cannot gather, but I will try to find

out. You did not tell us you would pay it from revenue, nor did you tell us that you would pay it from loan, because you said any new loan would be reckless.

THE PREMIER: We said we would not want it for two years, and if we wanted it we would have to have a new loan.

MR. LEAKE: You know you will want it. It is what I call "humbugging the House," and it shows a lack of moral courage on your part. You cannot face your difficulties by coming down manfully and saying to hon. members, "I know I shall want a loan in two years' time;" but you say, "If I want it, I may ask for it," knowing full well that you cannot get your money without it. It is idle, it is nonsense, to talk like this; and it is flouting both Houses of Parliament and the constitution generally. I am sorry I have not been able to throw a little fire into this debate, because I feel very strongly about it.

THE PREMIER: You are terribly in earnest.

MR. LEAKE: I am; because what I have told you is nothing but the truth, and I know that what you have said from the start is said with the purpose of ignoring and cajoling the House.

THE PREMIER: Very polite.

MR. LEAKE: I cannot tell whether it is polite. I am not here to utter pretty phrases, and I know you have lived on them for years past, but I cannot overburden your soul with them at the present time. I am giving utterance to political truths, and I want the country to know what the facts are, and to understand the financial position. You have, I repeat, "overrun the constable," and you have no possible way out of the difficulty except by borrowing to pay your debts, the present proposal being only a temporary measure which enables you to pay by taking from work that you say you have not abandoned. You take from that work, and at the same time admit that you have to repay somehow or other. Why not be honest and straightforward, and say you know the country is committed to a loan? You know perfectly well that in two or three years, when you are not here and the Government of that time has to raise a loan, the country, the public works, the labour market, and so forth will not for

the time being benefit a single penny, no matter how successful that loan may be, because it will not be for works to be proceeded with, but to pay for those already authorised.

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. LEAKE: That will cripple your borrowing power, if you are still content with a public loans policy.

THE PREMIER: Not at all.

MR. LEAKE: Explain it when you reply.

THE PREMIER: Certainly.

MR. LEAKE: I have explained it as well as I can, and for the reasons I have stated I intend to oppose the passing of the Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): All the arguments used by the leader of the Opposition are sound, but I do not feel, under our present circumstances, it would be possible to oppose the Reappropriation Bill successfully. Still, I think it only fair we should look our position properly in the face before we vote on the question. We have out at present £1,550,000 worth of Treasury bills; and these have to be provided for by loan. The Government have authority, of course, to borrow; but the bills are only short-dated ones, and a sum of £2,000,000 will have to be raised by loan during the next two years.

THE PREMIER: Where do you get that from? You should be careful.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am making statements with proper care, and I make no statements in this House but what I can verify. The statement I made was that two millions will require to be borrowed within the next two years. We want £550,000 for present borrowing purposes; there are £300,000 due in September, 1899; also £500,000 due in December, 1899; also £250,000 due in June, 1900; also £250,000 due in June, 1901; £100,000 due in September, 1901; also £50,000 due in October, 1901; also £50,000 due in November, 1901; also £50,000 due in December, 1901; these sums making £1,550,000. Then add the £550,000 which the Government propose to reappropriate, and we thus have practically to face within the next two years two millions of loan. I do not want to say it adversely to the Government or adversely to the present proposal, but we

must look our position fairly and squarely in the face. All financiers with whom we are likely to do business are fully acquainted with the fact that we have these bills out, and we must borrow to recoup, and the financiers also know that, when we pass this Reappropriation Bill, we commit ourselves to a further borrowing of £550,000. So that two millions, practically, will have to be raised within two years, and raised onwards from September next. We are asked to reappropriate these moneys now, but the Premier knows well that this system of reappropriation is justifiable only when there is an abandonment of works or a surplus on works that have been completed. In the case of the Murchison Railway, this reappropriation is perfectly justifiable and in accordance with practice. A particular sum was voted for that work, and the railway has been built for less than the estimate and less than the amount voted. We assume there is a surplus, and to reappropriate that surplus is an act within the powers of this House and in accordance with practice. If the Government say, "We do not intend to spend on the Coolgardie waterworks scheme during the next three years more than £1,500,000, instead of £2,500,000 which have been authorised;" and if they will say they intend to cut the expenditure down to £1,500,000 and desire to reappropriate the other million, then they abandon the expenditure of that million, and it will be in accordance with the ordinary practice of Parliament to reappropriate that million for other purposes. But only under those two conditions is reappropriation a legal and constitutional course. If there is an excess, if there is a surplus over the expenditure, of course the sum in excess can be reappropriated. If there is to be an abandonment of any portion of money voted for public works, then it is within our powers to reappropriate that excess. But, with all deference to the opinion of the Premier, I say that—and I think all who judge our financial position will say the same—we are practically committing not this Parliament but a future Parliament to an obligation: because the sums of money which it is now proposed to raise will have to be recouped beyond the life of this Parliament, and we are practically

committing a future Parliament to a loan policy, although possibly the mandate of the country may be against the loan policy. In what position do we place the country in such a case? Parliament has entered into obligations in regard to the Coolgardie water scheme; and if we commit ourselves to obligations in excess of the money voted for that work, we necessarily commit a future Parliament to that extent; and that expenditure must come out of revenue or must come out of another loan. It is not fair, and is certainly not constitutionally right, that such a proceeding should take place; and, whatever may be the circumstances which may call for this House voting for this Reappropriation Bill, it must be voted with the recognition of the fact that the position is extraordinary, unusual, and not to be made into a precedent. Let us suppose that we decide on a public work, the Coolgardie water scheme for instance, and suppose that when the next Parliament meets it decides against that work going on, then we shall be in the position of trustees who are required to hand back sums of money which were voted for a specific work, and which we shall have spent. If we were to do that in our private businesses, what would it be called? If we took certain sums of money that were put in our hands in trust—and we in this House are only trustees for the public—and if we were given that money to expend for specific purposes, then the Government, who are boasting that they have the people behind them and have an immense majority to carry the Coolgardie water scheme forward, may find themselves in this difficulty, that the people may then say, by their mandate, that the scheme shall not go forward. Yet we shall have spent the money voted for the specific purpose, and we shall have spent it on some entirely different purpose. It seems to me that, for the most part, the works enumerated in this Bill will have to be carried out. It is unfortunate that we are in this position. I practically agree with the Premier that it would be most unwise to suggest, at this stage, any further loan authorisation; that it would be absolutely a mistake. It is also utterly out of the question that we should debit these works to ordinary revenue, and create a deficiency at the end of the

year; although there will, I anticipate, be a sufficient deficiency, which I can deal with on another occasion. I ask the House to consider whether we have not definitely led the people of this country, and more particularly the people of Great Britain from whom we are proposing to borrow this money, to believe that we are going on more cautiously than hitherto in connection with the Coolgardie water scheme. I have a letter here, received only yesterday from a gentleman of this country, who is a strong admirer of the Premier, and has strongly supported the Government in their Coolgardie water scheme. Writing from London, he says: "Nothing can be done in business properties in Western Australia just yet. First the holidays, second the general depression in the mining market, and third want of credit in the colony as evinced in the recent loan." He goes on to say: "Surely it is time the Government woke up to the necessity of encouraging private enterprise to carry out some of these works, notably the Coolgardie water works." I have not voted for nor have I advocated private enterprise, as a general rule, in connection with great public works in this colony; but I say that we, who are a mere handful of people, cannot carry out all the works this country requires, and it is in my opinion a big mistake that we have been endeavouring to do it. As I pointed out 12 months ago, this country was spending £1,300,000 out of her revenue, besides a surplus in hand, on public works; and I say this rate of expenditure is extravagant, and that the country cannot sustain it. Supposing all the works were well and cheaply done, and that they were necessary, yet there are some things we cannot stand, and as a people we cannot carry out all these works in a short time. I rejoice greatly in the report which the Premier has given us in connection with the gold returns; but I do say the Government have been discounting the gold returns, and I would ask the Premier to notice this fact, that in 1851 to 1853, in Victoria, the amount of gold raised was over £40,000,000 in value, when the population was 223,000 and the national debt was only £808,000. We in this colony may discount our future too rapidly. The future is grand, but we

must not anticipate and waste it foolishly. We must not go on living in a fool's paradise, and imagine that because there is prosperity ahead, therefore we can spend lavishly now. The people must learn to have patience in connection with the carrying out of public works; and the Government should boldly say that, whatever the Coolgardie water-works may cost, this Parliament will commit itself to no larger sum than one and a half millions for expenditure on that work, and therefore we will reappropriate to other purposes the million of money which has been voted for the Coolgardie water scheme. I do not know what other members think, but I notice that the Government have called for tenders for the construction of pipes in connection with the Coolgardie water scheme. I say that in our present financial position, it would be the maddest possible thing for the Government to accept any tender for those pipes; and I hope and trust that, whatever mad thing they do, they will not commit the country to the acceptance of any tenders for those pipes, until they have a clear conception of how they are going to raise the money. Let us have no more Treasury bonds placed on the market; no more appeals to the A.M.P. Society; no more financing of that sort; but let us wait patiently, and finish those works which are in hand. I say it will be a great blunder for the Government to accept tenders for the construction of those pipes, and I take this opportunity, the first which has occurred in this House, to enter my protest against any tender being accepted until the finances of the colony are placed in a better position.

MR. A. FORREST: What is the matter with our finances?

MR. LEAKE: You have got to borrow to pay your debts.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There is a commercial man, the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), who does not know what is the condition of our finances. When you have an expenditure greater than your revenue, what is the use of your talking of your financial position? Your expenditure for the next month will be greater than your revenue, and your deficiency at the end

of the financial year will be greater than you anticipate.

THE PREMIER: We intend to be economical.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There are some kinds of economy which you may not be able to carry out. I see no course open for us but for this money to be reappropriated and for this Bill to pass; but, in expressing that opinion, I do hope the passing of the Bill will be with the understanding that the Government will not commit us to any expenditure in connection with the Coolgardie water scheme until they have proper authority from this House for the remaining portion of the money, and that they will limit their present expenditure in connection with that work. There are some details I would like to speak upon in committee, but I say now that I shall sternly oppose any expenditure on a survey for the proposed railway from Menzies to Mount Leonora, and on the proposed railway from Coolgardie to Norseman; and I say this not in regard to the question of railway policy. I shall equally oppose the survey of a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman, and for the reason that we have no right to build up hopes and expectations of railways, when we have no reasonable prospect of fulfilling those hopes. I say we have no reasonable prospects of building these railways.

THE PREMIER: You are not yourself now.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am myself. I say we have no reasonable prospect of building these railways; and, because we have no reasonable prospect, we shall do these districts a gross injustice if we allow the surveys to go through, and lead the people to expect they are going to get their railways, when we are not in a position to build them. Look at Esperance, where people have been expecting a railway for years: what has the effect been there? People have been injured, some people have been ruined, simply by an implied promise from the Government; and now we are to do the same thing in other districts—we are to put upon the Estimates a survey, when we know that we cannot build the line. Everybody knows that the survey of a railway is practically a conditional prom-

se of its construction. I am not prepared to vote for the construction of these railways, and I am not prepared to vote for the surveys; and I hope that, whatever the Government do, they will allow these surveys to be struck off this schedule, because it is unfair to the people and unfair to this country to vote money for such a purpose. It is creating a prospective liability, and leading the people to suppose that these railways will be built; and I do hope the Government will not raise expectations they have no reasonable prospect of gratifying. I admit that the arguments used by the leader of the Opposition are all sound arguments, yet the condition in which we are, the exigencies of the case, seems to me to point to the fact that these works cannot be stayed; and I cannot see any way, satisfactory or otherwise, of raising the money. For that reason, and that reason alone, under protest and strongly urging the Government to limit the expenditure in connection with the Coolgardie water scheme, I will support this Bill.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I should like to say that the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), at any rate, seems to have grasped the situation, and I am very much obliged for the remarks he has made. Although I do not agree with all of them, still, generally, I think he may fairly be said to take the same view as I take with regard to this matter. In regard to dredging the colony not to spend more than 1½ millions on the Coolgardie water scheme, I see no necessity to do that. We will do our best to carry out that scheme as economically as possible, and I think it will be a long while yet before we will expend the £2,030,000 already available. I think there is every reason to hope that the water will be in Kalbarrie before we require to ask this House for more funds; and, that being so, I cannot see what there is to fear, though we may have to ask in two years' time for so for a little more money for that great work. In any case, we do not want it now.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why not write it off?

THE PREMIER: We are writing it off. We are going to make that amount

£2,030,000. The Government cannot spend a single sixpence more than £2,030,000 without the authority of this House. That is exactly what the hon. member has asked us to do—to make it quite clear that the Government have no authority to spend more than that sum on the Coolgardie water scheme without a fresh authorisation. It seems to me that is the only course open to us at the present time; and as for the remarks of the member for Albany as to stealing money from one work to construct another, I would reply that many of these other works from which we are reappropriating will not require the money. Take the item of dredges and barges from which we are taking away £25,000. We do not need to repay that. We appropriated more than we wanted originally for dredges and barges. We have two dredges and several barges now which are just being finished, and almost on their way to the colony. That will give us five dredges and a number of barges. When the Fremantle harbour works are finished, what are we to do with these dredges? I think five dredges are sufficient for all our purposes. We may have to sell some of them when the work is completed. Take, again, the Fremantle dock and slip. We are not able to go on with those works at the present time; in fact, if we had the money available, we could not commence the work for a year or two, for the dredging is not far enough advanced.

MR. HIGHAM: You could start in advance of the dredging.

THE PREMIER: No; we could do nothing of the sort. The hon. member (Mr. Leake) tried to get a little support from Fremantle by alluding to this reappropriation; but Fremantle has never had such a good friend in him as it has in me, nor is it likely to have. We have taken nothing from the Fremantle dock and slip that we have not given back again. We are taking £35,000 from the dock and slip with a view of giving to Fremantle £128,000 for harbour works; so the hon. member's endeavour to alienate the support of the Fremantle members is not likely to be successful. Then there is the item, "Water supply for towns, £25,000." We can do without that sum, as we have £68,000 for the

purpose. Some of it has been spent—a good deal at Fremantle, in giving a water supply there, and the sum mentioned can be taken from that vote, for the present. If more money is required for the water supply of towns, we will have to obtain it either from loans or from revenue; but there is no necessity to repay the £25,000. The same remark applies to the Geraldton-Murchison gold-fields railway. With regard to the Coolgardie water scheme. I have already explained that the authorisation will be limited to £2,030,000. I do not mean to say that sum will cover all the reticulation necessary. That will cost a great deal more; but this amount will take the water into Kalgoorlie; and, if that is the case, it will be a long time before we will have to borrow more money, and if we do reappropriate, it will not be in the shape of a repayment, but will be a new loan. As I said, we want this Bill, and we cannot do without it. The member for Albany twits me with this and that, but he does not tell us what he would do in the circumstances. All he says is that he would go in for a new authorisation. I consider that would be reckless finance, and would bring discredit on the country.

MR. LEAKE: You pledged the credit of the country long ago.

THE PREMIER: I do not want to wrangle with the hon. member. I have no wish to be as rude to him as he is to me. Anyone would think I was here simply to be insulted. I demand from the hon. member the greatest courtesy. If he did not know any better, I would forgive him; but he does know better, and the observations he has made are unworthy of him. I do not care for his threats. If he can turn me out of this seat, let him do it, and I shall wish him joy of it.

MR. LEAKE: What have I said?

THE PREMIER: I am trying to do my duty; that is all, and I expect courtesy from you.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): Without wasting the time of the House, I wish to emphasise the few remarks I think it necessary to make. This principle of reappropriation does not sound right. It is very repugnant to any man connected with commercial pursuits; and especially does it create in me a feeling of unrest

when I notice some of the items in the schedule. It is not a question of flinging mud at the Premier or even at the Commissioner of Railways. We know that for a large proportion of the extravagance charged against their departments those Ministers are not directly responsible. They may be politically responsible, but they are not responsible as a man would be who was manager of a private concern, and had to see that work were carried out with due economy. I am more with the idea of attracting the attention of those two Ministers to certain items in the schedule, than with any idea of casting blame upon them, that I speak. There is the item, "Ashburton jetty, £7,500." I am told that is regarded by the people of the Ashburton as an absolute waste. It is the same with regard to Wyndham; the people there have been almost staggered to know why the money was spent on that jetty.

MR. A. FORREST: Who says so?

MR. GEORGE: If the member for the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt) were here, I would ask him to give us some information on this point, and I believe he could make some startling revelations to the House. This is not a question of flinging mud at Ministers; but the fact is that the money of the country has not been wisely and justly expended. With regard to this reappropriation, if the money must be had for the credit of the country, I am prepared to vote for it. I do not like it, but the credit of the country is the first thing that appeals to me; and I believe that although the Government have pledged to the Coolgardie water scheme, still if they could see their way to come before the House and say that, in the altered state of the finances of the country, it was well to defer that scheme, a great majority of hon. members would be well satisfied, and I am certain a great majority of the people of the country would be satisfied. If it had not been a question of turning the Ministry out, I would have voted against that Coolgardie water scheme, but I voted for it because I saw that no so doing was another way of saying that we must keep the present Ministry in power, and must give them a chance of putting the affairs of the country on

solid basis. If I could have seen at the time any gentleman in this House who would have been capable of taking the reins of power, I might have voted differently; and I do not know whether it would not have been a great relief to the present Premier to have vacated the position.

MR. A. FORREST: Why not have taken it yourself?

MR. GEORGE: Because I am not fitted for it. Whatever my faults may be, I know the sort of job I can fill, and I stick to it.

MR. WOOD: What is that?

MR. GEORGE: Not "barracking" for the member for West Perth. I leave it to others to assume responsibilities which they are unable to discharge. I presume that, although we vote for the second reading of this Bill, we shall be able to discuss these items when it goes into Committee; and, on the assurance of the Premier that it is absolutely necessary, to save the credit of the country, that this reappropriation should be effected, I am prepared to vote for it; and that is the sole consideration that weighs with me.

MR. HOLMES (East Fremantle): I have always looked upon this policy of reappropriation with suspicion, fearing that it would have some serious results. Dealing with the schedule now before us, I am even more firmly convinced on this point. Yet, unfortunately, I see from the Bill before the House that there is practically nothing else for us to do but to pass some of the items, at all events, in order to get the country out of difficulties. When the Reappropriation Bill was before the House last year, and on other occasions, hon. members have allowed the Government to reappropriate funds from other authorisations; and the Government find themselves now in this position, that they cannot conduct the affairs of the country without further reappropriations. Realising what the results of blocking this Bill would be, there is really no course open to me but to support the second reading. On no account will I be one to sanction the reappropriation of money for works that are not now in hand. If it is necessary to reappropriate for works that have already been completed, and works that must be paid

for, there is nothing else for us to do but to allow the reappropriation; but to allow funds to be reappropriated for the survey of a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman, or from Menzies to Mount Leonora, or even for the construction of railway works at Midland Junction, would be nothing less than supporting a wild scheme. One proposal is to reappropriate £35,000 from the dock and slip at Fremantle, and it is also proposed to expend £30,000 as a first instalment on railway workshops at Midland Junction. The Director of Works told us yesterday it was estimated that this work when completed would cost £180,000. We have also had brought before us during the last few days the fact that the men engaged in the works at Fremantle have been called up and told that they will have to be contented with five days' work and five days' pay a week. Yet in the face of this we are asked to reappropriate £30,000 to build a workshop at Midland Junction, whilst men engaged in the railway workshops have practically nothing to do. When the Reappropriation Bill was before the House last year it was proposed to take £70,000 from the Fremantle dock and slip, and the right hon. gentleman stated that the power that took away could give. He also averred that the money would be returned probably out of revenue, but perhaps out of loan. Now, 12 months later, we find there is no suggestion at all about returning it, but there is a further proposal to take away £35,000 more. The same day the Director of Public Works said that the money would not be required then for the Fremantle dock and slip, and when it was required at a later date it would be obtained from somewhere. Perhaps it would be interesting to know where that somewhere is. In the absence of this information, I must at all events say that I will oppose the items that I have referred to, namely, the survey of the railway from Coolgardie to Norseman, and of the railway from Menzies to Mount Leonora. I believe if the Government spoke their real mind they would admit that, even if they were granted the money, they would not entertain the slightest idea of carrying out the survey from Menzies to Mount Leonora within the next two or three years, at any rate. I must sup-



port the second reading, but I will oppose those items when they come up for further consideration.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra): I listened with great interest and a large measure of approval to the speech of the member for Central Murchison, who has practically voiced the feelings of most members of this House. The country is to a large extent committed to, I will not say all the works, but most of the works which appear on this loan schedule, and I see no way of their being carried out except that proposed by the Premier. I would like to have asked the Premier to what extent the loan expenditure is likely to proceed in the future. I cannot altogether agree with the member for Albany that it would be right to oppose the reappropriation at the present time. In my opinion, financial affairs are now possibly at their worst, and they will be better two years hence. The most advantageous course open to us is that which the Premier intends to pursue. There are one or two items that I cannot see my way clear to support when the Bill gets into Committee. I cannot see any legitimate reason for a railway survey from Menzies to Mount Leonora, and from Coolgardie to Norseman. My own experience in the district which I have the honour to represent is totally against survey. We have had a survey for four years, and I fear that when the railway comes to be built to the Pilbarra gold-fields, as I hope it will in a year or two, when times are better, the route will have to be practically resurveyed, because in my opinion there will be considerable difficulty in picking up the old pegs. I took a great deal of notice of the words of the Premier in the Budget speech. The right hon. gentleman said we might well cease from borrowing; and when he said that, he voiced the opinions of most members of this House. He also referred to the indebtedness of the colony on the capitation system. Unfortunately we have evidence that during the last few months the indebtedness per head of the population has increased day by day; not because we are borrowing more, but, unfortunately, because our population is leaving us, though I do not say that I regard this as altogether an unmixed evil. Every man who stops in this country with

nothing to do and no money to spend must become a drag upon the community and the best thing he can do, not only for himself but for the country, is to leave it, for the present at all events. We may depend upon it that when the country is in a fit and proper state to afford that man employment, he will be willing and ready to come back, or, if he does not do so, other people will come in his place. While not assenting altogether to every provision of the Bill, I see no way out of the difficulty we are in except that of supporting the second reading.

MR. CONOLLY (Dundas): Although to the minds of all members of this House or to many of them, this reappropriation may not present a welcome aspect of the finances of the colony, still most of those who look into the question will fully realise, with some regret, that the course proposed is practically the only means of meeting the somewhat difficult position in which the Government at present find themselves. The position may not be a pleasing one, but the plan proposed is practically the only one which exists for overcoming the difficulty. In regard to the address of the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) on the financial condition of the colony, whilst I do not agree with him throughout, I realise that there was much in his speech which has an important bearing, not only on the present financial condition of the colony, but the future. Although the view he takes relative to a fresh authorisation may not meet with the approval of members, I think it behoves the Government to be most prudent in the manner in which this money is spent and be more careful than hitherto in reference to works to which they commit the country. It is practically impossible for me to understand how the Government could commit the country to the large and I might say enormous, expenditure on public works which they have been carrying on for four years, with a population of 170,000. I cannot see how they could possibly expect either to raise the revenue from these people or to go into the financial market and raise a loan. I do not think the colony of Western Australia has anything whatever to complain of with reference to the London market. Indeed the mere fact that a colony so young, and with such a small population,

a population practically of very short standing as compared with the other colonies, and I might almost say a visiting population to a large extent, has gone to the London market and raised money on the same advantageous terms as the sister colonies with five times the population, and a settled population, is evidence not only of the appreciation those who lend money have of the resources of Western Australia, but also of the faith they place in the colony; for not only have we raised this money, but we have done so at 3 per cent., which is a matter that the people of Western Australia may congratulate themselves upon. Members must consider whether this colony will be able to continue raising money at 3 per cent. I think we really have no right to expect to be able to raise money on the same terms as the sister colonies. What I wish to reiterate is that the Government of which the Premier is the head cannot hope to continue this gigantic policy of public works, involving this enormous expenditure, with such a small population. The only thing that surprises me, and I believe most thinking men, is that they have been able to carry out works they have already accomplished. Some of the works may not have been of such urgency as to justify their being carried out; but taking the public works policy of the Government as a whole, it is a matter of astonishment that so much has been done.

At 6.30 p.m. the SPEAKER left the chair.

At 7.30 the SPEAKER resumed the chair.

MR. CONOLLY (resuming): I was speaking with reference to the great extent of the public works which have been carried out in the colony, and comparing them with the very small population. Referring now to the reappropriation, which I presume will take the place of the Loan Estimates for this year, what I fear, and what many other members fear is—

THE PREMIER: Not take the place of the Loan Estimates. They will come down as soon as this Bill is passed.

MR. CONOLLY: It appears to me that the great fear which many persons entertain is that we have "overrun the con-

stable," not only in having a deficit upon last year's Estimates, but that we may "overrun the constable" in our borrowing policy. That is a fear which many people have entertained, and the recent developments in this colony have in some degree given colour to it, because as we all know the financial credit of a colony is based, in no small degree, on its population, and our loan policy has been based on the increase in the population which we have experienced during the last three or four years, and which we anticipated would go on some considerable time longer. It is all very well for us to say we will look to the present and let the future look after itself, for that is really what the Government have been doing. I think, with all due deference to the Premier, that this is what he was doing when he brought down the Governor's Speech at the beginning of the session; for he prepared that speech by looking at the present, and left out of consideration the future. One consequence now is the almost complete repudiation of the principal public works which were promised in that speech. It behoves everyone to look well into the future, and to gauge, as far as possible, what it has in store for this colony. Looking at it in a matter-of-fact way, sweeping away entirely the veil of hope and anticipation under which we have been living for the last three or four years, and looking at things practically, we shall find that this is a time to cool off and take things very steadily. Our population does not show those signs of increase which we anticipated; and in the second place the financial market in London on which we depend so much, and on which we base our financial arrangements in no small degree, is not in so favourable a condition as we anticipated it would be in regard to this colony. The result is that suddenly, without any real warning, the Government have had to adopt a policy of extreme retrenchment.

THE PREMIER: Not extreme.

MR. CONOLLY: For the sake of this colony, I should not like to see it more extreme, for the shock has been enough in itself, without our wishing for any more; and I would like to point out to the Premier that, by reducing the num-

ber of men who have been engaged in carrying out public works—

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: We are not reducing further than that the men go off in the ordinary course, as the works get finished.

MR. CONOLLY: I do not think there is any reason to discuss the matter, for we know and the Government have told us—I do not think they desire to conceal the fact—that they have entered into a policy of extreme retrenchment by retrenching in every possible way. I consider they are acting wisely in doing so; but they have allowed this to go on and accumulate, until the shock has become so great that the whole colony is affected in its commerce and trade. It is not only men who are dismissed from the Government employment, for that is the direct effect, and I agree with the Commissioner of Railway that possibly the Government have not thrown many men out of employment; but the indirect effect is that the commercial people and the other persons who are affected by this policy are adding to it by throwing other men out of employment, and so it is the accumulated result which we are feeling.

THE PREMIER: Two or three hundred men. How can that affect the whole commerce of the country?

MR. CONOLLY: That is the direct result of the Government action, but indirectly the commercial houses were affected by the Government policy, by throwing other men out of employment, and in that way the whole trade of the colony is affected. With reference to the survey of these railway routes, one of them affects me and affects my district to a great extent. In the Governor's Speech, it was stated that a railway would be constructed from Coolgardie to Norseman, and we have all been led to expect this work would go forward; but we find the effect of this policy of looking to the present and letting the future take care of itself has brought about a rejection of that policy of railway construction, and we are now to have a survey instead.

MR. VOSPER: That is no good to you.

MR. CONOLLY: I can also reiterate the statement of my friend the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill), and I am sorry the Premier spoke before I had an

opportunity of doing so; because, allowing these surveys are carried out this year, does the Premier think his Government will be in a position to follow out that promise by constructing a line next year? Does he anticipate that the natural condition of this colony will permit him to carry out the construction next year?

THE PREMIER: I hope so. It depends upon the condition of the colony. I cannot see a year ahead.

MR. CONOLLY: No. That is just what I regret so much; and, with all due deference to the right hon. gentleman, he has not seen ahead, as a gentleman filling his responsible position might reasonably have been expected to do—he has not seen ahead, and the result is that all this has come upon the colony as an accumulated shock. Instead of adopting this policy gradually, and carrying it out in such a manner as would enable this colony to have experienced it without serious results, it has come in one solid shock. I should like to say, also, that although it has come as a shock, yet I think the Government have acted rightly, even at the cost of this shock, by bringing this retrenchment about. With reference to these surveys, I think there is a great deal in what hon. members have said. The survey of a line, I think the Premier will agree, is a very fair and reasonable indication to the people of a district that the line will be constructed at no very distant date. From what I can see of the financial position of the colony at the present moment, the Premier has not the least possible chance of finding himself in a position, towards the end of the year, to do this. I do not think he will have the money to do it. I can only say, with the Premier, that I hope the money will be there; but I think that is the best anyone can say at the present moment. I have very great pleasure in supporting this Reappropriation Bill; not because I approve of the measure, but because I think that, in the present financial condition of the colony, it is really the only way to carry out the obligations to which the Government have committed the country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is making the best of a bad job.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle): In dealing with this question of reappropriation, we have to consider the state of the

country. I am adverse to reappropriation on principle, and think it should not be resorted to except as an extreme measure. I fully concur with what has been said by the member for Central Murchison (Sir. Illingworth), and with the way he put the whole case before the House. It is evident that we have gone ahead too fast year after year, with the result we now see. Time after time it was pointed out that such must be the result, and yet the system of borrowing was persisted in. Consequently, the time has arrived when we have to retrench in all directions. I take it, however, that every member in this House, though some may have disapproved of what was being done, has, nevertheless, been a party to placing the colony in its present position. I will not say they are all equally culpable, but they are blameworthy to a great extent for passing such measures as have been brought in. Now we find it necessary to retrench; and it is to be deplored that the retrenchment was not commenced in the early part of the year, instead of being left to the present time, when it is creating so much misery. It is all very well for the Commissioner of Railways (Hon. F. H. Piessé), who lives in the metropolis of the colony, to say that no ill effects have followed from what has been done in the way of retrenchment; but I can assure him that in Fremantle, and I believe it is so throughout the colony, this sudden retrenchment has created serious misery all round. I think the colony is to be congratulated, so far, on the balance of the loan having been floated. I am afraid it will be some time before we feel any good effects from it; but it will be reassuring to the public, by showing them that our credit is not altogether gone, and that foreign capitalists still view our position with satisfaction, or they would not have given us the remainder of the loan, as announced by cable to-day. For the sake of the future of the colony, we are called upon to be very careful in what we do; and I think it would be suicidal to promise in any way, even in the most indirect manner, to construct the works that have been passed by this House, and more especially to reappropriate money from votes which have been passed for works already in course of construction, so as to commit

the colony to new works to be undertaken in the future. I fully concur with what has been said on that point. The hon. member who spoke on this subject is interested in the district where it is proposed to spend money for railway purposes; yet he has not expressed himself in favour of the proposal, but has come forward and pointed out the danger to the Government in what they are doing: that they are promising what they will scarcely be able to fulfil, unless something extraordinary occurs. When an hon. member speaks in that way in regard to a proposal to spend money in his district, it shows how serious the matter is. There are one or two items in this Bill which I am fully bound to vote against, when in Committee. I think it was shown last night, by the answer to a question which I asked the Commissioner of Railways, that very little has been done at Midland Junction in connection with the railway workshops. It must be some four or five years since their construction was authorised, after a keen discussion; and one would have thought the works would have been hurried on, and that by this time they would be nearing completion. But how much has been spent on them? £30,000.

MR. GEORGE: Money wasted.

MR. SOLOMON: And what can we assume from this, but that although it was originally maintained by the Government and other members that the Midland Junction site was far superior to that of Fremantle, they have found that the site is not so good as they anticipated, and consequently the money has not been expended, nor do I think it will be. As regards the two items for surveys, we should be doing a great injustice by passing them. It is not the amounts I cavil at, as they might be taken out of the general revenue without being felt; but it is the principle of voting money from works which have been already passed by this House, and which are now being proceeded with, that I object to. I will support the second reading of this Bill, because I think it necessary in the present circumstances that we should assist the Government to some extent, and I shall not be one, in a matter of this kind, to make things worse for them than they really are.

Mr. KENNY (North Murchison): I think I cannot do better than endorse the able speech of my colleague, the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth). I look upon the measure before us exactly in the same light as he does. It is simply a means to an end, with a view of making the best of our position. I will not detain the House on that particular point; but there is one matter which I should like to submit to the favourable consideration of the Premier. It is proposed to reappropriate the sum of £15,000 from the Geraldton-Murchison goldfields railway vote, to be expended upon water supply and other requirements of the Murchison goldfields. The Premier promised us last year that any further reappropriations made out of this loan should be expended upon the Murchison. He has kept his promise, and what I wish to do now is to ask his favourable consideration for a proposal I have to make for the benefit of the Murchison goldfields, and for that particular portion of those fields which I have the honour to represent. We have here the sum of £15,000, and I would ask the Premier to increase it by £5,000, so as to enable the Minister of Mines to grant a petition from the inhabitants of Peak Hill for the purpose of erecting a public battery. I have no desire on any occasion to stand up in this House and advocate the expenditure of public money, except upon such works as I feel confident will prove reproductive and beneficial to the country. The particular centre in which it is desired to erect this battery is Revelstone, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Peak Hill. At present there are 23 leases, comprising 260 acres; and the fact that there is such a large number of leases within an area of 260 acres shows they are held by small men. I am in a position to state that many of those men have been working there for the last three or four years, and they look forward to a public battery as the only means of their ever hoping to reap the benefit of their years of toil. At present there are 3,600 tons of stone in sight—small crushings that they have been able to get through, so far, giving a return of from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ounces to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ounces to the ton. Should the Government see their way clear to fall in with the suggestion, 121 men would be guaranteed constant em-

ployment, and a large increase of the number must undoubtedly take place, as this is a rich auriferous country where there are miles of reef unpegged at present, but only awaiting facilities for crushing. I am fully aware that this House has no power in itself to increase the vote, our power being only to reduce it; but the hon. the Premier, by address to His Excellency the Governor, can carry out the expressed desire of the House, and I am perfectly justified in seeking the favourable consideration of the right hon. gentleman in this instance, because I am fully persuaded that £5,000 of the public money could not be spent to greater advantage than it would be if devoted to the work I propose.

Mr. WALLACE (Yalgoo): I have no intention to oppose the second reading of the Bill; but having taken up a different position on a previous occasion when the Appropriation Bill was before the House, I feel that an explanation is necessary. After the deplorable statement of the Premier in his Budget speech, I see the necessity for this House to agree to the Reappropriation Bill, though there are one or two items I do not agree with, and I am strongly opposed to the principle of reappropriation, because it is a kind of finance which no commercial man approves of. The Premier has made an announcement which will afford satisfaction to every member of the House. We have his assurance that that great boon, the Coolgardie water scheme, will be put through at a cost considerably under the estimate. The necessity of these works is clear, and notwithstanding the fact that the Premier has spoken of members on this side as croakers and traitors, we find that when he requires assistance, the so-called croakers and traitors are ready to help him and the country, and to show that they recognise the necessity of this Reappropriation Bill. When the interests of this colony are at stake, croakers and traitors are ready to come to the front and assist the Premier over the difficulty which he has brought about himself. The remarks which fell from the leader of the Opposition this evening were perhaps somewhat severe, but I consider they were justifiable.

Mr. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): I do not lay claim to be an authority

on financial matters, and therefore shall limit my remarks to the smallest possible space in dealing with the Bill before the House. It appears to me that this scheme for reappropriation intends to take mostly the funds required from the Coolgardie water scheme. I am not perfectly acquainted with what has been done at Mundaring (reservoir site), but I am aware that tenders have been sent in for pipes. I quite agree with the hon. member who says it would be folly and madness on the part of the Government to immediately accept tenders for those pipes; but, at the same time, I urge upon the Government the necessity of proceeding as rapidly as possible with the scheme. I am not aware whether the Treasurer has in his possession funds necessary to carry on the work, but I presume it is so; and, if that be the case, the utmost expedition must be observed in connection with this work, because whatever we may think of the scheme itself, there is no doubt it is hanging like a pall over the progress of West Australia. It is checking trade in other directions, and is becoming a laughing-stock. For three years, or nearly so, we have been promised that the scheme shall be pushed on; and if the Premier's prognostications had been carried out, the scheme would now have been well on its way. If the House takes a liberal view of the position of the right hon. gentleman, and accords him a general support for reappropriation, every effort should be made to show that the Government are thoroughly in earnest about this work, and intend to proceed with it as soon as possible. With regard to the question of reappropriation generally, I am in accord with the leader of the Opposition as to the principle involved; but I also see there is a great deal of force in what has been said by the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth). The position may be briefly summarised in the old adage that "Heaven helps those who help themselves." It appears to me that the Premier has helped himself, and we find ourselves obliged to help him, whether we like it or not. We all know that those who belong to the Opposition have to tread the narrow path, whereas the Government supporters have the broad and easy way. I cannot conceive that some of those jet-

ties in course of construction on the northern coast are either urgent or necessary, and I think any member of this House is entitled to enter his protest against the extravagant expenditure which has taken place on the various ports north of Carnarvon. We find the expenditure on public works north of Carnarvon has amounted to £300 per head of every elector.

MR. A. FORREST: They are all producers.

MR. VOSPER: We do not see much of what they produce. They produce members of Parliament, and that is about all. In fact, the principal exports of the northern districts consist of members sent to this House. There is in the schedule an item of £7,500 for the Ashburton jetty. Where is it?

THE PREMIER: Don't you know the Ashburton River?

MR. VOSPER: I know there is an Ashburton River, but where is the site of this jetty? Is it on the coast, or where? It appears to me that this jetty is being constructed at a place so utterly insignificant that it has not a name of its own, the only name given to it being that which is applied to a vast province, where most of the land is held by one person. The property there is held by three or four people.

MR. HUBBLE: No.

MR. VOSPER: As far as I know anything about these electorates, they are mostly held or owned by a few persons. If we exclude the trade from the northern goldfields, what do we find left? The whole of the revenue derived by the Government from that part of the country does not equal that of a fifth-rate goldfields town.

MR. A. FORREST: Look at the exports from Carnarvon.

MR. VOSPER: You may quote the statistics if you like. There are two more items to which I wish to refer, these being the survey of a railway from Menzies to Mount Leonora, and the survey of a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman. It is admitted that we shall not be able to construct the railway from Coolgardie to Norseman during this financial year, and it is open to very serious doubt whether that line will ever be constructed in the form proposed. To spend £9,000

in putting up flags and other decorations which survey implies on such a work as that referred to would be a sheer waste of money. I earnestly hope the Government will reconsider these two points, and strike these items out of the schedule. As far as the rest go, I shall give a general support to the Bill. I would call attention to one other matter, following the example of the member for North Murchison (Mr. Kenny). A sum of £40,000 is put down here for public batteries, and this is a good time to put in a word for my own electorate. I am not going to ask that a certain sum shall be set aside to be spent in my electorate, but that, as a matter of common fairness, an inspector shall be sent there to see whether it is a fit place to erect public batteries. Until Mr. White visited Bulong, no inspector had ever visited the place. North-East Coolgardie stands at least as the second or third goldfield in the colony, and there is also a peculiar fact, and one which I have never been able to understand. Some documents, and most elaborate statistics, prepared by an association formed for the purpose at North-East Coolgardie, were sent to the Minister of Mines. His successor, the hon. gentleman now sitting opposite, declares he has never seen them, and the Under-Secretary says that no trace of these documents has been found. It would be interesting to ascertain what became of them. But in any case they are gone, and valuable information is lost. I ask the Government to compensate for it by sending an inspector to report on the capabilities of that district for crushing purposes, and I consider it would be only just to comply with this request. As regards the Bill generally, I shall give it my support, not because I believe in the principle, which is rotten, as most of the financial proposals that emanate from the present Government are; but we find ourselves face to face with something very closely approaching a financial crisis, the country being in a very awkward position, and if the passing of this measure will assist the Government to get the colony out of the Slough of Despond into which they have plunged it, I am prepared to sacrifice my principles for the sake of giving them some help.

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): I support the second reading of the Bill, because I consider it the only proper course to adopt under the circumstances. It would be impossible for the Government at the present time to go into the market for a loan of £500,000 when we have not raised the amount we are authorised to do at the present time.

MR. WILSON: Whose fault is that?

MR. A. FORREST: It is your fault for voting such a large supply last year. You asked for a large amount of money for your district, and got it, and every other member did the same. The Government thought the revenue would keep up, and large votes were granted; but now the members turn round and say, "You should not have given it."

MR. LEAKE: Wrong, as usual.

MR. A. FORREST: I know the hon. member voted for the Greenhills railway, the Bunbury harbour works, and all those jetties.

MR. LEAKE: No, I did not. I opposed nearly every one of them.

MR. A. FORREST: Members of this House voted for them, and the works were carried; and now those who obtained the money for their districts come down and say the Government had no right to get into debt.

MR. LEAKE: You admit you got a lot.

MR. A. FORREST: It appears to me that the Opposition members can get a great deal more than supporters of the Government.

MR. LEAKE: They deserve it.

MR. A. FORREST: I suppose the member for North-East Coolgardie has got more out of the Treasury chest than any other man in this room. He is one of those persistent members, always trying to get something out of the Treasury, and I congratulate him on his success.

MR. VOSPER: I got about 5 per cent. of the amount paid by my constituency to the Government.

MR. A. FORREST: The member for North-East Coolgardie said he did not know there were any people in the Carnarvon district at all, and he spoke as if small constituencies had no right to be represented. The Collector of Customs stated that over 2,000,000lbs. of wool were exported from the port of Carnarvon, and putting it at 6d. per pound, we know what

that is worth. It also means that there must be in the district some 600,000 sheep. This country has had to be fenced in.

MR. VOSPER: Not much of it.

MR. A. FORREST: The hon. member knows more about it than I do; but I say this country is practically all fenced with six wire fences, and water is conserved all over it. A large amount of labour is employed, and if not altogether white labour, the labour is employed; and the people in those districts have to pay customs duties. Going further on to the port of Ashburton, where one hon. member objects to have facilities given for getting a steamer alongside the jetty, the returns show that the district exported 785,000 pounds weight of wool. Going on to Derby, we find the amount of wool exported was 721,000 pounds weight, although the chief export of that district is cattle. Then the port of Cossack exported over 2,000,000 pounds weight of wool. It will be seen that those districts must be of great importance to this colony, when I inform the House that one half of the meat supply of Western Australia comes from districts north of Geraldton; therefore they must be great producing districts, and there must be good grazing country to produce that amount of meat and the amount of wool I have stated. There are four intercolonial steamers trading between Fremantle and Singapore, which derive their profits from the trade of our northern coast; and one mail steamer, the only one, is subsidised by the Government because it is bound to run to contract time. These facts are sufficient evidence that the small amount of expenditure which is given to the northern districts is well deserved.

MR. VOSPER: £300 a man; that's all.

MR. A. FORREST: I should like the hon. member to show that in figures. That may have been the total cost during the last 30 years. What we ought to encourage in the colony is producers, and not people living in towns and doing practically nothing. We do not want drones, but producers; and I say the men who go into our northern districts with their flocks and herds, and raise stock for the market, are deserving of great consideration, and the least we can do for them is

to give proper facilities for bringing their produce to market.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The squatter lives in St. George's Terrace, you know.

MR. A. FORREST: Well, suppose he does—there is no reason why he should not, so long as he pays people to carry out what he requires to be done on his station. The owners or shareholders of a gold mine do not live on the mine, and do not work it with their own hands, but pay to have it worked, and the squatter does the same with his station. As to the Bill, I am sure the House will be doing right in passing it, and I hope this is the last we shall hear of the small amount of expenditure, which has been given to the producers in our northern districts. It should be remembered that, when the goldfields require anything to be done for them, the northern members are first to help them; therefore the least that the goldfields members can do is to give us a little wharfage accommodation for the export of our produce.

MR. WILSON (Canning): I intend to oppose this Bill, and in doing so I should like to say that, in listening to the indignant remarks of the Premier with reference to some observations made by the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), I could not help thinking that the greatest punishment the member for Albany could possibly mete out to that gentleman would be to let him resign and take his position; because anyone following the Premier as Treasurer of the colony would have a stupendous task before him, to overcome the evils and the ills due to the maladministration of the Forrest Ministry. I have no objection to plain speaking in these matters, but I do object to any hon. member, who is in the habit of slinging abuse across the House at his opponents, getting up and in a fit of temper objecting to remarks made by the leader of the Opposition. I saw nothing to find fault with in those remarks. One word he used, "humbug," was taken exception to by the Premier; but it is a word I used here myself the other night.

THE PREMIER: That makes it all right, of course.

MR. WILSON: That makes it absolutely right. As a rule, I do not use dis-



courteous language to any member of this House, and it is my effort not to do so. The right hon. gentleman forgets the terms he uses to members on this side. Often has he used such words as "traitor," "croaker," when referring to members on this side of the House; and he has said we are not fit to fill the positions which he and his colleagues hold. If those words are not abusive, I do not know the meaning of them in the English language. Once before I had occasion to tell the right hon. gentleman that, if he would descend to abuse, he might expect that members on this side of the House would fight him with his own weapons; and I wish to reiterate that statement. The question of reappropriation contained in this Bill is a matter of principle, and not of detail. It is strange to me that the majority of speakers to-night, in speaking to this Bill—no matter on which side of the House they sit—have agreed in saying that the reappropriation is to be condemned; but, although they agree that the borrowing and spending policy of the Forrest Ministry has landed our great country in somewhat of a mess, so far as finance is concerned, yet they say they must vote for the Bill. I am of this opinion, that if we think a measure is wrong, if a measure introduced by the Government is wrong, then it is our bounden duty, in the interests of the people, to vote according to our convictions. If we are going to reappropriate moneys which have been already voted for certain works, I want to know where this practice is going to end. Last session we had a debate on this very subject, and the position was put very clearly before the Ministry, for it was pointed out that the proposed reappropriation was absolutely wrong in finance and wrong in principle; and, after a very strong debate, of course as usual hon. members gave way, because the Government were in a corner and must have the money. The same argument is brought forward by the Premier now, that he must have the money for works which have been started and for some works which he wishes to commence. Last session, on that statement of the case, we allowed the Ministry to reappropriate moneys for carrying on the Fremantle harbour works, amongst other things. To-night he

stated again that more money was required and would be repaid, that it was simply a matter of book-keeping, and that the money would be repaid out of, possibly, some future loan. I do not think that what was borrowed last year has been repaid.

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. WILSON: We have had Treasury bills floated since then.

THE PREMIER: There has been no new appropriation since then.

MR. WILSON: There was a million loan floated.

THE PREMIER: But that was not an appropriation. There has been no new appropriation.

MR. WILSON: I did not say a new appropriation. I said a loan of a million had been floated, and the money borrowed last year has not been repaid. The Premier comes up again and asks for a further reappropriation for the Fremantle harbour works; and I say, where is this going to end? He may have the audacity, next session, as I believe he will, to come again to this House and ask for a further reappropriation. Why not go on and reappropriate the whole of the vote we have passed for the Coolgardie water supply scheme? If the right hon. gentleman will abandon that scheme, which I thoroughly believe will yet bring him down—for that scheme is destined, in my opinion, to bring the Forrest Ministry to grief—if he will abandon that and reclaim or re-establish the credit of the colony in the home money market, then I have no objection to granting him the reappropriation he wants for this or other works he may require.

MR. A. FORREST: You agreed to the reappropriation from the water supply scheme, at a caucus meeting.

MR. WILSON: The hon. member knows he is stating what is not exactly the fact, for he knows I have consistently opposed any vote for the Coolgardie water scheme. My hon. friend tries to put the blame on members sitting on this side of the House, for he says members have passed votes, and therefore the Ministry are justified in spending the money. It is true they passed votes on statements put forward by the Ministry, and on the distinct understanding that the Government could raise a certain amount of

money out of revenue and a certain amount by loan. If the Government made such statements, are members to blame when they find fault with the Government for the way in which they have spent the money? There is no getting away from the position, that these reappropriations ought not to be resorted to unless under extreme urgency: when there are a number of urgent works to be carried out, and when the Ministry have not been supplied with sufficient funds for carrying them on. In circumstances of that kind, the Government might be justified in asking for a reappropriation. The Premier went on to state that reappropriation would not increase the borrowing authorisations. I certainly join issue with him in that statement, for I cannot understand his arguments or his facts. He said reappropriation would not increase our borrowing authorisations, but I say it is bound to increase the borrowing authorisations, and you cannot get away from that position. This Parliament has passed certain borrowing authorisations for carrying out certain works; the Ministry carry out other works, or they carry out more works than they are authorised to do, and therefore are short of funds; then they ask this House for a reappropriation from the Coolgardie water scheme to carry out those works. We are obliged to carry out the works already passed by Parliament, and we have taken away half a million from those works; therefore we must, sooner or later, go to the money market and raise a loan to carry out the works we have passed. That is patent to anyone.

MR. A. FORREST: No one disputes that fact.

MR. WILSON: I am putting it plainly before the House, and I hope it will move some hon. members even to vote with us on this matter. The right hon. gentleman said some people took exception to the Fremantle harbour works. I have been in the colony for seven years, and I have no recollection of hearing any member now sitting in this House, who has taken exception to those harbour works.

THE PREMIER: I did not use that word. I said some people would not perhaps be displeased if the works did stop.

MR. WILSON: That conveys to me pretty well the same meaning. I do not

think any member in the House, or any person in the colony, would like to see those harbour works stopped. They are gigantic works of national importance, and such as we ought to be proud of. I do object to the right hon. gentleman throwing those insinuations across the House, evidently referring to some members here, and suggesting that we should be delighted if a big work of that description were stopped. Surely we on this side of the House have the interests of this great country at heart, just as much as members on the other side of the House, and perhaps more so—certainly every bit as much as the hon. gentlemen who fill the Treasury benches. Our export of gold, of course, has increased, and we are all glad that it is so; but I do not think that is altogether due to the administration of the Ministry. I think the increase has taken place to a large extent, despite the administration of the Ministry.

THE PREMIER: All due to you, I expect, and to your supporters.

MR. WILSON: It is due to the men who came here, many of them without much money, and went out on the fields, discovered the gold, and opened up the country. And it is also due to foreign capital, which the right hon. gentleman, in his wise administration, is driving away from the country. At the present time I would like to see him amend his financial administration, so that foreign capital may still flow into this country for the development of our mines and other industries.

MR. A. FORREST: I hope you will speak like that on the goldfields.

MR. WILSON: Last year I had to take very grave exception to the reappropriation of moneys which had been voted for the Perth and Fremantle sewerage schemes, and I endeavoured to have that proposal struck out last year. We do not find the right hon. gentleman proposing to reappropriate further sums for carrying out those sewerage schemes, and we know he has refused to give to the City Council any further assistance towards carrying out the deep drainage of Perth, and has said it should not be carried out at the present time.

THE PREMIER: When did I say that?

MR. WILSON: You did say it.

THE PREMIER: I did not say so.

MR. WILSON: The right hon. gentleman said to a deputation in his office that he advised them not to carry out the sewerage scheme for the present.

THE PREMIER: I deny that.

MR. WILSON: The right hon. gentleman does not attack the sewerage to-night; but this year he attacks the vote for the water supply of towns, and I say it is a suicidal policy to do that, for both these schemes affect the public health in an important degree; and we are not justified in taking away any of the funds voted for either sewerage or towns water supply. It is also proposed to take away some unexpended balance from the Murchison-Cue Railway vote. I have no objection to that, provided the balance is really unexpended; but I heard in Perth to-day, though there may be no truth in it, that the contractors for the construction of that railway have a bill of extras amounting to something near £200,000 to put before the Government.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: They might make it £300,000.

MR. WILSON: Under the very equitable conditions of railway contracts, in which all claims have to be submitted to the arbitration of the Engineer-in-Chief, whose decision is to be final, contractors have very little chance of getting justice. I do not insinuate that the officer does not deal fairly; but is there any justice in a contract to which there are two parties, when one of the parties is made the sole arbitrator in respect of disputes which may arise concerning the contract? The thing is absurd, and the sooner it is amended the better.

THE PREMIER: In other words, the Government are to be fleeced more severely.

MR. WILSON: I hope a motion will be submitted in this House, very shortly, to amend that iniquity. You can call it nothing else.

THE PREMIER: Give it to the Government. That is the plan.

MR. WILSON: I want to see the Government do some good for this colony. I want to see them retrieve the flourishing position in which we were two years ago. We are going down and down, deeper and deeper; and I do not believe there will be any improvement until the right hon. gentleman sits on this side of the House. I told him the other night that no one who

filled his position could do it much worse than he has done; and possibly a successor would do it better—I believe he would. Certain sums of money are included in this Bill for the purpose of carrying out surveys of railways. I object entirely to any money whatever being spent on the survey of railways which the Premier has admitted he does not intend to build this year. There is one thing very certain, that whether he intends to carry out these works or not, it is not within his power to do so, because he has not the money. To make a survey of a railway which you do not contemplate constructing within the next 12 months is simply, to my mind, misleading the people of the district, and causing them to fall into the same error which the poor people of Esperance were led into by the hon. gentleman and his half-promises. I might instance, in support of that argument, the Marradong railway (Williams district), which I believe has been surveyed. What is the result? There is not the slightest chance of that railway being built within the next two years; and yet we find a timber company being floated on the London market, and the main inducement held out in the reports of the expert who reported on that timber country is that the Government will shortly construct a railway to Marradong.

MR. GEORGE: Who was that expert?

MR. WILSON: The Conservator of Forests. Now I object to that entirely; and it may also be possible that the same inducement might be held out for the flotation of mines in connection with these proposed goldfields railways, which we do not intend to construct for the present. I object strongly to any money being spent for the surveys, until we are prepared to go on with the construction. The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) stated he was willing to support this Bill, on the distinct understanding that the Premier would reduce the sum of money to be spent on the Coolgardie water scheme to 1½ millions—that is, unless he came to the House for a further authorisation. I do not know whether the Premier has distinctly given that promise. I did not gather it from his remarks, and I hope the hon. member (Mr. Illingworth) will insist on the promise being given, or will vote against the

second reading of this Bill. To my mind, having got the vote for the money necessary to carry out the Coolgardie water scheme, no amount of reappropriation for the time being will prevent the Forrest Ministry from carrying it on to any extent.

THE PREMIER: We cannot spend anything beyond the sum of £2,030,000.

MR. WILSON: I am very pleased to have that assurance. When I heard the Premier commend and thank the member for Central Murchison for his kind remarks on this Bill, I could not help contrasting the language used with the attitude of the right hon. gentleman last year. When a Reappropriation Bill was before us last session, no one was stronger in condemning it than the member for Central Murchison.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I did it again to-night.

MR. WILSON: He used some very strong language in connection with this matter, and put the position very clearly. He said that the Premier would never be able to repay the reappropriation for the next two or three years. He also said that, before this money could be repaid, there must either be another loan, or this large sum must be taken out of the revenue of the next or some future year; that there was no chance of increasing the loans of the colony for some considerable time, and it would not be possible to recoup this money out of revenue for the next two or three years.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I say the same to-night.

MR. WILSON: He says the same to-night; yet the Premier thanks him for his support. But what did the Premier say about the hon. member last year, when he made exactly the same remarks, and pointed out the gravity of the position as he has done to-night. He said that if this colony were dependent, for its good credit, on the speeches of the member for Central Murchison, it would soon find itself in the insolvency court. Then where, I ask, is the consistency? Last year, when the same statements were made by the member for Central Murchison as he made here to-night, he was told he would soon drive the colony into the bankruptcy court; and yet to-night he is thanked for his statements.

MR. LEAKE: A man who is in a fright never is consistent.

MR. WILSON: I need not detain the House longer. I have expressed my views; and whether they are palatable or not to hon. members on the other side of the House does not trouble me.

THE PREMIER: It does not trouble me, either.

MR. WILSON: I quite admit that. There is nothing troubles you, unless you are short of money. The only thing that troubles you is that your revenue is falling off, that you have a big deficit, and will have a bigger deficit next year.

THE PREMIER: And is not that something?

MR. WILSON: It is all your own fault; and the only other thing that troubles you is that you cannot borrow money at home.

THE PREMIER: I think we borrowed some to-day.

MR. WILSON: How did you do it? We know how you did it. You could not get it on the public market.

THE PREMIER: At any rate, we got a good price.

MR. A. FORREST: And the hon. member is sorry for it.

MR. WILSON: All I say is that I intend to oppose the second reading of this Bill; and I do it because I consider the reappropriation of these large sums of money is wrong in principle. I do not think it is calculated to assist in reclaiming the credit of the colony, which has been practically ruined by the right hon. gentleman, through the way in which he deals with the finances of the country. Therefore, I think, I am justified, and am only doing the duty which I bound myself to do when I came into this House, in opposing this Reappropriation Bill.

THE PREMIER: Tell us what you would do instead of it.

MR. WILSON: I would abandon the Coolgardie water scheme.

THE PREMIER: That would not affect the reappropriation. It would mean that you would go on with the reappropriation, principle and all.

MR. WILSON: Yes: principle and all.

MR. WOOD (West Perth): I hope the member for the Canning, after his half hour's harangue, is feeling a little better. I am sure, now he has it off his chest, he

is very much relieved. He spoke a good deal upon the terms bandied about between the Treasury benches and Opposition members; he also spent about ten minutes on finance; but, all through his speech, he never once suggested what should be done in lieu of this Reappropriation Bill. Not a single suggestion, not a single proposal came from him for getting us out of the difficulties we are in. No doubt the country is in a financial strait, just for the moment; and the only way I can see out of it is by means of this Reappropriation Bill. None of us approve of reappropriation. I, and other members on this (the Government) side of the House, are just as much opposed to it as members on the other side. It is a great misfortune to be in the position in which we find ourselves; but, being there, what can we do?

MR. LEAKE: Vote as you are told.

MR. WOOD: We do not do that, on this side of the House. We vote as we think and as we choose. We are entirely free agents. We are not under the whip, like hon. members opposite.

MR. LEAKE: Of course not.

MR. WOOD: As I said, none of us approves of reappropriation; and it is the very last resort of any body of men or any Government. No doubt the position was put very fairly by the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth). Every word he said was no doubt correct, and he had the approval of the Premier. We can all see exactly that the Bill is not what we want, but we cannot help ourselves; and the only way out of it is to accept the Bill, and to get out of our present position as quickly as possible. But the thing must stop. Of course it will stop, for the Government have given us every assurance that they will stop it by rigid economy in the various departments, and by cutting down in all directions. In fact, there has been too much cutting down, I think; the cutting down has been too sudden, and has created quite a panic in the country; but still, it is a step in the right direction, and no doubt we shall feel the good effects of it at the end of a couple of years. I think it is a waste of time to deal with the individual items in the schedules on the second

reading, for there will be plenty of opportunity for so doing when we go into Committee. Still, I must say that I am altogether opposed to the two items, totalling £9,000, for the surveys of two railways; and I shall certainly vote against them in Committee. I should be inclined to use that amount for the erection of public batteries, as I think those are necessary works on the gold-fields. Other items also might be omitted—for instance, "Port Hedland jetty and approach road;" we might take a thousand or two off that.

THE PREMIER: You cannot do that.

MR. WOOD: That, of course, is the trouble. Complications may arise. I suppose half of this money is spent or allocated, and thus we have to accept this Bill, whether we like it or not. But I should like to ask those members on the other side, supposing they succeed in knocking out this Bill on its second reading, what are we to do? What will the position be? I think the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) would like to see the Government in that position. He and his friends always seem to rejoice when any calamity happens to the Government of the country.

SEVERAL OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no.

MR. WOOD: I am sorry to see the great rejoicing in the Opposition camp when any calamity happens.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is not true.

MR. WOOD: It is perfectly true, and you know it, too. I have seen you jubilant when some bad news has been received about a loan, or something of that sort.

MR. GEORGE: That is not throwing oil on the troubled waters.

MR. WOOD: No; I did not say I was going to throw oil on the troubled waters; but the further I go into the items, the thicker we seem to get into the mire; and the only course open to us is to leave their discussion till we get into Committee.

MR. OLDHAM (North Perth): It was my intention to leave the matter of the reappropriation until we went into Committee on the Bill; but the remarks which have just fallen from the hon. member (Mr. Wood) compel me to rise for the purpose of giving them a most emphatic denial. These are the words which have

fallen from him: "The country is in financial straits."

MR. WOOD: I said "for the moment."

MR. OLDHAM: The hon. member is like a good many of us; he is troubled with what is called "after wit." He stated that the country was in financial straits, and he said that it was a great misfortune to be compelled to reappropriate. He stated that reappropriation was one of the last resources that any Government could be put to. This is the position which the hon. member occupies, as a supporter of the Government; but I want to ask this House, whose fault is it that the country is in financial straits?

MR. A. FORREST: Yours.

THE PREMIER: It is not in financial straits.

MR. OLDHAM: My fault? The hon. member gives me a good deal more credit than I am prepared to take. I want to ask the hon. member opposite, whose fault it is that the country is in financial straits? He said it was a great misfortune to have to resort to this scheme. I am using the words of a prominent Government supporter. If it is a great misfortune that the Government are compelled to reappropriate, and if they do so as a last resource, whose fault is it? And then the hon. member goes on to say that we must stop somewhere. I will tell him that we will stop doing this kind of thing; that is, when the Government go out of office, and not before.

MR. A. FORREST: You had better come over here.

MR. OLDHAM: I do not think it would be a misfortune to this country, if members on this side of the House went over to the Government benches. What do we hear outside of this Chamber? Go to any business man in the city, and ask him what he is doing. Go to any merchant, and what is his cry?

MR. WOOD: The same cry as he always has.

MR. OLDHAM: Go to any mechanic or labourer, or any speculator in St. George's Terrace, and ask him the state of affairs in this colony.

THE PREMIER: It is all the fault of the Government, of course.

MR. OLDHAM: I say it is undoubtedly the fault of the Government.

THE PREMIER: For spending too much money, I suppose?

MR. OLDHAM: Let the Premier, if he knows anything of building construction—

THE PREMIER: You cannot expect me to understand your trade.

MR. OLDHAM: No; I do not expect the hon. gentleman to be an expert; but I want him to realise that in a certain railway which has been constructed, they have put up stations, costing thousands of pounds, where there is not a settler, where there is not a man within 40 miles.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Only a man who goes there once a week.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Name the stations.

MR. OLDHAM: I will name the stations, when we come to the items on the Estimates. I will give the Minister the names of all the stations, and I will give him the figures. I could tell him that they have ticket-offices, and racks for tickets, in a certain country station, just like those at the Perth railway station; and I will guarantee that there is not a man living within ten miles of it. That is the position of the country at the present time. It is not the money we spent, it is the money we wasted, that has brought us into this position. There are two items which I certainly shall vote against, and which I shall endeavour as far as possible to get struck out. I refer to the survey of railway from Menzies to Mount Leonora and survey of railway from Coolgardie to Norseman. If there were the slightest possibility of those railways being constructed in the near future, I would not take any great exception to them, but can any member say that there is any probability of it whatever? The Government are going to take away £25,000 from the water-supply account. They are going to take it away from a work which is absolutely essential to the health of the community, and yet they propose to spend £9,000 upon a work which, at any rate for the present, is useless. The member for West Kimberley said members on this side of the House were responsible for the position the Government have got the country into, because they tried to get as much as they could for their constituencies. That is a very serious confession for him to make,

for it is equivalent to an assertion that the Government had not backbone enough to refuse the request of any gentleman for a work which they knew was not absolutely necessary. I do not know that my constituency has been treated unfairly.

MR. A. FORREST: They have had a good lot.

MR. OLDHAM: What have they had?

MR. A. FORREST: They have had £300,000.

MR. OLDHAM: If the Treasurer will only take the amount of revenue he derives from that constituency, he will find that my constituents have not had 2½ per cent. of the money they have given to the Government. I come back again to the member for West Perth, who wants to know what the position would be if this Bill were pushed out.

MR. WOOD: I asked what would you do if this Bill were rejected.

MR. OLDHAM: I will tell the hon. member what we would do. Supposing the Bill were rejected, I suppose the Government would resign, and that some other gentlemen would occupy those seats. That would, I believe, be the best thing that could happen to this country.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—The Governor may appropriate and expend £100,000:

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was desirable that it should be made quite clear that, if this clause were passed, members would not be blocked from striking out certain items in the schedule.

THE PREMIER: The passing of this clause would not affect the schedule at all.

Put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

First Schedule—Amounts to be reappropriated:

MR. HIGHAM: It was a matter for regret that a sum of £35,000 had been taken from the Fremantle dock and slip. Practically, it represented the unexpended balance.

THE PREMIER: £56,000 was available.

MR. HIGHAM moved that the item, "Fremantle Dock and Slip, £35,000," be struck out. The temporary slip had to

be fitted with a considerable amount of machinery before it was of any use at all. He was fairly right in assuming that £35,000 was nearly all that was left. The Premier had stated that it was useless to commence the construction of the dock at present because the dredging was not completed, but there was no reason why excavation and other work could not go on simultaneously. There was ground to complain that the construction of the dock and slip had been delayed so long.

THE PREMIER: The slip was all right.

MR. HIGHAM: A slip such as it was, but there had been a great deal of unnecessary delay in the completion of the work.

MR. SOLOMON: The dock at Fremantle should have been ready now to receive the larger vessels coming from foreign ports. Many in high positions in the Government service at Fremantle were of opinion that the completion of the dock should have been one of the first things undertaken.

MR. DOHERTY: There was no reason why this amount should be taken at a critical time, when it was required for the object for which it was intended. He would not object to the item, however, because he saw the Government were going to spend £40,000 on the erection of public batteries, which were very necessary, and it would be a good thing for the Government to give every facility to people to treat ore.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It was no pleasure to the Government to ask for this reappropriation, but it had to be done, and he did not think Fremantle would suffer to any large extent for having this matter delayed. The fact was the Government were unable to go on with the work at the present time. Fremantle had no cause to complain of the action of this House towards it, for we had spent something like £600,000 or £700,000 on the harbour there, and we proposed to spend £128,000 this year out of this allocation. If the work were in full swing and it were proposed to put a stop to it, there would be cause for complaint; but seeing that it had not yet been undertaken, and that the Government always had been and would be desirous of assisting Fremantle and making it a port worthy of the colony, the members for

Fremantle ought not to adopt the attitude they were taking. He knew that the position occupied by representatives was a difficult one, but on the other hand there was a certain amount of fair-mindedness about the people of the colony, and they would see that the Government were giving three or four times as much as they were taking away. He hoped the amendment would not be carried, because if it were it would interfere with the arrangements of the Government, and perhaps it would be necessary to propose something else.

MR. GEORGE: As the Commissioner of Railways had answered a question he put the other evening with reference to scour in the river at Fremantle and the mode of dealing with it, would the amount which was to be reappropriated by this schedule be sufficient to secure safety, not only for the old railway bridge, but the new railway bridge and the proposed bridge over the river at Fremantle? Reading between the lines of that reply, he wished to have an assurance that this amount of reappropriation would provide for the safety of the travelling public, and also carry out the works proposed in the harbour scheme.

MR. HOLMES supported the striking out of the item, and objected to the Premier continually reminding Fremantle members of the amount of public money spent there. One would think almost that Fremantle members were here to be bought, and that this money was being spent in Fremantle for the benefit of Fremantle only. Every member would admit these harbour works were national.

THE PREMIER: Fremantle people got the benefit of them all the same.

MR. HOLMES: There was no doubt the Government intended, when they commenced the harbour works, to go on with the dock and the slip at the same time.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: It was intended to go on with them still.

MR. HOLMES: But there would be nothing left, after these reappropriations. There was now in Fremantle a big ship disabled, and there were no means of repairing it.

THE PREMIER: Could it not be put on the slip?

MR. HOLMES: The slip appeared to be useless, unless more money was spent on it.

MR. MORAN: The Government ought to be strongly supported in this matter. If there happened to be a change of Government, he did not know how Fremantle would fare, for if there was one town in the colony which ought to follow the old maxim, "Shut your eyes and open your mouth, and see what the Government will send you," that town was Fremantle. When the Government proposed to reappropriate a little of the money voted for a particular work in Fremantle, while at the same time giving a larger sum for other works there, the Fremantle members popped up one after another, like so many corks, to protest against losing anything that had been voted for Fremantle. Members who were friendly to Fremantle would see that this was pushing the matter too far.

MR. WILSON said he would support the amendment, not because Fremantle had been badly treated, but because the enormous tonnage of shipping coming to Fremantle made it absolutely necessary there should be a dry dock there. The slip at present was of no use, and would have to be reconstructed or taken up. He understood that even a hopper barge could not be lifted on to it. A dry dock would bring a good revenue in dues, and would employ engineering works and various workmen in making repairs.

THE PREMIER: The amount at present available would not do it. There must be some money voted for the dock before it could be started.

MR. WILSON: Take it from the Coolgardie water scheme. A dry dock would do infinitely more good than that.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member's advice was not wanted. The Government preferred their own advice.

MR. WILSON said he intended to give his advice, and was sent to this House to do so. If his advice was not accepted, that was the look-out of the Government; and the people of Western Australia would know whom they should believe in. He hoped the amendment would be carried to a division.

MR. CONOLLY: The unanimity shown by the members for Fremantle was a pleasing spectacle, considering that



£30,000 was being taken from one work and £100,000 being added to another work in the same town. A dry dock might be of some small use for coastal vessels, but could not be of much use for large vessels, because of the greater expense of repairing them at Fremantle as compared with the cost of repairs at Melbourne or Sydney. It would be only in urgent cases that large vessels would be repaired at Fremantle, because in the cost of repairing there was competition against the world. He did not disparage the making of a dock at Fremantle, but it should be postponed for a time.

**THE PREMIER:** If the first schedule were amended by striking out this item, that would reduce the total by £65,000, and it would become necessary to alter the amount in the second schedule to the same extent, the totals in the first and second schedule being the same. £100,000 was appropriated in the Loan Act of 1896, and that amount exactly was to be reappropriated in the second schedule of this Bill. Therefore, if one schedule were altered, the other schedule would have to be altered to the same amount, unless the whole Bill were remodelled. He did not see how the schedule could be reduced by £65,000, and the Fremantle members should not urge this amendment. The Government had no desire to do anything that would detract from Fremantle being a good port, but the dock when made must be one which would serve to compete with docks in other colonies, and the cost for such a dock would be £200,000 or £250,000. The Government had no idea of abandoning the proposed dock for Fremantle, and all they were proposing to do was to postpone it because it could not be undertaken at the present time. It would be better to complete the harbour works as soon as possible, and with that object he hoped the first schedule would not be interfered with.

**MR. GEORGE:** What about the slip?

**THE PREMIER:** This was the first he had heard of the slip not being satisfactory. He hoped that was not so.

**MR. LEAKE:** It was quite evident, from what the Premier had said, that Fremantle was not to have its dock, because it would cost £200,000 or £250,000, while the original estimate made by the

Government for the cost of a dock and slip at Fremantle was £142,000; so that there never was any sincerity about the proposal to build a dock and slip at Fremantle; and this showed once again that the Fremantle members had been humbugged. The slip did not appear to be worth anything, so far as it had gone, and that was practically admitted by the department, who now found they had made a mistake in starting it; and he challenged the Director of Public Works to show that the slip was of any use.

**MR. WOOD:** This was the first that members had heard of it.

**MR. LEAKE** said he had known of it for some time. The effective part of the Fremantle harbour scheme was the proposed dock, and he was astonished that the Fremantle members fell into the trap, last session, by consenting to have some portion of the vote for the work reappropriated to another purpose. Therefore he was not sorry to see them wriggling in their disappointment now.

**MR. HOLMES** said he had voted against it last year.

**MR. LEAKE:** Then the hon. member was the only sensible one in the lot. The others did not vote against it. They fell into the trap. The member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) did not allow the stockwhip to be laid across his haunches, as did other Government supporters. It was interesting to note how the predictions of Opposition members had been realised; and this showed how dangerous it was to go tinkering and tampering with a well-recognised and firm principle. It was well known that this Reappropriation Bill had been settled by the Premier at an interview in his office, where the right hon. gentleman had to go down on his knees to his supporters, and declare that if this Reappropriation Bill and other Bills were thrown out he would have to resign.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** And that would be too great a calamity.

**MR. LEAKE:** Of course, that threat was big enough to induce the Government supporters to carry the Bill through; and that would account for the extraordinary hurried, and nervous manner in which the Premier introduced the Bill. He (Mr. Leake) would retaliate by saying that, if all these schedules were carried, he would resign. He, too, would use that argu-

ment as frequently as the Premier; and it would be interesting to note its effect upon hon. members. We were making a laughing-stock of legislation and constitutional government, by allowing such violations as this to proceed unchecked and without protest. He appealed to hon. members to consider this question, not from a merely local standpoint, but from a constitutional point of view.

THE PREMIER: Constitutional point of view! Where did that come in?

MR. LEAKE: The Premier was absolutely ignorant of the subject, and the sooner he studied its elementary principles, the better it would be, not only for his own future career, but for the country. Though hon. members might pass the Bill, they should give the Government distinctly to understand that they must put a period to this juggling with principle and with the constitution. Let them say that, though they had allowed themselves to be driven up to a certain point, and were threatened with resignations on both sides of the House, they would proceed no further in the same direction. He knew the Government supporters would do nothing to upset this Bill; but let them give a warning for the benefit of subsequent Parliaments and subsequent administrations, for this sort of thing would work ruin in our midst.

MR. HIGHAM: The complaint of the Fremantle people was, not so much that the construction of the dock and slip had been delayed for a certain time, as that it was postponed for an indefinite period. Were that dock in existence at the present time, the steamer "Adelaide," instead of going back to the East to be docked, would have been repaired at Fremantle, where the work could have been just as easily done. Granting that the necessary machinery was not here at the present time, yet provide the dock, and the machinery would soon follow. It might be argued that the work could not be done here so cheaply as in Melbourne or Sydney; but no vessel would go in ballast from this colony to either of those places for the sake of saving £200 or so. A three-masted schooner, the "Lark," was beached a short time ago, and cost three times as much to repair as it would had there been dock accommodation at the port. A disabled barque came in the

other day, which would have gladly availed itself of a dock. The steamer "Croydon" sprang a leak between Fremantle and Geraldton, and her owners had to hire the Government steamer "Penguin," with her pumping appliances, to keep the vessel afloat for a considerable period, until they got a diver to patch her up. Apart from the matter of actual repairs, all the steel vessels which came into the harbour after a long voyage would be glad of an opportunity to clean off barnacles and weeds, before loading up for the return passage. It was essential, in the interests of the colony and of the port, that this dock should be constructed as early as possible. No doubt Fremantle, as well as other towns, would have to be moderate in her demands, and to dispense with some of her requirements. A good deal had been heard in the debate about the immense sums spent on the Fremantle harbour works; but beyond the benefit derived from the labour employed in the works, Fremantle was really a loser by them. The immense lightering fleet formerly engaged at Fremantle, which gave profitable employment to many labourers and a fair return to the owners, was now lying idle. Cargo was unloaded at Fremantle now at an expenditure of 3s. or 3s. 6d. a ton, while in the old days it cost something like 12s. The increase in the volume of shipping was, of course, an advantage; but that would have accrued, harbour works or no harbour works. It should also be remembered that the decrease of 9s. a ton in the cost of handling cargo benefited the consumers of the whole colony, for it meant quicker despatch for the vessels, and lower freights. In addition to £35,000 for the dock and slip, Fremantle had also to sacrifice £25,000 for dredges and barges. To that there could be no great objection, for with the two dredges now on the way the plant should be sufficient for the immediate requirements of the trade. A good deal had been heard from the member for the Murray (Mr. George) about the state of the Fremantle bridges; but as far as he (Mr. Higham) could ascertain, there was not the slightest danger at present. Possibly when the river was dredged right up to them it might be necessary to underpin them to prevent the river scouring out the foundations; but there was no need for alarm.

MR. MORAN: Trains ran very slowly over them.

MR. HIGHAM: No; they did not. He did not specially desire to divide the House on the question—in the first place, because he had no hope of carrying his amendment, and, secondly, because his object was simply to urge the importance of the dock project not being indefinitely postponed, and to protest against the reappropriation of what he still considered as practically the balance available.

MR. MORAN expressed pleasure at the fact that the hon. member (Mr. Higham) would not divide the House. Fremantle was not the only place which had to go without public works. The Coolgardie water scheme had been deprived of half-a-million to-night, in order to give nearly £200,000 to the Fremantle harbour works. Money was being reappropriated from the vote for the Coolgardie water scheme for the purposes of works in all parts of the colony, and why did hon. members agree to it? Because they knew that, if the present Government went out the scheme would be abandoned altogether. The Fremantle members acted wisely in not pushing their claims too far; for it was hardly likely they would receive general support. The policy of give and take must hold good until we overcame our difficulties.

MR. KENNY: While no believer in reappropriation, he could not shut his eyes to the fact that every farthing of the £100,000 reappropriated from the various works in the first schedule was to be expended on the goldfields; and, as a goldfields representative, he must support the Government in this matter. The works proposed to be constructed with that £100,000 were absolutely necessary to the maintenance and development of those fields. Last year the Government proposed to spend £30,000 on public batteries, but only £2,000 was spent out of that vote, leaving £28,000 unexpended. The Government had since added £12,000, making a total of £40,000. Out of that £40,000, eight batteries had been secured, and were being erected; so that there would not be a large amount remaining to the credit of the vote. He must congratulate the Government on the manner in which they had taken this work in hand, by appointing a practical man from Victoria to

take charge of it. He was well acquainted with the scheme so far as it had gone, and had nothing but good to say of the public batteries project and its administration. He was confident that the officer in charge, assisted by the Minister of Mines, would make it a great success. He regretted that the Government had not been able to fully carry out their promises in the matter; still, affairs had not turned out so well as had been anticipated. It was well-known that throughout the various goldfields of the colony there were hundreds and thousands of hard working men who had taken up reefing properties and worked them for years. The erection of public batteries would prove the salvation of those districts. As a general rule, batteries were spoken of in connection with capital and capitalists, but when we spoke of public batteries we referred to the means provided by the Government for enabling working men, the reefers, the pick and shovels—as the member for East Perth termed them—to realise the result of their years of labour. Hitherto they had been compelled to dispose of their properties for anything they could get, because they were not able to erect the requisite machinery to secure their gold. One battery was being erected in his (Mr. Kenny's) district, at Tuckunara; and to give an idea of the impetus occasioned thereby he might state that the population had trebled, the town had been surveyed, upwards of eighty town lots had been applied for, and the area of leases had increased twofold. This battery had not yet been erected, but was only in the course of erection. The facts he had stated would give some idea of what the result would be when it was finished. All those who were there were working men. A short time ago he received a long petition from the workers of Ravelston, near Peak Hill, asking him to secure from the Minister of Mines a public battery for that district. The Minister of Mines, who had ever been glad to receive such applications and to do what he could to grant them, found that it was utterly impossible, with the amount of £40,000, to go farther than he had already done, and now his (Mr. Kenny's) desire was to suggest to the Colonial Treasurer that he should increase the amount proposed to

be reappropriated for this object. The Colonial Treasurer had proposed to reappropriate £15,000 from the Geraldton to Murchison goldfields railway, and to spend the amount on water and other requirements on the Murchison goldfields. Last year the right hon. gentleman said he would not use any money reappropriated from that particular vote, except on the Murchison. He had kept his promise, and he (Mr. Kenny) now asked him to increase the amount for the erection of public batteries by £5,000 to meet the reasonable request of the men at Peak Hill, where at the present time over 300 were working. They were not birds of passage, but had been there for the last two or three years, many of them living upon what they could dolly from their claims, which they were still developing. If the erection of a public battery at Tuckunara had been attended with such beneficial results as he had mentioned, the erection of a similar battery at Peak Hill would be even more successful, and he never with greater confidence suggested to the right hon. gentleman the advisability of increasing the expenditure on any public undertaking.

**THE PREMIER:** It would be impossible to promise at the present time to grant the increase suggested; but when the schedule had been gone through, he would be in a position to deal with the matter and would consider the proposal made, which could be referred to on the report stage. Of course what was desired would require a message from the Governor.

**MR. GREGORY:** It would be wise to endeavor to induce all the goldfields members to support as strongly as possible the proposals of the Government. He hoped they would be able to alter the last schedule, so that even a larger amount than had been proposed would be granted for public batteries. He wished to express thanks to the member for North Fremantle for the remarks he had made, which showed that some in this House had the interests of the goldfields at heart. The erection of public batteries would be the greatest boon that could be conferred upon our goldfields. In the district of Ullaring there was no public battery, but the Government had

promised one, and it would be shortly erected. The prospectors of that district had carted in some 529 tons of ore, and the returns from that had been 1,541 ounces, with an average of 2ozs. 18dwts. to the ton. The introduction of public batteries would promote a new era in mining altogether. Under the old conditions, as soon as men found a bit of a reef, they were afraid to go further, and had to wait until a buyer came along. If they proceeded with the work it was quite possible that the reef might run out, and they might have to leave their dump there and go away. Under the system of public batteries, prospectors would be able to have their ore crushed at a fair and proper rate. He believed the Government desired to make no profit out of these batteries, but were going to crush the ore at a price sufficient to cover the cost. We should have nothing but really legitimate mining upon our goldfields in the future, and that would assist us with regard to English capitalists. We could have the mines held by the miners themselves, and the men, instead of selling and clearing out of the country, would be stationed here, for their interests would be here. In one place where three months ago there were not more than 40 or 50 people, there must now be more than 400 or 500. All the men were pegging out their leases and claims, and there was quite a different feeling from that which used to exist. The same thing existed at Mount Ida. At Tampa it was decided to crush ore for the public at a fairly low rate, and immediately a lot of men started pegging out claims. Since April this battery had crushed 1,000 tons of stone, and the average return had been 1oz. 3dwt., which would realise some £4,000. He had a list of some twenty-five leases at Malcolm, and not one of them was held by a company, all being in the possession of prospectors. The quantity of stone crushed was 857 tons, yielding 1,940oz., or an average of 2oz. 5dwt. Through the system of public batteries a large amount of money would be circulated, the mines would be developed, and we should have purely legitimate mining. The Premier said last year that if £30,000 was not sufficient, they would spend £50,000. They had not an opportunity of spending it last year, the

sum actually spent being only £2,000, but he knew they had entered into engagements now which would cost between £30,000 and £40,000. He noticed on the Estimates a sum of £13,000 for the Governor's ballroom. He would like to induce the Premier to strike off some of the items that appeared in the Estimates, so as to give a greater amount for public batteries.

MR. VOSPER: What had been said in favour of public batteries met with his entire approval. There was a sufficiently wide margin in the other portions of the schedule to leave untouched the particular vote now before the Committee. He could confirm what had been said with reference to the influence which public batteries had upon the goldfields population. Negotiations were pending between the Minister of Mines and the people of Bulong in reference to the purchase of a large battery, and it was probable, from what the Premier had said about the matter, that a favourable report would be forwarded in due course. He had received a letter to-day from the town clerk of Bulong, who said some twenty leases had been taken up, and a large population was coming to the town on the mere off chance of this battery being purchased. A number of other claims which had not been worked for a long time past had been taken up by *bona fide* persons. He hoped that, whatever might be done with these votes or schedules, an increased amount for public batteries would be voted. The members for Fremantle had his hearty sympathy, for they seemed to have suffered last year and were suffering again now over the dock and slip; but one thing particularly admirable was their patience and loyalty to the Premier, for they were faithful in adversity, whilst others acted from interested motives.

Amendment (Mr. Higham's), by leave, withdrawn.

Schedule put and passed.

Second Schedule.

MR. KINGSMILL: The first item in this schedule was £40,000 for public batteries, and he asked how the vote was to be allocated, and whether it was not possible to give the Committee the option and the opportunity of saying to which goldfields the money should be appropriated for erecting batteries. He could

not altogether congratulate the Government on the equity or fairness with which they had apportioned the money for batteries. No district more fully fulfilled the requisite conditions than did his district (Pilbarra); yet the people there did not even ask for public batteries, but erected batteries of their own. When they did ask for assistance in the way of a bonus, they got one bonus of £500 out of a total sum of £30,000 allocated. What portion of the proposed expenditure of £30,000 in this schedule would be retrospective, and what portion would be prospective? He simply protested against the way in which the Pilbarra district had been shamefully neglected in this matter.

MR. OLDHAM: Come over this way (Opposition side).

MR. KINGSMILL: No; his district has not been neglected to that extent.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy): A sum of £30,000 was voted for public batteries, and at the end of the financial year only £1,997 had been actually expended. The whole amount, or nearly so, had been allocated; but at the end of the last financial year £28,000 was left out of the £30,000 which had been voted. £40,000 was now asked for in this Reappropriation Bill for public batteries, and of that amount about £35,000 approximately was arranged to be expended, or had been expended, the expectation being that this amount would be required by the time the batteries arranged for were in a position to begin crushing. Nearly £2,000 was actually spent last year, as he had said, and therefore £33,000 of allocations had to come out of this reappropriation to fulfil the present engagements. It was not known exactly what would be the cost of erecting some of the batteries, but the estimate he had stated was at the highest amount. There would remain, therefore, about £7,000 for new batteries out of the £40,000 now asked for. The Norseman battery would be doing public crushing on Monday next, and the erection of other batteries was being pushed ahead, and it was hoped that by the end of the year all those now arranged for would be in working order. The average cost of a public battery, to make it complete with water supply, was found to be from £4,000 to £5,000.

MR. DOHERTY said he had discovered the most modest man in the House, and that was the member for North Murchison (Mr. Kenny); for he had simply asked for an addition of £5,000 for his district. As to the policy of erecting public batteries on the goldfields, he had been in conversation with a mining man of experience, and had formed the opinion that the erection of such batteries was one of the best possible means for inducing the working men to remain in this colony, and providing the working miners with means for carrying on operations in a small way on the various goldfields. He approved of this vote as a proper means of assisting the labour market of the colony, and he only wished the amount could be very much larger, even if it were necessary to raise another loan for the purpose. We should give encouragement to local industry, and help those who employed labour to distribute the money to the grocer and the baker. This would assist the member for West Kimberley.

MR. A. FORREST: It would assist the hon. member himself.

MR. DOHERTY: Yes; it would benefit himself. This morning he saw crowds of people ready to leave the colony by a steamer at Fremantle, and the Government should do what they could to stop the people going away. There were large financial institutions in this colony willing to lend £100,000 at 4 per cent. to the Government, if the revenue and loan moneys would not stand the expenditure of this sum.

THE PREMIER: There was no difficulty in finding money.

MR. DOHERTY: It would be well to have more money spent on batteries, say £60,000.

MR. VOSPER said he would support a motion to that effect. The hon. member (Mr. Doherty) had made a generous offer to the goldfields members, and he (Mr. Vosper) generously accepted that offer. It was a serious symptom at the present time to see people going away in large numbers. Every boat that had gone away during the past three weeks had been crowded with passengers, and people had to secure berths two or three weeks ahead. The remittance of money to other places would be accentuated in the future.

One boat, last week, took away 330 people.

THE PREMIER: Did the hon. member say that people had to book berths weeks ahead.

MR. VOSPER said he knew, as a fact, that berths had to be booked as far ahead as a fortnight to enable people to secure them. This exodus should be stopped, and the development of the goldfields in the direction indicated by the hon. members for North Fremantle and North Coolgardie was the best possible way of stopping people going away. The schedule should be prepared in such a way that the Committee would have some idea of where the Government proposed to expend the money. When a Railway Bill came down, the different appropriations were always specified. There was not a general amount set down for building railways, but in the Bill before us items were set down in general terms, and the whole of this money was to be left to the administration of the Minister. In regard to the amount of £40,000 for the erection of public batteries, the Government had their sub-departments in working order, and it would have been easy to have prepared a schedule showing where this money was to be spent. He would explain why he objected to these moneys being voted in a lump sum. It gave too much power to the Minister, and gave a chance of granting favours; those who made the most noise got the most money. He (Mr. Vosper) had never succeeded in getting more than 5 per cent. of the revenue that his constituents contributed. If this matter were to be thrashed out fairly in Committee, a schedule should be prepared showing how the Government intended to allocate the money. On the schedule an amount was set down of £5,000 for the Pilbarra goldfield, and there was another amount of £15,000 for the Murchison and Peak Hill goldfields. When we came to the eastern goldfields, there was an amount of £18,000 set down. We ought to know how the money was to be expended on the different eastern goldfields.

MR. A. FORREST: While agreeing with the remarks which had been made generally on this subject as to increasing the vote, yet anyone who had practical knowledge about goldfields knew full well that

the goldfields would be assisted by the erection of public batteries, and this would do good generally to the community. The leaseholder with small means who was not in a position to erect a battery, and the other small men, could be assisted by the erection of public batteries. If these people could be assisted at no cost to the country, except the initial cost, upon which we hoped interest would be charged, so that in course of time the battery would be of no cost to the country, that would be a good thing. He hoped the Government would take precautions. The question of laying before Parliament the details from one session to another was an important one, and required consideration, because between one year and another goldfields sprang up, and it might be necessary to erect a public battery forthwith in one new locality or another. If a hard-and-fast rule were adopted, the Government could not erect public batteries without the sanction of Parliament. Care should be taken that a battery should not be erected in some place which would be of no benefit to the country. It was the wish of hon. members to assist the gold-mining industry, because so many other industries were affected by it. Our northern districts were affected more particularly than any other district. Although the northern districts had not been treated altogether well by goldfields members this session, the representatives of the North were prepared, and always had been prepared, to assist the population of the goldfields in every possible way. If representatives of pastoral districts were prepared to do all they could to assist other portions of the colony, the least that representatives of those other portions could do was to render pastoral districts some little assistance in return.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That was somewhat like log-rolling.

MR. A. FORREST: It was not log-rolling at all; it was only fair play. The member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty) was one of the largest pastoralists in the East Kimberley district, or in the colony, and was a pastoral representative although he sat for a city constituency. He (Mr. Forrest) would like to see the vote £100,000 or £200,000, if the country could afford it. This proposal to

erect public batteries was one of the best ever placed before Parliament; and as suggested by the member for North Fremantle, everything possible should be done to keep population here.

THE PREMIER: In regard to the proposal or suggestion that the Government should increase the vote, he was not prepared to make any promise at the present moment. When the schedule under discussion had been dealt with, alterations which met with general approval could be made on the report, and he then could be prepared to propose alterations with the authority of the Governor. Public batteries would no doubt do a great deal of good, but he did not like embarking too largely in what was a new departure, until there had been a fair trial. He was somewhat afraid of the administration, because the difficulty of getting men to manage these batteries economically would be very great. The batteries, after they had been erected, should be made to pay, or, otherwise, they would become a great burden to the State. He was in hopes that the batteries would be self-supporting; and, if they were, the difficulty would, of course, be altogether overcome, and the number of the batteries could be increased. It would be an expensive matter running these batteries night and day, and they must be made to pay; and he was inclined not to go too heavily into the venture, until it was seen how the batteries succeeded. That was the reason why he had been somewhat cautious in limiting the amount to be expended to £40,000 which, he understood, would be sufficient to work nine or ten batteries.

MR. DOHERTY: Population ought to be kept in the colony.

THE PREMIER: If population was going away, he expected population was also coming into the colony. He would make inquiries into that matter, and find out how many people were leaving and how many were coming in. No doubt people would go away when they could not get enough work to do, but they would come back at the first indication of employment being offered. After a railway contract was over, and several hundreds of men had been discharged with money in their pockets, what was more natural, if no other contract was in view

at the moment, than that these men should go back to the country from which they came, and have a little enjoyment? Whatever was done, that sort of thing would go on until people made their permanent homes here. There was a good many Government contracts at present, but there was also a good many coming to an end, and it was not to be wondered at that discharged workmen, with money in their pockets as the result of the good wages they have been receiving, should go away for a time. But they would come back, because even now the prospects here were far better than in other colonies. What was the good of workmen going to South Australia or Victoria at the present time?

MR. VOSPER: Sir George Turner told a different tale.

THE PREMIER: It was known from people who came from the other colonies that there was not much work there.

MR. VOSPER: Perhaps Sir George Turner, like the Premier of Western Australia, was an optimist.

THE PREMIER: Sir George Turner was a reasonable man, and not an exaggerator.

MR. VOSPER: "Optimist" was the word used, and not "exaggerator."

THE PREMIER: Well, it was pretty much the same. If hon. members passed the schedule after having thoroughly discussed it, he would see what could be done; but he did not advise going heavily into the erection of batteries during the present financial year, some two months of which had gone over. It would take time to get into work the batteries already in hand, and caution seemed to be the order of the day. There were great timidity and fear on the part of many people who, as during this debate, seemed never tired of speaking of the troubled state in which they believed the colony to be. One hon. member had gone so far as to suggest that the Government should go to the banks and get a few pounds; but he (the Premier) had yet to learn that the Government could not get what money they wanted elsewhere, at a very much better price than it could be got for at the local banks. He had not had any difficulty as yet in getting money when it was required; but, of course, it was not desired to burden the country with obligations, unless there was great necessity.

The system of public batteries was on its trial. He had no doubt the batteries would do good, and would be of great advantage in many localities; but, unless they could be made to pay, he could see clearly the country would not be able to carry them on. We could not afford to lose a lot of money over this business, and he was sure that neither those representing goldfields nor anyone else, expected the country to erect these batteries and carry them on at a loss. We did not want to make any profit out of them, but we must, at any rate, try to make them self-supporting, and he hoped the result would be altogether satisfactory.

MR. GREGORY: The member for North-East Coolgardie had tried to twist him and others with being bought over. He wondered if the hon. member could be bought over. Last year he (Mr. Gregory) asked that no political influence should be brought to bear at all in the question of where public batteries should be erected. The Minister should not look at the question from the point of view of placating any member. If the Minister had been desirous of trying to placate members he would not have placed four batteries in his (Mr. Gregory's) constituency and have left other supporters without any batteries at all; and the fact that four were there showed that they were deserved. It was not at all fair of the member for North-East Coolgardie to impute such motives to those who had always acted independently in the House. He thought the opinion of the outside public and of members was that others would be more likely than he to give away their votes for the sake of public batteries.

MR. KINGSMILL: Several cases had been placed by him squarely and fairly before the gentlemen who had at various times occupied the responsible position of Minister of Mines, and he (Mr. Kingsmill) had on every occasion been treated with the utmost courtesy—in fact too much of it, and nothing but courtesy. As to the requirements of his goldfield, the miners at Pilbarra had sufficient independence, sufficient gold, and sufficient belief in their own field to place batteries there; but they were entitled, when other people were getting batteries costing thousands of pounds, to receive some small assistance in the way of bonus; and hitherto he had



asked, and would continue to do so, that this bonus should be granted on the system of payment by results. The miners who erected batteries were for the most part working men, and not speculators, and they should be paid, say, £1 for every ton crushed, the rate at which they would crush for the public fixed for a certain number of tons, say from 500 to 1,000. When this fragment of £7,000 was being allocated, some little portion of it at all events might go to that field. He was unable to introduce deputations, as people did not like to travel 2600 miles from Pilbarra to Perth and back again. It would be well if a lump sum were allocated to different goldfields, to be spent within the limits of those goldfields as an inspector, warden, or some official representing the Government should direct. He believed a sum of £10,000 was placed on the estimates for goldfields last time, but he failed to find that any large portion of it had been spent, and although he had asked for a return he had not received one. As to his own field, the Minister could not do better than spend money on roads and wells. He (Mr. Kingsmill) did not desire to offer any opposition to the passing of this motion, but he hoped that what had been said by the member for North Fremantle would have some effect upon the Government.

Mr. WALLACE: A more popular vote than that for the erection of public batteries had never been placed before the House. The whole of the public batteries in existence had been erected on the recommendation of the members representing the various districts. No hon. member would be likely to ask the Minister to erect a public battery in his district unless he had good grounds for the request. If everyone who had asked for a battery had made out as good a case as the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory), the Government would not regret the expenditure. The fact that a district had one or more batteries already should not be a reason for refusing a request for another, provided it was required by a number of working miners who were developing their claims at their own expense. He knew several places in the Murchison fields where batteries could be erected without fear of loss, including the spot mentioned by the hon. member (Mr. Kenny). That

district was populated solely by working miners, who had been there for years, dry-blowing, dollying, and stacking their stone, the cost of crushing which was prohibitive. Batteries in such districts must be self-supporting, and would stop the exodus from the colony by providing work for the unemployed. This was not a speculation, but a certainty, and the Premier should increase the vote, as he had promised to do if possible.

Mr. MORAN: There was no stone waiting to be crushed in his constituency, unless the Government liked to put a battery on the Ivanhoe Venture lease, so that the alluvial men might be spared the trouble of carrying the ore away. He hoped the Government would not give any big centre a public battery. Public batteries were for distant centres, to help the prospectors.

HON. H. W. VENN: Broad Arrow, for instance.

Mr. MORAN: No; that place was on a railway line. The member for North-East Coolgardie had applied for a battery for Kanowna, and there were twelve batteries at Kanowna already. The Peak Hill field was the most successful outside Kalgoorlie, but the public had no means of crushing there; that was the place where the Government should erect a battery. The Pilbarra goldfield was also another place where a battery should be erected. He hoped the Minister would put his foot down firmly, and not erect a battery in any large centre.

Schedule put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

#### RIVERS POLLUTION BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and, on the motion of Mr. LEAKE, read a first time.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11.10 p.m. until the next day at 7.30 p.m.