

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it would be a satisfaction to stock owners in the North, as far as Kimberley, to know that it was definitely intended to provide a means of travelling fat stock to Coolgardie, and, by adding to the clause the words suggested, the intention of the item would be made clear, although the Government had intended to make a stock route to Coolgardie without the additional words being in the item.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said roads were a necessary means for the development of agriculture. He was willing to leave in the hands of the Premier the question of a stock route to the goldfields, but satisfaction would be given by inserting definite words in the item. At Cue the cost of butcher's meat was about 4d. a pound, because supplies were obtainable from stations in the district; and a road to Coolgardie for fat stock from the North would make a great reduction in the cost of meat to miners around Coolgardie.

MR. CONNOR said it was not possible to travel fat stock from the far North by the overland route to Coolgardie. The stock must continue to come by sea to a Southern port, if the meat was to be in good condition. As an experiment, however, he would support the amendment, but did not expect a successful result.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he could not support the item at all. Such an item was improper in a Loan Bill. Unless the Government were prepared to get some revenue from this expenditure, as a reproductive work, the item ought not to be passed. He did not suppose they would put up toll-bars for getting a revenue. He knew, however, it would be only a waste of time to move that the item be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 15 — *Miscellaneous, including charges and expenses of raising loan, £30,000:*

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked whether it was really necessary to make this provision, in view of the state of the English money market.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he expected the loan would realise a premium; but it was better to provide for contingencies, and such an item was

usual in our Loan Bills. The amount lost on the loan of 1891 was over £20,000 in floating it, but about half that amount was got back in premiums on the loan of 1893. He anticipated to get a large premium, perhaps £100,000, on floating the present loan. Still, it would be better to keep this item in the Bill.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he was inclined to move that the item be struck out. It was a sort of "petty cash" item, and he objected to allow a large sum for "incidentals," or anything of that kind.

MR. RANDELL said the hon. member for the Gascoyne might be rightly termed the Joseph Hume of Western Australia. As to this item, it was as well to provide for contingencies.

Item agreed to.

Postponed clause—Clause 1:

Agreed to.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 12:45 o'clock a.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 24th September, 1894.

Employment of Dredge at the Canning—Estimates, 1894-5: Budget Speech—Small Debts Ordinance Amendment Bill: third reading—Municipal Institutions Bill: third reading—Loan Bill, £1,500,000: consideration of committee's report—Droving Bill: in committee—Homesteads Act Amendment Bill: second reading: in committee—Marriage Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7:30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

EMPLOYMENT OF DREDGE AT THE CANNING.

MR. SIMPSON (on behalf of Mr. JAMES), in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works for what length of time the dredge had been engaged in the Canning River, and when it would be brought to Perth to reclaim the foreshore?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the dredge had been employed at the Canning River since August, 1892. The work was nearly completed, and it was expected that the dredge would not be required for many months longer, after which it could be brought to Perth, where its services would be available.

ESTIMATES, 1894-5.**FINANCIAL STATEMENT.**

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir John Forrest), having moved the House into a Committee of Supply to consider the Estimates of Expenditure for the year ending 30th June, 1895, said: Mr. Traylen,—Sir: This is the fifth occasion that I have had the honour of moving in this House the Estimates for the financial year. I am pleased to think that on all previous occasions in making these financial statements I have had the good fortune to be able not only to give a good account of what has taken place in the past, but also to take a hopeful view of the future. To-night, sir, I shall have the same pleasant duty. I have a satisfactory account to give of what we have been doing in the past, and I shall be also able to take a very hopeful view of the future. During this session, sir, I have, in introducing the second reading of the Loan Bill, and also the second reading of the Agricultural Bank Bill, had to deal to a considerable length with the position of the colony, with its ability, in my estimation, to bear the additional liability which that Loan Bill will impose upon the country, and I have also had occasion to review generally the financial condition of the affairs of the colony. Therefore, much of that which I had to say on those occasions I shall, in some measure, have to say again in some parts of the Speech which I propose to make to-night. During the nearly four years we have had self-government in this colony, although, in common with

the other colonies of Australia, we have had to face some difficulties and troubles, we have been, sir, on what I may call the up-grade during the whole of that time. Our revenue has been increasing, and our affairs generally have been progressing; and although, as I have just said, we have had troubles and difficulties to contend with—in a smaller degree, perhaps, than the other colonies of Australia—we have been able to keep on the up-grade the whole time. To-night, sir, I propose, following the custom I have previously adopted in dealing with the finances of the colony, to deal first of all with the past, and then to glance at the future, and conclude with some general observations on matters that may be of interest to the whole community.

Population of the Colony.

The first item that I will deal with is that of the population of the colony, because there is no doubt that unless our population increases we can scarcely be said to progress. My great hope, and my great object, during the time that I have had the conduct of the affairs of the colony, has been to increase the population of the country, because I have felt that if we can only increase our population we shall at the same time decrease our indebtedness per head. Therefore I have been most anxious to attract people to the colony. I have been most anxious to make the colony a place worth coming to, to make it attractive, and a place where those who come can see that they are coming to a country in which there is a fair chance of obtaining a comfortable livelihood and also a competence in the future. Although I have never held out, either in this House or elsewhere, that people may come here with the expectation of making a fortune in a few days or in a few years, still I have always said that for those who are prepared to throw in their lot with us, and who are willing to work, there is a fair chance for them to succeed in this country. I think we may still say so. I think we may even say that there are opportunities afforded in this colony at the present time for people to become rich quicker than almost in any other part of the world. But I do not hold

that out to persons I desire to see coming here; all I wish to point out is that if they are careful, and thrifty, and industrious, they will be able in this country to gain a competence. Sir, on the 30th June, 1890—that was just before the introduction of Responsible Government—the population of the colony was estimated at 44,758, while on the 30th June last it had reached 75,919, showing an increase during those four years of 31,161, or at the rate of about 8,000 a year. During the last three months our population has been increasing a little above that rate—at the rate of about one thousand per month; and the population of the colony at the present time, as near as I have been able to gather from the available statistics of the Department, is about 78,000. It is not a large population, after all; still I think we have made fair progress, considering all things, when we have increased our population by 31,161 during four years. I think that is a very fair record.

Indebtedness of the Colony.

The next question I propose to deal with is the indebtedness of the colony. I have been surprised to learn that there are persons in the colony, prominent persons too, who have apparently experienced difficulty in arriving at the actual indebtedness of the colony. Now anyone would suppose it would be a very easy and simple matter to find out in this colony what its indebtedness is. I may say that I have never found any difficulty, myself, in ascertaining from official records the indebtedness of the country. But there is this difference between myself and others. While they are inclined rather to look at the dark side of things, I like to give them a little golden tinge, if I can do so justly and honestly. I think I have been justified—at any rate I have always thought I have been justified—in my estimate of the actual indebtedness of the colony; and I think that those who have tried to make the indebtedness of the country appear greater than it really is have not acted quite as justly, in my opinion at any rate, as I have. I will never, sir, in estimating our indebtedness, consider contingent liabilities as part of our actual public debt. That is the reason why I have always refused, and why I still refuse, to in-

clude in the indebtedness of the colony the guaranteed loan of £500,000 for the Midland Railway Company. In ordinary life, and I am sure there are plenty in this House—and I include myself amongst the number—who have had occasion sometimes to endorse a friend's bill, and we do not object so much to do so when we have good security attached to it, as a guarantee that we shall not be called upon to pay that bill. I do not think that anyone who has endorsed such a bill, with ample security at the back of it, when reckoning up his indebtedness, would include that liability as one of his debts? If, however, he did so, he would certainly put the security on the other side as an asset. Therefore, I say if anyone likes to include this £500,000 guaranteed by the Government to the Midland Railway Company as part of the indebtedness of the colony, we may fairly ask him to put the security we hold on the other side, but I am not prepared to-night to do either one or the other. Sir, the public debt of this colony on the 30th June, 1894,—a few months ago—including £35,085 of Treasury bills still in existence, was £3,267,339. But there is a sum of £138,531 in hand on account of sinking fund, so that our actual public debt on the 30th June last was £3,128,808. Members who feel inclined to look through the accounts will see that on that date there were Treasury bills in actual existence amounting to £185,085, and the reason why I have only included £35,085 as a debt, is that a sum of £150,000 was in the hands of the Government at that time waiting to pay off Treasury bills, and they have since been paid off, on the first of this month; so that, as we had the money in hand, and were only holding it until the bills matured, I have not reckoned it as part of our indebtedness on the 30th June last. The interest and sinking fund payable up to that date was £128,384; but, for the present year, the amount of the interest and sinking fund is estimated at £155,648. As members are aware, under our Loan Acts, provision for the sinking fund does not commence until four years after the loan has been raised. Therefore the sinking fund in respect of the Loan of 1891 will not commence until next year, and the sinking fund for the 1893 Loan

will not commence until 1897. I think there is nothing as yet to be afraid of in the amount we have to provide for interest and sinking fund in connection with our loans. With a revenue of £873,650 for the year (as I shall be able to show later on) surely it cannot be said that a liability of £155,648 for interest and sinking fund is in any way beyond the means of the country? Taking our present population, as I have said, at 78,000, I find that our indebtedness per head is about £40, which is the lowest in any of these Australasian colonies, except perhaps Victoria, whose indebtedness per head of the population is about equal to our own. In New Zealand it is £62 per head, while in Queensland it is £74. Since the present Ministry have been in office, we have borrowed £1,876,000 in the London market, and in addition £35,085 in the colony by means of Treasury bills, or a total of £1,911,085. On the 30th June last there was unexpended of this amount a sum of £336,064, which includes about £90,000 worth of stores in the hands of the Treasury.

Loan Expenditure.

During the past year we have expended a very large amount of loan moneys in this country. The total amount expended both here and in London was £683,562; of which £465,079 was expended in the colony, and £218,483 in England. In addition to this, the Midland Railway Company expended £89,488 in the colony, and £83,593 in England. Therefore, members will notice that, in addition to the expenditure out of the current revenue of the country, we expended a very large sum out of loan funds during the past year. I may say that nearly all the works authorised by the Loan Acts of 1891 and 1893 are either approaching completion or have been completed. In a very short time the whole of these works will be completed, with one or two exceptions, such as the Cape Leeuwin lighthouse and one or two works of minor importance. The whole of the money which has been raised under those two Loan Acts will shortly have been expended; and our departmental resources will be available for the works authorised by the Loan Bill which has just passed through this House. I think this will show that the Government and this House

have not been very far out in their calculations as to the period which it would take to expend the moneys raised under our previous Loan Acts. I think I said I expected that the money raised in 1891 would last about three years; since then we have borrowed another £540,000 in order to complete the works undertaken out of the previous loan; and the result has been as I anticipated, the expenditure of this money has extended over the period I mentioned, and the works will practically have been completed by the time the four years will have elapsed. I think it is a wise policy to pursue, that we should complete one set of public works before we undertake another set of new works; though no doubt it was not in our minds at the time we borrowed that first loan, the great developments that have taken place in the colony within the last year or two—developments which have left the Government and this House, and the people of the colony, no alternative but to embark upon this new loan for the construction of further railways and other pressing wants of the country.

Deposits in Local Banks.

On former occasions when dealing with the finances of the colony I have drawn attention to the amount of money in our local Banks, which I look upon as an important indication of the condition of the country. I am very glad indeed to be able to point out to-night that, although the amount of these deposits in past years were large, they are even larger now. Although some people may think that it is not a desirable thing for persons to invest their money in this way—lock it up, as they call it, in the Banks—still I think we take a wider view of the question than that. We must bear in mind that this money which is deposited in the Banks at comparatively low interest is lent out by the Banks to the people in the colony engaged in developing the resources of the country. On the 30th June last, there was an immense amount of money on deposit in these Banks. It really puzzles me sometimes who owns all this money. On that day there was the enormous sum of £1,545,938 on fixed deposit and on call in the local Banks; and I may point out—as it may occur to some members that a great deal of this money belonged to the Government—that out of that sum of

£1,545,938 only £396,880 belonged to the Government. On the 30th June, 1893, a year previously, the total amount on deposit in these Banks was £1,283,130, of which £246,243 belonged to the Government; so that there has been an increase in one year of £262,808 in these deposits. No one can say, I think, in the face of these figures, that there is no money in the colony. On the 30th June, 1890, four years ago, the total amount of deposits, fixed and at call, was only £947,234; so that on the 30th June last there was a sum of no less than £598,704 more money on deposit in our local Banks than there was four years ago. As I have said, these figures quite surprise me, because one would hardly suppose that, in this small community, there was over a million and a half of money on deposit in the Banks.

Savings Bank Deposits.

Another important index of the progress and prosperity of the colony, is to be found in the operations of the Savings Bank. The returns of this institution also indicate that at any rate there is a considerable amount of thrift amongst our working classes and people of small means—more so than has ever been the case hitherto. On the 30th June, 1893, the amount due to depositors in the Savings Bank was £74,925, whereas, on the 30th June, this year, there was no less than £141,319, showing an increase in 12 months of £66,394. The number of deposits during the half-year ended 30th June, 1893, was 6,772, whereas for the year ended 30th June, 1894, they had increased to 17,297. The amount of money paid into the Bank for the year ended 30th June, 1893, was £68,740, whereas for the year ended 30th June, 1894, it amounted to £146,887, or more than twice as much—truly a wonderful increase in one year. It shows, sir, I think, that the new Act which we passed a couple of years ago is working well, and is being largely availed of by the people of the colony.

** Our Imports and Exports.*

I now come, sir, to another important matter connected with our financial position, and that is the question of the imports and exports of the colony. I think that members would be justified in giving a considerable amount of attention

to this matter—much more attention than I am able to give it this evening. I think it will reward them if they give this question their earnest consideration, for it certainly affords food for reflection. In 1893 the value of our exports for the year ended the 31st December was £918,147, and of this amount no less than £421,385 was represented by our export of gold. Our imports for the corresponding period amounted to £1,494,438. For the first six months of the current year our exports were valued at £440,135, and, out of that sum, no less than £288,210 was for gold, leaving only £151,925 for all the other products of the colony during those six months. On the other hand our imports for the same period amounted to no less than £1,010,126, as against £440,135, the value of our exports, which, as I have said, included £288,210 for gold sent out of the colony. During the past three years our imports have been going far ahead of our exports. Anyone who takes the trouble to analyse the figures will see that the export of gold is the only saving clause, the only gratifying feature in connection with our exports. I dealt with this question pretty fully in moving the second reading of the Loan Bill, when I showed that, exclusive of gold, our exports for 1890 had been £585,149, while for 1893 they were only £496,762. This is a matter, as I have said, that deserves our most serious consideration. No doubt, the low price of wool has had a great deal to do with this reduced value of our export trade, and the low price of produce generally. Still, at the same time, one cannot but be conscious that there is something connected with this matter which wants looking into. When we remember that, from the beginning of 1891 up to the 30th June last, our population has increased 64 per cent., that our revenue, strange to say, has also increased in the same proportion, namely, 64 per cent., and that our imports up to the end of 1893—members will notice that there it is a little difficult to deal with these figures up to the same date, as our financial year ends on the 30th June, and our statistical year on the 31st December—and that our imports up to the end of 1893 had increased by 71 per cent.; when we bear these figures in mind, and find that our exports, including gold and

everything, up to the end of 1893 showed an increase of only 37 per cent., or, if we exclude gold, were actually 16 per cent. less than our exports in 1890—I say when we bear these figures in mind they certainly afford grave cause for reflection. These figures are taken from the official statistics, and, I presume, those statistics are correct. At any rate, they are what go forth to the world, and they are believed in, and, so far as I know, they are correct.

Our Gold Exports.

The other evening some members, referring to the export of gold, said it was the very best export we could have, and that in fact no other exports were to be compared to gold. I do not wish to be understood as saying that gold is not a valuable export, and a good export—even the very best export; but it is an export that may disappear. It is an export that may go away, and never return; like the gold sent annually out of the colony to London to pay the interest on our loans; like the gold that goes out of the colony to support absentees in other lands; and like the gold that goes away to support shareholders in other countries, and which does not return, but is a perpetual drain upon the colony. Of course I do not mean to say that those who receive this money from the colony, and who may re-invest it here again do not do the country some good; but I do say that this gold which goes away to pay the interest upon our debts, and to support absentees, and to support foreign shareholders, cannot be regarded in the same light as other exports, because the value of our other exports comes back to us in the ordinary way in the goods which we import into the colony. It may, of course, indirectly do the colony good when it goes forth to the world that men are making fortunes here, and it may attract people to our shores in the hope of making fortunes themselves. It may do us a great deal of good in that way, but it cannot be looked upon in the same light as other exports, the ordinary products of the country, which are sent away, and come back again in the shape of imports. That is one of the reasons why we in Australia feel the weight of our public debts so much, because the payment of the interest upon these debts,

going as it does out of the country, and expended in other countries, is such a drain upon the resources of our colonies. If this money were borrowed from our own people, the annual interest would be spent amongst us and would not be such a drain upon the resources of the country as it now is, when the annual interest goes out of the colony to support people in other parts of the world.

Serious food for reflection.

I think, sir, I have shown, from the figures I have just quoted, that the falling off, or the smallness, of our exports affords very serious food for reflection. It shows the want of local production on our part, because that is what it comes to. We produce so little for exporting. I have heard members in this House, many times, saying in all sincerity that it would be a sad day for this country when our local production surpasses the wants of our local markets. All I can say is, if we are going to be ruined by over-production I cannot understand it. Is that the way to view the interests of this great country? Is that the way to encourage the development of this immense territory? In the adjoining colony of South Australia we often notice it stated in the press that they reckon their prosperity by the yield of wheat for export. They calculate whether they are going to have a good year or a bad year by the number of bushels of wheat they will have available for export. Why should it not be the same here? I cannot believe that if you were to convert the whole of this vast territory into a smiling wheatfield, or a flourishing well-cultivated garden, producing every product of the soil, and supplying more than is necessary for our local requirements, it would make us poorer. I believe the more we produce the richer we are likely to be, and the cheaper we can live the easier will it be for the people of the colony to maintain themselves and their families. That is so in other parts of the world, and why should it not be so here? Surely it cannot be to our advantage that we should have to buy everything from other countries and support the toilers of other lands rather than support our own people? All our expenditure on railways and other public works will not avail us, unless our internal resources are de-

veloped. I make that statement here publicly, and I am prepared to stand upon it; all these railways we are building, and all these other public works we are constructing, will be of little use to us, unless they enable us to hold our own by developing our own internal resources and increasing our production. I warn those members who oppose our efforts in this direction, that a very grave responsibility rests upon them. I am afraid some of them do not feel the burden. As a rule, I fear, they do not think much about the subject; for those who are the most eager to oppose every measure brought forward by the Government, having that object in view, have, I regret to say, in my opinion, given the matter but little consideration, and, I fear also, have but little knowledge of the subject.

Live Stock Returns.

I next wish to deal for a moment with our stock returns, especially sheep, as the stock returns in regard to cattle and horses call for little remark. These are very interesting, inasmuch as they show that our flocks have recently been increasing at a very rapid rate. On the 31st December, 1893, the number of sheep in the colony was 2,220,644, as against 1,685,500 in the previous year, showing an increase of 535,144 sheep in one year. I really can hardly believe the figures. But there they are, as given in the published returns, and I am very glad indeed to be able to refer to them, as they indicate a very satisfactory state of affairs. From 1884 to 1890 the number of sheep in the colony increased from 1,547,061 to 2,524,918—an increase of about a million in six years. Then came a period of drought and disaster, and two years afterwards the number of sheep had decreased to 1,685,500—a reduction of 839,413. I need not go into the reason of that—members are aware of it. We all have too much reason to remember the terrible drought which almost ruined half the squatters in the Northern part of the colony—I say almost, I fear, in many cases, beyond all hopes of recovery. Over three quarters of a million of sheep were destroyed in two years; and in 1892 we had gone back, as regards the number of our sheep, to our position ten years previously. But I am glad to say that

things are improving again. The number is rapidly increasing, and by the end of this year we may expect—notwithstanding the great losses I have referred to—to be abreast of our numbers at the end of 1890. Of course the great trouble we have to contend with, the great difficulty our pastoralists have to deal with, is the low price of wool. Really, the very low price at present ruling for wool almost, if not altogether, makes sheep farming come out on the wrong side of the ledger. I remember, a few years ago, if any person were reputed to have a sheep station at the North his credit was good, and he was looked upon as a man of substance—in fact, a rich man. But, now, anyone who has a sheep station at the North is not looked upon as a man to be envied, but, as a rule, is looked upon as a man having an encumbrance. I trust that state of affairs will speedily alter, because it undoubtedly is a great disadvantage to the country when an important industry like the pastoral industry is languishing. I, therefore, hope that not only will the price of wool increase, but also that our flocks will continue to increase.

Revenue for the past year.

I now come to deal with the public revenue for the past year—that is, the year ended the 30th June last. Up to that date the year's revenue amounted to £681,245, as compared with £575,821, the revenue for the previous year; showing an increase of £105,424, or about 20 per cent. The principal causes of this increase were as follows:—

Customs	... £66,116 (increase)
Postages, &c....	3,629 "
Telegrams	... 3,694 "
Railways	... 26,329 "

Our revenue from railways increased from £107,305 in 1893, to £133,544 last year. In land the increase was only £635—£98,026 in 1893, as compared with £98,661 last year; but, with the exception of this item, nearly every other important source of revenue showed a satisfactory increase. The actual revenue received from all sources was £681,245: the estimated revenue for the same period was £589,500; so that the actual revenue exceeded the estimate by £91,745, and we received £105,424 more than we received during the preceding year. The

instances in which the estimated revenue was not realised were few and unimportant, the whole amount not being more than about £3,400. In nearly all the items—in all the important items—the actual revenue received showed a good increase over the estimated revenue.

Expenditure for the past year.

Coming to the expenditure for the past year, I find that the actual expenditure was £656,356, as against an expenditure of £629,372 in the previous year, or an increase of £26,984; showing that while the revenue increased about 20 per cent., the expenditure only increased about 4 per cent. The estimated expenditure for the past year was £651,962, so that we only exceeded our estimate by £4,394. I think that is a pretty close result. I do not wish to take too much credit for it, because you can very often control your expenditure much easier than you can control your revenue. But there is the fact; we only exceeded our expenditure by £4,394, although the total expenditure amounted to £656,356. I think that the result at any rate shows that the Government of this country is not carried on in any haphazard manner, but that there is someone on the watch, and that care and caution is being exercised in dealing with the finances of the colony. It is a notable fact that in 1893 we spent £24,889 less than we received, and consequently our credit balance, which was £63,131 on the 30th June that year, reached £88,020 on the 30th June this year. When we took office at the beginning of 1891, our credit balance was £45,600, whereas, as I have said, it is now £88,020, showing an increased surplus of £42,420 during our term of office, and showing also that, notwithstanding our expenditure, and the growing demands of the country, we are living within our means. We often hear members who have not given the subject any consideration whatever saying that we are spending more than we are receiving. My answer to that indictment is—how can we be spending more than we are receiving when our surplus balance is now £42,420 more than it was when we took office.

Estimated Revenue for 1895.

Having dealt with the past, in regard to the revenue and expenditure, I now

come to glance at the future. I estimate the revenue for the year ending 30th June, 1895, will amount to £873,650, which is more than double the revenue for 1890, when we took office, and is £192,405 more than the actual revenue for the past year, or an increase of 28 per cent. If we add to this estimated revenue the balance of £88,020 from last year, we have available for expenditure a sum of £961,670, or nearly a million of money. To-day is the 24th September, and members may be interested to know that the revenue this year up to the 22nd instant has already reached £191,698, as compared with £101,106 received during the corresponding period of last year, or an increase of £90,592. In fact we have nearly doubled our revenue during these three months; and, what is more, we have already reached nearly one half of the estimated increase for the whole year, which, as I have said, I put down at £192,405. We may therefore fairly expect to receive the other half at any rate during the next nine months. I think, sir, if we reflect upon these large figures we must come to the conclusion that this is a splendid revenue for a small population, but still I think members will agree with me that the estimate is a moderate one? When we recollect that the revenue for last year exceeded that of the previous year by £105,964, I think it is not too much to expect that the increase this year will amount to what I have estimated, namely, £192,405, especially when from railways alone there is an estimated increase of £86,456. The "Customs," I estimate, will yield us £414,600, or an increase over last year's receipts (£331,298) of £83,302. In the same item last year's receipts showed an increase of £66,116 over the revenue for the previous year; so that I do not think it can be said that £83,302 is an excessive estimate for the present year's increase. Our "Land" revenue is estimated to yield £108,200, as against £98,661, the amount actually received from the same source last year, or an estimated increase of £19,439. In this estimate there is a sum of £27,300, revenue we expect to receive from our goldfields and mineral areas. From "Postages" I expect to receive £32,000, as compared with £26,414, the revenue actually received last year, or an increase of £5,586. This,

I think, is a moderate estimate, when we recollect that a penny postage stamp now also serves for revenue purposes. Under the head of "Telegrams" I estimate we shall receive this year about £26,000, the actual revenue last year being £19,204. I think we may fairly anticipate an increase of £6,796, bearing in mind the extensions of the telegraph to Coolgardie, the Murchison, Marble Bar, and other places.

Railway Revenue.

I now come to the "Railway" receipts, which is an important item, and which is fast increasing. The estimated revenue for the current year is £220,000, made up as follows:—

Eastern Railway	...	£125,000
Northern Railway	...	20,000
South-Western Railway	...	25,000
Yilgarn Railway	..	50,000
		<hr/>
		£220,000

Last year the railway revenue realised £133,544, so that we estimate an increase of £86,456 from this source. This, I may say, is the Departmental estimate, and I feel sure it can be relied upon, because my friend the Commissioner of Railways' estimates, ever since we have been in office, have always been accepted by me, and have always proved within the mark. Therefore, I think we may fairly reckon upon receiving this revenue, and probably more. I think I have shown from these railway receipts that we are developing. For 1890 our revenue from this source, including tramways, was only £48,628, while expenditure was £62,270, showing a loss of £13,642. For the year ended the 30th June last our revenue from railways and tramways amounted to £134,966, and the expenditure for the same period was £105,977, showing a profit of £28,989. I should like to explain here that I am dealing with the actual cash received in the Treasury, whereas the Departmental returns (and quite rightly, too) deal with the actual earnings. Of course, as in every other large business, there are some outstanding accounts, and the actual earnings of our railways last year amounted to £142,631, showing an actual profit of £36,653. For the present year, ending 30th June,

1895, the estimated revenue from railways, as I have already mentioned, is £220,000, and from tramways, £1,570— or a total revenue of £221,570. The estimated expenditure for the same period is £166,647, so that we expect to make a profit on our working railways this year of £54,923, which is equal to more than one-third of the interest we have to pay on the whole of our public debt. I think that is a matter we may fairly congratulate ourselves upon, being results of which we may well feel proud; and, what is more satisfactory, they are steadily improving. We are only beginning to realise the beneficial effects which our railways are producing. I believe that in a short time they will pay even far better than they are paying now. Many of these lines run through country that is hardly yet settled, and, as I have often pointed out in this House, a railway does not make the grass to grow, or improve the land of itself; it only affords improved facilities of transit, and encourages the development of the land. Therefore, if our railway system, running as some of these lines do, through country that is only partly settled, already produces a revenue such as I have mentioned, we may reasonably hope, as time goes on, that our railways, instead of being a loss to us, as they were a few years ago, will be our largest revenue-producing item. At any rate, I sincerely trust that such may be the case, and that we may then find members, and the people of the country generally, more eager and more anxious to construct railways through the producing parts of the country than some of them have been up to the present time.

Estimated Expenditure for 1895.

As I have already stated, I estimate the revenue from all sources during the twelve months ending 30th June, 1895, at £873,650, which, with the credit balance of £88,020 on the 30th June last, will give us £961,670 available for expenditure. The estimated expenditure for the current year is £934,581, so that I estimate we shall have a credit balance of £27,089 on the 30th June, 1895. Last year I estimated we should have a credit balance of £669, whereas we actually had £88,020. If I err on this occasion, I hope I shall err in the same direction.

Works and Buildings.

I will not deal at present with the Departments of the Service, because it would be long and tedious to go through all the items on these Estimates, and members will have an opportunity of dealing with item by item as we come to them. But I may refer to some of the principal items under the heads of "Works and Buildings," for which we provide £119,571 on these Estimates, as against an expenditure of £42,243 last year. I think it will be agreed that, apart from loan works, £119,571 is a very large expenditure in one year to propose out of current revenue upon works and buildings. Such a thing was certainly never heard of in the colony in the days that are past. Among the works that we propose to undertake I may enumerate: Additions and repairs to buildings, £19,500; Customs, bonded stores and goods sheds, £2,350; Court Houses, £2,500; Gaols and quarters, £3,150; Hospitals and quarantine stations, £12,900; Police stations and quarters, £6,500; Post and telegraph offices, £13,414; other Government buildings, etc., including a Museum and an Observatory, £10,050; Schools, £9,000; Municipal buildings, including agricultural halls throughout the country (which have proved very acceptable in those districts where they have been built), £4,623; Furniture for public buildings, £2,200; Harbour and River improvements, £7,365; other works and services, £9,163, which, together with a sum of £16,856 for staff and supervision, makes a total, as I have said, of £119,571. Amongst other improvements contemplated is the improvement and beautifying of that magnificent piece of ground, the park, on the top of Mount Eliza, which is already so valued by the people of Perth, and which in the future will, I hope, be one of the most charming pleasure resorts to be found in these colonies. We propose to expend a sum of £3,000 in clearing, making roads, and otherwise improving this park at present, and I hope members will support the item.

Roads Boards and Municipalities.

There is also a sum of £46,641 on these Estimates for "Roads and Bridges," as against an expenditure of £25 919

last year. This includes a sum of £30,000 for distribution among the various roads boards, as against £17,097 distributed last year. There is also a sum of £12,000 provided as a subsidy for municipalities, to be distributed amongst them in the proportion of £1 for every £1 raised by means of general rates, instead of 10s., which was the proportion last year. I am very glad, indeed, to be able to increase this subsidy, because I believe it is in accord with the general desire of the people of the country. I am also rejoiced to do it because I like to help those who are willing to help themselves. I should like to see the same principle adopted in regard to the roads boards of the colony for the maintenance of local roads. I do not mean in the same proportion, £1 for every £1 raised by the boards, but in some other fair proportion, whether it be £2, or £3, or £4 to be contributed by the Government for every £1 raised by the Board. I think this would do a great deal of good in many ways. It would encourage a feeling of self-help, and it would educate the people in the principles of self-Government, and create a stronger interest in these local institutions than is at present taken in them. I do not think the settlers would object to a little local taxation to provide funds for improving their own roads if the Government agreed to supplement the amount, as I have suggested—not so much for the making of new roads or bridges as for the maintenance of existing roads. At any rate, I think if that system were introduced it would work well in the direction I have indicated. It would not be a heavy burden upon the country people. No one would mind giving a little towards the maintenance of the roads he himself used, and, I cannot help thinking, if the principle were adopted, as in the case of the municipalities, the result could not fail to be beneficial to the country. As I have said, I would not propose that this principle of local taxation should apply to new roads and new bridges, which I look upon as what I may call national, rather than local, undertakings in many instances. I may add that there is also a sum of £13,500 on these Estimates to provide for the maintenance of the water supply on our goldfields, and also in connection with the water supply at Fremantle.

Large Items of Expenditure.

Without going in detail into the proposed items of expenditure, I may mention a few of the more important items which help to swell up these Estimates. They include £177,864 for the Civil List and payments authorised by Statutes (including £152,607 interest on loans); Railways, £166,647; Works and Buildings, £119,571; Roads and Bridges, £43,641; Water Supply, £13,500; Miscellaneous Services, £21,632; Post and Telegraph Department, £86,413—members will notice that the expenditure in connection with post offices and the telegraph is growing at a tremendous rate; Police, £58,275—another item that is largely increased, owing to the extension of settlement, and the opening up of our goldfields; Medical, £22,117; Gaols, £17,647; and Charitable Institutions, £10,978. These items represent a total expenditure of £738,285, leaving only £196,296 for all the other services of the colony.

Establishment of a Mint.

Members will no doubt have read in the newspapers that representations have been made by the Government to the Imperial Government in regard to the advisability of establishing a branch of the Royal Mint in this colony. I hope in a few days to place the correspondence on the table of the House for the information of members. The Imperial authorities have been good enough to accede to the request made by this Government that we should be allowed to establish a Mint here, and I hope to be able next session to deal with the question in a practical shape, and also be able to submit the necessary legislation. I think if we believe, as I am sure we all do, that this is to be a great gold-producing country, we should not hesitate to establish here a branch of the Royal Mint. It would not only add to our prestige, but also be a great convenience to everyone engaged in obtaining gold. The question, of course, arises, whether it will cost too much? We always come back to that. However desirable a thing is, and however much we may want it, if it won't pay, or if we cannot afford it, we must let it go by the board. The Imperial authorities propose that in connection with this establishment, we should grant to Her

Majesty a civil list of £10,000 a year. In Victoria, they grant a civil list of £20,000, and in New South Wales £15,000, in order to provide for the upkeep of the Mint in those colonies. The arrangement is, that anything that is over and above what is necessary to pay all the expenses is refunded to the consolidated revenue; but the Imperial authorities take care that sufficient provision is made by Statute to ensure the establishment being carried on without cost to the Imperial Government. It has been said that a Mint here would be a "white elephant." I do not think that it would. I think the more we look into the question—I do not pretend to be an expert or to know more about it than other members—but I think if we look into the matter we shall find it will pay the colony, not only in prestige but in other ways. The loss to Victoria last year was only £1,500. It appears from the statistics I have been able to get at that the loss on working the Mint in Victoria from the date of its establishment in 1872 up to the present time, has been about £114,000; but the Mint authorities claim that the loss is compensated many times over by the advance in the price of gold since the opening of the Mint, namely from 76s. to 77s. 8½d. per ounce, whereby the colony has gained about £70,000 a year, or about a million and a half altogether. That shows it is not such a "white elephant" as some people would lead us to imagine. It would have this effect at any rate—we would save the cost, and the delay, and the interest upon the gold we are now sending away out of the colony. I have not had much experience myself, unfortunately, in sending gold away, but those members who have had to do with it have found that, by the time you pay all the charges, there is a considerable amount of expenditure, and a considerable loss, which is a matter that should be taken into consideration. I am of opinion that if we look into the matter carefully, it will be found that not only would the establishment of a Mint add to the prestige of the colony as a gold-producing country, and give us a name in the world, but it would also benefit the colony in other ways, and be altogether beneficial. I hope to be able to deal with the question next session.

A Public Observatory.

On these Estimates we have resuscitated an item that appeared on the Estimates some three years ago; we have put down £1,000 towards building an Observatory. The item did not meet with sufficient favour to carry it on a former occasion, but I think the time has now arrived when we should take steps in this direction, and place the colony in the same position in this respect as every country of note in the civilised world. We certainly want a time ball at Fremantle, like other important ports in all parts of the world, where mariners may obtain accurate information in regulating their chronometers. But that is only a small matter. There is the question of local meteorology, which requires to be put in the hands of someone who will make a study of it, and devote his whole attention to it. The present meteorological reporter is an excellent officer, but he has so many other duties to perform—I do not know exactly how many offices he holds—that it is impossible for him to pay that attention to the meteorology of the colony which its importance deserves. In these days of meteorological knowledge we look for weather forecasts and other useful information such as we get from Mr. Ellery in Melbourne, Mr. Wragge in Queensland, or Sir Charles Todd in South Australia. I think we are in a better position here than they are in respect to weather forecasts, because, as we know, nearly all the bad weather comes from the Westward; and we, in this colony, ought to be the foremost authorities in Australia in regard to the weather. Beyond that, we must keep abreast of the times. Surely we ought to do something in this growing colony in the interests of science, in the interests of astronomy, in the interests of meteorology, and in the interests of science generally? Everyone who comes here must be surprised at the almost entire absence of scientific men in our community. I think the presence among us of a few scientific men would be a gain to us. We would, no doubt, be able to obtain the services of a qualified man from one of the Observatories in England, and we would thus be able to do a little in this colony to advance the interests of science. Besides that, there

is the educational value of such an institution as an Observatory. In Melbourne and Sydney, young surveyors and other students are able, at a very small cost, to go through a course of study at the Observatory, which is very valuable to them. I hope this item—we only propose £1,000 for this year (the cost of the building is estimated at about £3,000)—will be agreed to, and that we shall thus make a beginning in this direction, and establish at any rate one scientific institution in our midst.

Admiralty Surveys.

There is another item on the Estimates to which I may refer. We propose to press the Imperial Government to renew the agreement they had with us some years ago in regard to the Admiralty surveys; and we have placed a sum of £1,500 for this service on these Estimates for this year. The reason the amount is so small is that some time must elapse before the service can be renewed, and the necessary officers obtained from England. I am going to make strenuous efforts to induce the Imperial Government to continue the surveys which were so successfully conducted on our coast a few years ago. The present state of affairs as regards our marine surveys is most unsatisfactory. If reefs are reported or other dangers, or a harbour requires to be surveyed, we have no one to do it. We might send a land surveyor, of course, but the report of such an officer would not bear that value as if it had the stamp upon it of an officer of the Royal Navy accredited by the hydrographer of the Admiralty. Therefore we propose to try to induce the Admiralty authorities to again let us have a couple of naval officers, as they did before, capable of conducting these surveys. It is scarcely to be believed, but at present we have not even a reliable survey chart of the Swan Estuary between Perth and Fremantle. We must continue these surveys both on our coast and in our harbours. The matter is so pressing that I feel no one in this House is likely to oppose it.

The Gold Production of the Colony.

I must not omit, sir, a reference to that great factor in our progress—gold. We began to export gold in 1886, in which year 302 ozs., valued at £1,148, were exported

from the Kimberley district. From that small beginning our output of gold has developed until, during the year ended the 31st December last, we exported 110,845 ozs., valued at £421,212; and, during the first six months of this year we exported 75,863ozs., valued at £288,281. If we deal with the twelve months ended the 30th June last, our export of gold was valued at £560,162. It may be interesting to members to know that the total export of gold from this colony up to the 30th June this year, has been 323,535ozs., valued at £1,229,433; and it has been obtained from the following places:—

	ozs.	Value.
Kimberley	21,195	£80,541
Pilbarra	71,831	272,970
Yilgarn and Coolgardie	159,840	607,578
Ashburton	1,474	5,603
Marchison	68,937	261,980
Dundas	206	782
	323,535ozs.	£1,229,433

It will be seen that about one half the gold exported has come from the Yilgarn and Coolgardie districts. I may also add that from the end of June this year up to the 22nd of this month (two days ago) our gold export was 54,920 ounces, valued at £208,696. It may also be interesting to members, in order to trace the development of this important industry, to know what the annual export of gold has been since the first year the precious metal appeared amongst the exports of the colony. The figures are as follows:—

	Value	£1,148
1886	18,517	
1887	13,273	
1888	58,872	
1889	86,064	
1890	115,182	
1891	226,284	
1892	421,312	
1893	496,977	
Total	£1,438,129	

* Up to 22nd September.

When we remember that this result has been obtained, by means of the most primitive means, as a general rule, and when we also bear in mind the extent of our auriferous deposits, ranging from Dundas at the South to Hall's Creek at the North—right along from Dundas Hills to Southern Cross and Coolgardie, on to Lake Barlee, Mount Margaret, Lake Carey, up to the Marchison, on to the Gascoyne and the Ashburton, up to Pilbarra, Marble Bar, Bamboo Creek, and the Nullagine on the DeGrey, right away to the Kimberleys—it must be quite

1,200 miles of country, with goldfields studded along the whole route—when we bear in mind this enormous extent of auriferous country, and its richness as indicated by the amount of treasure already obtained by means of the most primitive appliances, I think we may well ask ourselves, what are the possibilities, what are the probabilities of this great country? I hesitate to say. I do not know what they may be, but I think they are sufficient to make us hopeful for the future of our country, and to make us not hesitate or be afraid to incur responsibility in further promoting the development of its resources. There are no doubt difficulties in the way of prosecuting this important industry in regard to the supply of water on some of our goldfields, especially at Yilgarn and Coolgardie; but, I believe we shall surmount these difficulties. The wit and energy of man will be able to overcome the forces of nature. It only gives greater scope for our energies when we encounter difficulties in our way. That is the time when our true character comes out. It is not in times of prosperity, but when he meets with adversity and with difficulty, that a man really shows what metal he is made of.

A Good Record.

I have now, sir, said all I propose to say on this occasion. I feel that I have had to inflict upon members a very formidable array of figures—longer, I think, than ever I had to ask members to listen to before. At the same time they have to be gone through. They have to be marshalled and placed before members in order to show the financial position of the colony. In looking back over the period of four years since we have had the management of our own affairs, I think, speaking on behalf of the Government, on behalf of this House, and on behalf of the country, we have every reason to be satisfied. Although we have had serious responsibilities cast upon us during that time, I think it cannot be said that we have not been equal to those responsibilities. We have instituted a new order of things in this country, we have managed our own affairs, and developed the resources of the country; and I think the results, taken altogether, have been eminently satisfactory—so much so that I do not believe there is a single person in this country

who would to-day desire to see this country revert to the old order of things existing when we were under the tutelage of "Downing Street." I do not think we need be ashamed of the record that we have made for ourselves during these four years. The colony certainly has progressed amazingly. It seems as if the introduction of Responsible Government was the turning point in its fortune. It has had the effect of a fairy wand in stimulating the energies and enterprise of the whole people. It would almost seem as if it had also discovered the golden wealth of the country for us. There is no doubt of this fact, that ever since we undertook the management of our own affairs a new life has been imparted into the people of the country.

Conclusion.

I can only, sir, in conclusion, thank members for the assistance they have given the Government during the past four years. No doubt I have myself, and so have my colleagues, tried to do our best; but our efforts would not have been of any avail, unless we had been supported by the members of this House. I most willingly and gratefully acknowledge and thank members for their assistance during the time we have been in office. I think we have great opportunities before us in the future of this colony—greater than ever we have had in the past; but we have also grave responsibilities. I have, however, sufficient confidence in the good sense and the patriotism of members and of the people of the country, to believe that we shall continue in the future as in the past, to do our best to promote the interests of the colony entrusted to our management. A great change has come over this country. Western Australia is no longer poor, isolated, and unknown—I might almost say despised, as she used to be—she is now respected, and I may even say famous. Our credit is good, our finances are in order, everything seems to be in our favour. Looking around this House I am proud to see many friends of my youth, and the faces of well-tried, and respected colonists. With such men to work with I have no fear for the future. We have known the colony in the days of obscurity and adversity; let us so strive that we may be able to guide her steps with wisdom

and moderation in the days of her prosperity. (Sustained applause.)

SMALL DEBTS ORDINANCE AMENDMENT BILL.

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

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS BILL.

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

LOAN BILL (£1,500,000).

The Order of the Day for the consideration of the committee's report upon this Bill having been read, and the amendments made by the committee in the Bill having been read and agreed to,—

Clause 4:

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the following words be added to the end of the clause:—"subject to the prior charges mentioned in the 'fourth section of 'The Loan Act, 1891.'"

Amendment put and passed.

Schedule, Item 9.—"Development of Agriculture, including Land Purchase, Clearing Land, Drainage, &c., £40,000":

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the words "Land Purchase" be struck out of the item, as promised, when the item was under discussion in committee.

MR. RICHARDSON wished to state that he was not at all in favour of striking out these words. There were plenty of areas of land, even close to the city of Perth, which could be repurchased by the Government at the present time, and in other parts of the colony, adjacent to railways, and he thought it would have been wise policy to have allowed the Government to purchase some of this land. There were many other items which he would sooner see struck out than this, and he was sorry that the Government had undertaken to omit it.

Motion put and passed.

Report of committee adopted.

DROVING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 4 (inclusive):

Put and passed.

Clause 5—Travelling stock to be moved certain distances per diem :

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that this clause provided that large stock should travel not less than ten miles a day, and sheep not less than six miles. It had been pointed out to him that ten miles was rather more than should be insisted upon, and he therefore moved that the word "ten" be struck out and "eight" inserted in lieu thereof. He also moved to reduce the minimum distance to be travelled by sheep from six miles to five—the latter being the distance provided under the Scab Act.

Amendments put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 6—Drovers to give notice before entering a run :

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said it would be seen that this clause provided that notice had to be given when stock was about to travel across any run, or along any road intersecting the boundary of a run, "except along a declared public stock route." It had been pointed out to him that a public stock route might in some instances go through a private run, and it might be said that no notice would be required under this clause, in that case, and the owner of the run would be left in ignorance of the fact that travelling stock were going to cross his run. He, therefore, moved that the words "except along a declared public stock route" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. LEAKE said the clause provided that the required notice should be sent to the occupiers of runs by post. How was that provision to be carried out in remote places such as the Kimberley district, where there might be no postal communication, or where the mails were only despatched at long intervals? The stock might enter a man's run before he received the notice.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said there was the alternative of sending the notice ahead by messenger. No doubt there was a difficulty in dealing with these notices, inasmuch as they had to be left at the head station, but he thought some means would be found for delivering the notice before the stock entered upon any part of the run. Perhaps it was rather too much to require the notice to

be given not less than forty-eight hours before starting with the stock, and he would not object to reduce the time to twenty-four hours. He thought some means would always be found for giving such notice. Such a clause as this was very much desired by owners of stock at the North. He moved that the words "forty-eight" be struck out, and "twenty-four" inserted in lieu thereof.

MR. RICHARDSON said that in the other colonies it was customary to send a man ahead to report that stock was coming; but of course the same difficulties did not present themselves there as here, where runs were so large, and the distance often so great. He did not think stock owners here could afford to send a man on purpose to report at every station on the way. There was another difficulty: a man might send notice beforehand, but the stock might not arrive for a fortnight or a month afterwards; was the notice to hold good until the stock arrived? There ought to be some limit.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved that the words "nor more than seven days" be inserted, after the word "hour," in the fourth line. The notice would then have to be given not less than twenty-four hours nor more than seven days.

MR. RANDELL was afraid that instead of reducing the cost of meat to the consumer, this Bill, with the restrictions it imposed upon travelling stock, would tend to increase the price of meat.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 7—Travelling sheep to be branded with the letter "T":

Put and passed.

Clause 8—Sheep or cattle brought back to the run from which they started to travel to pay a travelling charge:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said this clause aimed at what were called "mouchers." It would be seen that, owing to an omission, no charge was fixed in the case of cattle, and he proposed to remedy the omission. The charge in respect of sheep was 2d. per 100. per mile, and, as one head of large stock was usually regarded as equivalent to ten head of sheep, in our stock legislation, he proposed to accept the same proportion here. He moved the

insertion of the words "and two-pence per head of cattle," after the word "sheep," in the fifth line.

Amendment put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said it would be seen that the clause exempted stock travelling to and from the coast for change of pasture from having to pay this fine. It had been pointed out to him that there were cases in which stock were *bonâ fide* moved from one run to another, without being at the coast. He therefore moved that the words "and from the coast" be struck out, and that the words "another run of the same owner" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 9—"Shortening Ordinance":

Put and passed.

Schedules, preamble, and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

HOMESTEADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Sir,—The object of this small Bill is to remove from the Homesteads Act the provision that land taken up under that Act shall be taken up in alternate blocks. I almost think, myself, that the wording of Clause 3 of the Homesteads Act is wide enough to admit of what we require done to be done without the necessity of this Bill, but it is better, perhaps, to have it made perfectly clear, and the object of this little Bill is to do so. It is also made clear here that the Land Regulations run concurrently with the provisions of the Homesteads Act, in this way: if an agricultural area is set apart as open for selection for homestead farms, the ordinary Land Regulations of the colony will apply over that area equally with the Homesteads Act, thus leaving it optional with the selector to take up land under the Homesteads Act or under the existing Land Regulations. Clause 3 of the Bill makes it clear, as regards land taken up under the 47th and 48th clauses of the Land Regulations, that double improvements may count in lieu of residence. I move the second reading.

Motion put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

The House then went into committee on the Bill, and agreed to the clauses without amendment or discussion.

Bill reported, and report adopted.

MARRIAGE BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

The House again went into committee on this Bill, as amended after *pro forma* consideration in committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive:

Put and passed.

Clause 4—Interpretation:

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he had to thank the Attorney General for the many important amendments introduced into the Bill since it was before them the other day; but he should like to see one or two other amendments adopted to further remove the restrictions as to the celebration of marriages. In this interpretation clause it was provided that the term "District Registrar" should mean the officer appointed to register marriages within a district, "but shall not include any assistant district registrar." He moved that the words "but shall not" be struck out, and that the words "and shall" be inserted in lieu thereof. There might be parts of the colony where the District Registrar's office would be 50 or 60 miles away, and why should they compel parties who wished to get married to travel all that distance, when there might be an assistant registrar on the spot? For instance, they had a registrar at Cue, but only an assistant registrar at Mt. Magnet; why should people have to come all the way from the Magnet to Cue if they wished to get married? Surely marriage before an assistant registrar was as good as before a full-blown registrar?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that in the past these assistant registrars were simply appointed to supply or collect the necessary forms in cases of births, deaths, or marriages, for transmission to the Registrar, and they were allowed to charge a small fee, but he was afraid that in the future they would have to deprive the public of these conveniences, as the House had reduced the fee. He did not think these assistant registrars were in all cases men who should be entrusted with the duty of celebrating marriages. He had gone a

great way to meet the views of those who desired to remove some of the restrictions provided in the original Bill; but he was not prepared to go any further. He thought it was asking too much to allow marriages to be celebrated without any restrictions at all, which seemed to him to be the object of the hon. member who had moved this amendment. Surely people who wanted to get married would not mind travelling 50 or 60 miles for that purpose. It was not an everyday occurrence. The hon. member might take the assurance of the Government that a district registrar would be appointed in every important centre.

MR. ILLINGWORTH could not understand why they should hedge marriage around with unnecessary restrictions, so long as they placed a check upon clandestine marriages. Anyone would think they were legislating against some crime, or to prevent some great wrong being done.

MR. LEAKE pointed out that the registry books would be kept at the office of the district registrar, and it would be impossible for assistant registrars to make entries of the marriages which they celebrated unless they distributed these registry books all over the country.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 5—Persons who may celebrate marriage:

Put and passed.

Clause 6—No marriage to be celebrated before eight o'clock in the morning or after eight o'clock in the evening; provided that no district registrar shall be compellable to celebrate a marriage after four o'clock in the afternoon:

MR. LEAKE moved that the word "eight" be struck out, in the second line, and the word "six" inserted in lieu thereof. He thought six o'clock in the evening was quite late enough to allow marriages to be celebrated. From eight in the morning until six in the afternoon was quite long enough without extending the time any later. He did not believe in having these things done in the dark.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the hour in the original Bill was four o'clock, which he thought was a reasonable hour, but he had extended the time to eight o'clock in order

to meet the views of some members, though, he must admit, he was not very much enamoured with several of the alterations that had been made in the Bill, and this was one of them.

MR. RANDELL thought it might be inconvenient in the case of working men, if they could only get married during working hours. Some of them could ill afford to lose a day's wages, when they required what little money they had for household expenses. In New South Wales, and he believed some of the other colonies, people could get married at any hour they pleased, early in the morning or late at night; and he did not see why we should place these restrictions upon marriages here, so long as they were celebrated legally and duly registered.

MR. ILLINGWORTH again protested against any unnecessary restrictions being placed upon people's choice in these matters. This surely was a free country, and why was it necessary to restrict the hour at which a ceremony that was in itself legal and commendable should be performed? As he had pointed out on the second reading of the Bill, marriages in Victoria could be celebrated at any hour.

MR. RICHARDSON said possibly that accounted for the number of divorce cases in that colony.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he had never heard any objection himself even to the existing law, as regards the hours within which a marriage could be celebrated, and this Bill extended those hours. He was not aware that the present law caused any inconvenience to people who wanted to get married. As to its being hard upon the working man, he thought if a man could not afford to lose half a day's work to go and get married, that man had better not get married at all. People did not get married every day of their lives; it was an event of a lifetime. He thought it was very desirable there should be some check placed upon the hasty impulses of young people, and that we should not encourage them to run to the parson at any hour of the night to get married. He did not think many marriages were celebrated as late as six o'clock in the evening, even in countries where there was no restriction as to the hour.

MR. ILLINGWORTH instanced the case of a minister in Melbourne who had celebrated over 1,800 marriages, and nearly every one of them was celebrated after six o'clock in the afternoon.

MR. CONNOR said reference had been made to the law in New South Wales, where marriages could be performed at any hour; he had heard of a case in that colony where the same minister married the same man twice in one night. That was a thing we did not want to encourage in this colony.

Question put—That the word “eight,” proposed to be struck out, stand part of the clause; and a division called for, when the numbers were—

Ayes	4
Noes	11

Majority against ... 5

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Burt
Mr. Paterson	Mr. Connor
Mr. Randell	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Solomon	Mr. Leake
Mr. Wood	Mr. Marmion
Mr. James (Teller).	Mr. Moran
	Mr. Pearse
	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Richardson
	Mr. Venn
	Mr. Monger (Teller).

Question thus negatived, and the word “eight” struck out.

Question—that the word “six” be inserted in lieu thereof—put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved that the words “or at all on any Sunday or Bank holiday” be added at the end of the clause. The clause already provided that a district registrar should not be compellable to celebrate a marriage after four o'clock in the afternoon. He also thought these officers should not be called upon to celebrate a marriage on Sunday or a public holiday.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 16, inclusive:

Put and passed.

Clause 17—Seven days notice of intended marriage to be given to a district registrar:

MR. MONGER moved that the word “seven” be struck out, and the word “fourteen” inserted in lieu of it, so as to place registrars in the same position as ministers, who could not celebrate a marriage unless the banns had been published for three consecutive Sundays.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the amendment would not effect the object the hon. member had in view; and, unless some very good reason was given for the amendment he could not accept it.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 18 and 19:

Put and passed.

Clause 20 — Marriage by special license:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the hon. member for Albany had given notice of an amendment in this clause, the effect of which he had not yet had time to consider. He, therefore, moved that the clause be postponed until after the consideration of the remaining clauses.

Agreed to, and clause postponed.

Clauses 21 to 38 inclusive:

Put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again another day.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 35 minutes past 10 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 25th September, 1894.

Amendment of the Electoral Act—Licensing of Camels
—Inviting Offers for Working Coal Deposits—Loan
Bill (£1,500,000): third reading—Homesteads Act
Amendment Bill: third reading—Friendly Societies
Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 2:30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

AMENDMENT OF THE ELECTORAL ACT.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether