

than did the Government, municipal councils, or other public bodies out of their employees. The profits of contractors bore no comparison with the losses incurred by public bodies in carrying out works by day labour. The Minister of Mines had properly described as a "boom" period, the period at which was incurred the excess expenditure covered by the Bill. It was a question whether it was desirable to have those "boom" periods. At any rate there was no necessity that the country should be in want of money when the "boom" was over. At present there was a slight reaction; and that alone should induce the Government to carefully consider their position in relation to public works. With the prospect of a fairly good season and of further development of the gold-fields, the colony should enjoy a period of prosperity in the current year.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved, That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 4:30 p.m. on Thursday.

Put and passed.

The House adjourned at 6:28 p.m. until Thursday, 18th November.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 16th November, 1897.

Petition (Southern Cross): Prohibition of Asiatic Immigration—Question: Custom-house and Court-house for Fremantle—Question: Bond re Defaulting Railway Employee—Question: Deep Boring at Coolgardie—Question: Pastoral Rents Remission and Reduction—Local Inscribed Stock Bill: third reading—Width of Tires Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Sale of Liquors Act Amendment Bill: in committee (new clauses)—Motion: Legislation re Inebriate Retreat—Message (appropriation): Annual Estimates; Financial Statement in Committee of Supply—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PETITION—PROHIBITION OF ASIATIC IMMIGRATION.

MR. OATS (Yilgarn) presented a petition from residents of Southern Cross, praying for the prohibition of further immigration of Asiatics.

Petition received and read.

QUESTION — CUSTOM-HOUSE AND COURT-HOUSE FOR FREMANTLE.

MR. HOLMES, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works, Whether the sums voted towards the erection of a new Custom-house and for the building of a Court-house in Fremantle, which were passed in last year's Estimates and had not been expended, would be renewed on the Estimates for the current year.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) replied:—The Government do not, at present, purpose proceeding with the erection of the new Custom-house at Fremantle, as, owing to the increase of business, it is probable that a much more important building will be required than was originally contemplated. It has, therefore, been decided to defer the matter for the time being. Provision will be made on the Estimates for the new Court-house at Fremantle.

QUESTION—BOND RE DEFAULTING RAILWAY EMPLOYEE.

MR. HOLMES, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways—1. Whether in the case of Randell, a defaulter to the Railway Department, proper securities were obtained for the

good conduct and *bona fides* of the said employee. 2. Assuming that question to be answered in the affirmative, whether repayment of such losses had been obtained.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) replied:—

1. The defaulter occupied a dual position, viz., stores manager for railways as well as works. He was under guarantee as regards the former department, but this guarantee did not apply to the latter, in which his defalcations occurred. 2. No repayments have been made.

QUESTION—DEEP BORING AT COOLGARDIE.

MR. HASSELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works,—1. The depth of the diamond drill bore at Coolgardie. 2. The nature of the rock the bore was in at the present time. 3. Whether the Government intended to continue the bore.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) replied:—

1. The depth reached by the Coolgardie diamond drill bore was, on 7th November, 2,905 feet. 2. The nature of the rock at the present time is diorite. 3. The Government do not intend to bore to a greater depth than that authorised, viz., 3,000 feet.

QUESTION—PASTORAL RENTS REMISSION AND REDUCTION.

MR. HUBBLE, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands,—1. Whether, owing to the heavy losses of stock in the Northern parts of the colony, occasioned through the late severe drought, it was the intention of the Government to forego the moiety of the present pastoral rents due up to 1st January next. 2. Whether the Government intended reducing the present pastoral rents from 1st January next. 3. Whether it was the intention of the Government to extend the present existing pastoral leases to 21 years, commencing from 1st January next.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell) replied:

1. The Government do not propose to forego the rents due from pastoral lessees in the Northern part of the colony on the 1st January next. 2 and 3. The Consolidating Land Bill, about to be introduced,

makes provision for reducing the rents and extending the tenure of pastoral leases.

LOCAL INSCRIBED STOCK BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

WIDTH OF TIRES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

SALE OF LIQUORS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration of new clauses resumed.

New Clause—Licensing fees:

Debate resumed on this clause, moved by Mr. Quinlan at the previous sitting, as follows:—

Sub-section (1) of Section 15 of the principal Act, 41 Victoria, No. 9, is hereby amended by striking out all the words after "license," in the first line, and inserting the words "seventy pounds in the Perth and Fremantle electoral districts, fifty pounds in the Perth and Fremantle magisterial districts (excepting there-out the Perth and Fremantle electoral districts), and also in Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, and Boulder municipalities, and forty pounds elsewhere."

MR. LEAKE said he preferred to see the license fee raised in Perth and Fremantle only. If the member for Toodyay would simply add the words "seventy pounds in Perth and Fremantle," he would support the clause.

MR. QUINLAN: Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie could afford to pay.

MR. LEAKE: This being near the end of the year, and as all applications for renewal would be made in a fortnight, it would hardly be fair to deal with this matter so late in the year, as it might affect renewals; but, if we could have the various licensing laws consolidated by next session, this matter could well be left standing over till then. He would like to know if the member in charge of the Bill (Mr. Burt) could give the committee any assurance on the point. If the hon. gentleman would like an expression of opinion from the House on the subject, he would table a resolution to that effect.

MR. MITCHELL: It was hardly worth while making an alteration for such a paltry sum. Better leave the matter alone

until a general reconstruction took place. If an alteration were made, it should be thorough.

New clause put, and division taken, with the following result:—

| | |
|----------|----|
| Ayes ... | 19 |
| Noes ... | 6 |

Majority for ... 13

| AYES. | NOES. |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Mr. Burt | Mr. Gregory |
| Sir John Forrest | Mr. Holmes |
| Mr. A. Forrest | Mr. Mitchell |
| Mr. Hassell | Mr. Phillips |
| Mr. Hubble | Mr. Rason |
| Mr. Illingworth | Mr. Solomon (Teller). |
| Mr. Kenny | |
| Mr. Kingsmill | |
| Mr. Lefroy | |
| Mr. Locke | |
| Mr. Monger | |
| Mr. Oats | |
| Mr. Pennefather | |
| Mr. Piesse | |
| Mr. Quinlan | |
| Mr. Sholl | |
| Mr. Throssell | |
| Mr. Wood | |
| Mr. Doherty (Teller). | |

Clause thus passed.

New Clause—License fee for spirit merchants:

MR. QUINLAN moved that Sub-section 4, Section 15 of the principal Act, be amended by omitting the figure “£5,” and inserting “£25” in lieu thereof. He said £5 was too small a fee to charge for a spirit merchant's license. Retail houses were charged a sufficiently high license already, and the firms benefiting by this business ought to contribute something in the way of increased fee.

MR. DOHERTY objected to the increase as being a prohibitive tax on auctioneers and others who dealt in wines and spirits only in a small way as an addition to their ordinary business. The increased tax would not matter to those who were carrying on a large business, but the small men would be unable to pay it.

MR. WOOD: The proposed increase was too large, and he indorsed the words of the member who had just spoken. Having had personal experience in the matter, and having had a license for some time which cost him £5 a year, and which brought him in a commission of about £2 10s., he must say this increased fee would create another anomaly. There were many traders in a small way who could not possibly pay such a high fee.

MR. A. FORREST: Five pounds was too small a fee. He knew of one firm

who did business to the extent of nearly a million a year, and could afford to pay a much higher fee. Auctioneers and others who became wine and spirit merchants, in addition to their usual business, did no good to the trade; and it would be well if all these small dealers in spirits went out of the business.

MR. SOLOMON: A gallon license cost only £10 a year, and if we increased the merchant's license to £25, the merchants would take out gallon licenses and thus be enabled to sell from a gallon upward.

MR. GREGORY supported the new clause.

MR. WOOD: If the fee were increased to £25 a year, as proposed, between 50 and 60 persons who now paid the smaller fee would be driven out of the business, and the wine and spirit merchants would be reduced to five or six large firms. It was not worth while to interfere with the fee for gaining so small a result in revenue.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Not being himself anxious to promote the sale of liquor, he would support the proposed increase in this licensing fee, because any spirit merchant who could not afford to pay £25 a year for a wholesale license had better go out of the business. It was not desirable to encourage a lot of small dealers, especially after having provided for inspectors to watch the liquor that was distributed, because the fewer the centres of distribution, the more easy to keep an oversight, and the more certainty would there be of the liquor sold being good.

MR. JAMES: If any spirit merchant could not afford to pay the proposed increase, the sooner that class of merchant went out of the business the better the class of liquor sold. If the margin between profit and loss was so narrow, it was almost a guarantee that the liquor sold by a person carrying on such a business was bad in quality. If the trader had not sufficient capital or sufficient stock, he should not be in the business. Some persons who had an inferior line to dispose of would take out a license, sell the stuff, and then drop out of the business. It was well that such persons should drop out.

MR. BURT (in charge of the Bill): Unless a distinction were made between the fee for a wholesale license and that

for a gallon license, the spirit merchant would carry on wholesale by means of the gallon license at the lower fee. The present distinction was that the spirit merchant must not break bulk. The fee for a gallon license should be higher than the fee for wholesale dealing.

MR. LEAKE: If the wine and spirit merchant's license was to be increased to £25, that of the publican should be increased in like proportion, say to £250. This would be real consistency. But of course we did not wish to be consistent in that way. He would vote against the new clause, unless the fees were raised all round.

MR. QUINLAN: Judging the feeling of the House, and seeing that a spirit merchant could sell wholesale by taking out a gallon license, he would withdraw the new clause.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. GREGORY suggested that Section 69 of the principal Act should be repealed, as it enabled a person having a grudge against another, to cause injury to the character of the individual or firm by alleging a false charge, and causing the name of the suspected person to be posted up at every police station in the colony. This section was a relic of the dark ages.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

MOTION—LEGISLATION *RE* INEBRIATE RETREAT.

MR. WOOD (West Perth), in accordance with notice, moved "That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should introduce legislation to establish an inebriate retreat." He said: This motion is a very appropriate sequel to the discussion of the Liquor Bill, and it is with a certain amount of confidence that I propose it, while I fully recognise the importance of the question and my inability to do that justice to it which it deserves. I should have been glad had someone else undertaken the task, and I can assure the House that I have not brought up the question in any spirit of rivalry, or with a view of taking away the ground from beneath the feet of any other member who might have liked to introduce it. I make no apology for my case, which I look upon as beyond all suspicion of the slightest shadow of cant

or humbug. I might even say that it is outside the range of the temperance question in the ordinary acceptation of the phrase, because the people with whom we seek to deal, or in whose interests this motion is brought forward, are beyond the reach of the ordinary temperance society or of the ordinary temperance worker, and could only be dealt with by a great national organisation such as that which I am asking the Government to bring into existence.

THE PREMIER: Will you require any money?

MR. WOOD: Well, sir, it will be money well spent, as several hon. members in this House will be able to show you. The principal question is whether there is a necessity for an inebriate retreat in this colony; and I think we must answer it in the affirmative, because when we look around us, we can put our fingers on hundreds of people who sadly require the treatment which they would obtain in an asylum of this description—men who have gone under, owing to strong drink; people who, in their younger days, were looked upon as men of the very highest type, strong-minded men, too, we have considered them. If the gaols cannot better their condition—and the gaols, to me, seem to have been an absolute failure in this direction—then we must find some other means of reclaiming them. Inebriate retreats have been established in various parts of the world. I do not know very much about the details of the working of them, although a good deal of information has been sent to me from different quarters during the last few months; but I believe they have been very successful in reforming those people who, owing to their weakness in this respect, have gone down to the lowest depths of shame—for I cannot call it anything else. This matter, of course, resolves itself into a question of ways and means. My own opinion is that the public of this colony are not in a position to inaugurate a retreat entirely upon their own responsibility. The population of this country is a mere handful of people, and they have a great many demands upon their pockets for the purpose of dealing with various cases of distress; and there are no very rich people in this colony, except the hon. member the leader of the Opposition,

who looks at me somewhat indignantly. With the exception of him, there are, perhaps, no very rich people in this country who are prepared to endow an institution of this sort. Therefore, we must naturally fall back on the Government, in the same way as was done when our public hospital was erected in this city. We had to go to the Government for that; and I am sorry to say that the results, so far as regards the amount of public subscriptions to that institution, have not been at all satisfactory.

THE PREMIER: They have never yet attempted to subscribe.

MR. WOOD: Most certainly the scheme has not worked out in the way that we expected; and so it must be with a place wherein to domicile confirmed drunkards, and for that reason we must ask the Government to assist us. I do not think that this retreat would be altogether a burden on the public purse, or on the revenue of the colony; because, properly conducted, it would be to a great extent self-supporting. I shall not enter into the details of the operation of this institution, but the idea is that it shall be established somewhere in the country districts, where farming operations and various other industries connected with agriculture could be entered into. Thus, in course of time, it would become, to a large extent, reproductive. The strength of the claim which I think the public have on the Government in a matter of this sort lies in the fact that hundreds and thousands of our fellow creatures might be reclaimed by such a scheme, in the course of a few years. Even if the rescued were to be numbered merely by hundreds, this fact would justify its establishment. Nay, supposing we spent £10,000 and reclaimed even 100 fallen creatures, I think we should be well repaid for the outlay. The plan of sending these people to gaol has not cured them. They are altogether a burden to the public, as are their wives and families. Our other benevolent institutions—our poor-houses and dépôts—are filled with such cases; and, if we could effect the reformation which we say could be brought about by the establishment of this retreat, the cost of police, and of our destitute asylums, and other institutions of a similar nature would be so considerably lessened that the country

would be a gainer in the end. I am sorry, sir, for the block of business which has characterised this short session of Parliament. There is much necessary legislation, for which the country has been crying out for years, which the Government has been unable to introduce, not merely in this particular instance but in various other directions, especially as regards social legislation. The cause has been, of course, that fearful dunny, as I call it—federation, which has blocked us this year. What good it is going to do us when we get it, I fail to understand. I think that, in the end, we shall feel we have lost a year's good work. Federation has put us back with regard to other legislation for five or six years. The Premier recently acknowledged that the Government had been backward in social legislation. I am glad the right hon. gentleman admits that; but, if the Government are unable to introduce legislation of that kind, I would be glad if they would encourage private members to do so. At present private members do not get very much encouragement. I am not speaking against the Government, as I fully appreciate the work of the Ministry, both in this House and outside it. Still I must say they have not given that encouragement to private members to introduce social legislation which they might have done. I think it would be well if one or two members of the Ministry were to resign their present seats, and take up real live constituencies, where they would be urged on by various organisations to deal with these matters. I do not wish to cast any reflection on the Government, who have no warmer or more consistent supporter than I. My remarks are only intended to remind them of the duty which they owe to themselves and to private members, on this matter. As regards the institution concerning which I have tabled a motion, I cannot do better than refer hon. members to the leading article in the *West Australian* of November 13th, which is very ably written, and I dare say has been read by every hon. member. There have also been several good letters dealing with the matter published in that paper, which I would like hon. members to read. The Speaker ruled me out of order a little while ago, in moving that a sum of money should be set apart out of the revenue towards the proposed insti-

tation ; but I must say that I would like to see £10,000 put on the Estimates for that purpose. It is not a very large amount, when we consider the large revenue of the colony at the present time. It would be £10,000 very well invested, and we should get a very good return from it—a return in the amelioration of many of our fellow creatures, as also in the general improvement and tone of the whole colony. I am not here, however, as a temperance advocate. I do not want, by any side-wind, to introduce the temperance question, because this has got beyond that stage, and is now a national question more than anything else. I hope hon. members will not treat it lightly. I feel sure that some of my friends here will support the motion. I trust that the Government will see their way also to fall in with the views I have expressed, and with the views which I know will be expressed by other hon. members. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

MR. QUINLAN (Toodyay) : I have pleasure in seconding the motion, and I think the member for West Perth has placed the matter fairly before the House. Whether the means are available for carrying out the wishes of the hon. member is another question. I am sure the Government, and this House in general, are in sympathy with the spirit of the motion. It is well known to every person throughout the colony that there is need for such an institution, and that it would be a means of saving to the State many valuable people who would become good citizens if they were reformed. Inebriety is unfortunately the one failing with some people, and anything that would bring them back in the right direction, or that would enable them to lead steady lives, would be appreciated and welcomed throughout the length and breadth of the land. I did not rise with the intention of speaking at any length, but merely to indorse the sentiments of the member for West Perth.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : Although I was not prepared to speak on this matter to-night, I am sure the thanks of the House are due to the member for West Perth for bringing the matter forward in such a moderate way. Notwithstanding the general belief that the Government have done nothing in the

way of social legislation, if hon. members would consult the statute book from 1891 to the present year, they would find a good deal of social legislation of a very important character. I believe a Bill has been prepared in regard to this matter, for the Government. I confess I have not read it, as I thought it would not be possible to introduce it and pass it this session. Unless Parliament is prepared to find money for the establishment of this institution, it is of no use loading our statute book with Acts which will not be carried out. If you look at our statute book, you will find many useful Acts passed by this Parliament that have not been acted upon, and the same will, I dare say, hold good in the other colonies. Unless we are prepared to find a considerable sum of money, it is no use placing a law of this character on the statute book. I have no doubt that in order to carry out this scheme a lot of money would be required. You would want a large building, large grounds, and a large staff. [A MEMBER: £20,000 would be required.] I am not prepared this session to ask the House to find that sum for this purpose. There are so many other demands, we cannot possibly provide so large a sum for an inebriate asylum. There are many philanthropic people in this colony at the present time who take an interest in this matter, and who should be asked to contribute towards the establishment of such an institution. There is nothing so elevating as to find people taking interest in other people, especially in those who are in want or in need ; but I have not myself found any great effort made, or any well-directed plan brought forward, to see how far the people of this colony are in sympathy with this movement, and how far they are willing to support it. It is very easy to bring a Bill forward and ask the House to pass it. Little trouble and little responsibility rest on anyone, except on those members of the House who are charged with the administration of the finances. It is a very easy matter to form institutions having for their object the amelioration of this or of that class of people, so long as the State finds the money. There are any quantity of projects which will be brought forward, so long as the State will undertake to support them. There is scarcely a movement in this colony at the present

time that is not based on contributions from the public chest ; and, while this is all very well to a certain extent, it must be remembered that there is a limit to the public purse. Many people do not seem to believe that there is a limit: they seem to be under the impression that the Government have a bag full of gold, and all you have to do is to put your hand in the bag and take the gold out. The Government are not prepared to find the £20,000 necessary for the establishment of this institution ; therefore it seems to me that the best thing to do is to defer the matter for a while. If we could restrain those men who have lost their position owing to the love of strong drink, it would be a very good thing for them and for everyone else. There are many instances where men, sunk in the greatest depths of depravity brought about by drink, have become useful citizens. The Salvation Army is full of them. I am glad to think that such a great reform has been accomplished in many cases. The public money could not be spent in a much better way than in transforming a bad citizen into a good one. I do not suppose anyone would object to the motion itself, which proposes that we should do something in the way of legislation for reclaiming drunkards ; but legislation will be no good unless accompanied by a vote of public money, or unless the intention of the hon. member who moved the resolution is to work the institution on purely charitable lines, and only to ask the Government to provide the necessary authority. I do not know what his views are, whether he wants the Government to support the institution altogether, or whether he has some plan by which the Government should contribute pound for pound, or on what basis he proposes to work. People sometimes put me in a temper, expecting the Government to do things and to find all the money. If they are charitably inclined, they should make some effort themselves, and not ask the Government to do everything. We do not want to destroy all charitable effort in this colony. I certainly will not vote against the motion. I have no objection whatever to its being carried : at the same time I am sorry I cannot make any provision for it. Since the Estimates are closed, there is no room for

any contribution to this institution this session ; but at another time, perhaps, it may be done. I hope the idea will not go out that the Government are about to support this institution altogether. I do not know what the facts are in other colonies, but I doubt if these institutions are supported altogether by the Government. [A MEMBER : They are not.] Then why should we expect everything in this colony to be done by the State ? We have many rich men here, especially those who have made their fortunes out of the mines : they, no doubt, will endow the institution in some way. If I find there is a Bill in existence, I will consider whether it will be advisable to bring it down this session or not. I said, a little while ago, that I did not intend to do it, but I was not aware then that there was a Bill in existence. I am not of opinion that there are thousands of inebriates in this colony ; but however many there may be, how are you going to get them into the institution ? By their own free will or at the instance of a magistrate ? If the former is intended, I do not think you will succeed, because it is a great admission of weakness to start with, which few people would be inclined to make. I do not believe you would get many people to enter such an institution of their own free will, nor do I believe there are a great many in this colony who have given up the idea of working for their living, but through drink are simply loafers. I do not believe there are hundreds. I should be very sorry if it should go forth that, in a colony of only 160,000 people, there are thousands who are a burden to the State through the abuse of intoxicants. Even if it be so, it will be difficult to get hold of them. In the meantime, if the hon. member likes to go on with this motion, I shall not oppose it ; though I do not think it can be of any practical effect, this session.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison) : The number of inebriates in this colony is sufficient to make it desirable to do something in the direction suggested by the member for West Perth. I am sorry to say that, as population increases, there is a probability of this class of persons also increasing. The other colonies treat the drunkard as if he were a criminal. I object to that, and say that

inebriates should be treated not as criminals, but as suffering from a confirmed disease. During the absence of the Premier, a large and influential deputation waited on the acting Premier, and I think got from him an assurance that the Government would do something in this particular direction. Then when the Premier declared, in answer to the member for the Swan, that it was not the intention of the Government to take any action this session, it was assumed that the Government were not sympathetic, and did not intend to do anything in the matter. I presume it is the desire of the member for West Perth to elicit an opinion from this House as to whether something should be done in connection with this question. The difficulty which presents itself at the outset is: what sort of an institution is this inebriate asylum to be? Some people think that it should be a nice, comfortable home in the suburbs, where a gentleman afflicted with a craving for drink can go and get cured. I think that is a particularly visionary idea, because the first step that a gentleman in that condition would take, if placed in an inebriate retreat in the suburbs, would be to the public-house. An inebriate asylum must be in the nature of a prison, in which an individual can be forcibly detained. That being so, the question arises: what is the best course to pursue in the matter? This House would not agree to allow a magistrate to commit an individual to such an institution, without having control over the place. The kind of building that would be required, as the Premier has pointed out, could not be erected without the expenditure of a considerable sum of money. I do think it is within the range of the charity of the people of this colony to start an institution of this kind, and to show their interest in their fellow-men by putting their hands in their pockets to establish such a place. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] This is an entirely different kind of question from that we were speaking of in regard to hospitals, and the principles on which they should be supported. As every man in the community is at liberty to enter a hospital in case of necessity, I have argued before that such an institution should be supported out of the public funds; but this inebriate retreat for the care and treatment of

individuals who are sent to it, or go to it voluntarily as persons suffering from a disease, is essentially an institution which ought to be supported and managed as a public charity. Those who are interested in their fellow-men, and especially those taking part in the temperance movement, ought to regard the starting and maintenance of such institutions as coming especially within their province. If an inebriate retreat were established, it would be necessary to provide for a certain amount of restraint and oversight to be maintained for the proper treatment of persons entering into or committed to it; and in that respect it would be within the province of the Government to bring in a Bill, giving to magistrates power to commit a person convicted of habitual drunkenness, by offering him the choice of entering the inebriate retreat voluntarily for a period prescribed by the magistrate, or to commit him absolutely to the care of that institution; and if the offender left it before the prescribed period expired, it should be a condition that he must spend the remaining portion of that period in gaol. Such a method of dealing with habitual drunkards would greatly relieve magistrates who have to deal with such cases, and who feel the responsibility of sending to prison offenders whose real offence is that they are unable to take care of themselves; the magistrates knowing, as some of them admit they do, that a prison is not a proper place for such offenders. The Salvation Army does at present carry on a work of a somewhat similar kind, by taking an offender from a police court and relieving the justices from the necessity of sending the offender to prison. If an institution for dealing with inebriates were established, a large number of those persons who are now charged in police courts with offences arising out of habitual drunkenness might be dealt with most conveniently and effectively in the manner I have suggested; and I think that such an institution, managed in this way, would commend itself to the approval and support of the people generally. Any proposal in that direction ought to be well received by the Government and by this House; and some assistance might be granted out of the public purse. I hope the Government will bring in a Bill this session, if possible, for giving power to magistrates to com-

mit habitual drunkards to an inebriate retreat, if so formed. Of course the details will have to be worked out; but I do think the principle is a good one. I do not think the initiation of an institution of this kind should be the duty of the State; but a Bill will be required; and what we desire at this stage is that the Government will bring in a Bill, making it possible to establish such an institution, and giving the necessary authority for detaining persons under treatment, subject to the necessary conditions. I have had some conversation with those who are connected with the temperance movement, and we are prepared to say that we will do our best to establish such an institution as will commend itself to the State and the people of the colony; and we have no fear but that the Government, at the proper time and in a proper way, will give such assistance as the institution itself may deserve. I am expressing my own opinion, and that of persons interested in temperance work; and I am entirely in accord with the sentiments expressed by the Premier that such an institution should not be wholly dependent on the State. I want to impress on the Government the fact that, if we were to start such an institution to-morrow, we would require statutory power. It has been said by Mr. Justice Stone that he could not give his sympathy or assistance to such an institution as this, unless it had the necessary power of detention for proper treatment. Therefore, we want an Act that will give the necessary power, and framed in such a way as will ensure the full sympathy of all who are in favour of this movement. Then, after the institution proves itself worthy of the support of the Government, we have no doubt that Parliament and the Government will give to it the support which it will deserve, and which we desire it should receive.

MR. OLDHAM (North Perth): I regret to hear the remarks of the Premier, that the Government were in favour of this motion in the abstract, but were not prepared to place a sufficient sum of money on the Estimates to give it any practical effect. It appears to me that the practice which obtains in the other colonies is not one which should be very rigidly followed in this colony. I have

always understood—and I have endeavoured to understand this question—that habitual drunkenness is a disease, just as much as typhoid or cholera or any other serious malady is a disease; and I believe that the State could recognise very properly that it is a public duty to deal with a disease of this character in a way which is best calculated to eradicate that disease. It is not the duty of any philanthropic body to take the responsibility of stamping out this disease, if we are agreed that it is a disease. We have all been looking at the matter as if it were the duty of the Government to establish an inebriate retreat; and for a Government holding the purse-strings, the question appears to be: would an expenditure of money in this direction be remunerative, to any extent, directly or indirectly? I take it that, whilst it could never be said that this expenditure would be remunerative directly, yet it would be remunerative indirectly; because, by reclaiming any person who is afflicted with a disease of this character, and by making him a useful citizen, we are doing some good to the State indirectly. As far as the expense is concerned, I maintain that we do go to some expense for persons of this character even at present; and the illustration given by the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) very clearly showed that, for he showed that a magistrate could send a person to gaol for a period as a habitual drunkard. But we do not want a person to be sent to gaol for that offence, and we do not believe the gaol is the proper place for improving him. Some of the judges say the gaol is not a proper place for a man who is afflicted with such a disease as this, and they are in favour of sending him to a retreat. As far as expense is concerned, I believe that the expense of this kind of retreat or asylum might properly be charged to the particular traffic which is responsible for the disease, namely, the liquor traffic. I do not think it would be any hardship whatever upon the people who make money out of these unfortunates, if they were compelled to support the unfortunates while under treatment. I shall support the motion; and I believe we shall do some good, not only to the individual but to the country, in establishing a retreat of this character.

Question put and passed, without dissent.

At 6:12 p.m. the SPEAKER left the Chair.

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

MESSAGE (APPROPRIATION)—ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1897-8.

A Message from the Governor, transmitting the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the financial year 1897-8, was presented by the Premier and read.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

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

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Right Hon. Sir John Forrest) : Sir, It gives me very much pleasure to be in the position in which I find myself this evening, and to be able to place before hon. members the financial position of this colony. This is a year amongst years, in the history of our country and of our nation. It is the diamond jubilee year of the reign of Her Majesty the Queen; and we have in that a fact unexampled in our national history. We know that during this year from all parts of the world, from all nations of the world, including all the dependencies of the British Empire, congratulations and felicitations have gone to the mother country, to Her Majesty, expressing admiration for and sympathy with her in her long and beneficent reign as Queen of Great Britain. It is gratifying, too, that those congratulations and felicitations have gone to Her Majesty at a time when the British nation is probably more prosperous than it ever has been before. It must be a source of gratification to us in this distant portion of the empire, that the diamond jubilee year of the reign of Her Majesty should have been one that is satisfactory to us as a self-governing community; for we have also cause to rejoice that, looking around and throughout the length and breadth of this country, the year that we have passed and the year we have entered upon have been prosperous

ones. This is the eighth time that I have had the privilege of placing the financial position of this country before the House of Assembly of this colony. I have been in office, in my present position, owing to the support I have received in this House from hon. members, for nearly seven years; and during that time, as I have said, I have had the privilege of introducing eight Financial Statements for the consideration of hon. members. I need hardly say that those seven years have been years of anxiousness, not only for myself and for those who have been associated with me in the Government, but also I think years of anxiousness for hon. members who have sat in this House during that time. Although they have been years of anxiousness, they have also been years of development and of substantial advancement in the colony. It is not my purpose to-night to review those seven years. It would be altogether unnecessary for me to do so, because hon. members are as well aware of what has been done during that period as I am. My object to-night is to try and confine myself—and in that I shall have quite enough to do—to the financial year that is past, and to the financial year on which we have entered, over four months of which have already passed away. It would be of no use for me, on this occasion, to compare the present period with the period when we first obtained Responsible Government, because since that time things have altogether changed. A new community has arisen in this colony; as I will show later on, as compared with that which inhabited it seven years ago. Everything has changed, I think I may say, except the devotion of our people to the institutions of the colony and to the mother country, and our devotion to, and belief in, the land we live in. That has not changed.

Population and Increase.

In making my annual Financial Statements, I have been accustomed, in the years that are past, to take as my first subject that of population; and I think the course I have adopted in former years will be found a convenient one in this. There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that we want more population. We want especially that class of population who come to the colony with the intention

of settling here, and of making a home here. It goes without saying that, with the limited population we have at the present time, it is impossible for any very large number of people to find employment merely as labourers. There is a limit to the employing power of the country—there can be no doubt about that—and therefore what we want is to induce more people to come here with the intention of settling upon the land, where there is so much room for them, and where they would be able to supply the wants not only of this colony but of people in other parts of the world. There is a great difficulty as to how best to obtain population. There is the well-known plan of advertising the advantages which this colony offers to persons coming here; but even that plan is surrounded with difficulties. We have never attempted to do that in the Eastern colonies, because we thought it would not be friendly to do so, as they require population as much as we do here. The question of attracting population to the colony is a matter which should engage our attention, and we should not delay in giving it that attention. On the 30th June, 1896, the period I referred to when I made my Financial Statement last year, there were in the colony 122,420 persons, that being the estimated population then; and on the 30th June in this year, by the Registrar General's returns, there were in the colony 157,791 persons; so that in the twelve months from June, 1896, to June, 1897, there was an increase of 35,371 persons—an increase equal to nearly 3,000 a month for the whole year. A reference to the records will show that on the 30th June, 1896, the population was 32,870 more than on the 30th June, 1895, and that on the 30th June, 1897, it was 35,371 more than it was on the 30th June, 1896; also that during the first three months of this financial year, from 1st July to 30th September, the population has increased by 4,575 persons, so that our population on the 30th September this year was estimated by the Registrar General to be 162,394. Therefore, since I made my Financial Statement last year, having reference to June 30th, 1896, our population has increased by about 40,000 persons. I think that to be able to increase our population in one year and three months by 40,000 persons is a very good record

indeed, and one that should give us satisfaction. Hon. members will notice that during the seven years we have had the advantage of self-government, our population has very largely increased. It was something like 50,000 persons in the beginning of 1891—not quite 50,000 persons, for the census taken in April, 1891, gave the population as under that. In round numbers the population was then about 50,000 persons, and it is now, in round numbers, 162,000 persons. It will be seen, therefore, that the new immigrants coming to seek their fortune in this colony must, at the present time, be as two to one to every inhabitant who was here before 1891. I think it is a very important statement, that for every person who was in this colony in 1891, there are now two persons who were not here then; showing that I am justified in asserting that a new population has arisen in the colony.

Inducements to Immigrants.

When I was in England, a few months ago, I visited the great manufacturing centres of Leeds and Birmingham; I had an opportunity of seeing those great cities and the teeming populations who live and work in them; and I told the people of Leeds and also of Birmingham, as well as of other cities, on public occasions, that when I considered that so many hundreds of thousands of people lived on the small area of land occupied by the cities of Leeds and Birmingham, my thoughts could not but go away to the great colony in which I lived, and I could not but think how good a thing it would be for us, as also for the people of those cities, if some of them would come to the colony of Western Australia and take part in building it up, in becoming permanent settlers, in cultivating its lands, and in developing its resources. I also told them that there was plenty of room for them and for their families, and plenty of opportunity to obtain not only the necessities but also the comforts of life. That thought must strike any one who travels about the world, sees the crowded cities in the old countries, and recollects that these wide lands we own here are to a large extent unutilised and unpopulated. We must try and do everything we can to alter this state of affairs, and to settle

people upon the lands of the colony. We must be more liberal than we ever have been before, more liberal than any other country, in regard to the alienation of land, so long as we can get it utilised. Our great aim must be—I am sure I am giving good advice in this matter—to try and fix a settled population upon the lands of the colony.

Revenue of the Past Year.

As you all know, the revenue of the colony for last year, ended June 30th, 1897, was estimated at £2,425,000. The actual revenue received was £2,842,751; so that we received last year £417,751 more than we estimated we would receive, and the revenue we received last year exceeded the revenue received the previous year by no less a sum than £984,056. It was an enormous revenue, no doubt, but although we received it we did not hoard it—it was all expended, as I will show later on. If, as is often said by hon. members and by others, the people are heavily taxed because the revenue is so great, my reply is that the Government are only distributors: they receive the revenue, but they spend it in providing employment for the people and in the construction of public works, and in doing everything we can to develop the resources of this great colony. The principal excesses over the estimates were on Customs—we estimated to receive £908,000, and we received £1,087,257, so that we exceeded the estimate by £179,257. In land revenue, I am glad to say, we received £67,125 more than we estimated. We estimated to receive £118,000, and we actually received £185,125. That was largely due to the sale of Crown lands on the goldfields, from which a large revenue was received. The receipts from mining did not reach the estimate. We estimated to receive £255,500, and we actually received £212,407, leaving a deficit of £43,093. For postages we estimated to receive £82,000, while the actual receipts amounted to £100,434, giving a surplus of £18,434. That, I think, is satisfactory, as the Postal revenue is a very good index of what is going on. For telegrams we estimated to receive £120,000, and we actually received £99,820. We did not receive last year, therefore, on this

head as much as we expected to receive by £22,180. The railway revenue was a remarkable one, amounting to £200,325 more than we anticipated. The estimate was £734,000, and the amount actually received was £934,325. I will deal with the question of railways generally later on. The stamp revenue did not come up to the estimate by £5,032. We estimated to receive £80,000, and the receipts amounted to £74,968. I suppose there were not so many transactions in land or mining, or in those branches of business from which stamp revenue was anticipated. It will therefore be seen that Customs, Lands, and Railways were the principal sources from which the excess of revenue over the estimate was received. If we compare the revenue received for the year ending June 30th, 1897, which was £2,842,751, with the revenue received for the previous year, which was £1,858,695, it will be found that there was an increase of £984,056.

Expenditure of the Past Year.

Comparing the expenditure of the year ending June 30, 1897, which was £2,839,453, with the expenditure for the previous year, which was £1,823,863, we find that there was a remarkable increase over the previous year of £1,015,590. It seems to be almost fabulous that the revenue in one year should exceed the revenue of the previous year by nearly one million, and that the expenditure should exceed that of the previous year by over one million. We commenced the year beginning 1st July, 1896, with a credit balance of £312,064; we received during the year £2,842,751; so that we had available for expenditure during the year ended June 30, 1897, the sum of £3,154,815. We spent during the financial year ended 30th June last, 1897, £2,839,453; so that we had at the end of the year, the 30th June, to the credit of consolidated revenue £315,362. Notwithstanding the great expenditure and the enormous transactions, we had, at the end of June, £3,298 more than we had at the beginning of the financial year; and we had therefore £315,362 to our credit, instead of, as I had estimated, £16,673, when I introduced the Estimates on the 27th August, 1896. Therefore, notwithstanding the great increase of revenue and of expendi-

ture, these facts show that a tight hand has been kept on the financial position of the country, and that at the end of the year we were in a better position than at the beginning. The estimated expenditure for the year ending 30th June, 1897, was £2,720,390, while the actual expenditure was £2,839,453; so that we expended last year only £119,063 more than the estimate. Of this amount £103,196 was expended on railways, consequent on the large amount earned; because the expenditure is in proportion to the amount earned on our railways. Then on the Medical vote we spent £39,499 more than the estimate; and of course hon. members know there were great demands on the public purse in regard to this vote, such as hospital maintenance on the gold-fields, and taking care of those who were sick and in want. On Customs there was a small increase of £5,323; on Miscellaneous, an increase of £119,087; on Lands and Surveys, an increase of £13,830; on Mines, an increase of £22,596; and on Police, an increase of £7,098. There were underdrafts compensating for these excesses, namely on Public Works an underdraft of £101,901; on Public Buildings, £62,785; and under the head of Charitable, the underdraft was £869, which I think is very satisfactory. It is an important feature that the Charitable vote was not exceeded last year; and this shows, at any rate, that while large numbers of people have come to the colony, a great proportion of them are strong and self-reliant. The underdraft for Postal was £10,731; and for Education the underdraft was £12,803. The net result of the excess expenditure, taking the underdrafts from the overdrafts, was £119,063. This excess is not very much, when one looks at the transactions for the year, and at the new avenues of expenditure which must arise in a growing and progressive colony.

Post Office Savings Bank.

Having stated what I desired to say in regard to the revenue and expenditure, I will now deal with a few other heads, before I come to the financial proposals for the current year. Firstly, I will make a few remarks about the Savings Bank—an institution, as hon. members are aware, which is doing a great deal of good, very quietly, in the colony. It is

much availed of by the people of the country, and is managed very cheaply. Those who invest in it get 3 per cent. upon their daily balance. Formerly we allowed interest at $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., until we found we were losing money by this rate; for it was not possible to invest all the deposit money available, because we had to keep a certain amount at call. During the last few years we have not been able to make as good an arrangement for the Government balance held at the Bank as formerly and consequently there was a difficulty in making both ends meet. That being so, we had to reduce the interest on the daily current account from three and three-quarters to three per cent., the rate we allow now on deposits in the Savings Bank. On the 30th June, 1896, we owed to depositors in the Savings Bank £460,610, and on the 30th June, 1897, we owed to depositors £856,083; so that in twelve months the deposits in the Savings Bank had increased by £395,473. This does not show that the people here are in poor circumstances; on the contrary, does it not show that, during the year, careful people among the humbler classes. I believe, as a rule, have been able to place £395,473 more in the Savings Bank than was placed in it on 30th June, 1896. This Savings Bank is carrying on a good work; it is managed cheaply because the Post Office officials do the work at a very small cost. There are 38 Savings Banks in the colony, and no doubt more will be established soon. During the year there were deposits entered in the Savings Bank amounting to £1,068,322, and there were withdrawals during the same period of £690,183. These are considerable transactions when over a million of money is deposited and nearly three-quarters of a million is withdrawn in one year. During the same year there were 129,699 deposits, averaging £8 4s. 8d. each; and there were 44,337 withdrawals, averaging £15 11s. 4d. each; so that the transactions do not seem to be in such very small figures, after all. There were 24,783 accounts opened and 14,626 accounts closed, and there were remaining, at the end of the year, 26,317 open accounts. We paid £17,334 in interest to the depositors during the year. I think this record I have given of the

transactions of this very important institution, working quietly in our community, shows of itself that there is great vitality in the people and in the country. While we have assisted these depositors by taking care of their money, giving them an undoubted security, and paying them £17,334 in interest, this institution has also done good to the colony in other ways. It has lent to the Metropolitan Waterworks Board (Perth) £350,000, which bears interest at four per cent.; and it has also lent to the Loan Account of the Government £300,000; so that we have been doing a good turn to the colony through the agency of this bank, as well as assisting the people who have invested their small savings in the bank. Last year, ending 30th June, 1896, the Government lost on the transactions of this bank £2,638, a result which was unsatisfactory; but this year, I am glad to say, we have made a profit of £2,491, which no doubt is caused chiefly by the Government having taken £300,000, and by the loan to the Metropolitan Waterworks Board of £350,000, this money bearing interest at four per cent. On the 30th September, 1891—about nine months after Responsible Government was introduced into this colony—the total amount invested in the Savings Bank was only £44,269; but on the 30th September, 1897—six years afterwards—the amount in the Savings Bank was £989,748. This increase indicates, I think, the change that has come over the colony.

Banking Transactions in the Colony.

It is usual for me to make a short reference to the banking institutions doing business in the colony. I may inform hon. members that on the 30th June, 1896, there was gold in all the banks of the colony to the amount of £2,305,401; and on June 30th of this year there was gold in the banks to the extent of £2,347,889. It will be seen that this is an increase of only £42,488, showing that the banking institutions had about the same amount of gold in their coffers at the end of last year as they had this. The deposits in the banks have decreased during the year by £219,316; the deposits on the 30th June, 1896, being £4,347,572, and on the 30th June this year £4,128,256. The reason, no doubt, that the deposits have decreased

a little, is that the banks have lent more money, and I think that is a good sign. The advances made by the banks, as shown on the 30th June, 1896, were £2,720,086, and the advances made by the banks, as shown on the 30th June, 1897, were £3,377,237; so that the indebtedness of the people of the colony to the local banks in one year increased £657,151. I think that is an important fact, because it is a good sign in many ways. It shows that the banks have been willing to lend more money to the people of the colony, and it shows that these institutions have greater confidence in the prosperity and resources of the colony to the extent of nearly three-quarters of a million of money in one year.

The Agricultural Bank.

There is another institution working in the colony, of which I may say a word or two. That, too, like the Savings Bank, is working quietly; it is working economically; and I have no doubt hon. members have read, with interest, the encouraging report of the manager. I refer to the Agricultural Bank. Up to the 30th June, 1897, having been a little over two years in existence, it had advanced and promised to advance a total of £52,425; and, as a condition of those advances, improvements had either been made, or will soon all be made, to the value of £104,186. There has been an increase of 24,000 acres under cultivation, through the agency of this bank, and 435 properties have been improved by its aid. This, in my opinion, is but the beginning of the great and noble work this bank will do. It will do what Dean Swift said was better than all that politicians could do—it will make two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before, and will make two ears of corn grow where none grew before. What is the object of this bank? It is to subdue the wilderness, and plant happy and prosperous homes in this country. Its object is, as I have often said, to plant “a bold peasantry, their country’s pride,” on the soil; and I believe this bank will largely assist in obtaining and securing this desirable class of population.

Imports of the past Year.

Now we come to the question of imports and exports for the past year, and the

figures unfold a tale which will astonish many people. I do not mean to say the figures will astonish hon. members, because they have had the opportunity, and will have taken advantage of the opportunity, of reading the report of the Collector of Customs, which is always read with interest, because it contains much valuable information. The imports for the year ended 31st December, 1896, were valued at £6,493,557, as against £3,774,951 for the previous year; showing an increase of imports in one year to the extent of £2,718,606. Of that large amount, goods to the value of £4,105,142 were imported from the eastern colonies, while we exported to those colonies only £962,959 in value. We often read, in newspapers of the eastern colonies, remarks adverse to Western Australia; but if the people there knew, as they ought to know that we import over four million pounds' worth of goods from them in one year, they should surely see that we in this colony are doing them a good turn, as well as trying to build up our own colony. Out of six and a half millions' worth of imports, goods to the value of about two and a half millions were imported duty free. I want hon. members to remember that distinction; for, notwithstanding the cry that has been got up that this country is heavily taxed, there is the fact that out of six and a half million pounds' worth of imports last year, two and a half millions were admitted duty free. The figures I have quoted show that, while we have been helping ourselves, we have also been helping our fellow colonists on the eastern side of Australia, and also the people in the mother country. Our trade, both imports and exports, is almost entirely with British communities. We do not trade to any large extent with any other but our own race.

Exports of the Past Year.

Our exports for the year ending December 31, 1896, were £1,650,226, while for the year 1895 the exports were £1,332,554. Thus we have an increase of exports during the last year equal to 24 per cent. Our exports are not very numerous, I regret to say. We must try to alter that, and build up a large export trade, because we cannot always go on having imports

without corresponding exports. Gold, of course, is the principal export. We have also wool, timber, pearls, pearlshells, sandalwood, and some other items. The value of the wool exported for the year 1896 was greater than that of 1895 by £83,996. That is satisfactory, knowing as we do the great difficulties which pastoralists in the Northern parts of the colony, and in the Eastern parts too, had to encounter through the very dry seasons. I wish to inform hon. members, in comparing these figures, that the report of the Collector of Customs is not for the financial year ending the 30th June, 1896, but for the year ending 31st December. The total value of the import and export trade of the colony for the year ended 31st December, 1896, was £8,143,783, and of that immense trade, only £185,841 worth was done with foreign countries. No one can say in regard to our trade that we have not been desirous in the past, as we are at present, to "follow the flag."

Land Settlement and Free Homestead Farms.

I desire now to make a few observations in regard to land settlement. In my opinion, land settlement is one of the greatest works before us. We have to reclaim the wilderness, and make this country productive. At the end of 1895, the conditional purchases under deferred payments represented 525,019 acres; and at the end of 1896, the acres thus held amounted to 628,545; so that the area under conditional purchases was increased in one year by 103,526 acres. Up to the 30th September of this year, that acreage had been further increased by 234,410 acres; and this I regard as a most satisfactory statement. Besides those conditional purchases, there were 214 free homestead farms, containing 30,704 acres, taken up during 1896; and this fact shows that the free homestead farm system, in which I have taken so much interest, in the face of a good deal of adverse comment, may be regarded as a success. I maintain that it is a good system, and I believe the free homestead system is the best ever introduced into the colony. A similar system has settled the great countries of America and Canada; and, with proper working here, I believe it will also settle Western Australia. The best advertisement this

country has is that when a man lands at the port of Fremantle or Albany he sees placards informing him that he can have 160 acres of land for nothing in any part of the country set apart for that purpose. I have said that 214 free homestead farms, representing 30,704 acres, were taken up in 1896, but I have to add that, for the first nine months of the year 1897, there were applied for and granted in addition 439 free homestead farms, representing 65,075 acres. That is a most satisfactory record. It is possible that some of the persons who took up these homestead farms were already settled in the colony; but the chances are that nearly all these applicants were new to the country and they practically represent 439 new settlers. This record of land settlement during the last ten months, taken alone, shows conclusively that the colony is moving ahead in real earnest.

Pastoral Occupation.

At the end of 1896, the area held under pastoral lease was 83 million acres, as against 85 million acres at the end of 1895. I am sorry the record in regard to pastoral development is not so satisfactory as that in regard to agricultural settlement. Pastoralists have had hard times, of which no doubt the principal causes were the low prices of wool and bad seasons. The Government propose to submit to the House a new land Bill more liberal to the pastoralists than those at present in existence. We propose to liberalise the land laws by lowering rents, and by giving an extended term of lease. We are already giving better facilities for shipping at all the ports on the coast, from Fremantle northward to Wyndham; and when we lower the rents and give a better tenure, I hope that even with bad seasons, which I hope will not recur, the pastoralists will be able to do better than they have done in the past. The banking, mortgage, and financial institutions have not, so far as I can see, dealt with the pastoral industry in the way they should; and before I leave this subject, I wish to again express a hope that these institutions will not continue to pursue what I may describe as a suicidal policy. I advised those institutions, long ago, to try and instil hope into the people, by

granting terms which would offer to the pastoralists some prospect of recovering from their embarrassment. But interest heaped on compound interest seems to be the order of the day. Even those institutions which reduced the interest by a half per cent. have not dealt with the position in a way to do good to themselves or to the pastoralists who are unfortunately situated. The Government are quite willing to do their share in putting the pastoral industry on a better footing; and, for their own ultimate benefit, the financial institutions should assist in the work.

Live Stock and Cultivation.

I am sorry to have to record that there is no increase of stock for 1896 over that of 1895; and I suppose this is about the only statement I shall have to make that is not absolutely satisfactory. The number of stock is about the same, or, at any rate, it is not very much less. The natural increase has been about equal to the loss, and the returns towards the end of 1896 are somewhat the same as towards the end of 1895. In regard to cultivation, a new system has been instituted of collecting returns, or, at any rate, of analysing and compiling returns of stock and land under cultivation in the colony. No doubt the new system is much better than the old; but the returns having been made in an altogether different way previously as compared with the method used in the last returns, a serious difficulty is put in the way of making comparisons. I have, however, done my best, and will give hon. members the results. In 1895 there were 97,821 acres under crop; in 1896, according to the returns received, there were 111,738; showing an increase of only 13,917 acres under cultivation. I do not believe this quantity represents the actual increase that has taken place, though there are the figures; but when we get to the next year, the beginning of 1898, these returns being usually made early in the year, we will be able to say how the work of 1897 compares with the work of 1896. In 1895 there was a total of 51,550 acres under fallow, cleared or partially cleared and ringbarked. The several kinds were then all lumped together, and a total of 51,550 acres was the result; while in 1896, there appears, by the returns before me to-day, to be a total of 429,351 acres

under these heads. There certainly has been an enormous advance of between three and four hundred thousand acres in regard to fallow, cleared or partially cleared and ringbarked, and I think the results will show up well when we get the report of our next year before us. I need hardly say that, my hon. friend and colleague, the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. G. Throssell), has shown great interest in this important work. His great desire, as it is mine, is to see a contented people living upon their own land in this country; and I believe that, with his energy, knowledge, and enthusiasm, he will be able to bring about a great improvement in regard to land settlement throughout the colony.

Railway Revenue and Expenditure—Remarkable Results.

I now come to a very interesting part of the past year's record, dealing with railways and tramways. I have already told hon. members how very successful, from a railway point of view, the last financial year has been. The revenue we received from railways and tramways last year was £939,146; and the expenditure we made on account of railways and tramways was only £580,146, so that we had a saving on the year's transactions, on account of railways and tramways, of £359,000. This is a very gratifying record. Of course, it may be said—and my hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways (Hon. F. H. Piesse) will explain this matter when he comes to deal with it in the Estimates—that some portion of the improvements, which might fairly have been charged against revenue, were made from loan funds; but I have no reason to think that such was the case. At any rate, we have the fact in our public accounts that the Railway Department, which on its own account would rather, I think, spend some of its earnings upon improvements than hand them over to the general revenue of the colony, contributed no less a sum than £359,000 to the general revenue, after paying all expenses, except interest and sinking fund on capital account.

Railway Revenue and Expenditure for Financial Year 1897-8.

Referring now to the financial year on which we have entered, I may say

that for the year ending 30th June, 1898, the estimated revenue from railways is £1,200,000, and from tramways £3,820; so that from railways and tramways we expect to receive in the financial year £1,203,820. The estimated expenditure for the same period is £866,396; and in this estimate of expenditure the Commissioner of Railways has allowed £97,000 for improvements and renewals of existing lines, which cannot be properly charged to maintenance. The profit for the year is therefore estimated at £337,424; and it is a remarkable and important fact that this estimated saving on the current year's transactions is just £302 less than the interest and sinking fund required for all the public debt of the colony. Therefore we have the fact that, after paying £97,000 for improvements, we expect this year to effect a sufficient saving on our railway business to pay, within £302, the whole of the interest and the sinking fund payable on account of all the money which the Government owe, in the shape of loans, Treasury bills, or otherwise. I think this fact reflects great credit upon the untiring efforts of my friend the Commissioner of Railways (The Hon. F. H. Piesse), and his officers, and it also reflects great credit on the General Manager, (Mr. J. Davies), who has an immense business under his control to carry on. When, however, results like these, which prove that our railways are not only able to pay the interest and sinking fund for the railway debt, which is not more than five millions, but are able also to pay the interest and sinking fund on all the whole public debt of the colony, which are over seven millions, there is good cause for satisfaction. When I also tell hon. members that this sum includes the interest and sinking fund on our purchase of the Great Southern Railway, as well as on all our railways, I think it will be very gratifying, not only to members of this House, but to the people of the colony. It comes to this, that we have all the advantages of cheap, rapid, and certain means of communication, while at the same time the railways pay their way, and not only pay their way, but this year are estimated to contribute to the general revenue of the colony enough to pay the interest and sinking fund on the whole public debt. This

gratifying result is, of course, also largely due to the cheapness of our railway construction, under the able administration of the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. C. Y. O'Connor), and consequently the smallness of the capital account, on which interest and sinking fund has to be paid.

Works Constructed out of Loan Funds.

I should like to refer briefly to the works constructed out of loan funds during last year. We spent last year out of loan funds on the public works a total of £1,519,995. Of this sum we spent £202,770 on the Fremantle Harbour Works; we spent £49,970 on the Murchison railway, and £59,533 on the Southern-Cross-Kalgoorlie railway; we also spent a small sum, £2,533, on the Menzies railway; we spent £37,931 on the Bridgetown railway; £28,560 on the Collie coalfield railway; £616 on the Kanowna railway; £525,798 on improvements and additions to existing railway lines; £10,467 on railway workshops; £537 on the Fremantle Slip; £108,526 on the development of gold-fields; £273,479 on railway rolling stock, and £94,816 on rails and fastenings; £11,516 on roads and bridges; £10,110 on the development of agriculture; £10,821 on water supply and sewerage for towns; £3,138 on immigration; £4,813 on light-houses; £71,407 on departmental expenses; £10,327 on miscellaneous, and small sums on several other works; making a total of £1,519,995. All these works, or nearly all, are still in hand, and will be carried on without interruption until completed; and it goes without saying that the expenditure on all these works must be providing employment for a large number of people all over the colony.

Obtaining Money by Loan.

Hon. members, I am sure, will not require to be told by me that, with this large expenditure on account of loans, together with the many calls that have been made upon the Government during the year, some difficulty was experienced in providing sufficient funds to keep all these works going. This however we succeeded in doing. The difficulty for a short time only, I am glad to say, was increased by the action of the West Australian Land Company, in publicly floating the Government bonds handed to them in payment for

the Great Southern Railway and lands, which, no doubt, did act prejudicially against the price of our stock in London. I may say that this proceeding on the part of the company was a surprise to me, as I had all along understood that one of the advantages held out to the Government in the offer to take 3 per cent. bonds at par, was that it would avoid going on the public market with a loan. I freely admit that the placing of that stock upon the market, contrary to the understanding, in fact contrary to any idea, that we had at the time we made the bargain, did us some harm. The course pursued, as I pointed out in London, was unknown, and to me unexpected. There is no more reason why we should have expected that particular stock to have been placed on the market, after we handed it over, than for someone to buy the whole of the issue of any colonial Government which placed a loan on the market, and in the next week or the week after to place the same bonds again publicly on the market. I asked the question in London, and found that such a course was altogether unknown—that loan stock, being once sold, went upon the market through brokers and others. I found that the course followed by those who sold the Grand Trunk Railway to the Tasmanian Government was the course we adopted in dealing with the West Australian Land Company and that the Tasmanian stock never was advertised for tender as ours was. Although I do not wish to exaggerate or over-estimate the harm that this transaction did us, I am quite willing to admit that it did some harm. However, it is useless to refer further to this matter. It is all past now, and I think, perhaps, that the less we say about it the better. We cannot undo what has been done. We were certainly misled; but I am quite sure that any harm which was done to the country at that time has all passed away now, and our financial position at the present time is in no way affected by the occurrence that took place early in the year.

Borrowing for Unproductive Works—not desirable at present.

In regard to the borrowing of money for new projects, and to the demands

made upon the Consolidated Revenue Fund, hon. members must recognise, as I have to recognise every day, and as the people of this colony ought to recognise, and must recognise, that works which will not pay must, for the present, stand aside. Unless hon. members are prepared to say, in regard to new works, that they will be remunerative and will pay, such works must stand aside for the present. Some necessary works, such as hospitals, and other like institutions, are not intended to pay; but railways and works of that character are on a different footing; and even if it can be shown that these works are likely to pay, it may not always be convenient, financially, that they should be commenced. Governments cannot always go to the market for money; and this Government cannot go to the market more often than the people who buy our loans are willing to take our securities. I would like to tell everyone in the colony that, although our revenue is so enormous, the demands upon it are also enormous. I would also like to say that there is a bottom to the Government purse. Our revenue having increased so much, in recent years, it seems impossible to make some people believe that the Government purse has a bottom. I do not complain, because when the revenue is increasing at such a rate as it has increased during the last few years, and when the Government have undertaken so many public works out of revenue, there may be some justification for people thinking that there is no limit to the amount of money at the service of the Government.

Results in Seven Years.

During the last seven years we have certainly done very well. If any private individual could show such a balance-sheet as we can show, I think he ought to be satisfied. We commenced in 1891 with a credit balance of £45,600, and on the 30th June last, after having undertaken so many public works out of revenue, there was a credit balance of £315,362. Looking backward and forward, as we are all able to do, I think there is good cause to be satisfied. We have been doing a great work in this colony: we have been trying to subdue the wilderness and to open it up by railways, by

telegraphs, and by every available means—trying to make this country a better place to live in than it was. We have had anxieties and troubles, it is true—a great and growing business cannot be carried on even by Governments without trouble and much anxiety; but we must rejoice that, thus far, we have been able to successfully overcome all the difficulties that have arisen.

The Future Estimate of Revenue for 1897-8.

I have now dealt with the past. It was a long duty, and the past is never so interesting as the future; but in a Financial Statement one has to review the year that is past before dealing with the year which is before us. The estimated revenue for the year ending 30th June, 1898, is £3,008,000. The revenue which we received last year was £2,842,751, so that the Government anticipate receiving, in the current financial year, £165,249 more than they received last year. We hope to obtain from Customs £1,065,000, which will be £12,257 less than we received last year, owing as you are aware to the Remission of Duties Act which was passed last year, providing for the introduction of machinery and other mining appliances and many other articles free of duty. The Customs revenue may fairly be expected, therefore, to be less than it was during the previous year. In Land revenue we expect to receive £177,800, being £7,325 less than we received last year. In Mining we expect to receive £125,000, showing a considerable falling off, amounting to £87,407. The reason for the decrease is that there has not been so much of what is called "booming," of late. The people have not been taking up leases everywhere hap-hazard, as they did last year, and one result is that there will not be so much revenue from this source. The Stamp revenue I estimate at £61,000, being less than the revenue received last year by £13,968. The Government do not wish to estimate more than we expect to receive; we desire to estimate only the exact amounts we think we are likely to obtain. We, however, expect an increase from Railways, amounting to £265,675, the estimated revenue from which source is £1,200,000. We also expect an increase of £19,566 from Postages, etc.; the total revenue from this source being estimated

at £120,000. Hon. members will notice that, on some of the items, we estimate to receive less than last year, whereas on others we expect to receive more. I may say that as we expect to receive £3,008,000 from revenue, and as we had, on the 30th June, a balance of £315,362 to our credit on the Consolidated Revenue account, it follows that we shall have an estimated total of £3,323,362 available for expenditure. Our estimate of the expenditure for this year is £3,319,454; so that if we get all the revenue we expect to get and spend all the money we expect to spend, at the end of the financial year, ending 30th June next, we shall have a credit balance of £3,908.

Future Expenditure—Estimate for 1897-8.

I will now deal with the proposed expenditure. It exceeds the actual expenditure that we made last year by £480,001. Hon. members will see from this that the reports which have been current as to the Government curtailing expenditure, and that the expenditure is to be less for this year than it was before, are incorrect so far as the consolidated revenue is concerned. We expect to spend, this year, from Consolidated Revenue, £480,001 more than we spent last year. The statutory payments on account of interest on loans, and Treasury bills and the Sinking Fund on Loans amounts this year to £337,726, and if to this is added the Civil list and other charges, the statutory payments will this year amount to £363,309. In the remarks I am making to-night, I do not intend to say anything in regard to salaries. They are details we can deal with when we consider the Estimates in due course, and hon. members can then ask all the questions they like, and I hope we will be able to give satisfactory explanations. There are very few increases in the salaries for this year. There are some small ones, however, for the lower officers, but we have not been able, this year, owing to the heavy demands made upon us, to go in for any large increases, and I do not think it is necessary, as we have been increasing salaries for many years past. No doubt they were very low in 1891, but still I think it is unreasonable for civil servants to expect an increase every year. A great necessity exists, for a Civil Service Act governing the salaries of

officers, so that a civil servant, on entering a certain grade, may know what salary he is to receive. Increases of salary should be granted on some established principle. The plan, which prevails at present to a very large extent, of salaries being at the mercy of the head of the department, sometimes at the will of the Minister, though that happens very seldom, is not a plan which we can approve of or commend. We propose to expend £56,591 on Miscellaneous services; last year we spent £170,238 for Miscellaneous services, which was increased by purchases of land, grants to municipalities, sanitation grants, and many other services. We hope this year not to expend so much under this head, and the estimate is therefore much less this year than last. For municipal subsidies there is a sum on the Estimates of £36,000. Last year £34,833 was expended, and I am afraid the sum named will not be sufficient for the requirements of the municipalities. If the municipalities go on increasing as they have done lately, I am afraid the Government will not be able to stand the £ for £ subsidy. I recognise that this is a contribution which does a great deal of good, but I must impress municipalities with the fact that the Government cannot give more than £ for £. At present this grant is taken as a matter of course, and attempts are made to obtain grants from the Government in addition, for doing municipal work such as making streets, footpaths, and other works; and although we desire to help municipalities, the finances of the country will not stand such large demands being made upon them. Therefore the sooner municipalities recognise that they should be satisfied with the £ for £ subsidy and ask for nothing more, the better.

Public Works Expenditure—Estimate.

I now come to a large item—the estimate of the expenditure on public works. There are three main divisions in regard to the Railways and Public Works Department. The Railways I have already dealt with. There remain the estimates of expenditure for the Public Works and for Works and Buildings. We propose to spend £474,454 on public works out of consolidated revenue. Last year we spent £384,339, showing a proposed increase of £90,115,

as compared with the previous year. On Roads and Bridges we propose to expend £151,224, which includes £50,000, which is the ordinary grant for some years past to the various roads boards of the colony. There are so many particulars in this Roads vote distribution, that I cannot refer to it in detail. When hon. members look at the list of Roads and Bridges in the Estimates, they will see what care has been taken to allot this money, and that we have done our best to supply the wants of all parts of the colony. On Harbours and Rivers we intend to expend £136,090, including the completion of the following Jetties, Ashburton Jetty, £11,700; Broome £15,200; Carnarvon Jetty, £15,000; Derby Jetty, £3,000; Esperance Jetty, £9,000; Bunbury Harbour Works (second grant), £30,000; Maud's Landing, £4,000; Port Hedland Jetty, £10,000; improvements at Wyndham, £2,000; and we intend to expend upon alterations and repairs, £9,000. With regard to the Bunbury Harbour Works, I may say that work is being carried out expeditiously, and it will, I believe, be a complete success. The total amount to be expended on the work is £100,000; £21,366 was expended last year; and we propose to expend another £30,000 this year. Hon. members who join us to-morrow in visiting Bunbury for the annual show, will see these harbour works, and if members are not then satisfied with the way in which the works are being carried out, they will have good reason to move for striking the item off the estimate, when it comes up for consideration. On the Goldfields Water Supply, which is distinct from the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Supply scheme, we propose to expend £60,500 from revenue. We have also, on Loan Accounts, £85,189 legally available for this purpose, and we propose to provide by re-appropriation (the Bill for which will be on the table in a few days) £113,000 more; so that the total amount from loans and from consolidated revenue, available for the Goldfields Water Supply for the year, will be £258,689. As I have said, this has nothing to do with the Coolgardie Water Scheme, but has to do with water supply generally throughout the goldfields. Out of this £60,500 which we have on the Estimates for water supply, we propose to expend

£22,500 on the Murchison and Peak Hill goldfields, £9,500 for Pilbarra, and £21,000 on the Eastern goldfields, besides expenditure for water supply on the Ashburton, Gascoyne, and Kimberley goldfields. We have also made provision for water supply for Fremantle and other towns, on which we intend to expend £17,754. There is also provision on the Estimates of £7,000 for Owen's Anchorage railway, and £3,000 for the railway survey from Pinjarrah to Marradong, also a sum of £1,312 for the railway survey from Northam to Goomalling. With regard to these projected railways to Marradong and Goomalling, I may say these lines have not yet been submitted to this House for approval, except as to the surveys; and the Government do not propose to make provision this year for proceeding with the construction of these two railways, but only for the surveys. I do not think it is reasonable, or within our financial arrangements, for us at the present time to undertake the construction of these works; and all along it has been intended that these two railways—certainly the one from Northam to Goomalling—should be constructed out of revenue. I am sorry I am not able to make any further promise to my friends in regard to these lines, as there is no room on the Estimates for the works. They will have to stand over, for the present, and I do not think anyone has any real cause for complaint, because Parliament has never approved, nor been asked to approve, of anything further than the surveys being made. We are making provision to the extent of £30,000 on the Estimates for the railway to Greenhills (York district), this being the first railway to be built out of the consolidated revenue of the colony. The Government are anxious that the Bunbury harbour works, the railway to Greenhills, and all the jetties and wharves from Fremantle to Wyndham, having been begun to be built out of revenue, shall still be carried on and completed out of the consolidated revenue; and I shall be very loth to ask the House to approve of any portion of these works being constructed out of loan.

Public Buildings—Estimate of Expenditure.

I now come to the Public Buildings vote, and I may inform hon. members

that the estimated expenditure for public buildings throughout the colony is £553,664, as against £421,139 last year. Hon. members will see there is no falling off as regards the provision for public buildings. The demand made on the public purse in regard to them is an increase of £132,525; and I can assure hon. members that every one of these items have been scrutinised by myself and the Director of Public Works, and by the heads of all the departments, in order to limit the expenditure as much as we could. We propose to spend £553,664 on public buildings, and included in this total are hospitals and quarantine stations, £73,800; I will give you some of the items. Additions and repairs to existing buildings, £7,000; Albany quarantine station, £8,500; Bunbury hospital, £5,000; Geraldton hospital, £6,000; Perth hospital, £10,000; Kalgoorlie hospital, £3,750; Coolgardie hospital, £4,700; Marble Bar hospital, £2,000; Beverley hospital, £2,300; and Whitby new asylum (a beginning), £3,000. There are numerous other items, but I am anxious not to weary hon. members by stating them all. We intend to spend £55,991 on Police Stations and quarters, including Fremantle £5,000; Cossack, £3,500; Bardoc, £1,500; Beaconsfield, £1,600; Black Flag, £1,450; Boulder, £1,900; Bunbury, £1,600; Esperance, £1,000; Hall's Creek, £1,300; Kalgoorlie, £1,750; Wyndham, £3,500; Derby, £1,000, and many other places throughout the colony, which hon. members will be able to see when they have the Estimates before them. There is also an amount of £4,000 set down for additions and repairs to existing police stations. Provision is also made on the Estimates for the Perth Observatory, £5,000; Perth Public Library buildings, £9,000; Cossack Customs buildings, £3,300; Esperance Bounded Store and Magazine, £1,868; Perth Railway Bond, £4,603; Government Store at North Fremantle, £9,500; and many other items. We also provide £15,000 for the Royal Mint, also for machinery £6,500, making a total of £21,500 for the Mint. In regard to the Mint, I may say that every effort is being made by the Government to push on with the work, and we hope in a few months to be making our own sovereigns. The day the Mint is completed will be one of rejoicing, as far

as I am concerned. The building will be finished, I am told, by the 1st March; and when the Mint is completed and open for business, I think we shall have the "hall mark" placed on this colony as a gold producer. We propose to spend a total of £28,600 on court-houses: including the court-house at Albany, £5,250; Beverley court-house, £1,900; Fremantle court-house, £2,500; Geraldton court-house, £9,000; and Mount Magnet court-house, £2,200. We propose also to make a beginning with the Perth Supreme Court. On Post and Telegraph offices throughout the colony we propose to spend £76,080, including the following:—At Balladonia, a new and euphonious name, it is intended to expend £4,000, at Broome, £2,600; Busselton, £2,000; Carnarvon, £2,000; Coolgardie, £5,500, and Eucla, £7,000. There is an agreement with the South Australian Government in regard to the telegraph office at Eucla, by which South Australia pays, I think, 10 per cent. on the outlay for half of it; and the building being within our own territory, there was a difficulty in asking the South Australian Government to contribute. On the Kalgoorlie post office, which is to cost £13,000, we have provided £4,000 for expenditure this year. At Port Hedland it is proposed to build a post office, this being the nearest point to the Marble Bar goldfield, and an amount of £1,700 is set down for this. For Subiaco post office, we provide £1,900; for Norseman (£3,454 having been spent already), we provide £1,200 more; for a post office at Eyre Sandpatch, £2,700; and there are many others on the Estimates. In regard to Mines offices, a total of £46,840 is provided on the Estimates, including the following:—Bamboo Creek, £1,200; Coolgardie, on various buildings, £10,715; warden's quarters at Cue, £2,400; Kalgoorlie warden's quarters, £3,100; Kanowna offices, £2,750; Marble Bar warden's quarters, £2,000; Menzies warden's quarters, £3,300; Perth Mining offices, £4,000; also additions and repairs, £4,000. We have included on the Estimates £84,492 for Educational buildings; including Cottesloe school, £3,100; Beaconsfield, additions and teacher's quarters, £2,750; Boulder school, £1,000; Claremont school, £1,780; Coolgardie schools (£4,538 having been

already spent), £1,700; Esperance school (already spent, £1,778), £1,500; Fremantle boys' school, additions £2,500; Helena Vale (already spent, £1,526), £3,000; Highgate school, Perth (already spent, £2,293), £1,500; also, we intend to spend £5,000 on additions and repairs to existing buildings; for Kalgoorlie school (already spent, £2,723), we provide £2,750; Kelmscott, £1,300; Leederville (already spent, £1,763), £2,000—Meckering, £1,150; Menzies, £1,900; North Fremantle, £1,850. For the Perth schools, to complete the new buildings, which have already cost £11,721, we have provided £4,900. For Plympton we provide £2,200; South Perth, £1,400; Subiaco, (already spent, £2,956), £3,110; West Perth (already spent, £1,562) £2,100; West Leederville school, £1,000; Wyndham school, £800; and York school, on which £1,147 has already been spent, we provide £2,750. On additions and repairs to public buildings we intend to spend £8,000 generally throughout the colony. On abattoirs, which are to cost £10,000, we intend to expend £2,500; on the Coolgardie local water supply, £3,750. For the new wing of the Government Offices we provide £11,000, in addition to the £12,087 already expended; for a strongroom for the Lands Titles Office, £4,000; and for mineral and agricultural halls, £8,837. We spent £421,139 on public buildings last year, and this year we estimate to spend £553,664. That does not look as if we were curtailing expenditure, or were afraid of the future of this country. We propose to expend this year on works and buildings from revenue £1,028,118, as against £805,478 last year, or an increase of £222,640 from revenue. We also propose to provide £30,000 for the erection of public batteries on goldfields. The Government promised £50,000 for this object, but seeing that the year is so far advanced, we may not be able to spend more than £30,000; although, should it be found necessary to spend more than £30,000, and should the finances then admit of it, hon. members have the promise of the Government that £50,000 will be available for the purpose. In the Mines Department, we propose to spend £115,594, including £30,000 for public batteries, as against a total of £112,000 last year. In the Postal Department,

the expenditure last year was £313,203, but this year it is to be £282,633, showing a saving here of £31,570. Hon. members will notice, by reference to the Estimates, that many works charged to the Postal Department last year are not chargeable this year, amongst these being the Eucla telegraph. In the Education Department, there was spent last year £40,260, as against the proposed expenditure this year of £49,945. The expenditure from revenue, for the first four months of this year, has exceeded the expenditure for the corresponding four months of last year by £312,959. And yet people say, and I have seen it asserted in the press, that the Government are not spending as much as last year.

Comparison with Other Colonies.

I propose now to compare the revenue and expenditure of this colony for the past year, and also for the current year, with the revenue and expenditure of the colony of South Australia. I do not do this for the sake of glorification, but merely to show the position we have attained in relation to the nearest of our sister colonies. At present we cannot compare with New Zealand, Victoria, New South Wales, or Queensland, as they are far ahead of us. The revenue of South Australia for the year ending June 30, 1897, was £2,628,049, and the expenditure was £2,615,860, with a deficit from former years of £1,108,795, which I am glad to hear is fast decreasing. In Western Australia, for the same period, the revenue was £2,842,751, and the expenditure £2,839,453; and we had a credit balance of £315,362. For the current year, South Australia expects to receive a revenue of £2,628,044, while we in Western Australia expect to receive £3,008,000. South Australia anticipates for this year an expenditure of £2,626,236, whereas we provide for an expenditure of £3,319,454. We have therefore every reason to be satisfied, when we can compare ourselves with a great colony which has been so far ahead of us in the past.

Fremantle Harbour Works.

There is one great work on which I should like to say a word or two—that is the construction of the Fremantle harbour, which is progressing most satisfactorily. It is gratifying to see the large

number of ships berthed in the river. Hon. members will notice, from the map lying on the table of the House, that vessels drawing 19ft. of water can come into the harbour with safety; and it is clear that, in a short time, vessels drawing 24ft. will also find accommodation there. This great work, designed and carried out by the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. C. Y. O'Connor), excites the admiration of everyone who comes to the colony, and realises what has been done; and I am sure that every resident of the colony who has visited the place must feel gratified at what he there sees. The Government, assisted as they always have been by hon. members of this House in this work of providing a safe and commodious harbour at Fremantle, will not cease until they have made Fremantle the first and also the last port of call for the mail steamers trading from the mother country to the Australian Colonies.

Gold Production and Export.

I now come to a very interesting part of my remarks. I have not given all the best plums at the beginning, but have kept some good ones to the last. The gold industry is the great factor in our progress; and this colony is fast becoming one of the great gold producers of the world. It certainly is fast approaching the position of the greatest gold-producing colony in Australia. Up to October 31st, there had been exported from this colony 1,494,363ozs. of gold, which, taken at £3 16s. an ounce, the value we put on it for statistical purposes, was worth £5,678,581. In the first ten months of this year, there have been exported 526,737ozs. of gold, valued at £2,001,601, as against 220,737ozs., valued at £838,802 exported in the corresponding ten months of last year. In that period we increased our export of gold by 306,000ozs., valued at £1,162,799. That seems to me an enormous increase. It is considerably more than double the export during the corresponding period of last year, and this fact must be gratifying to every hon. member. In the ten months of this year, we have exported about 40 per cent. of the whole gold export of the colony from the commencement. I have information before me in detail as to the particular goldfield which the gold came

from; but I must deal with the matter generally on this occasion. From Coolgardie, East Coolgardie, North Coolgardie, North-East Coolgardie, Broad Arrow, and Yilgarn, grouped together, we have exported gold to the value of £3,842,413. From the Murchison, East Murchison, Mount Magnet, Yalgoo, and Peak Hill, grouped together, the gold exported is valued at £1,205,313. From the Ashburton goldfield, £14,301. From Pilbarra goldfield, £459,195—and to those hon. members who are clamorous for railway transit to be provided for certain goldfields, I commend to their notice the yield of gold from this field, of which so little is said, and which has no railway communication. From Dundas, the export of gold is valued at £66,823. From Kimberley, it is £90,536. These various yields of gold exported make a total value of £5,678,581. During the ten months of this year there has been exported from the Coolgardie group of goldfields, including Yilgarn, a total yield valued at £1,608,522; from the Murchison group, £303,431; from the Ashburton, £3,652; from Pilbarra, £36,336; from Dundas, £47,942; and from Kimberley, £1,717, making a total of £2,001,600. When I was in England recently, I addressed myself to the question of the gold industry of this colony, on two important public occasions, and I stated that this year's gold export would probably reach two millions in value. Now we see that in the first ten months of this year, my estimate has been more than reached. This output of gold will do this colony a great deal of good in England. One is often looked upon with suspicion, especially when advocating his own interests, and it might have been said that I was then personally interested in placing the prosperity of the colony in the best light. But now, after this short interval, it is gratifying to me, and must be to hon. members, to find that my estimate of the export of gold has been more than realised; and when we consider that the Coolgardie group, including Yilgarn, has produced in ten months £1,608,522 worth of gold, it must be admitted that this is a part of our country which the people of the colony should not hesitate to look well after, and therefore the proposal of the Government that the Coolgardie goldfields should be provided

with a certain and cheap supply of water is one deserving of the greatest consideration and attention, not only by hon. members of this House, but by the people of the whole colony. [MR. LEAKE: Why do you not go on with the scheme?] If the hon. member will allow me to tell my tale in my own way, I shall perhaps satisfy him. The Government propose, with the approval of Parliament, to commence almost immediately the construction of the dam in the Helena River for this water supply; the dam being a large undertaking which, we are informed, will take two years to complete; and as the cost of the dam is to be about £200,000, I think we are justified in not losing any time in making a commencement with this great work.

Comparison of Gold-producing Colonies in Australia.

I have taken the trouble to obtain a comparison of the gold production of this colony for last year and for the first ten months of this year, with that of the colonies of Victoria and Queensland for the same periods. These are the only two Australasian colonies that do compare with us, for we are far ahead of all others, though not yet up to these two. I find that, in 1896, Victoria produced 805,087oz. of gold; Queensland produced 638,212oz.; and Western Australia exported 281,265oz. Hon. members will see that we were a long way behind in 1896. But for the first ten months of 1897, I find that Victoria produced 649,526oz., Queensland produced 628,521oz., and Western Australia exported 526,737oz. It will be noticed that Victoria is scarcely holding her own in the present year, that Queensland is slightly increasing her output, whereas Western Australia has increased her export of last year by 140 per cent. in ten months. Next year I think this colony will be the largest gold-producer in Australasia; and, if that comes to pass, as there seems every reason to believe it will, our colony will occupy a very proud position on this continent.

Present Financial Position.

I now wish to say a few words in regard to our financial position. Members know exactly our liability in regard to the loans that have been floated, as the papers published and the returns

laid on the table of the House give full information on the subject. We have £792,320 worth of Treasury bills outstanding; but of these, £300,000 worth belong to the Savings Bank, and are therefore in our own hands. Of the balance, £480,000 worth, will be redeemed at the end of January, from loan or other funds. We have, as you all know, the right to borrow 2½ millions on account of loan funds, for certain public works; also 2½ millions on account of the Coolgardie water scheme; therefore our loan authorisation, at the present time, is £5,000,000. We have not, up to the present time, sold any Treasury bills under the authority given to us last session; so that my hon. friend the member for Central Murchison (MR. ILLINGWORTH), when he told the House the other night that we were paying 4 per cent. for the Treasury bills we had sold, was speaking without accurate information. The hon. member is sometimes given to drawing a little on his imagination, when he wants a fact to suit his eloquence. But, as a matter of exactness, we have not, up to the present time, sold any of the Treasury bills for which authority was given last session. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: You have sent them home, have you not?] I think it is unnecessary for me to say anything to the House with regard to our financial position in London. To say we have not had some anxiety in the matter of obtaining such moneys as we have been spending would not be exactly correct; but the only anxiety we have had has been caused by our desire to push on such public works as we are constructing from loan funds. We have, of course, had no anxiety whatever with regard to our consolidated revenue, for we have not spent as much as we received; but we have been spending a great deal of loan money on railways all over the colony, and on other public works, here, there, and everywhere; and, as hon. members know, we have not raised any money in London from loans for some time past. I believe my visit to England has smoothed the way; and I have now no doubt whatever that, with the care and economy which I hope the Government always exercise, there will be no difficulty in obtaining all the money we require in order to carry on the public works of the

colony. I do not mean to say we can get all at once the whole of the money required to carry on the Coolgardie water scheme. Care and discretion will have to be used in raising that loan; but still I think we shall be able to begin the work, and that in a very few months we shall place ourselves in a position to let contracts for the work. I do not wish to make any promise in regard to this matter, for we are not altogether free agents in respect of it. We have to act in accordance with the opinion of our financial advisers; and the great point I wish to make is that we want to get our money at a cheap rate, and in order to do that we must wait the convenience of the market. Of course, if we were willing to pay a high rate of interest, there would probably be no difficulty whatever in obtaining what we want; but that is not the way in which we wish to carry on the financial affairs of this colony. We think we can, by waiting, get money at a cheaper rate, and we are certainly most anxious to get it at as cheap a rate as possible.

Public Indebtedness—a Comparison.

In regard to our public indebtedness, hon. members will have seen the published accounts. Our indebtedness is increasing—there is no doubt about that—and I think that, until our population increases, we should be careful not to increase our borrowing authorisations. I do not mean to say it may not be necessary for us, to some small extent, to increase our borrowing authorisations; but what I wish to impress upon hon. members is that, until we get rid of the authorisations we already have, it would be unwise, in the interests of the country, to have any more borrowing authorisations; therefore, I shall set my face against them, for the present. Hon. members are probably aware that, when we have exhausted all our authorisations, the public debt of the colony will be something like 12 millions; and of course we have five millions more to raise before the total will reach the twelve millions. It is reasonable to suppose that the expenditure of this additional five millions of money, a considerable portion of it in the colony, must have a very beneficial result. Our indebtedness on the 30th June last, after giving credit for the sinking fund invested, which amounted to £205,637, was

£7,105,177. After all, when you compare our indebtedness with that of the other colonies of Australia, there is really nothing to be afraid of, and nothing that is not satisfactory. New South Wales owes 61 millions, which is equal to £46 per head of the population; Victoria owes 47 millions, which is equal to £41 per head; Queensland owes 32 millions, which is equal to £67 per head; South Australia owes 24 millions, equal to £69 per head; Tasmania owes eight millions, equal to £50 per head; and Western Australia owes seven millions, equal to about £45 per head of the population. If we further compare our indebtedness with our annual revenue, we find that we are, relatively, in a magnificent position. The debt of New South Wales is seven times her annual revenue; that of Victoria is seven times her annual revenue; that of Queensland, nine times her annual revenue; that of South Australia, nine times her annual revenue; that of Tasmania, 11 times her annual revenue; whereas that of Western Australia is only a little over twice her annual revenue; so, hon. members will see that, whether we compare the amount of indebtedness per head of the population, or the indebtedness in proportion to the annual revenue, our position is excellent. It may be interesting to hon. members to know how we have expended the seven millions of money which we owe. On railways we have spent about five millions, on telegraphs about £270,000, on harbours and rivers about £900,000, on public buildings about £60,000, on the development of goldfields about £300,000, on roads and bridges about £120,000, and on various works and services about £350,000. The total amount we have to provide on this year's Estimates, for interest and sinking fund on Loans and Treasury Bills is £337,726.

Concluding Remarks.

I have pleasure in informing hon. members that I have come to the end of my task. I have said all I have to say, with the exception of a few concluding remarks. I have compared the past year with its predecessor; I have compared the present year with the past year; and I have tried to review the various interests and the various transactions of the Government. I have tried to place before hon.

members the present position of the colony, and I hope I have not altogether failed in my attempt. I have desired, above all things, not to keep back anything from hon. members, for there is nothing to hide, in regard to the finances of this country, and they are as open to hon. members as they are to myself. I do not mean to say that I have told you things which it would not be prudent to speak of—those negotiations which are going on, but which are not completed, for to do so might perhaps injure the colony. But everything that it is right and proper the public should know, I have told you to-night; and I shall be happy to afford any further information to hon. members if they will only ask me to do so, when we are dealing with the Estimates in detail. I have pleasure in stating that our credit in London is good, and that we are trusted by those with whom we do our business. We believe we will be able to float our loans on favourable terms, when we decide to place them on the market. I say that advisedly—when we decide to do so; because, as I have just stated, we want to place our loans on the market at the best price. It is not to the interest of this colony to pay a high price for our loan moneys when, by waiting a little while, and by using a little caution and a little discretion, we may be able to obtain our moneys on easier terms, as I believe we shall be able to do. We in this colony are, I think, in a position that should make us satisfied and grateful. But although we have had seven years of prosperity, I feel sure that no hon. member will say, in regard to myself and those who are associated with me in the Government, or in regard to the members of this Assembly, that these seven years have not been years of great anxiety. I hope that no one in this House will think that the load of responsibility in regard to the conduct of public business is a light load, for we ought to regard it as a heavy burden. After all, we are not acting here for ourselves, nor even for the people at present in this country: we are here as trustees for the people who will come after us; and I hope that when we pass away, and those who come after us are here in our places, they will be able to say of us that we were not only mindful of the interests of the present time, but that we had a due regard

to the interests of the future. The honour and the credit of this country, not only for the present, but for the future, are to a large extent entrusted to us; and I hope we will all of us act in these matters with a full sense of the weight of responsibility that is resting upon us. Looking back, as we may do to-night, with pleasure, and looking forward as we may also do, and as we have a just right to do, with confidence, I think we have cause for great satisfaction. One fact is particularly gratifying and should not be forgotten, that although we have managed the affairs of this country—and when I say “we” I am not speaking of myself, or even of the members of the Government, as the hon. member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) took upon himself to say the other night, when he asserted that I, when speaking in London of the Government of this colony, used to speak only of myself and those who were associated with me; for when I speak of the Government, in a general sense I mean the Government acting with the approval of the Parliament of this country; and I had no such narrow views as have been attributed to me, when speaking in London of the Government of Western Australia—I say that although we have managed the affairs of this country, and have constructed all these great works during the last seven years; although we have built railways all over the country, and have made it possible to live in comfort in portions of the colony that were almost uninhabitable some few years ago; although we have built harbour works and erected telegraphs, and done so many things to open up and improve the country, yet it is a matter of congratulation that we have never placed additional taxation on the people, but on the contrary, have during that time been able to take about £200,000 a year off the burdens of the people. Looking on all these things, we have surely cause for satisfaction; and looking round about me to-night, seeing the changes that have taken place in this Chamber, and remembering what has been said and done, I cannot help asking myself, where are the croakers, where are those who opposed all these railway works and other projects which they said were going to ruin the country? There can be no doubt

now in their minds that they were wrong all through in opposing those projects which have so greatly helped us in developing the resources of this country, and in advancing the interests of the people. Let us in the future be bold but cautious—that is a very good motto—and let us remember that “fortune helps the brave.” Let us keep a tight hand on our finances, as that is the secret of all advancement in public as in private business. You may depend upon it that if you do not keep a tight hand on the finances, disaster will come upon you, whether in the affairs of an individual or of a nation. I desire to thank my colleagues for their loyal service during the time they have been associated with me in the Government; I desire to thank hon. members on this side of the House for the support they have given me during so many years; and I further desire also to thank hon. members opposite. The members of this Assembly are not adventurers, here to-day and away to-morrow. We desire to see this colony, which we have made our permanent home—many of us having been born here—prosper and advance. Time is flying from us. In this Parliament of 1897, we miss the faces of many of our old friends who were with us in 1891. The task becomes more onerous as the years roll away; but I believe that the present Parliament is actuated by a deep sense of duty, and is desirous to build up a record of faithful service, which the Parliaments and public men of the future may for ever look back upon with pride and satisfaction.

I beg to move the first item of the Estimates.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:50 p.m. till the next Thursday.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 18th November, 1897.

Question: Bathing by Adults in Swan River—Question: Mr. G. D. Simpson and Peak Hill Properties—Question: Fremantle Lunatic Asylum—Criminal Appeal Bill: first reading—Dog Act Amendment Bill: in committee—Excess Bill, 1895-6: third reading—Registration of Firms Bill: in committee; Division on Clause 5—Underground Surveyors Bill: second reading; in committee—Aborigines Bill: second reading; in committee; Suspension of Standing Orders: third reading—Hawkers and Pedlars Act Amendment Bill: second reading; in committee—Cemeteries Bill: second reading—Paper presented—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—BATHING BY ADULTS IN SWAN RIVER.

HON. H. BRIGGS (for Hon. R. S. Haynes), in accordance with notice, asked the Minister of Mines:—1. If the Government intend to have any steps taken to prevent the bathing by adults on the Brewery and Mill Point Spits; if so, what steps? 2. If the Government will have police protection afforded for the public in the vicinity of Mill Point.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) replied:—1. No; but bathing is controlled by No. 17 of the Swan River jetties and foreshores regulations. 2. A police patrol is established, and the Works Department have asked the police to afford all possible protection to the public. I do not know whether that is the exact information the hon. member wants. If there is anything further, I shall be glad to supply it.

QUESTION—MR. G. D. SIMPSON AND PEAK HILL PROPERTIES.

HON. A. P. MATHESON, in accordance with notice, asked the Minister of Mines:—1. Whether the facilities afforded by the Government to Mr. G. Darlington Simpson, for floating his Peak Hill properties by furnishing him with the reports of the departmental Government engineer and of the warden of the district, and also by permitting the Government engineer, Mr. Frank Reed, to manage the Peak Hill properties, are at the disposal of other speculators, and, if so, on what terms? 2. Whether the Government accept the full responsibility for all