

and it is the wish of both the Government and the municipality to exempt that school.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: Why?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): So that we may do all we can to encourage education.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: In the case of an orphanage, does the hon. the Colonial Secretary mean that only the room in which the children are given instruction will be exempt?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): An orphanage means a place for keeping orphans, where they are kept and clothed.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I think the amendment I propose will get over all the difficulties.

The amendment was then agreed to, and the motion, as amended, passed.

Ordered—That a Committee consisting of the Hon. J. G. H. Amherst, J. W. Hackett, and G. W. Leake be appointed to draw up reasons for the above proviso.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT reported from the Committee the following reasons:—

“1st.—The Committee considers that, in the best interests of Education, private schools, when not the property of religious bodies, should not be exempted from municipal rates.

“2nd.—That the exemption of private schools as such is an interference with the principle of the Bill.

“3rd.—That the words ‘private school,’ unless as above qualified, in the sub-section (f), taken with the words just preceding, may lead to litigation and open a door to evasion of the real intention of the Act.”

THE HON. M. GRANT: Under this amendment the Fremantle Grammar School will not be exempt, and will, therefore, not be in as good a position as the Government School. I think it would be a great loss to the community if so excellent a school as this were placed under any disadvantages whatever. I have been somewhat misled in agreeing to this amendment, because I think this school should be exempt.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): The Government also wish

to protect this school. It is the gentlemen on the other side who do not.

Question—That the reasons be agreed to—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 4.15 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, 4th February, at 8 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 2nd February, 1892.

Aboriginal Offenders Act, 1883, Amendment Bill: third reading—Patent Act Amendment Bill: in committee—Estimates, 1892: adjourned debate upon the Treasurer's Financial Statement—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

ABORIGINAL OFFENDERS ACT, 1883, AMENDMENT BILL.

On the Order of the Day for the third reading of this bill,—

THE SPEAKER having put the usual question that the bill be read a third time, which was agreed to,

MR. CANNING said: This is the very bill with regard to which, a few minutes ago, I gave notice of my intention to move its recommittal on Thursday, in order to introduce an amendment in the bill. I had no idea the bill was coming on so soon.

THE SPEAKER: The third reading was the first Order of the Day for the present sitting; and I have now put the question, and it has been agreed to.

MR. CANNING: I spoke to the Attorney General outside the House, only five minutes ago, about recommending the bill, and no objection was raised.

THE SPEAKER: I am afraid I cannot do anything with it now. It is read a third time. I waited for some time after putting the question, to see if the

hon. member would take any steps in the matter. There is no means now of getting over the difficulty, as the bill has passed its third reading. The question "That the bill do now pass, and that the title be 'An Act,' &c.," is a mere formal motion. I have already put the question that the bill be read a third time, and the House agreed to it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt), who entered the House at this stage, said the hon. member for East Perth had spoken to him outside, a few minutes ago, about recommitting the bill, and he had offered no objection if the House wished it. He had no idea that the third reading was coming on so early, or he would have been in his place sooner. Possibly the hon. member might get someone in the Upper House to move the amendment he wished, and, if the amendment was agreed to there, the bill would come back again to the Assembly.

Question put—That the bill do now pass, and that the title be "An Act," &c.

MR. CANNING: I beg to move that it do not pass. It contains a principle that I feel I must oppose; it provides for a mode of punishment which has been generally discarded in almost every civilised country, and it applies that principle under most peculiar circumstances, to a people who certainly—whatever we may have to complain of at their hands—still deserve some consideration from us, on the score of humanity. I allude to the punishment of flogging. We know that flogging has been abolished in the Army and in the Navy, and I believe it is no longer resorted to in any other country in Europe, except Russia. We are aware that some years ago an Act was passed in England to make whipping applicable in certain extreme cases—garroting, for instance; but it was agreed to with very great hesitation, and it was only applied to beings who really were found to be untameable, the very worst kind of savages,—savages who were the product of a high state of civilisation, and in whom there was no redeeming feature in their cruelty. That punishment, even in the case of these untameable criminals, was agreed to with much reluctance and great hesitation by the British Parliament.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What was the result? The result justified its adoption.

MR. RICHARDSON: It completely put an end to garroting.

MR. CANNING: The fact remains that the punishment was only made applicable to beings of the most degraded type, who had forfeited every claim to consideration. I am entirely in sympathy with those settlers who in distant parts of the colony have to put up with the depredations and outrages committed by aboriginal natives, and who may be said to carry their lives in their hands; I agree that they should have the fullest latitude as to the measures they may adopt for purposes of self-protection, and that the Government should do what it can to protect them. At the same time, I do not think we should inflict upon these aboriginal natives, whose instincts have not taught them to distinguish right from wrong, and who, whatever their faults may be, have admittedly certain redeeming qualities,—I do not think we should resort to this most degrading and brutal mode of punishment in the case of these wretched creatures.

MR. SIMPSON: I rise to order. I should like to ascertain whether at this stage the hon. member is in order in discussing the main principle of the bill.

THE SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member is out of order; he is giving reasons why the bill should not pass.

MR. CANNING: As I was saying, these natives, after all, have some useful qualities; their labor can be turned to profitable account, and they have shown themselves amenable to management, and that they deserve at our hands at all events a certain amount of consideration. Would this mode of punishment be thought of for one moment in the case of whites committing these offences? No; there would be a general outcry against it as degrading and brutal. Why, then, propose it in the case of these unfortunate blacks? Why inflict upon these wretched creatures who, as I have already said, have shown at any rate some good qualities,—why inflict upon them the most utterly degraded punishment that can possibly be conceived, and which is an outrage upon humanity? They have no one here to represent them, and we are dealing with

them entirely from our own point of view. They have no one to come forward to speak on their behalf.

MR. RICHARDSON: There is an Aborigines Protection Board.

MR. CANNING: These natives have no one here to represent them, nor are they here to speak for themselves.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (HON. S. Burt): Give them a vote.

MR. CANNING: I think this question is a very serious one, and I think this House ought to pause, and consider the matter well, before they go so far as to create a blot upon our Statute Book by passing such an Act as this. When all the circumstances of these wretched creatures are taken into consideration, when we remember that after all they are human, and that they are made in the image of their Creator—

MR. SIMPSON: No.

MR. CANNING: When we bear in mind that these natives, I say, are human, that they are the creatures of their own untutored instincts, and that whatever we may suffer at their hands they are not devoid of some good and useful qualities; when we bear all the circumstances in mind, I think we should pause before we inflict upon them the most degrading punishment that can be inflicted upon any human being. Take any average body of Englishmen that you may come across anywhere,—walk along Piccadilly or Cheapside, or any crowded thoroughfare in any city, and ask the first ten men you meet which they would prefer—to be executed or flogged; and I venture to say that nine out of the ten would choose the former in preference to the other most infamous and degrading punishment. And I say whatever crimes these ignorant aborigines may have committed, there is nothing in the circumstances of our relation with these people, and nothing in the circumstances surrounding the offences which they commit, and nothing in the state of the colony, so far as these wretched creatures are concerned, to justify the passing of this clause.

MR. RICHARDSON: I always thought the discussion upon the main principle of a bill was supposed to be on the second reading. This bill has passed through that stage, and through the committee stage, yet the hon. member now rises for the first time to oppose the fundamental

principle of the bill, the whipping of aboriginal native offenders. The hon. member seems to have got some sudden inspiration from some source, which—

MR. CANNING: I am under the inspiration of no one, and I object to any member saying so. It is a reflection upon me which I must resent. The words I utter in this House are inspired by no one; they are the inspiration of my own conscience and of my own intelligence.

MR. RICHARDSON: If the hon. member had this inspiration when the bill was under discussion on the second reading, all I can say is he was very culpable in sitting down quietly and not raising a voice of protest against this the main principle of the whole bill. The hon. member was very lax in his duty to have allowed the bill to reach its present stage before giving vent to this inspiration. He says it will be an "outrage on humanity" if this bill is passed; yet the hon. member sat here and allowed it to be read a second time, and to go through committee, clause by clause, without raising a single word of protest against what he calls an "outrage upon humanity." After all, what does this "outrage on humanity" amount to? This whipping is to be at the discretion of the magistrate; it is limited to a certain number of strokes, which are only to be inflicted in the presence of a Justice of the Peace, or of a native protector, or of a police officer of the rank of sergeant, who is bound to see that that whipping is not unduly severe. I hope our magistrates and justices are humane enough to see that no native is treated with undue severity. I think we may have that much confidence in our magistrates that they will not allow any punishment to be inflicted upon a native that would be an "outrage on humanity."

MR. MOLLOY: Last evening we were occupied a considerable time in discussing a frivolous technicality with reference to this bill. I think about an hour and a half was wasted in an endeavor to introduce the word "stipendiary," and I believe that was the only objection taken to the bill during its passage through committee. Prior to that, we had the second reading of the bill, and not a syllable of protest was entered by the hon. member for East Perth against any portion of the

bill. It does seem strange, if the hon. member considered the bill was an "outrage on humanity," that he should have waited until now to make his protest, and to ask this House, at this stage of the bill, to stultify itself by condemning the main principle of a bill which passed its second reading without opposition, and which in committee only elicited a discussion upon what I call a frivolous technicality. I am not one of those who are in the habit of indulging in maudlin' sentimentality with respect to the punishment of natives, when they deserve punishment; and to speak of this bill as being an "outrage on humanity" is simply maudlin' sentimentality. An outrage on humanity, indeed! Is it no outrage on humanity when these treacherous savages come upon our own settlers unawares and murder them? Are we to continue to allow these outrages on humanity to be committed without doing what we can to protect those who go out to do the work of pioneering with their lives in their hands? Is the white settler to be compelled to stand upon ceremony while his flocks and herds are being stolen and slaughtered, and his own life in danger, while, on the other hand, if we make any effort to bring the authors of these outrages to account, and to provide some deterrent measures of punishment, we are to be accused of committing an "outrage on humanity." Let these natives be made to understand that so long as they conduct themselves, we shall protect them,—as we are prepared to do; but let them also understand that all this protection is not to be on one side. Let them know that we also mean to protect our own people. I think it is high time that some provision should be made to make these natives understand that if they commit offences against our laws they will be punished for them. I think it will have a wholesome effect, this punishment of whipping. It is not so much cruelty to whip a native in the way it is here proposed to whip them—it is not such an "outrage on humanity"—as to chain them by the neck and to make them travel hundreds of miles to place them at Rottneest. It is likely to have a much more beneficial effect upon these natives than any imprisonment we can give them at that place, where, if they improve in intelligence, it is in that kind

of intelligence which makes them more crafty and greater villains than they were when they were sent there. The hon. member for East Perth said he did not know any place in the civilised world, except Russia, where flogging was resorted to as a punishment. I am aware, of my own knowledge, that until recently it was resorted to in this colony, in the convict prison at Fremantle. I do not know whether it has been done away with.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No.

MR. MOLLOY: I think if offenders merit a punishment it should be awarded to them. There can be no doubt about the efficacy of this particular punishment. It is a notorious fact that while flogging was resorted to for certain offences, and where discipline had to be maintained, it had the desired effect. I believe it will also have the desired effect in this case, and I for one shall stand up here and uphold the provisions of this bill.

MR. CANNING: Some remarks have been made about my not having moved in this matter at an earlier stage of the bill. I may state that I spoke to my hon. friend the member for York about it last night, not being able to communicate with Mr. Speaker at the moment, as to the proper time for bringing forward this amendment. I found there was a difficulty in doing so last night, as I had allowed the first part of the bill to pass without giving sufficient attention to the clauses. But I spoke to him about my intention of moving certain amendments, and I spoke to the Attorney General about having the bill recommitted.

Question—That this bill do now pass, and that the title of the bill be "An Act," &c.—put and passed.

PATENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

This bill passed through committee, with some verbal amendments, without discussion.

ESTIMATES, 1892.

Resumed debate upon the Treasurer's Financial Statement.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I wish to inform the House that the other evening when I made my Financial Statement I did not sufficiently explain the item of "Railways"; in fact I over-

stated the expenditure on railways. I said that the revenue received from railways, excluding tramways, in 1890, was £45,814, and that the estimate for 1891 was £53,000. The amount received in the latter year was £63,002, being a receipt of £10,002 more than the estimate, and £17,188 more than in 1890. Some honorable members may ask, at what cost to the revenue was it obtained? I stated that the cost was £68,348, and in that I was in error, because the amount £68,348 was the total expenditure on both railways and tramways, while the cost of railways alone was £66,251, and tramways £2,097, making a total of £68,348 for railways and tramways—an expenditure of £3,249 over the amount received, whereas I stated that it was £5,346. If we take the railway and tramway receipts for 1891, the amount received was £65,709,—not £63,002, as I said, which was the receipt from railways alone. The expenditure on both was £68,348, or £2,639 over the receipts. I make this statement because it has been pointed out to me that in one case I gave the revenue for railways, and in the other the expenditure on both railways and tramways. The House will agree that if we take the expenditure upon railways and tramways we ought to give the revenue for the two also. If we take the railway and tramway receipts together the amount for 1891 was £65,709, and the expenditure for railways and tramways together was £68,348 or £2,639 over the receipts. I believe my hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways, when he has an opportunity, will be able to explain further to the House, and will be able to show that there was really a profit on the whole transactions of the year, taking the earnings into consideration. I was dealing with the actual receipts. I am sorry I should have made the mistake I did, and I thought I would take the earliest opportunity of correcting it. The figures in the Budget Speech were revised to agree with this statement before going to press.

MR. PARKER: I observe that one of the papers here the other day, in writing about the Budget Speech, gave me a title to which I am in no way entitled; it referred to me as the "Leader of the Opposition." For my own part, I should

not care to take the trouble of contradicting this statement, or any other statement in a newspaper; but, inasmuch as newspapers go abroad, unless I disclaim at once the position assigned to me by this paper, it might be taken that I was content to assume that which I had no claim to whatever,—an honorable position certainly, and a position I hope to see occupied by some member of this side of the House at an early date. But I take it that an Opposition must consist of some party—two or more at any rate—combined together to oppose the general policy of the Government or some important item of their programme. So far as I am aware, I know of no such party sitting in any part of this House. I take it that those who sit on this side of the House sit here simply by accident. They do not sit here with any idea of ousting the Government and of stepping into their shoes, but simply because there is not room for all of us on the Ministerial side of the House. Some of us who sit on this side would, no doubt, be glad to occupy the comfortable and commanding position occupied by the hon. member for Plantagenet, a most dignified position, alongside my hon. and learned friend the Attorney General. But we cannot all sit alongside my hon. friend; we cannot all be accommodated with seats on that side of the House, simply because there is not sufficient room, and some of us must be content with seats on this side of the chamber; and, by mere accident, I happen to be one of them. I disclaim entirely the personal reference to myself as Leader of the Opposition, for, as a matter of fact, there is no Opposition that I know of; and I certainly disclaim the empty title of Leader of an Opposition that does not exist.

MR. CANNING: I quite agree with what has just fallen from the hon. member for York as to there being no organised Opposition in this House. Nor is it desirable, in my opinion, that there should be any organised Opposition of a factious character. At the same time, I think that a fair and honest and watchful Opposition is the very essence of this form of Government. I think it would be an evil day for party Government if there was no such thing as an Opposition, in the sense of watching and criti-

cising the actions of the party in power; and, so long as that criticism is fair and honest, I do not think anyone has a right to resent it. Coming to the question now before us, I think I may say that the Financial Statement of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer, on the 28th January, was perhaps the most cheerful and cheering discourse ever listened to within these walls. The figures of anticipated income are marshalled with such consummate skill, and yet with such unhesitating boldness, and the deductions from them were stated with such perfect confidence, with such an ignoring of the possibility of criticism, not to say challenge or contradiction, that the hon. gentleman, I am sure, fairly carried his admirers away with him. It was only by an effort that I was able to restrain myself from giving manifestations of enthusiastic admiration and delight, but the habit of examining important questions for myself was strong enough to enable me to repress my first impulse. I have since read the hon. gentleman's speech, and examined his figures by the light of calm reflection. I will, therefore, now proceed to examine some of those figures and statements in their order, and I trust that, in doing so, I may be able to avoid wounding the susceptibilities, or arousing the ire, or in any way bringing down upon myself the displeasure of the hon. gentleman. After speaking of the increase in both revenue and expenditure during a period of ten years, he stated that the estimate of revenue for 1891 was £444,165, and the actual revenue collected £497,670. And this is put forward as an evidence of the marvellous administrative ability and consummate financial skill of the Government. It is true the hon. gentleman admits that he had not had much experience in financial matters; and, after having listened to the hon. gentleman's Financial Statement, I should be very sorry to contradict him on that point. He modestly implies, however, that he therefore deserves all the more credit for what he has achieved, and claims the honors of victory. There were brave men before Agamemnon, and there have been claimants before the hon. the Treasurer, but their claims have not been always allowed. Well, sir, let us see, however, upon what his claim rests? Nearly half of this revenue is derived from Customs

receipts; the greater portion of the revenue (£237,686 out of £497,670) is derived from Customs. Now, as nearly every article we use, nearly every kind of food we consume, is heavily taxed, it follows that the larger the Customs revenue the more the people are oppressed by taxation. I do not believe there is any other country or colony where taxation bears so heavily on the people as here. The Customs tariff may be higher in certain places, but then the things taxed are for the most part produced in those places, so that, whilst the tariff may be high, living may be remarkably cheap. That, as every man in the community knows, is not the case here, where the cost of living is abnormally high. It may be replied that, with the development of the colony's resources, we shall be able to produce the necessaries of life in much greater abundance than heretofore. Let us hope so at all events. But, in that case, our imports of that kind must be smaller, and the Customs receipts will be proportionally diminished; consequently the Treasurer's estimate of revenue from Customs for the current year may not be anything like realised; and I see no justification for his fixing it at £250,000. And, even assuming the estimate to be reached, I deny that the event would be an indication of prosperity or a proof of good government. Next to a poll-tax, an almost indiscriminating tariff imposing duties on all imports is the clumsiest and least statesmanlike mode of raising a revenue. No one would be better pleased than myself to see the land revenue exceed the hon. gentleman's estimate, but, with my knowledge of the situation in many parts of the colony, I have very grave doubts as to the land revenue for the year reaching anything like the amount received last year. But, while glancing at this item, I should like to ask the hon. gentleman how the land revenue is made up? Does it include proceeds of sales of land?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It always has.

MR. CANNING: If it does, I must point out that a most improper course (and one that has been most emphatically condemned elsewhere) has been taken in this matter, and it is to be hoped that it will be abandoned for the current year.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): You must alter the system first.

MR. CANNING: I shall be glad to discuss the question with the hon. gentleman, but I will ask him not to persist in these interruptions. The sooner we alter the system the better. Rents received for the occupation of public lands should alone be treated as current revenue; the proceeds of lands actually sold should form a fund apart for the settlement and improvement of the public estate generally, and for certain important national purposes—certainly not for current expenditure. Passing over various smaller sources of revenue, I now come to the item of "Income from Railways." Doubtless this should show an increase for the current year, but, with the rate at which our population is increasing, it cannot be very considerable. The working of the railways shows a loss, not taking into account interest on the capital expended (which for some inscrutable reason the Treasurer omits) of £5,346. I think if to this be added, as it should be, the interest on capital, many people will be of the opinion that the deficiency is very large indeed. Upon what the Treasurer bases his estimate of a profit on the working of the railways for the current year, I am at a loss to understand. The reasoning appears to be something like this: because we have a loss of £5,346 therefore we look for a profit of £4,622 on the working of our railways for 1892. Moreover, the hon. gentleman proceeds to deal with the question as if the estimated profit were an actuality. Has he calculated what would be the return if every individual in the colony, and all the new comers we can possibly expect, travelled by rail, and all the goods we can import passed over the railway? Would it give the result necessary to establish the soundness of his estimate? I think not, but we shall see. Well, sir, I have endeavored to direct attention to the more important items of revenue included in the Estimates from a different point of view from that from which the Treasurer desired us to look at them. I have, however, done little more than suggest matter for reflection. I desire now to make some observations upon the Estimates of Expenditure for the year.

With regard to public works, it will be borne in mind that I have from the outset given a general support to the policy of the Government on this head. I have again, however, to express my surprise and disappointment that the Government so persistently neglect to take the only measures which can render these works reproductive, that is, to introduce immigrants of a desirable class and to settle them upon the land. I again affirm that it is only by largely increasing our population that our railways can be made to pay, and that the resources of the colony can be so developed that our imports and exports can be brought more on an equality. At present not only are we borrowing money for public works which cannot under existing conditions be rendered reproductive, but we are actually living to a great extent on borrowed money, and that representing capital. I take the Treasurer's own figures. He says the imports for 1891 were £1,162,878, and the exports £765,044, that is to say, the imports equalled £22 per head of the population and the exports £14 per head. And this is the situation which the Treasury puts before us as a subject for self-congratulation! In other words, we are consuming more than half as much again as we produce.

MR. RICHARDSON: Imports are a fair index of a country's prosperity.

MR. CANNING: What would you think must be the position of an ordinary individual who earns or produces what yields him £3 a week and who expends £5 in the same time? Clearly, in order to make both ends meet, he would have to borrow. Well, sir, that is an illustration of our present position, and I affirm that so long as we remain in that position the paramount duty of the Government is to practise the strictest economy. But what do we find? An increased expenditure all round; salaries—especially of well-paid officials—increased; new offices, carrying with them high salaries, created; and various items on the Estimates for what we may fairly call, in our present circumstances, wholly unnecessary purposes. At the same time, no efforts to promote settlement on the land, to alleviate the effects of the drought in the North, or to take any such measures as might be expected from statesmen. No; the imagination of the

Treasurer seems to be filled with parks, observatories, esplanades and such things, all of which are excellent and most desirable in due season, but for which there is no such great and immediate necessity as to justify the neglect of measures bearing upon our immediate wants and necessities. The hon. gentleman reminds me of a story told, I think, by Benjamin Franklin. It is that when he was a small boy his aunt or grandmother sent him out on one occasion to apply for a situation. She dressed him as well as circumstances would allow, put a neat patch on each knee of his very much worn trousers, and made him wear gloves. Going along the street he met a carpenter with his basket of tools on his shoulder. The carpenter put down his basket, took the unhappy boy by the shoulders, and, looking at him from head to foot, said "A patch on both knees and gloves on!" Well, sir, we are something like that boy. Whilst we have scab and drought among our flocks and herds, and our agricultural lands lying waste, and little revenue from any other source than Customs, and whilst we are struggling for existence as a new community, we must have observatories, we must have parks, and we must have other costly, luxurious adjuncts of wealthy cities. Why, we have not even a market yet; nor is there any provision for one on the Estimates. I cannot call to mind any town or city approaching Perth in importance which has not its market place. In every age and in every country, in all towns or cities we read of or know anything about, the market is spoken of as one of the chief gathering places of the people. A market here would be especially useful, as it would encourage the farmers and fruit-growers of the neighboring districts to extend their operations by affording them facilities for disposing of their produce. This is comparatively a minor matter. I fear that any suggestion or recommendation of this kind coming from me is hardly likely to receive much consideration. The hon. gentleman, in fact, the other night reminded the members for Perth that they all three sat on the Opposition benches; at the same time he was gracious enough to intimate that he would not on that account withhold from the city a share of the subsidy he proposes to distribute among the

Municipalities throughout the colony. I am somewhat at a loss to understand why the hon. gentleman should have made such an observation.

MR. A. FORREST: It was only in joke.

MR. CANNING: I thought at once, when I heard him, of a Plantagenet or Tudor monarch rebuking the disloyal burgesses of a town which had not been so subservient as he expected, but at the same time giving the citizens to understand that in his gracious clemency he would not leave them wholly without some token of his royal bounty. Another important matter mentioned by the hon. gentleman calls for some remark. I have no doubt that Sir William Robinson will perform the duties of Agent-General well and faithfully. As the question of his taking this appointment with the salary named by the Treasurer is a public one, there can be nothing indecorous in my remarking that in sacrificing emoluments of at least £4,500 a year for what in the circumstances is but a pittance of £1,500—in other words, giving up two-thirds of his income—one is tempted to think he must be influenced by intense love for the colony; or, some may think, by a disposition to leave us "to stew in our own gravy." However, we secure his services, be the motive influencing him to give them what it may. That motive, however, can only be a personal one, one connected with his own interest or convenience, and I will return to the question presently. Let me first say, however, that it seems to me that, on personal grounds, no exception whatever can be taken to the appointment. Sir William Robinson has represented the Crown in the very highest position in many colonies, with credit and distinction, and it should be an advantage to have our affairs in England under his direction. But there is another aspect of the question, apart from considerations of personal convenience or of personal fitness. Sir William Robinson was, and still is, the Governor of the colony. In that position he should be in a position of the most entire and complete independence of any party, set of men, or individual in the colony. His complete independence, and consequent thorough impartiality, should be distinctly beyond all question. He should have nothing to hope or fear from any individual or

party. Now, sir, the proposed appointment in the circumstances,—about which there is no disguise,—strikes at the root of the position of the Governor in any of the British possessions having Responsible Government. How can he hold the balance equally between contending political parties when he may hope to obtain from one party or the other such an appointment as that now under consideration? This is a question to which I feel bound to call attention. If it be not fully considered and dealt with by this House or in this colony, the Government may rest assured it will be elsewhere. It is a question of the greatest importance not only to this colony, but to all the other Australian colonies. It may be said that I speak not over favorably of any of the proposals and announced intentions of the Government. I am glad to say, however, that there is, to use the hon. gentleman's own metaphor, a "ray of light" shining through the gloom to cheer us and to conciliate the goodwill of all towards the Government. The hon. the Treasurer has indicated the probability of a speedy dissolution. This is undoubtedly good news.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I never said anything about a dissolution.

MR. CANNING: The hon. gentleman did not use the word, but he hinted at it. He implied that it was the intention of the Government to amend the Constitution.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not think the hon. member is putting it correctly. I do not think it should go forth throughout the colony, or outside the colony, that I promised a dissolution at an early date. I know what the hon. member is driving at; I think he had better come to the point.

MR. CANNING: I will; the hon. gentleman intimated the intention of the Government to do something which would necessitate an amendment of the Constitution, and we have been told over and over again that an amendment of the Constitution will entail a dissolution.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I did not say that.

MR. CANNING: The hon. gentleman said it was proposed to increase Ministerial salaries.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That would not interfere with the Constitution; that would not necessitate a dissolution.

MR. CANNING: I will refer him to the Act. In order that the matter may be clearly understood, however, I will refer to the different sections of the Act bearing on the point, and also to Schedule B of the Act. Section 28, paragraph 2, runs as follows:—"Provided always that there shall be five principal Executive offices of the Government liable to be vacated on political grounds." And paragraph 3 provides: "The said offices shall be such five offices as shall be designated and declared by the Governor in Council within one month of the coming into operation of this Act, and thereafter from time to time as may be, to be the five principal Executive officers of the Government for the purposes of this Act." Then we come to another section of the Act. Section 69 says: "There shall be payable to Her Majesty in every year out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund sums not exceeding in the whole £9,850 for defraying the expenses of the services and purposes set forth in Schedule B to this Act, and the said several sums shall be issued by the Treasurer in discharge of such warrants as shall from time to time be directed to him under the hand of the Governor." And section 73 says:—"The Legislature of the colony shall have full power and authority, from time to time, by an Act, to repeal or alter any of the provisions of this Act, provided always that it shall not be lawful to present to the Governor for Her Majesty's assent any bill by which any change in the Legislative Council or the Legislative Assembly shall be effected, unless the second and third readings of such bill shall have been passed with the concurrence of an absolute majority of the whole number of the members for the time being of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly respectively. Provided also that every bill which shall be so passed for the election of a Legislative Council at any date earlier than by Part III. of this Act provided; and every bill which shall interfere with the operation of sections 69, 70, and 71, or 72, of this Act, or"—and this is the important

point—"of Schedules B, C, or D, or of this section, shall be reserved by the Governor for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure thereon." Now, sir, let us turn to Schedule B. That schedule deals with salaries, as follows:—

Governor	£4000
Private Secretary	300
Clerk of the Executive Council	250
Chief Justice	1200
Puisne Judge	900
Five Ministerial Salaries ...	3200

£9850

Surely an increase of Ministerial salaries would be an interference with Schedule B; and I have shown that any interference with these salaries will have to be dealt with in the way the Act provides. It will thus be seen that, with the best intentions in the world, the augmentations of the Ministerial salaries cannot be accomplished so speedily as might have been expected. Now, sir, the hon. gentleman has taken me to task for having made statements in addressing this House injurious to the colony.—[THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.]—This I absolutely deny. If, in his opinion, I ever made such statements, why did he not meet me with fair reason, and show to the world that I was wrong in my propositions and conclusions? He says I have accused the Government of unconstitutional action, and of reckless expenditure. Will the hon. gentleman venture to deny that my charge of unconstitutional action has not been amply confirmed by the opinion of very high authority? As to expenditure I have said that the Government have committed themselves to a course of expenditure lavish to recklessness, and this I most emphatically repeat and will confirm by the evidence of the official returns and Estimates. I exclude from my observations legitimate expenditure on public works. What do the returns for 1891 compared with those for 1890 show? And what do the Estimates for the current year compared first with the expenditure for 1890 and then with that for 1891 reveal? For the year 1890 it was £401,737; in 1891 it was £511,558; in 1892 it is to be, according to the Estimates, £596,809. In two years an increase from £400,000 to about £600,000.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You did not know that when you made the statement. You did not know at the time what expenditure we proposed this year.

MR. CANNING: Surely this is fair matter for comment. It confirms what I said before about our expenditure being on too lavish a scale altogether. We shall be told that there has been a large expenditure on public works. The Treasurer has stated that last year the expenditure on public works was some £70,000. Yet the expenditure on the whole for that year exceeded the previous year's expenditure by £110,000. How was the other portion, some £41,000, expended? In extravagant display, in unnecessary outlay, in lavish payments for unnecessary purposes.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Name them.

MR. CANNING: There was the delegation to Sydney. Two members of Parliament would have been quite sufficient to have been sent on that delegation, instead of seven.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The number was approved by this House—approved by Parliament.

MR. CANNING: There was also a large and unnecessary expenditure incurred in connection with the Census. Again, on the occasion of the visit of the *Katoomba* there was unnecessary expenditure in connection with that demonstration.

MR. RICHARDSON: We ought to have given them tea and damper.

MR. CANNING: A great deal of money was also unnecessarily spent at the time of the introduction of Responsible Government.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): All very small matters, it appears to me.

MR. CANNING: They amount to a considerable sum in the aggregate. This expenditure, and the expenditure for experiments in connection with visionary projects, all go to make up an aggregate of over £40,000 of public money needlessly expended. And now, from what source is that money obtained? Chiefly by burdensome Customs duties upon every article of use and consumption, whereby the cost of living is made enormously dear in this colony. The money is taken out of the pockets of the people

in the colony, who are forced to contribute to the objects I have named. I say it would be infinitely better to reduce the Customs duties on many articles of consumption not produced in the colony, so as to diminish the cost of living. Firstly, then, I contend that we had a right to expect from the Government a scheme for the introduction and settlement on the land of immigrants in considerable numbers, that being the only course by which our railways and public works can in any way be rendered reproductive. As to attracting population, it is vain indeed to hope that we shall attract them in appreciable numbers, by any means known to us at present. Secondly, we had a right to expect the announcement of a measure for the revision of the tariff so as to protect certain industries, and at the same time to diminish the cost of many of the necessities of life. Thirdly, we ought to have had an announcement on the part of the Government of an intention to pursue a policy of the strictest economy, in view of the costly works we have undertaken and of the inadequacy of the means at our command to carry them out. The Treasurer says the Government has legally at its disposal for public works and for the services of the colony no less a sum than £1,917,215. And how does he make this appear? He includes in this estimate nearly £1,100,000 of the loan authorised last year. This money is not yet raised, and it seems very uncertain when we shall be able to raise it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): To-morrow, if we wanted it.

MR. CANNING: The hon. gentleman says he could obtain the money to-morrow. Yet only the other day he told people there was not the slightest prospect of raising a further loan at present. Moreover, do not the reports from London published almost daily go to show that in the financial world the tide is setting sharply against Australian borrowing generally; and it will not be maintained that there is anything exceptionally favorable in our position to warrant us in expecting that we shall succeed where the great Australian colonies fail. Doubtless, if the right course had been taken last year we might have floated the entire loan. I do not intend to speak in disparagement of

the Attorney General's management of the business; he was accredited to the London and Westminster Bank, and was in a measure forced to place himself in the hands of that institution.—[THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No.]—Now that institution's business is not mainly or comparatively speaking largely connected with Australia. Although it is a great institution, one of the greatest financial institutions in England, I do not think it can be said that its business transactions with Australia are very great.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Oh!

MR. CANNING: I know what I am speaking about. I say that, comparatively speaking, its transactions with the Australian colonies are not so great as might be supposed. If an arrangement had been made with some of the leading Australian Banks—such as the Bank of Australasia, the Bank of New South Wales, the Union Bank, and the National Bank—with their intimate knowledge of Australia generally, and with their interests so intimately interwoven with Australia, the financial business of the colony would have been transacted more satisfactorily. There are gentlemen on the boards of some of the institutions named who, as regards standing, power, and influence in the financial world, are quite equal to any members of the Board of the London and Westminster Bank. And I believe the whole of our loan might have been obtained if we had gone to them.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What would we have done with it?

MR. CANNING: There would have been no difficulty about that. If these banks had co-operated in raising the money for us, they would have taken care of it for us; and no doubt advantageous arrangements might have been made with them. My observations have been called for by the interruptions of the hon. gentleman. I have now glanced at the leading features of the financial policy of the Government. Our policy now should be one of steady watchful progress. Having made a beginning with our public works we should look forward to carry them out by means of sales of lands. We should then in a measure be establishing something like an equilibrium, by restoring the value to the

public estate with one hand which we had taken away from it with the other. Hand in hand with our public works policy, we should have a bold vigorous immigration policy. Our expenditure should be kept down resolutely, and there should be no increase in well-paid offices until our financial position be vastly and decidedly improved.

MR. LOTON: Whatever may have been the views or surmises of individual members of this House, when we were assembled together a year ago, as to the probable financial position of the colony at the end of the year we were then just entering upon, I think, now that we have arrived at that period, we have matter for congratulation, not only in this House but throughout the colony generally, in view of the facts and figures placed before us by the Colonial Treasurer the other night, with regard to the financial position of the colony at the end of the year which has just closed. That position, I venture to say, is one such as no member of this House ventured to anticipate. It is better, far better, than any member had any idea of. I myself, in commenting at the time upon the Treasurer's financial statement for the year, and his somewhat glowing anticipations, ventured to express a doubt as to these anticipations being realised; and the Treasurer, the other evening, in referring back to my remarks, said that he himself, after listening to them, began to entertain a doubt whether he had not been a little over-sanguine. The result has shown that there was no occasion for doubt. The result has proved that the estimated revenue was exceeded by some £50,000. I do not know that the Government can take any particular credit to themselves for this position; nor do I think that the Treasurer himself has shown any wonderful amount of ability in preparing his Estimates when we find that the hon. gentleman himself was so widely astray in his calculations. However, the error happens to be on the right side, fortunately for all of us. It is a grand position I consider, a most satisfactory position, we appear to be in, at the end of 1891, the revenue having so far exceeded the estimate. On the other hand, what has been the action of the Government with regard to their expenditure? Here I am prepared to yield to

the Government, unhesitatingly, every meed of praise that is due to them. While they knew there was every appearance—and it was manifest, early in the year—that the estimated revenue would be considerably exceeded, they nevertheless kept in view the fact that they had only a certain amount of money placed at their disposal for expenditure by this House, and they religiously kept within that limit, and succeeded in carrying on the Government, and carrying it on, I venture to say, very efficiently, with a saving of £10,000 on the estimated expenditure. I think that on this account the Government is entitled to a meed of praise. It may possibly have occurred to the minds of some members to ask what has been the reason of the extraordinary increase in our revenue during the past year? To my mind, it is not far to seek. I attribute it to that one word "gold." The discovery of gold in various parts of the colony has drawn people to our shores, and increased our population over three thousand in the twelve months. If we look at the source from which the greater portion of this revenue is derived we find it in the Customs, where of course the increase of population tells. There are only one or two points in connection with the transactions of the past year which I intend to refer to. I do not see, myself, that much good can accrue from any close criticism upon the transactions of the year, unless we are prepared to show that the Government have made some serious mistakes. If any member can do that, let him stand up and do so. With regard to our railways, perhaps it may be remembered that last year when we were discussing the loan proposals, I put before this Assembly a number of figures showing that our railway system during the five years preceding 1891, exclusive of interest on the cost of construction, had been worked at a loss of an average of £14,000 a year. I am very glad to see an improved state of things in this respect with regard to last year. It was put before us the other day by the Premier that the loss on our railways last year was about £5,000—the figures have been since corrected to about £3,000. This is very satisfactory in comparison with the previous average loss of £14,000 a year, during the previous five years. I

am not prepared to say where this saving has been effected, or how it has been effected, whether it has accrued from any marked economy in the working of our railways, or whether it has accrued from the increased tariff rates; possibly a little of each. I hope, at all events, that where it has been possible to exercise economy—at the same time bearing in mind that efficiency also is required—but where it has been possible to exercise economy that it has been exercised. However, we have this fact before us, that whereas in the five preceding years our railways were worked at an average loss of £14,000 a year, last year the loss was reduced to £3,000. We all know that the Treasurer and his colleagues are great on railway extension, for opening up the country and developing its resources, and that we have three or four new lines now in contemplation. The Treasurer, the other evening, in dealing with this question of railway revenue, seemed to anticipate that, if with our present short lengths of railways we could make this reduction, we would be able to make our railways pay still better when these new lines are constructed. I do not know that he said so in so many words, but it may be fairly inferred that this was what he intended to convey. If that is the hon. gentleman's opinion, I am sorry to say I cannot agree with him. I cannot at all see how, at the present time, this colony will be able to work these new railways without showing a deficiency in the working expenses. It seems to me that for some time to come—even allowing for a considerable increase of population and the development of our agricultural lands, and our mineral lands, and our pastoral lands—it seems to me that we must be prepared, out of other sources of revenue, to make good a considerable deficiency in the cost of working our railways, and especially these new railways, for some time to come. I think the Government would do well to keep this point in view. I may be wrong. I shall be very glad indeed if it should prove that I am wrong; and no doubt all of us will be glad. But, if we look the matter fairly in the face, I do not think we can get away from the fact I have just stated. In connection with the transactions of the past year, the Treasurer put before

us certain figures relating to our imports and exports, in comparison with our imports and exports for the previous year, showing, as he concluded, that the colony was making considerable headway, and that the increase shown in the figures was a sign of progress and prosperity. I notice that whereas our imports for 1890 were (in round numbers) £874,000, the imports for 1891 reached £1,163,000, or an increase of about 30 per cent. No doubt this may be, from one point of view, a sign of progress. If we can import this increased quantity of goods, and pay for them and consume them, we surely must be progressing. But there is another point of view to be looked at. What about our exports? I find that in 1890 our exports were £671,000, and that in 1891 they amounted to £765,000. In other words, while our imports increased to the extent of 30 per cent., our exports did not increase more than about 15 per cent. That is a very wide difference. Let us take the same comparison as between the figures for 1891, and what do we find? We find that whereas our imports for 1891 showed a difference of 30 per cent. as compared with 1890, the difference for the current year amounts to 50 per cent. I have heard it said that increase in imports is a sign of progress. But, to my mind, I would much rather see these two items, imports and exports, balancing each other a little more closely, and very much more closely. While we are importing 50 per cent. more than we are exporting, in value, what are we doing besides that? We are going into the money market, borrowing for public works, for one thing. And what besides that? We are borrowing privately, our own people are borrowing as well, in order to develop the resources of the colony. And where does the interest on all this borrowing go to? It goes outside the colony. And, so long as our imports largely exceed our exports, and so long as we go outside the colony for extraneous aid to assist us in still further increasing our trade in that direction, the greater will be the increase in our indebtedness; and it is only a question of time how far we can go before we find ourselves on the verge of extreme difficulty. What we want in connection with this increase of imports is to stimulate local production at the same time. We

must develop the resources of the country, both agricultural and pastoral, and mineral. With this increase of our imports, we must see that there is an increase of settlement going on hand in hand with it. Passing on to the year we have just entered upon, I do not intend to discuss the various items on these Estimates, or any one of them in particular; the time for doing that will be when we are considering these Estimates in detail. But I would like to draw attention to one or two things. The hon. member for East Perth, in his remarks on the Budget, alluded to the fact that the Government had taken no action in connection with establishing a public market in Perth. To my mind this is a work that ought to be undertaken outside the Government; it should be taken in hand by the Municipal Council. They are the people who ought to undertake a work of this kind. We have had rather too much of this looking to the Government to do everything for us. I was in hopes that the people of Western Australia would, under freer institutions, turn round and do these things for themselves, and not be everlastingly looking to the Government to do everything for them. That is my reply to the hon. member for East Perth on this point. When the same hon. member was dealing with the land revenue he referred to the desirability of capitalising the amounts derived by the Government from land sales, and not include this money in the ordinary land revenue. I may state that is no new idea. I, myself, on several occasions, have prominently brought it before the Government. On one occasion, in the debate upon the Address-in-Reply, I spoke very warmly upon the subject, and opposed the policy of the late Government in including the receipts from land sales in the ordinary land revenue.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): They had no policy, I think.

MR. LOTON: Their policy was to spend as much as they could, if they could get it; and I think that is the policy of the present Government too. But when the hon. member for East Perth talks about omitting land sales from the general revenue at present, I would ask him to remember that the

colony is committed to a large loan, and we must in the first instance put ourselves in a position to pay the interest on our loans, and to carry on the Government and our public works at the same time. If we are to open up and develop the country by means of borrowed money it appears to me that we may, for some time at all events, legitimately use what, under other circumstances, we should not make use of. In fact, we cannot just now afford to lose any item of revenue. In looking through the Estimates now before us, I observe there are a few new items and a few increases. I do not propose to deal with them now; we shall have another opportunity of doing so. But there is an omission from these Estimates of an item I should have been very glad to see. Members will recollect that during last session, or the session before, a motion was put forward desiring the Government to set aside a block of land in the Eastern districts for the purposes of an Experimental Farm. To my mind, now that we have railway communication established, or about to be established, in all directions, the time has come when we ought to establish an institution of this kind, and I should have been glad to have seen a sum on these Estimates to start one—a place where some of our youth, immediately on leaving school, might enter and be trained for agricultural pursuits, under proper supervision, by a practical and scientific man. I believe it would be money well spent. Although the Government have not seen their way to do it on this occasion, I trust they will make a start at it soon. We are expecting, and are getting now, a considerable revenue from the sale of lands, and surely this would be a proper and legitimate object upon which to spend some of it. I do not want one of those fancy establishments, costing a lot of money, but a good farm, with a practical man at the head of it, which would probably pay its own expenses, once it was established, if carried on in the proper way. On this occasion I will not detain the committee any longer. I trust that this Assembly, when we come to deal with these Estimates and with our financial affairs more in detail than we are expected to deal with them on this occasion, will be able to assist the Government to wise conclu-

sions. Although we have trying times, very trying times I may say, in front of us, as well as encouraging times, I do trust that at the end of the present year we shall have, at all events, a moderate balance to the credit of the colony in the public chest. I commend the Government for making provision for a good balance, so far as they can do so on the Estimates before us, for the end of the year, and I only hope and trust we shall find their expectations realised.

MR. SIMPSON: It affords me much pleasure, representing as I do one of the most important constituencies of this colony, to congratulate the Ministry and to congratulate the Colonial Treasurer on the satisfactory results they have been able to put before us of the first year of their administration, and of the first year of Responsible Government. In the course of this debate, allusion has been made to certain fortuitous circumstances which, it has been alleged, resulted to the advantage of the Government. I have gathered what I believe is intended to be conveyed, and that is that it is the gold discoveries of the colony that pulled the Government out of the mud. I think it is an unfair thing, an unwise thing, and nothing but carping criticism, to say anything of the sort. I think that, so far as these gold discoveries are concerned, we have, on the other hand, to look at the other side of the picture; I think that the drought in the North, the scanty rainfall in the Eastern and the Southern districts, and a black money market, furnish a very fair counterbalance to any advantages that accrued to the Ministry from our gold discoveries. I congratulate the Colonial Treasurer on the lucid statement of the finances of the colony which he gave us the other evening, clear of all political intrigue, and free from all party bias. I have looked as carefully as I could through these Estimates, and I have studied as carefully as I could the Treasurer's address in submitting his budget, and I am glad to observe a satisfactory account given of three great factors in the colony's progress—a largely growing revenue from our railway, from our postal, and from our telegraph services. I know no sounder indication of a country's progress than these three factors. I have so far spoken generally of the statement

that has been submitted to us as the result of the first year's administration of the first Ministry under Responsible Government. I would like now to refer to some few matters which in my humble opinion would be useful to the colony if this House in its wisdom and the Government see their way to adopt them. First of all with regard to the Stamp Department, which I notice shows a profit last year. It may be a small matter, but it is a practical one—I think the time has come when it would be convenient, as well as economical, if, instead of having two distinct stamps, one for postage and the other for revenue, one and the same stamp should be available for both purposes. I know from my own experience that in outlying parts of the colony this would be a distinct advantage, and a great convenience; while at the same time it seems to me it must be a saving to the Government. Then, again, with regard to our Telegraph Service: I do not wish in any way to reflect upon the staff at present employed, but I do think the time has come when we should have real solid reasons given as to why communication on our telegraph lines is so frequently interrupted. I do not think it is attributable to climatic or atmospheric conditions; I do not think these are so extremely different from those existing in other countries as to justify these constant interruptions of extreme duration. I do not wish to imply that it is carelessness, but I cannot help thinking that a little more energy in the supervision of the department would secure more efficiency for the public. With regard to the telephone system of the colony, provision for which is made on these Estimates on a slightly increased scale, I think that a little more supervision there, too, would be an advantage to the public. So far as I know, and so far as I can make out, the use of the telephone at present is a weariness of the flesh, and I am very much afraid it conduces to a considerable amount of profanity. With regard to our railways, I notice there is a largely increased expenditure contemplated. I agree, however, with the hon. member for the Swan (Mr. Loton) that it is putting ourselves in a "fools' paradise" to imagine that we are going to make our railways pay at present. The sooner we discard that idea

the better. I think it will really pay us better—it may seem a contradiction of terms—but I think it will really pay us better at present not to look to our railways to pay; that is, in a direct way. We want them to open up the country and to encourage settlement, and for public convenience; and we must be content to wait until a little later on before looking to our railways to pay their way. Indirectly, we must benefit largely from them, though directly they may be a source of loss to the revenue. In connection with our Railway Department, I would venture to suggest that the complaints of the public as to the railway service are not yet quite satisfied. I believe that the Ministry are doing what they can in the matter, but it cannot be said that the commercial public are yet satisfied that the utmost has been done that can be done to supply the commercial demands upon the department. There is one particular matter with respect to which I should like to glean some information, and that is the reason why the daily trains to and from Perth stop at Chidlow's Well for half-an-hour. I voice the opinion of many travellers when I say that this delay at this little wayside station is a bore and an absolute nuisance. One is compelled to stay there for half-an-hour ostensibly to eat a luncheon which one does not want, and pay half-a-crown for it, whereas people might easily reach their destination at Perth in ample time to get their lunch at their own home or hotel. I was told that it was done in order to water the engine. Surely that would not take half-an-hour. I hope the hon. gentleman at the head of the department will look into this matter, and abolish this wearisome delay. There is another matter I should wish to mention here publicly in connection with this department. I am told that the Government are having a magnificent Ministerial carriage built, and—I do not know whether it is true or not—I am informed it is to cost something over £2,000. I think that £2,000 can be a lot better expended on some reproductive public work than in providing a grand carriage for Ministers to ride in. I think the ordinary carriage accommodation is quite enough for our Ministers. These are small matters, perhaps, but it is as well to call attention to them. With

regard to our loan transactions, I think the statement submitted to the House by the Treasurer as to the bank charges in connection therewith was a satisfactory statement. I think the bank charges are decidedly reasonable, and that the general result was extremely satisfactory, considering the condition of the money market we had to face. There is one point, however, upon which I should like some information. The Treasurer informed us that the charge in connection with the administration of our loans in London would be £500 per million. I would like to ascertain whether that £500 per million is to be accumulative for each additional million the colony may raise? If so, it will amount to a considerable sum for administration, in the course of time. Allusion has been made to the possibility of Treasury bills being resorted to by the Government. I hope there will be no necessity for this. I consider that the advantages of issuing these Treasury bills, so far as the history of Australian finance goes, are dubious advantages. The question is a moot one. It generally means a mere temporary inflation of the finances, a fictitious financial prosperity. With regard to the public works policy of the Government, I do hope that every effort will be made to proceed with these works as rapidly as possible. I would particularly draw the attention of the Ministry to the wisdom and expediency of proceeding with the proposed public works in the drought-stricken districts in the Northern part of the colony, with all expedition, so as to afford some relief to the unfortunate residents of those districts. There is one item on these Estimates with regard to which I think it is desirable we should have more detailed information, and that is the item "Miscellaneous." Last year there was over £17,000 voted under this head, and this year we are asked to vote £25,000, of which we have no detail.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Look at page 31; nineteen items.

MR. SIMPSON: They are scarcely in detail. I think it would be in the interest of the colony and an advantage to this House if we had as few of these bulk votes as possible. With regard to Ministerial salaries, I am certainly in accord with the suggested increase. I think

that men who aspire to these responsible positions, and who gain them, are entitled to be fairly rewarded for their services. I think, considering the obligations imposed upon those in the position of Ministers of the Crown, that they should at any rate be fairly paid for their services. I do think that with £600 a year a Minister is likely to have a very small balance at the end of the year. There is one matter as to which I think the Government have been particularly miserly about, and that is municipal endowment. We are offered a paltry 10s. for every £1 of rates contributed by the public. We see huge frontages in our main streets occupied by Government buildings, frontages which have been improved and enhanced in value out of taxes that have come out of the pockets of the ratepayers, yet these buildings have never contributed a penny to the municipal revenue; and now the Government come forward and offer a paltry endowment in the shape of 10s. for every £1 raised by the public. I hope that some means may be adopted by this House to increase this allowance to £1 per £1.

MR. A. FORREST: It can't be done.

MR. SIMPSON: I am assured by the hon. member for West Kimberley that it cannot be done. I have often been told that things can't be done, but I believe that in 99 cases out of 100 a thing can be done, if you try; and I hope the Ministry will see their way to a further recognition of the obligations of the Government in this direction. With regard to the proposed expenditure of £2,000 on Mount Eliza Park, I think it is Utopian. I do not think the time has come for a population of 10,000 people to incur a large expenditure in converting that wilderness into a park. We have plenty of other open spaces nearer the centres of population requiring our attention,—Russell Square, Weld Square, Victoria Park, and other places, which need improving, and which are much more available and useful than the top of Mount Eliza; and I think this £2,000 would be much better expended in a grant to the Municipality for improving some of these other grounds in the centre of the town. With regard to the Agent-Generalship, I would not be the last to recognise the high social position occupied by the gentleman

to whom it is suggested that the office should be given; but I do not regard social position so much as sound practical business qualities as essential in the holder of this office, in the present position of the colony. I am uninformed as to whether Sir William Robinson possesses these qualities. But the Treasurer, in making the announcement to the House, said it was beyond his comprehension that a gentleman should surrender £4,000 a year, as Governor of the colony, to accept £1,500 as its Agent-General. So far as I know anything of business, I do not recognise that as an indication of shrewd business ability. But I should like to ask whether, in addition to the salary of £1,500—as is the rule in the other colonies—there are to be allowances granted to the Agent-General? The other colonies, some of them at any rate, allow their Agent-General some thousands of pounds for entertaining.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Not so here.

MR. SIMPSON: I am glad to hear it. If Western Australia is going to step into London with the idea of her Agent-General giving entertainments, to secure the good will of capitalists and others, I am afraid we shall find it an expensive game. It has been said that "Fools make feasts and wise men eat them"; and I think there is a great deal of wisdom in it. I am sorry to observe that in these Estimates there is no additional inducement offered to the men of this colony to go in for the Volunteer movement. I am a great believer in volunteering. I am not speaking in reference to the administration of the force—that is a matter of detail; but so far as the system goes, I think it acts as a preserver of law and order, and it helps to kill that curse of Australian civilisation—larrikinism. For these reasons, I should like to see it more liberally encouraged. I now come to a much graver omission—I would almost call it a crime, and that is that whereas last year, with a revenue of £497,000, only £13,400 was expended by the Government in educating the youth of the colony, this year, with an estimated revenue of £538,000, only £13,625 is proposed to be expended on education,—a beggarly and degrading increase of £225 for the promotion of

the education of the whole rising generation of the colony. I never knew of a graver omission in any financial statement ever made, under such encouraging financial prospects as we have here presented.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : There is £6,000 also for school buildings.

MR. SIMPSON : That is for public buildings ; I am speaking with regard to public teaching. This paltry increase of £225 may be an oversight ; if not, all I can say is, it is a deplorable thing in the best interests of the colony. We have now about 12,000 children of school age in this colony, of whom about only 3,500 attend schools ; and, according to the late Census, there is more than one-fourth of the population of this colony who can neither read nor write. Yet this Government, with a Treasury which is absolutely bulging with surpluses, comes forward and asks us to vote the magnificent sum of £225 to extend the educational facilities of the colony. I do think the time has come when more attention should be paid to this matter of education. I look to it to reduce our police vote, our gaol vote, and to lessen the cost of the administration of justice, and also to produce a better (in the sense of being a more intelligent) class of producers, and a better class of citizens, in every respect. I hope the Government will find an opportunity, out of the large surplus which they anticipate, to place more funds at the disposal of those entrusted with supplying the educational wants of the community. With regard to that, I think the time has also come—we have now arrived at a stage in the history and development of the colony—when the educational system of 1871 does not comply with the growing educational requirements of 1892. I hope to move in this matter later on, and that the Government will see their way to practically alter the system of education now existing in this colony. If one reads the report of the Inspector of Schools, submitted to the Central Board of Education, it will be found full of kindly suggestions to the teachers ; but it may surprise some members of this House if I tell them that head teachers charged with the educational training of the youth of the colony are absolutely receiving less pay than an ordinary laborer receives. I find that

the average salary of head masters in the schools of this colony is not more than about £110. This is what we pay the men entrusted with the important task of educating our youth, and of bringing them up to become useful and intelligent citizens. I have now, I think, referred to most matters of importance that have struck me in connection with these Estimates. I again reiterate my congratulations to the Treasurer and to the Ministry on the splendid success which has resulted on the first year of their administration ; but I do think the time has arrived when more careful attention should be paid to the educational institutions of the colony. Looking at the fact that we are growing rapidly in all matters of material progress, I feel sure that if a larger expenditure were incurred in connection with education there is not a member of this House who would object to it, or say that it would not assist us in taking our proper position amongst the great Australian colonies.

On the motion of Mr. Richardson, progress was reported and leave given to sit again next day.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at five minutes past five o'clock p.m.
