

Legislative Assembly,*Monday, 28th August, 1893.*

Business of the Session—Estimates, 1893-4: Financial Statement—Water Supply, Yilgarn Goldfields—Geraldton Jetty: Receipts and Disbursements—Spirits of Wine Imported into the Colony—Stock Tax Bill: Legislative Council's Amendments—Post and Telegraph Bill: Legislative Council's Amendments—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

BUSINESS OF THE SESSION.

MR. LEFROY: I should like, without notice, to ask the Premier if he could inform the House whether it is the intention of the Government to move the adjournment of the House at an early date, for a considerable period, and, if so, when the adjournment will be moved?

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): So far as I know, the Government have no intention of adjourning the House until the business of the session is completed, or so far completed, at any rate, as to enable the House to prorogue. The Government have been considering the question of adjourning, owing to the continued illness of the Attorney General, who has, on account of his health, to go to the North; but, after considering the matter, the Government have determined to carry on the business of the session until the work of the session is over.

ESTIMATES, 1893-4.**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.**

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in accordance with notice, moved that the House do now resolve itself into a committee of supply to consider the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year ending June 30th, 1894.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Before that question is put, I would like to ask, in view of the answer just given by the Premier to the hon. member for the Moore, that it is the intention of the Government to proceed with legislation in the absence of the Attorney General, whether it is wise, until we know what the Government intend to do, that we should proceed with these Estimates? We know there are

several important Bills—there is the Electoral Bill, and there is the Tariff Bill, and other important matters on the notice paper; and I question whether it would be wise for this House to grant supplies to the Government until these matters are disposed of. I question very much whether the Government are in a position to proceed with these important measures in the absence of the Attorney General.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That is your opinion.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Not only my opinion, but the opinion of the majority of members, if they conscientiously spoke their minds. With all the ability of the Premier, I do not think he is capable of piloting through this House an Electoral Bill suitable to the altered requirements of this colony. Legal questions may crop up, and legal objections may be raised, and amendments moved when that Bill comes before the House, and I think the Attorney General should be in his place when that measure is being dealt with. I do not think the country will consent to the postponement of that measure for an indefinite period.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We intend to deal with it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: My opinion is that you are not competent to deal with it in the absence of the Attorney General. I do not think the Government are capable of dealing with a question of such difficulty and magnitude as the Electoral Bill, in the absence of the Attorney General. Therefore, I intend to move that the question of going into committee be not agreed to.

MR. SPEAKER: Then the hon. member must vote against it.

Question put and passed, and the House resolved itself into committee of supply.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.**IN COMMITTEE.**

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) having moved the House into a Committee of Supply to consider the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year ending 30th June, 1894, said: Mr. Canning—Sir, it is with very great pleasure that I have again the honour of introducing to this House the

annual Estimates. This is the fourth time that I have had that privilege since we took office on the 29th December, 1890, and I am very glad indeed, at the outset, to inform hon. members that the account I shall be able to give to-night will be in all respects a highly satisfactory one. [Hear, hear]. Since I last addressed this House on the financial position of the colony, namely, on the 21st December of last year, a great financial panic has occurred in the Eastern Colonies of Australia, and its effects have been very far-reaching indeed, and they have even reached this colony. As the result, there has been a temporary falling-off, for a few months, in our Customs revenue, and trade has suffered to a great extent through the want of banking accommodation. In fact, for some time—I think I may say a period of three months—it was almost impossible to obtain any banking accommodation at all, of any magnitude at any rate. Although we were flourishing in our own affairs, a period of difficulty and a period of stagnation occurred, but I am very glad to be able to say here to-night that the cloud has lifted, and that, so far as I am able to judge, looking around and about this colony, these difficulties have been tidied over and that stagnation in trade has seen its worst. There are signs not only of an increasing revenue from Customs and other sources, but there are signs also that the financial troubles of that period of panic are to some extent disappearing. I need hardly inform members—I am sure they fully realise it—that during the last few months a grave responsibility rested upon the Government of the colony, in order that we might maintain during that very serious period the credit of the colony. But, as I said just now, I believe that when I have finished what I have to say to-night—and I regret to say I fear it will take a considerable time—I shall be able to show members and to show the people of the colony that we are in a solvent and entirely satisfactory condition as regards our public affairs.

Population of the Colony.

The first matter I shall deal with is the question of population, because the scarcity of population has been the greatest drawback we have had to contend with

for many years. I am very glad to say that the population of the colony is rapidly increasing. When the Census was taken, on the 5th April, 1891, there were 49,782 people in the colony. Our present population is about 63,000. We have increased about 13,000 since that time, averaging—and very fairly averaging, too, if we except the last month or two—about 400 or 500 persons a month. Although there is a still larger influx of people at the present time, the fact remains that ever since the date of the last Census the population of the colony has been steadily increasing at the rate of 400 or 500 a month. Since the 1st January, this year, there have been about 5,000 arrivals, and, as far as we are able to judge from the reports we see and also from the facts before us, they seem to be still coming, and it is difficult to say how many people will come into this colony during the next few months. We welcome all those who come to us from the other colonies or from the mother country. The people of this colony welcome them, and we wish them to make their homes here, and to share with us the responsibilities of improving, and cultivating, and developing the country; and we also offer them a share in the government of the country. Of course we are anxious that the best class of people should come here. We do not want the dregs of the cities of other countries; that, of course, is but natural. But I can say to all those who are coming here, or who intend to come here, that if they come here willing to work, and to enter upon and occupy the lands of the colony, there is plenty of room for them. If they come here with little means of their own, anxious to join with us in developing and opening up this extensive territory, there is ample room for them. But if they come here without means and only to seek labour, of course under present circumstances there is not room for them. No one can gainsay that. The employing power of the colony, a small population as we are, is limited, and it would be impossible for us to find means of employment for any large number of people. But if they come possessed of some resources of their own, and anxious to enter upon and cultivate and open up the waste lands of the country, I say there is boundless

space and great opportunities for all those who come here and throw in their lot with us. As I have already pointed out, there has been during the last few months a tide of population setting in towards our colony, chiefly of course on account of the rich discoveries of gold; and I have been urged by some people to publish in the other colonies that there is no work for those who come here simply seeking for work. But I have not felt myself justified in doing that, because I felt that there were plenty of opportunities for persons to obtain information as to the condition of the colony. There was an active and vigilant Press, there were also many societies in the colony, and there were many private individuals in the colony who could give every information to those who were coming here; and I thought it would have been a very bad advertisement for the colony, after having been languishing for population for many years, if the Government of the colony, as soon as a tide of population set in towards our shores, to at once check that tide, and prevent people coming here. I felt there was plenty of land here for them to occupy; and I believe, too, that the generality of those enterprising and adventurous spirits who leave their homes in other countries to seek new homes in this colony will be bold and brave men who will make good colonists and benefit the country. Therefore I am unwilling to do anything whatever to prevent these adventurous persons—for adventurous as a rule they will be—from coming here, and I hope they will do well, in this colony.

The Colony's Indebtedness.

Having dealt, sir, with the population of the country, I will now deal with the indebtedness of the people. On the 30th June last our public indebtedness, on Loan Account, was £2,280,012; but we had to the credit of the colony in the sinking fund a sum of £114,294, so that our actual indebtedness was £2,165,718, or about £34 per head of the population. I may mention, in passing, that this amount of indebtedness per head of the population is about one half that of the population of South Australia; in other words, their public debt is twice as much per head of the

population as ours is. Since the inauguration of the present Parliament—that is, since the coming into operation of the existing Constitution—we have added to our indebtedness by a sum of £900,000. But I would like to point out that although we have borrowed £900,000 within the last two or three years, the public works that have been undertaken or completed out of that amount have not yet, to any extent, made their influence felt. I make this remark because—although I have no reason but to be satisfied with the signs that are already apparent in regard to the operation of these works—I wish to point out that there has been no time yet for their operation to produce any marked effect. The mere building of a railway into a country will not at once convert the land from being a wilderness into cultivated fields. It is only some time after you give these facilities of transit and provide the people with an easy means of communication that any real progress can result. Therefore, I say, although we have spent £900,000 within the last couple of years in the prosecution of important public works, no time has yet elapsed to allow the full effect of these works to manifest itself. With the exception of the railway to Bunbury, which was opened to-day, no other public work of importance undertaken out of this £900,000 has yet been completed, and therefore the beneficial effects of this expenditure upon the cultivation of the colony have not yet been realised. I may also say that although we were authorised to raise £900,000, the loan only realised £888,674, the difference being made up of the cost of floating, commission, and other charges. Out of this sum of £888,674 we had expended, on the 30th June last, £639,860. Members will notice from the public accounts in their hands that that is the amount of expenditure which has actually been charged against the votes. There is, however, a sum of £204,294 which we have in railway, and other stores, principally on loan account, and which of course have been paid for.

A Comparison of our Indebtedness.

In thinking over our loan indebtedness it occurred to me to compare our position in that respect with that of the only other

Australian—I may say Australasian—colony that is in any way similarly situated with ourselves as regards revenue and population—although the population of that colony is considerably greater than our own. I refer to the Colony of Tasmania. I found that on the 30th June of this year the public debt of that important colony was £7,745,549, and that the interest payable annually on that amount was £322,172. I also found that the revenue of the colony was only £783,234, and that they began the year 1893 with a deficit of £233,885. In looking at these figures, it seems to me that our position is very different, and much more satisfactory than that of Tasmania. Our public debt on the 30th June last was £2,165,718, and the interest payable in respect of that amount was about £118,000. Our revenue amounted (in round numbers) to £600,000, and we commenced the year with a credit balance of £63,132. I also thought I would compare our indebtedness with that of the whole of the Australian colonies—excluding New Zealand—and I found that at the end of last year the total indebtedness of the whole of the Australian colonies put together was about £160,000,000, an amount equal to nearly £50 per head of the population. Members will therefore see that our own indebtedness per head of the population compares favourably also from this point of view. While the indebtedness of the whole of the Australian colonies (excluding New Zealand) amounts to a sum equal to about £50 per head of the entire population, the indebtedness of this colony only amounts to £34 per head. I think, sir, that these facts will, at any rate, show members that, although our indebtedness is considerable—I do not wish to deny that—still we are in a far better position in this respect than the whole of Australia taken together, and in a much better position than Tasmania, the one colony of the group which is in any way similarly situated with ourselves as regards its revenue and population. And, as I said before, a considerable amount of our indebtedness has been incurred so recently that there has been but little opportunity yet for the colony to reap the benefits that we so much look forward to reaping from this expenditure on public works.

Deposits in the Banks.

I desire, in passing, to refer to the deposits which the people of the colony have in the local Banks. I do so as indicating the position of our people, so far as private means are concerned; and I think the figures show that as a community we are in a fairly good position. I wish to draw attention to the fact that on the 30th June last there was in the Banks of the colony—we know they are very few in number—at fixed deposit and on current account, a sum of £1,283,130. On the 31st December last year there was a little more—£1,319,725; therefore the amounts at call and on fixed deposit in the Banks decreased in the intervening six months by £36,595. I think, sir, that the figures I have just quoted show that for so small a community, numbering only 63,000, all told, men, women, and children, we have what I may call an enormous sum lying to our credit, on fixed deposit and at call, in the local Banks. It shows, at any rate, that we have people in the country possessed of capital and means, and it shows, too, that there is plenty of money in the colony for developing the country, if it is only used in the right direction. In calling attention to these and other matters, I hope members will understand that I am not dealing with them in order to work up a case, as counsel sometimes do; I am dealing with them as facts that have come before me in considering the financial position of the colony, and if, when I have finished this statement, any member can say that I have omitted from it facts that would tell against my case and referred only to those that tell in its favour, I hope he will take the opportunity to do so. All I can say is that I have no such intention; but it will be apparent to every member here to-night that all the facts I am using are in favour of the contention that the colony is in a thoroughly sound condition. I say they are all in favour of that contention, for this reason: there are no facts on the other side to combat this contention.

Imports and Exports.

I now come to deal with the imports and exports of the colony, and I may say here that I read with very great interest, and I am sure all members have

done the same, the very excellent report of the Collector of Customs which has been laid on the table of the House, and which gives an immense amount of useful information. If anyone takes the trouble to read that report he will at once come to the conclusion that, notwithstanding all the financial troubles and difficulties I have referred to, things in this colony are, and have been, on the whole, very satisfactory. I find that the value of our imports for 1891 was £1,280,093, and that the value for 1892 reached £1,391,109, showing an increase of £111,016. During the first six months of the present year the value of our imports amounted to £782,984, so that it will be seen our purchasing power is still on the increase, because if we double the value of our imports for the first half of the current year we shall find it will more than exceed the whole value of the imports for the preceding year. In regard to our exports, of course we all know that the colony suffered very largely as regards its exports last year through the terrible drought which occurred in the Northern parts of the colony, and which not only altogether did away with the increase of our stock, but I might say decimated—and perhaps worse than that—the flocks in that important part of our territory. Therefore one would have expected a very considerable falling off in our exports; but I am happy to say that the good fortune of the colony has not deserted it, for I find that while the value of our wool and some other exports have decreased, our export of gold has increased, so that, notwithstanding the drawbacks referred to, our exports show a satisfactory increase all round. In 1891 the total value of the colony's exports was £799,466, whereas last year it amounted to £882,148, showing an increase of £82,682. I do not propose to go through all the items of imports and exports, because it would take too long, and also because the whole of the information is available for members in the excellent and comprehensive report of the Collector of Customs, which I commend to the consideration of members. Viewing the whole question of our imports and exports, which amounted altogether to £2,273,257, I think we have every reason to be satisfied, and that there is no reason for anyone to be despondent

either as to the present position or the future of this colony.

Revenue and Expenditure.

I now come to deal with the revenue and expenditure during the past twelve months. Members of course will understand that we have changed our financial year from the 31st December to the 30th June, and therefore the figures which I will bring before the committee will deal to a large extent with the year preceding the 30th June last; but I will also deal, later on, with the last six months, in order to give as much information to members as I possibly can. The revenue for the twelve months ending the 30th June last was £575,822, as compared with £517,985 received during the previous year, showing an increase during that period of £57,837. This increase occurred to the largest extent in the Railway receipts, which show an increase of £31,280 over the preceding year. The only important decrease was in the Customs revenue. I find that the Customs revenue for the past year amounted to £265,181, as against £274,352 for the previous year, showing a falling off of £9,170. In Harbor dues we received £7,466, where as in the previous year our receipts from that source were £7,194, showing an increase last year of £272. Coming to the Land revenue we received £98,026, as against £71,881 in the preceding year, or an increase of £26,144. I may, however, explain that the cause of that increase in the land revenue was due to two payments occurring last year on account of the Northern rents; otherwise the land revenue would not have shown this increase. It would only have shown a very slight increase. In the item of Postages there was a satisfactory improvement. The revenue received from that source last year was £22,785, as against £19,098 during the previous year, showing an increase of £3,686. The Railways yielded a revenue of £107,305, as against £76,024 in the preceding year, showing an increase, as I said before, of £31,280. Under the head of Stamp revenue we received £11,574 last year, as compared with £12,133 during the year before, showing a slight falling off in that item of £559. In interest we received £8,255, as against £4,421 in the

previous year, or an increase of £3,834. With the other items of revenue, which I need not go into, being small items not calling for particular attention, our total revenue, as I have already said, amounted to £575,822, as compared with £517,985 for the previous year, or an increase of £57,837. Therefore, looking at the revenue side of the question, there is no reason whatever to be dissatisfied with the amount received. In regard to the expenditure, I may say that we made very great strides indeed, due to our altered circumstances. From £487,438 for the year ended the 30th June, 1892, we reached last year a total expenditure of £629,372, or an increase of £141,934. Well, sir, that shows at any rate that our capacity for spending money has in no way diminished.

Causes of Increased Expenditure.

I will deal with a few of the causes of this increased expenditure. I find that in interest on Loans we expended last year £14,636 more than we did the year before. In the Medical Department there was an increased expenditure of £4,073; in the Police Department an increase of £4,643; and on our Defences—which includes £5,000 as the colony's contribution towards the forts at Albany—we spent £9,913 more than in the previous year. On our Postal and Telegraph Department, owing to the extension of postal and telegraphic facilities into the interior, in order to supply the wants of those engaged in gold prospecting and others, we expended £8,635 more than in the previous year. Under the head of Miscellaneous there was an increase of £8,153 as compared with the expenditure for the year before. In connection with Lands and Surveys, owing to the efforts of my hon. friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands to prosecute the survey of the lands of the colony required for the occupation of the people, we expended £10,154 more than we expended during the preceding year. Upon our Railways we expended £23,707 more than in the previous year, but, as I have already pointed out, the revenue from the same source increased in greater proportion. Works and Buildings all over the colony caused an expenditure of £40,757 out of current revenue in excess of the expen-

diture during the previous year. On our Roads and Bridges, too, we expended £10,720 more than we did the year before. So that members will see that this increase of expenditure, amounting as I have said to £141,934, has been expended in all parts of the colony, and expended in extending the services of the Government, in providing improved facilities of communication, in supplying the wants of outlying districts, in the surveys of land required for settlement, in the construction of roads and bridges, and in providing other necessary public works. Seeing that the total expenditure for the past year, ending the 30th June last, amounted to £629,372, whilst the revenue received during the same period only reached £575,822, it is clear that we expended £53,550 more than we received, and consequently we reduced our credit balance, which was £116,682 on the 30th June, 1892, to £63,132 on the 30th June, of this year.

Revenue and Expenditure for the last Half-year.

Having dealt with the past year, I should now like to come a little nearer home, and deal with the six months that elapsed on the 30th June last. The estimated Revenue of the Government for those six months was £320,417, while the actual amount received was £298,104, so that the revenue for that period fell short of the estimate by £22,313. I think this is the first occasion during the three sessions I have had the honour of presenting Estimates to this House that my calculations have not been verified; and the reason why my estimate for the past six months was not realised was, as hon. members all know, due to the financial difficulties and the general disruption of trade which followed upon the failure of so many colonial Banks, and which reacted even upon our own colony. The Customs revenue fell off £18,838 below my estimate, and there was a falling off in other sources of revenue to some extent; but on many other items there was an increase. When you bear in mind that no less than £18,838 of this decreased revenue as compared with the estimated revenue is due to the Customs alone, it is not very difficult to see that, but for that falling off, the estimated revenue would have been very nearly

realised, as the total diminution was only £22,313. But, sir, in order to show that, notwithstanding the banking troubles and the consequent depression of trade, the colony progressed, and materially progressed, all through these financial difficulties, I may point out that the revenue for the first six months of this year—which, as I have said, amounted to £298,104—exceeded the revenue of the preceding six months, ending 31st December last, by £20,387, the revenue for that period being only £277,717, and this although the Customs revenue was £22,857 less for the last six months than for the preceding six months. Dealing with the expenditure during the first six months of the present year, I find that the estimated expenditure was £378,193, and that the actual expenditure was £335,892; so that the Government expended less than they estimated by £42,301. Comparing the expenditure of the six months ended the 30th June last, namely, £335,892, with the expenditure for the previous six months, I find that it exceeded the latter by £42,412, showing that the Government have done their best, by a liberal expenditure, from current revenue, as well as from loans, to assist in the development and progress of the colony, during what everyone must admit was a period of very serious difficulty. While, then, our revenue for the first six months of this year was £22,313 less than the estimate, it nevertheless exceeded that of the preceding six months by £20,387; and, while our expenditure for the first six months of this year was less than the estimated expenditure by £42,301, still it exceeded the expenditure for the preceding six months by £42,412. As members are aware, we began 1893 with a credit balance of £100,919, and we received during the first six months of this year the sum of £298,104, so that our total assets for the past half-year amounted to £399,023. If we deduct from that the expenditure for the half-year, namely £335,892, we shall find that our credit balance on the 30th June last was reduced to £63,132, which is £19,990 more than the credit balance which I calculated upon opening the financial year with. I think, sir, that these figures, which of course are somewhat tiresome, still show that dur-

ing the last six months, which everyone admits covered a period of great difficulties and stagnation, the Government while careful of the finances of the colony, incurred during that period of depression as liberal an expenditure as it was possible for them to do.

Estimated Revenue for the Current Year.

Having dealt with the past, I now come to deal with the future, which I think will be more pleasant for members to listen to. I come to the consideration of the Estimates for the current year. The estimate of the Government for the coming year has been based upon a very moderate scale of revenue. We have thought that this is not a time when we should anticipate any large increase in our revenue, and I do not think anyone in this House will say that we are dealing with the future in too sanguine a way. When members have placed before them to-night the Estimates of the Government for the year we have just entered upon, no one, I venture to submit, will be able to say that those Estimates are based upon too sanguine expectations. The estimated revenue for the year ending the 30th June, 1894, is £589,500, being only £13,679 more than the revenue we actually received during the previous year. I estimate that the Customs will realise £275,000, and, as we actually received £265,182 from that source during the preceding twelve months, I do not think that an increase of £9,818 is anything but a most moderate estimate. Our estimated Land revenue is £90,000, as against £98,206, the actual receipts for last year. But that amount, as I said before, includes two payments during the same year on account of Northern rents. We therefore thought it would not be prudent to estimate the Land revenue for this year at more than £90,000. Post-ages, we estimate, will yield a revenue of £24,750, as against £22,785, the amount of the actual receipts during the past year, being only an increase of £1,965. I am sure, when we consider the large influx of people coming into the colony, and expected to come, and mostly people who use the post office, it will be granted that our estimate under this head is a moderate one, and will most likely be fully realised. From Telegrams we estimate to receive a revenue of £16,350, as against

£15,510 received during the past year, being an increase of only £840. With regard to Railway receipts, the estimate of the department—which I have had no reason to interfere with, because I have found out during the last two or three years that the estimates of this department are quite reliable, and therefore I have come to accept the estimates of my friend the Commissioner of Railways without any demur—the estimated revenue from this source is £120,800, as against £107,305, the amount received for the past year, showing an increase of £13,495. This is a most important matter, and most encouraging. Last year the receipts paid into the Treasury from our railways actually exceeded the expenditure by £6,361; and this year it is estimated that the receipts will exceed the expenditure by £17,559, equal to the interest on half a million of money. I think this fact alone, that we this year expect to receive £17,559 from our railways in excess of expenditure—from railways, too, which are only just beginning to produce the result we anticipate from them, for they have not had an opportunity of developing the country yet—I say this fact alone is most encouraging; and I think it reflects, too, a great deal (and I am pleased to say so) upon the management, and shows that there is care and economy practised. The Stamp revenue I estimate to yield £12,000, as against £11,574 received last year, or an increase of £426. I think, from what I have said, it will be seen when members have the Estimates of revenue before them, that our estimate for the year—£589,500—is a moderate one, and one that is most likely to be realised. Indeed, I am of opinion that it will be far exceeded.

Estimated Expenditure for the Current Year.

The estimated expenditure, I am sorry to say, is again very considerable. In fact it is with the greatest difficulty that I myself and those who have the duty cast upon them of arranging the expenditure of the colony, with so many demands coming from all parts of this immense territory,—it is with the greatest difficulty that we are able to arrange the expenditure on such a basis as to make both ends meet. I estimate the expenditure for the year ending 30th June, 1894, at

£649,881, and of this sum £124,385 will be required for interest on loans, and for sinking funds in connection with those loans. It also includes the sum of £7,000 to cover the interest on Treasury bills. The expenditure during the preceding twelve months was £629,372, as I have already said; so that the estimated expenditure for the present year is £20,509 more than last year. No one can say that this is an extravagant estimate. It is a large amount of money, of course, but I think we have kept within bounds. In this expenditure, besides providing £124,385 for interest and sinking fund—and that amount, I may say, includes the interest for half-a-year on the £436,000 that we have yet to raise, out of our last loan, and the £7,000 to cover the interest on Treasury bills to the amount of £170,000—besides providing for this expenditure, and the provision made for carrying on the various departments of the Government, there are many other items, and amongst them a sum of £46,436 for public works to be constructed out of current revenue, and £24,950 for Roads and Bridges. The works provided for on these Estimates, as members will notice, include bonded stores, court-houses, hospitals, gaols, lighthouses, police stations, post and telegraph offices, a museum for Perth—which is one of the greatest wants of this town, and it is very necessary that a place should be provided where specimens of our minerals and of the natural products of the colony should be stored, and made available for the use of those who are here and those who come here—agricultural halls, harbour and river improvements, and many other things which I need not particularise, as members will see them enumerated in the Estimates, which will be placed in their hands this evening. Our estimated credit balance on the 30th June, 1894, I am sorry to say, only amounts to £2,750. But I hope that things will so progress during the year that instead of this estimated balance of £2,750 on that date, we shall have a considerably greater amount. The Government, however, in dealing with this matter desired and have tried their best to be on the safe side; so that if better times come than we at present feel justified in providing for, well, then, any surplus will be all to the good.

Estimated Loan Expenditure.

I now, sir, come to the important question of Loan Expenditure. The Loan Estimates will in a very short time be placed before hon. members, and will give all the information that they usually give, and perhaps something more. I will deal in the first place with the Loan of 1891, because although there are two other Loans, the unexpended balances are very small amounts. Out of £1,336,000 authorised to be raised by the Loan Act of 1891, we have raised £900,000, which, as I have already said, realised £888,674; and of this amount there had been charged against votes, on the 30th June last, a sum of £639,860. It is proposed during the next twelve months to expend a further sum of £612,189; and if that amount is spent—I very much question whether it will be all spent, but the Engineer-in-Chief wishes to be on the right side, and it is not a matter of very great importance the amounts set down on these Loan Estimates, because the contracts have been let for the works, and of course the works have been entered into on the authority of the Loan Act, and it is only such amounts as will be required that will be expended; so that if the amount on the Estimates is greater than is required, of course the money will not be spent. But if the whole of this £612,189 is spent as proposed during the next twelve months, there will then be a balance of £83,951 left to be expended out of the Loan of 1891. We have a small unexpended balance of £3,003 of the Loan of 1884, and £2,539 of the Loan of 1888, which it is proposed shall be spent. Then there is also the proposed expenditure under the resolutions already passed by Parliament, which is estimated at £122,028, and which members will recollect was for the proposed deviations on the Eastern Railway and other works, sanctioned by a resolution of this House last session. This proposed Loan expenditure will altogether depend upon the state of the London money market, as will also several other items which appear on the Loan Act of 1891. For instance, there is the railway from Boyanup to Busselton, and the works in connection with the railway station at Bunbury, and many other works which are not now being proceeded with solely on account of the inability of the Govern-

ment to float the remainder of the loan in London upon terms which they consider advantageous to the colony. As I have already stated there were, on the 30th June last, in the possession of the Railway Storekeeper, stores—mostly on loan account—of the value of £204,298, all of which of course are paid for. If we exclude the value of these stores, there was really very little money to the credit of the colony on account of Loans, on the 30th June last, as members will have noticed from the quarterly financial statements which have appeared in the *Government Gazette*. By these quarterly statements it appears that on the 30th June last the Treasurer had in his possession a sum of £219,335 in cash, of which £34,967 was on account of Consolidated Revenue, £183,000 on Trust Account, and only £1,132 on Loan Account.

Public Works now in hand.

I will now deal for a moment with the public works we have in hand, although, no doubt, they are familiarly known to hon. members, still in a statement of the affairs of the colony—a statement which I am afraid covers a great deal of ground—I cannot omit reference to them. As you are aware the Bunbury Railway is completed. That is the first work under the Loan Act of 1891 which has been completed, the railway from here to Bunbury, which, I am glad to say, from all I have been able to gather—I have not travelled over the whole of the line myself, but I hope to do so in a few days—has already proved of great advantage to the districts through which it runs; and the general opinion is that it will prove a most valuable line, and be the means of encouraging the opening up of the country through which it goes. The extension of the railway to a place called Mininup Bridge—which, I hope, will not be called Mininup in the future, because there is already a place called Mininup; I wish it to be called by its old name, Donnybrook, which was the name it went by in my young days—the extension of the railway in this direction is also nearly completed. The Yilgarn and the Mullewa Railways are well in hand, and are being pushed forward most energetically. The magnificent dredger we obtained from England is doing excellent work at Albany. A channel 300 feet wide and 30 feet

deep has already been made, and we are now engaged in widening it another 100 feet. Other shoal banks have also been deepened, so that vessels now can approach the town jetty; and, altogether, the dredger is doing most excellent work. As soon as possible we intend to move her, so that she can do the same kind of work at Geraldton and Carnarvon; but the Government are unwilling to move a costly vessel about the coast until she has finished one work—unless there should be a great necessity for it—because we would run a considerable risk in moving such a vessel. The Harbour Works at Fremantle are progressing most satisfactorily. Over 1,300 feet of the mole at Rous Head has already been completed, and I was informed to-day that the cost of this work is far less than it was estimated, being only £10 per foot, whereas the estimate was £14 per foot. It may interest members to hear, if they do not already know it, that the cost of these important works at Fremantle is not so great as one would suppose. The cost is about £400 a week, or something like £20,000 a year. There is plenty of money for this work on the Loan Act, legally available, to last certainly to the end of next year, if not longer. Only a few moments before I came to the House I had the satisfaction of hearing from the Engineer-in-Chief that he is altogether pleased with the progress made with the work, and that he has seen no reason whatever to in any way alter the opinion he has already expressed with regard to it to the Government and to the members of this House, and that he looks forward to a satisfactory completion of this great and important work. [Hear, hear]. We have also executed important works in connection with harbour improvements at Cosack, Derby, Ashburton, and Geraldton, where we are building a large jetty in connection with the railway, and doing a great deal of good work. We have also completed the fortifications at Albany, the amount paid as contribution by this colony being £5,000. We have made roads in various parts of the colony, and amongst them I may mention a great work which I think even the hon. member for the Gascoyne will say “Hear, hear” to, and that is the Big Hill up the Table Land at the North. I think we spent between

£2,000 and £3,000 on that. We have also erected public buildings in various parts of the colony. The telegraph line from Derby to Hall’s Creek and Wyndham has been completed, and is in good working order. The proposed telegraph lines to the Murchison goldfield and to Marble Bar are about to be undertaken; the wire and all the material is in the colony ready for the contractor. Everywhere nearly, from the North to the South, there are signs of the activity and progressive spirit of the Government and of the Parliament of the country.

Our Export of Gold.

I now come to a very important matter, one which I am sure members are very much interested in, because it is one of the most important factors connected with the progress of the colony. I refer to the question of our goldfields. I am very glad to say that all our anticipations as to the presence of the precious metal in this colony are likely, so far as I can judge, not only to be realised, but to be far exceeded. The export of gold from the colony during the twelve months ended 30th June last amounted to 72,844 ounces, valued at £276,807; and when we remember, as is generally believed, that a great deal of gold goes out of the colony without having been entered at the Customs at all, we must be satisfied that at any rate gold to the value I have mentioned was actually exported last year, as against 45,105 oz., valued at £171,399, during the preceding twelve months, ended 30th June, 1892, being an increase during the past year of £105,408 in the value of our gold export. This alone should give us hope and confidence in the future. Nor is this the most flattering tale I have to tell. During the last six months, ending the 30th June this year, I find that gold to the value of £149,332 was sent out of the colony, as compared with £127,475 during the preceding six months,—besides, I feel quite sure, a considerable quantity more that was never declared at the Customs. It may be interesting to members to know from whence this gold came, and I have taken the trouble to find out. Dealing with the year’s export, I find that Yilgarn supplied 29,928 ozs.; the Murchison goldfield, 27,900 ozs.; Pilbarra 13,024 ozs.; Kimberley, 1,456 ozs.; Ashburton, 71 ozs.; and 456 ozs. were shipped

from Albany—I cannot say exactly where that came from, but I should be glad to think it came from Dundas Hills. In the first year of Responsible Government, that is 1891, our export of gold was valued at £115,182, whereas during the first six months of the present year it amounted, as I have said, to £149,332, and during the past year to £276,807. It seems to me from these figures that we are only at the beginning of our export of gold, and that the valuable discoveries that have been made in the various parts of the colony, and the attraction which the country has gained and the good name it has obtained, not only in the Eastern colonies but all over the world, must result in a large influx here of practical men, determined to prospect for and to discover more gold in this country.

The Water Difficulty on the Goldfields.

In dealing with this question of gold, I may say a few words in regard to the great difficulties that exist as to the finding of water, and in connection with the carriage of goods to our goldfields. It has been ordained by some wise providence that this precious metal, gold, which we all desire to get hold of, shall only be found in out-of-the-way places, far away from the centres of population, and where a great deal of trouble and a great deal of labour is necessary to procure it. I am not prepared to say that it is not a wise provision of Providence. However, whether it be wise or not, the fact remains that gold in this colony is found only in the most out-of-the-way places, the most desolate places I may say, far away from water, and where it is difficult to obtain supplies. But, notwithstanding these difficulties, we may depend upon it that so long as gold is found to exist in the country—and for my part, and I think I may say so with regard to most people who have thought over it, there is no doubt that gold does exist here in great quantities, and over an extensive area; and, that being so, we may depend upon it that the physical difficulties in the way of procuring it will be overcome by the enterprise and the ingenuity of man. It has been said by many persons that the Government have not been doing enough to remove some of these difficulties, and

that they are not equal to the occasion. Many things are said about the Government not doing this and not doing that. In fact, it seems to be expected that the Government of this colony should have nothing to do but to run after people who are seeking for gold. I am most anxious to assist all those who are seeking to develop the auriferous wealth of the country; but there are limits even to the action of the Government, and limits also to the means of the Government. In this matter no one can say that we have not done our best to try to improve the means of transit between the settled parts of the colony and these goldfields. Already £324,000 has been voted, and more will be required, in order to complete the railway from Northam to Southern Cross. We have also built telegraph lines, or are building them, to these and other goldfields; and we have men engaged on the fields whose only business is to look after the water supply on the different fields. We have also spent a large amount in providing postal facilities for the people on our goldfields. We have expended something like £70,000 of loan money, in developing our mineral resources, or at any rate it will be nearly all gone when we have built the telegraph lines to Marble Bar and the Murchison goldfield. We are also building a railway to Mullewa, in the direction of the Murchison goldfield, which will cost £186,000 before it is finished. I only mention these things to show that the Government are doing all they can to assist the gold-mining industry. We intend to continue to do all we can to assist in developing our mineral resources, especially on our goldfields to the Eastward, because we feel that the great future which we are looking forward to for this colony is considerably wrapped up in the development of these fields. We propose to indent immediately for the material to push on the telegraph line from Southern Cross to Coolgardie, so as to place that important mining centre within telegraphic communication with this part of the colony. I am glad to say we have already successfully arranged with the contractor for the Yilgarn Railway to complete his contract and hand over the railway on the 30th June next, instead of the 7th December following, and, in the mean-

time, to run trains for the convenience of the public, and to the satisfaction of the Government, at moderate rates, which have been agreed upon. The only thing the Government have to do, in return, is to pay the contractor a bonus of £2,500. It seemed to me that was altogether the best arrangement we could make. In fact, we were bound to make some arrangement to facilitate the means of transport to the fields; and I am very glad we were able to make the present arrangement, because it was absolutely necessary that some provision should be made to enable people to get to the fields with tolerable ease and expedition; and also that stores and goods should be transported at a reasonable rate, and a comparatively rapid pace. I think, if anyone takes the trouble to look all round, and see what the Government have been doing during the last two years and a-half, they must come to the conclusion that we have had our hands full, and that we have had a great deal to do, and that if we have not done all that some people would like us to do, we have at any rate done all that we possibly could do.

A New Loan Bill.

In making a statement of the financial condition of the colony, and reviewing its present position and future prospects, I must now refer to another important matter, which was named in the Governor's Speech, but which does not seem to have elicited that amount of comment which one might have expected—probably because members knew it was inevitable, and that the Government were bound to deal with the matter. I refer to the question of another Loan. In speaking of another Loan, I do not intend it to be understood that we propose to place another Loan on the market at the present time. That, of course, is not necessary, because there is a sum of £436,000 yet available from our last Loan to be floated, and which we intend to float as soon as possible. But it is necessary that the Government should be armed with legal authority in order to carry on the public works they are entrusted with. Although on two previous occasions I have submitted to this House certain resolutions, which were passed by the

House, and also by the other House, authorising the Government to incur certain expenditure in connection with these works; still, I do not intend to act upon those resolutions in future, or to follow that course again. It is just as easy for the Government to obtain a Bill as to obtain a resolution; and a Bill once obtained becomes part of the statutes of the colony, whereas a resolution has to be gone over again, and, in the end, you have to get a Bill passed. In fact, I have come to the conclusion that to pass resolutions is not the proper way to deal with these money questions; and, for that reason, the Government propose to introduce a Bill this session which will absorb the two resolutions already agreed to by Parliament—one last session and one the session before—authorising an expenditure of £280,000, and will also provide for other works which are urgently necessary. Of course members are aware that one item alone that was insufficiently estimated in the Loan Act of 1891 is a very considerable one, and that is the amount set apart for the purchase of land for railway purposes. When the Government brought in that Loan Bill they never expected to have to pay £100,000 for the land required for the purpose of building our railway stations. But such has been the case. In Perth alone a sum of over £60,000 had to be expended in this way; and at Geraldton, I am sorry to say, we had to pay over £20,000 for the purchase of land which we thought would have cost us about one fourth of that amount. However, there it is. What with the purchase of land in the various towns where railways are being pushed on, the Government have had to incur an expenditure—and most of it has been paid, too—of about £100,000. It appears to me that the bold policy which the Government initiated when they took office has resulted—there can be no doubt about it—in giving a greatly enhanced value to land; and, as a consequence, in the city of Perth, the town of Geraldton, and other places where railways have been constructed, land which before the introduction of Responsible Government and the public works policy of the present Ministry might have been bought at a comparatively low value is now realising very large sums.

Schedule of the new Loan Bill.

I may say that the amount of the new Loan Bill which I will shortly introduce and submit for the approval of this House is £540,000, and the schedule will comprise thirteen items. The first item will be the "Completion of the Yilgarn Railway," for which a sum of £34,000 will be asked. That is chiefly caused by the expenditure necessary in obtaining water, and the bonus of £2,500 to be paid to the contractor on condition that he hands over the railway to the Government on the 30th June next, ready for traffic. The second item is the "Completion of the Mullewa Railway," for which a sum of £86,000 is set down. It will be remembered that I obtained the authority of this House, during the session before last, to incur an expenditure of £50,000 on this line, in addition to the amount originally appropriated; but we find that, owing to the increased length of the line, which is ten miles longer than originally intended, and also owing to the great price we have had to pay for land at Geraldton, the amount now required to finish this line will be £86,000 instead of £50,000. The third item on the schedule is "Deviations and improvement of grades on the Eastern Railway, and relaying line with 60-lb. rails," which will require £120,000, which is almost the same amount as was authorised by a resolution of the House last year. The fourth item is, "Purchase of land for Perth Railway Station and yards, buildings, &c., including iron bridge and improvements to Barrack Street," which it is estimated will require £85,000. Members will recollect that £75,000 was voted for these purposes last year, out of which it was proposed to take £25,000 from the Southern Railway vote; but it has been found that, owing to increased expenditure in connection with sidings and platforms, the Bunbury line will not be able to spare this £25,000. Therefore it is necessary to make other provision for it, and instead of £75,000, it is estimated we shall require £85,000. The next item is "Eastern Railway, Miscellaneous, £20,000." Members may say this is a considerable amount, but it is the same as was authorised last year by resolution, with the exception of £2,000. The next item is "Additional rolling stock for existing lines, £60,000." Of

this sum, £50,000 has already been expended, in accordance with the resolution of last year, and we have put another £10,000 to it. The seventh item on the schedule is "Additional Improvements to opened railways (exclusive of the Eastern Railway), £10,000"; the next item is "Railway Workshops, £20,000." Without anticipating in any way the recommendations of the commission appointed to deal with this question, we feel quite sure that something will have to be done very soon with these workshops, and we have therefore made provision in this Bill. The next item is "Roads, including approaches to new Railway Stations, £10,000." It appears that the railways we are building all over the colony, are in some places away from the made roads, and consequently inaccessible unless the approaches to them are cleared and macadamised, and we propose to set apart £10,000 for that purpose. The next item is "Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources, £40,000." I have already informed the committee that the £70,000 included in the last Loan Act for this purpose has been exhausted, or, at any rate, will be exhausted when we have completed the telegraph line to the Murchison goldfield and to Marble Bar; therefore, it is necessary to provide more money to meet further expenditure in this direction. The next item is "Improvements to Harbours and Rivers, including Jetties and Dredging, £15,000." No provision has been made on the Estimates for jetties and wharves, or even for dredging, and we propose to place this sum in the schedule of this Loan Bill. The twelfth item is "School Buildings, £15,000." We have not been able to provide for these buildings on the ordinary Estimates, and, as they are very much required, throughout the colony, we propose to provide for them in this way. The last item is "Charges and expenses of raising Loans, £25,000." When loans have been raised, of late years, they have not realised the amount required for the works they were intended for, and consequently there is a deficiency. In former times we used to have a surplus, but it is not so now; and it is necessary, in order to have sufficient to cover the cost of the works as estimated, that the full amount shall be realised, and that other provision be

made for meeting the charges and expenses of floating a loan, instead of deducting the amount from the sums appropriated for the works included in the loan. Therefore we propose to set apart a sum of £25,000 for this purpose in the present Loan Bill, which we hope will be sufficient to cover the charges in connection with the last loan, and also the proposed new loan. All these items make a total of £540,000. As I said in introducing the subject it is altogether imperative that the Government should have authority to raise this amount, though it is not probable that any part of it will be placed on the market for a considerable time. We have authority already, so far as the resolutions of the House are concerned, to raise £280,000 out of this £540,000; so that hon. members need not sink down into their boots when I mention the sum of £540,000. It is only £260,000 more than they authorised us to expend by a resolution of Parliament. But, as I said before, I do not approve of these money resolutions, and I wish I had taken a Bill at the time, instead of having to come back to explain these things all over again to hon. members. It may be asked where is the money to come from to provide for all these works. I may inform the committee that with this Bill, which I believe the House will pass without any demur, and with the assistance of that excellent Bill we passed a short time ago, the Treasury Bills Act, which is now law, I believe we shall be able to provide funds for all the works I have enumerated. I am of opinion that this Loan Bill is absolutely necessary—it is no use members saying it is not—it is absolutely necessary to enable us to complete the works that we have in hand, and to carry out the other pressing works named in it.

No further Borrowing.

I must, however, say this: I hope we will not go on borrowing too often. [Hear, hear]. I think after we get authority to raise this £540,000 we should rest awhile without going into more borrowing. When this amount is raised, we will then have all the works that we have in hand and arranged for completed, and some more; and the colony will be in a far different position from what it was before

we entered upon the public works authorised by the Loan Act of 1891, and will have, I hope, little need for further borrowing, for some considerable time. I hope it will be a long time—I sincerely hope that—before I shall have occasion to ask this House to authorise another loan. As I have already said, I do not intend at present to raise the amount to be authorised under this new Bill. But it will be absolutely necessary to have authority to raise this money in order to complete the works now in course of progress, and the other works mentioned in the Bill.

The Midland Railway.

I am sure that members would consider it strange, and I think they would be disappointed, if to-night in making this financial statement I should make no reference to that venerable subject, the Midland Railway. I have very great pleasure indeed in informing members that the action of Parliament last session in guaranteeing the Company's loan has resulted in the money being obtained, and the works have already, I believe, been recommenced; and the only reason they are not in full swing is owing to the necessary preparations having to be made to carry them on. Some weeks ago I gave the necessary authority for funds to be available, on the necessary certificates, for payments; and there is no doubt whatever that this great work will be at once resumed, and be quickly completed. I feel quite positive of this: When completed it must prove of great advantage not only to the districts through which the line runs, but also to the whole colony. I have also much pleasure in informing the House that the £60,000 which we guaranteed, a year or two ago, and for which we had to bear an immense amount of opprobrium, has been repaid to the National Bank, and the Government are released from that liability. Looking back now, as we all may, upon this disagreeable, troublesome, and protracted business, I see no reason whatever to be dissatisfied with any action that I personally took, or that the Government took, in regard to this matter. I believe we were right, and those who supported us were right, all through, from beginning to end. We adopted the only means we could take to assist this Company, and the

result is we shall have the railway built and the lands opened up, and our relationship with the Northern part of the colony will be entirely changed. I look forward to great advantages resulting from the completion of this railway and the opening up of the country through which it passes. What would have been the result if we had not come to the assistance of the Company? I can only see one result. No one can deny that, looking at the difficulties which had arisen, we should have seen this uncompleted railway lying there idle and waste, a monument (if I may use so big a word) of failure; and the name of the colony would have been associated, not only here, but also in England, with that failure. I am very pleased indeed that we were far-sighted enough, the Government and this House, to deal with this matter in the practical way we did; and, whatever may happen in the future, at any rate we have the satisfaction of knowing that this great work will now be completed, and we also have the satisfaction of knowing that a quarter of a million of money will be spent here in building it, and that when this line is completed all the Southern parts of the colony, Albany, Bunbury, the Vasse, as well as the Eastern districts, will be connected by rail with Geraldton, and Northampton, and Mullewa, and, I hope, in the future, with the Murchison goldfield.

A Credit of a Quarter of a Million.

I have very great pleasure in announcing, for the information of hon. members, that I have been able to arrange for a credit of a quarter of a million of money, on the security of the final instalment of the Loan which is yet to be raised, and also on the security of the Treasury Bills Act which this House was good enough to entrust to the Government. This amount will last us some time. But I may also inform members—which is not quite such good news—that £100,000 of it has already been used. But I hope that before long we shall be able to place the last instalment of the Loan of 1891 on the market, and we shall then have funds in hand to prosecute the many important works we have in hand.

A Cheering Outlook.

I have now, sir, dealt with all the matters that I have noted down for refer-

ence in this statement, and I will merely add a few words, if members will bear with me while I do so. I hope that during the time I have been addressing hon. members they will have come to the conclusion, as I have come in preparing the information which I have placed before them, that the colony is in a thoroughly solvent position, and that we have every prospect of a prosperous future. I hope we all look forward to taking a greater interest in public matters than has been the case in the past; I hope we shall all take a keener and more active interest in political life, and be more earnest in dealing with public affairs. My opinion of the future of this country is that it is all we could desire. In looking around the colony I am unable to detect but one single dark cloud on the horizon, which I will refer to presently. We have had such a bountiful season as we have not been blessed with for many years. Our pastoral, agricultural, and mineral resources are all being developed, and are all prosperous. The wool clip will be a large one, and the pastoral outlook is as satisfactory as one could desire. Our agriculturists have been blessed with abundant rain, and there is every prospect of a bountiful harvest. Then if we look at our resources, they are everything we could desire. Our public works are in full progress; the Midland Railway troubles are over, and the work will be in full swing, in a few days, if it is not so already. Our goldfields, as I said are attracting population, not only from the Eastern colonies, but I have heard that people are coming from America and Canada. People are flocking here by hundreds, and our population is rapidly increasing. It would be difficult, I think, for anyone to stand here to-day and say what the possibilities of the colony are, or even its probabilities, in the near future. There is only one dark cloud on the horizon. There is only one trouble, and that is far removed from us; but it touches us very closely, and that is the tightness of the London money market. I do not know how it is, as I am not on the spot, but the money market in London seems to be really worse than it is in Perth. [Laughter.] It is bad enough just now in Perth; but it is a most difficult matter indeed to obtain money in the London market. This is our only

difficulty, and it is the more aggravating, so far as we are concerned, because we know that nothing has happened in this colony to cause them to distrust us, or to question our stability. Our goldfields, as I have said, are progressing, our population is increasing, our flocks and herds are doing well; everything in fact is prosperous. Still, for all that, the money market is as hard as it can be, and we can only hope—and I do sincerely hope—that something will happen to soften it. However, there are many ways of doing a thing; if you cannot do it one way, there is generally another way of doing it; and I hope that by one way or the other we shall be able to obtain funds for carrying on and completing the great public works we are engaged in.

No Increase of Taxation.

There is one thing I must say, and it is almost the last matter I shall refer to to-night, and that is this: although we have been in office for two years and a half, and members have sat here and worked hard with us in the interests of the country, and although we have undertaken public works of great magnitude and importance, we have never yet brought down to the House a single measure which had for its object to increase the taxation of the people. [Hear, hear.] I think that is a great thing to be said. Although we are engaged in large enterprises, throughout the whole of this vast territory, and entered the London market to borrow a million-and-a-third of money, and have actually raised £900,000 out of that sum, yet we have not had to come to this House and ask for a single penny to increase the burdens of the people. I hope that will long continue. I think I made a prophesy, when introducing our first Loan Bill, that when we spent that £1,336,000 we would be in a far better position than we were before we borrowed the money. So far as I am able to judge, looking all around me, I believe that prophesy will be fulfilled. When all these works are completed, we shall certainly be in a better position to pay the interest on that amount than we were to pay the interest on our old debt, before we contracted the new one.

Conclusion.

Sir, I cannot sit down, as this perhaps may be the last time—I sincerely hope it

will not—but it may be the last time I shall have the honour of addressing this House in introducing the Budget—[No, no.] I hope it may not; there is no knowing what may happen; and I cannot sit down without thanking the members of this House, both for myself and on behalf of my colleagues, both personally and politically, for the great consideration they have always shown to me, and the cordiality with which they have ever dealt with proposals coming from myself or the members of the Government. I will, however, say this: whoever may come after us to occupy these benches, we will leave them a going concern; we will leave them a concern far different from what it was when we undertook the management of it. They will find the public departments in working order, and well organised, and the Government in all respects a going concern. I am sensible of many shortcomings in dealing with the public affairs of the colony, and so, I am sure, are my colleagues. But there is one thing that we can say, and that is that we are conscious of a rectitude of purpose in everything we have undertaken, and in everything we have done in managing the business of the colony. In conclusion, sir, I again thank members for the consideration they have shown us during the two years and a-half we have been in office. I only hope that as time goes on that this colony will continue to progress and prosper, and that she will in the future occupy an important position in the great commonwealth of Australia. [Cheers.]

MR. DEHAMEL: As the only important part of the Treasurer's speech to which we have just listened is merely that contained in his reference to the proposed Loan Bill of £540,000, which will necessitate, on its second reading, a very full consideration of the various items embodied in the schedule of the Bill, and as to attempt on this occasion to criticise the Budget statement would mean a repetition of the whole matter when we have entered on the second reading of this Loan Bill, I do not propose, myself, to waste the time of the House by any comments upon the speech delivered to-night. But as there may be some members who may desire to speak upon it, I will formally move the adjournment of the debate. I move that pro-

gress be now reported, and leave asked to sit again.

Question put and passed.

Progress reported.

WATER SUPPLY, YILGARN GOLDFIELDS.

MR. CLARKSON: I think members will agree with me that there is no more important matter at present occupying public attention than our Eastern goldfields. We are all aware that there is a very large population there at present, a population that is increasing every week by hundreds. I am well aware that the Government are taking steps in the direction of supplying these goldfields with water, and I have no doubt that the Government think they are doing all that is possible to be done in that direction. But I am of a different opinion. I am well acquainted with that country, having travelled over it, in years gone by, on many occasions, and I am aware from personal observation that the water supply is not to be depended upon. At present there is a very large supply of surface water, owing to the fact that we have been blessed with very good seasons. There has been, I believe, a greater rainfall in that district during the last twelve months than they have had there for many years, and this is apt to lead people to think that there is a better supply than there usually is. I am credibly informed, by a settler who has lived there 17 years, that in a month's time the whole of the surface water in that district will be gone, unless we have very heavy late rains. It is not necessary for me to dwell upon the very grave position of affairs there, if the water supply fails suddenly, as it undoubtedly will—and very suddenly—unless some steps are taken in the direction indicated in my resolution. The boring machines at work there, I am told, are of very little use; certainly they have been of very little use in the past. I believe the Government have sent a gentleman out there with a divining rod for the purpose of discovering water. I do not know anything about the divining rod myself; I only hope the experiment may prove successful. We know that wonderful things do happen in these days, and it is possible that something wonderful may turn up in this instance, though I candidly confess I have

no great faith in the divining rod myself. I think we should apply ourselves to something more practical than that. There are many parts of the district where tanks and dams could be formed at a comparatively small expense, so long as a thoroughly practical man is entrusted with the job. There are claypans there, and plenty of soil suitable for holding water; and, although there are no large gullies that will hold any large volume of water, there are some small gullies which could be dammed up, and which would hold a considerable body of water. I think that, without any further delay whatever, the Government should employ parties of men to clean out these sandholes and clayholes, and to dam up these gullies. The only thing that I should like to insist upon is the necessity of having the work done under the supervision of a thoroughly practical man. There is no time to be lost if any satisfactory results are to be expected. Thousands of people will be on these fields in a few months, and what will be the position of affairs if there is no water for them? They will simply be thrown back on the towns, and no doubt will be clamouring on the Government to find work for them, and we shall have a very serious state of affairs. I think no stone should be left unturned to obtain a water supply for these fields before the summer sets in. I am sure I need not enlarge any further upon the subject, because members can see what a very serious matter it is; therefore, I will conclude in the words of my motion: "That in view of the large and daily increasing population of the Yilgarn Goldfields, it is desirable, in addition to the means at present employed for the purpose of obtaining a water supply in that locality, to start parties to work immediately to form tanks and dams in the most suitable places, and that a thoroughly practical man be employed to superintend such work."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member's motion is very good, so far as it goes, but we are doing the very thing he suggests, and doing it as hard as we can. I have no objection to the resolution if the House wishes to pass it, but, as I have said, we are now doing the very thing he asks. If the hon. member had been at the meeting of the Cabinet to-day he would have heard

us talking about this very question nearly the whole time. The hon. member, in his resolution, says that something should be done, "in addition to the means at present employed." I wonder if he knows what the means at present employed are? As for employing a thoroughly practical man to superintend the work, I think we can get him. Therefore, I do not see the good of the hon. member's resolution. The House may pass it, if it thinks necessary; it will do no harm. It may strengthen the hands of the Government; it certainly will not embarrass them. Nor is there any necessity for impressing them with the importance of the undertaking. We look upon this matter of water supply as a very serious business, and we are determined to do all we can to meet the difficulty. We have already done a great deal. Unfortunately this gold is found in localities where there is no water, and you cannot find it by sinking. We have got the boring machine at work, and we are doing the very best we can in the matter, and I can tell the House this: it is costing an immense amount of money. But we intend to persevere, and do all we can to solve the difficulty.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I do not think anyone can object to this motion, but I think it is rather late in the day to talk about making dams now, when the winter rains are over. I think the hon. member might have brought it forward a couple of months ago. I believe the Government have already taken action in the matter; still, the resolution can do no harm. If the Government do not make every effort and take every precaution, there is a danger of a serious calamity to the thousands of men who are likely to be on these goldfields. I only hope the Government have made a wise selection in their officer to superintend this water supply. I am rather doubtful about it myself. I cannot help thinking that the proper place for this officer is not in Perth but on the goldfields.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): He has gone there.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Only last week, or the week before. I do not know what he wanted to be in town here at all. We want a thoroughly practical man at the head of this department, and not an ornamental head. We want a man who will remain on the fields, and see that

everything is being done that can possibly be done to solve this water difficulty.

MR. THROSSELL: I think this resolution is a very proper one to bring forward. I am in daily contact with persons returning from these goldfields, and I am in a position to state that a very short time will see a stampede from the fields unless water is found, and that at present the outlook for the near future is a very grave one indeed. I am aware that the Government are really alive to the importance of the matter, though there is an opinion outside that they are not. One thing is certain, with the hundreds of people who are now flocking to the fields, unless something is done to procure a water supply, a very short time will see them flocking back again, and we cannot foretell what the consequences may be. What steps the Government should take, I am not in a position to say; but I think this motion is a very proper motion to bring before the House.

MR. MONGER: It gives me very great pleasure to support the motion. I do not think the Government up to the present time have taken those proper steps which it was their duty to do, to ensure the proper conservation of water on these fields. They have appointed officers to occupy important positions, who, according to the reports furnished to private people, are not capable of fulfilling the duties devolving upon them in a practical way. We have been told this evening that we do not want an ornamental gentleman to represent the Government on these fields in connection with this water supply question; but I have heard on most reliable authority that one gentleman who is out there informed a number of people that he is out there to maintain the dignity of the department. I am surprised that the responsible head of the department should send an officer out there with such instructions, an officer whose duty it should be to take practical steps to procure a water supply for the thousands of hardworking miners in the district, and not to maintain the dignity of the department. I think members will agree with me that men of that kind are not what we want to hold important positions on our goldfields, when people's lives and property are at stake. We neither want them to maintain the dignity of their own

position, nor the dignity of the department they are employed under. If that is the idea running in their heads, I am afraid we shall find a very poor water supply, and we shall find a large number of these miners returning to Perth and the centres of population. What they will do there is a question which I am afraid will cost the Government a considerable amount of trouble. I am sorry that the hon. member is so late in bringing forward his motion, as I am afraid the rainy season is pretty well over.

MR. LOTON: I think it is well that the hon. member who represents this mining district should bring this matter before the House and the Government. At the same time, it seems to me from what we heard a few days ago from the head of the department, and from the Premier to-night, that the Government are doing all they possibly can in order to provide this water supply. That being the case, what is the good of passing a resolution asking them to do more, beyond perhaps impressing upon them the necessity of continued action. I am not prepared to admit, myself, that because hundreds of adventurous people chose to rush into out-of-the-way places, far in the interior, the Government is bound to follow them and provide them with all they want. After all it is a question of means, and the Government must satisfy themselves that they are warranted in incurring a large expenditure in these cases. These rushes take place all over the country, in all directions, here to-day and there to-morrow, and it is unreasonable to expect the Government to follow up every rush, and spend a lot of money in finding water, unless they are satisfied with the permanency of the field. The Government are bound to act with some discretion and caution in this matter. Although I look with satisfaction upon the good which these goldfields are likely to do to the colony; still there is the other side of the question: we are incurring a very large expenditure in developing them, quite as much, I think, as the Government are justified in spending out of the revenue of the colony.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I am very glad that someone has risen in his place to check the tide of unanimity in blaming the Government for inactivity,

and neglect of their duty, in attending to the water supply on these goldfields. It was getting rather monotonous, and I am glad the hon. member for the Swan has reminded hon. members that there is another side of the question. It is only a few days ago that I mentioned at some length the steps which the Government had taken in this direction, and I understood that the statement I then made met with the approval of the House. But it appears to have suddenly dawned upon the hon. member for Yilgarn, at this late time of the day, that he ought to think about his constituents, when, in point of fact, the Government are already doing the very thing which he is asking them to do. While the hon. member has been cogitating, the Government has been acting. I can tell him that we have been spending at the rate of £500 a month upon this one goldfield, what with making and keeping up roads, sinking wells, and taking other steps to endeavour to provide water. The Superintendent of Water Supply has been instructed to proceed to the field, and he will be instructed to remain on the field until he is satisfied that he has done all that can be done in this matter.

MR. CLARKSON: He does not understand his work.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Perhaps the hon. member himself would be prepared to go out there and superintend the work. Possibly his constituents would be glad to see him. Probably the hon. member has not read the statement I made the other day in reply to a question from the hon. member for East Perth. I will call his attention to the last paragraph. The hon. member seems to think that these dams would cost very little; but am I to take his opinion or that of my professional adviser? This is what I told the House the other day: "Extensive works, in the shape of excavations for tanks at Southern Cross, Coolgardie, and along the road to the latter, have been recommended to be undertaken by the Superintendent of Water Supply, but as these would involve an immediate expenditure of from £25,000 to £30,000, the Government does not feel justified in expending this enormous amount at present, but are doing, and will do, all they can to try and keep the route to Coolgardie open

during summer, and provide a supply of water at that central point upon which the mining population may fall back in case of necessity." The hon. member seems to imagine that these tanks and dams would not cost much, but the professional adviser of the Government estimates they would cost from £25,000 to £30,000.

MR. CLARKSON: Nonsense!

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): The hon. member says "nonsense." That is the dictum of the hon. member for Yilgarn, and this is the dictum of the Superintendent of Water Supply. Which am I to accept? I may tell members again that no effort has been spared on the part of the Government to solve this water difficulty, and we are fully alive to its importance. But who would have thought a few months ago that thousands of people would have rushed to Coolgardie, in spite of the warnings of the Press of the colony as to this water difficulty? It is impossible for the Government, it is unreasonable to expect it of any Government, to follow up these miners to every locality they rush to, and provide them with water, here to-day and away to-morrow. I suppose the hon. member expects the Government to provide portable wells, and follow up these miners wherever they like to go, all over the colony. I think that is rather too much to expect even from this paternal Government. We are anxious to do all we can, but there is a limit to the means at our command. The Government are not responsible for the actions of these men in rushing into the interior, notwithstanding all warnings to the contrary. The Government are no more responsible for the rush to Coolgardie than they were some years ago for the rush to Kimberley, and the *fiasco* that occurred there. We have done all we could, and are still using every effort to obtain a water supply. But our means are not unlimited. The Government are not the possessors of "Bayley's find." The public Treasury is not inexhaustible; but what we can we will do, and the hon. member's motion is quite unnecessary and rather late in the day.

MR. A. FORREST: I think the resolution is a very proper one. I believe the hon. member is not too late, but is quite right when he suggests that now is the proper time to make these tanks, because

in these districts a large amount of rain falls during the months of November and December, and it is now only August. Let the Government, by all means, make these tanks, and trust to Providence to have them filled. The probability is that there will be heavy rainfalls in this part of the country before the end of the year. That has been my experience of the central portions of the colony. I quite agree with the hon. member that this work should be superintended by a thoroughly practical man, and not by any ornamental gentleman, whose main idea is to keep up the dignity of the department, with a top hat, high collar, and kid gloves. We want a different class of man altogether for bush work, and I hope the Government will see that they have got the right man to undertake this important work, otherwise the money will be thrown away.

MR. MOLLOY: The motion before the House is a very important one, and deserves the serious consideration of the Government.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We are doing it, that's the best of it.

MR. MOLLOY: The hon. gentleman says they are doing it. There is an impression abroad that they are not doing what they ought to have done. I agree it would be unreasonable to ask the Government to spend large sums of money, if there was no immediate prospect of the fields becoming payable; but, considering the prospects of these goldfields, and considering the large influx of people which is taking place there, it is surely the duty of the Government to rise to the occasion, and endeavour to meet the requirements of these people. It would be a very serious matter if all these people were to rush back suddenly into our towns, and fill our streets with surplus labour, for whom no employment could be found. Although the Government are not the possessors of Bayley's find, still they have a considerable sum of money at their disposal, which this House has not begrudged them. I think they might devise some means for making their expenditure in this direction reproductive. I see no reason why those who take this golden treasure out of the soil, and afterwards out of the country, should not be made to contribute something towards the expenditure incurred by the Government in

providing them with water and other facilities. If we could, by a judicious expenditure of money, induce these people to remain here and prosecute their labours, we might have the wealth they extract from the soil spent in the colony, instead of taken out of it. I think the Government may fairly be expected to do exceptional things in these exceptional circumstances.

MR. CLARKSON: I am very pleased to have the assurance of the Premier and the Commissioner of Crown Lands that so much is being done in this direction by the Government, and I hope that the discussion this evening will impress upon them still further the great necessity that exists for making every effort to obtain and conserve as much water as possible on these goldfields. Some members seem to think that it is too late in the season to expect any more rain this year. I can assure those who think so that they know nothing about it. The heaviest rainfall in this part of the country, taking nine years out of ten, occurs during the early summer months; and if these tanks were prepared now, they would be ready to receive the summer rainfall. The Commissioner of Crown Lands seems to deal with the question in a spirit of levity.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): You are quite mistaken.

MR. CLARKSON: I am glad to hear it. After the assurance of the Government that they are fully alive to the importance of the subject, and that they are doing everything in their power, I do not see the good of carrying the matter any further.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

GERALDTON JETTY—RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS.

MR. SIMPSON, in accordance with notice, moved that there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing the receipts and disbursements, and total net earnings of the Geraldton Jetty for the twelve months ended 31st December, 1892.

Motion put and passed.

SPIRITS OF WINE IMPORTED INTO THE COLONY.

MR. SOLOMON, in accordance with notice, moved that there be laid upon the

table of the House a return showing the quantity of spirits of wine imported into the colony and cleared through the Customs during the years 1892 and 1893 respectively; the declared purposes for which cleared; and the rates and amounts of duty paid respectively. He said he moved for this return because there were two kinds of spirits of wine, one coming under a specific duty of £1 a gallon, and the other only paying 12½ per cent. *ad valorem*, being for medicinal purposes. He was informed that a large quantity was cleared for medicinal purposes that was never intended for such purposes, and that in this way the revenue was defrauded to a considerable extent.

Motion put and passed.

STOCK TAX BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The House went into committee to consider the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill.

Clause 3.—Add the following words to the end of the clause: "and such remission of duty shall be notified in the next following *Government Gazette*:"

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved, as an amendment upon this amendment of the Legislative Council, that the words "the next following" be struck out, and the words "some issue of the" be inserted in lieu thereof, and that the words "published within thirty days after such" remission be added after the word "*Gazette*." The sentence would then read: "and such remission of duty shall be notified in some issue of the *Government Gazette*, published within thirty days after such remission." He moved this amendment because it might not be possible, in all cases, to notify the remission in the next following issue of the *Gazette*, and so long as the notification appeared at as early a date as possible, it appeared to him to make no difference.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said no doubt the other Chamber had well considered their amendment. He knew they took a great deal more interest in Bills than was generally done in that House, and gave them a great deal more consideration. He thought it was very necessary to insert this notice in the first *Gazette* that came out, so that the public might know when there had been a remission of duty made.

It might be kept back for a month, otherwise. He did not say that the present Government would do so, but some other Government might.

Amendment (upon the amendment) put and passed.

Resolution reported, and report adopted.

Ordered—That a Message be transmitted to the Legislative Council, informing them that the Assembly had agreed to their amendment with a further amendment, in which further amendment the concurrence of the Legislative Council is desired.

POST AND TELEGRAPH BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The House went into committee to consider the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Post and Telegraph Bill.

Clause 15.—Strike out the words “recommended by the Postmaster General and:”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 19.—Between the words “to” and “which” insert the words “or from:”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 36.—Strike out sub-clauses a, b, and c:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said these were the sections that allowed the Minister, in certain cases, to give notice in the *Government Gazette* that letters addressed to certain parties engaged in getting up consultations and other forms of gambling should not be forwarded through the post office. He did not propose to reopen the question, as it had been thoroughly threshed out when the Bill was in committee. He would only express his surprise that the other Chamber should have thought fit to strike out these sub-sections; he hardly thought they could have understood the intention of the clause. He moved that this amendment be not agreed to.

The committee thereupon divided upon the motion, with the following result:—

Ayes	15
Noes	10
			—
Majority for	...		5

Ayes.

Mr. Burt
Mr. Cookworthy
Sir John Forrest
Mr. Harper
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Loton
Mr. Marmion
Mr. Paterson
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Richardson
Mr. Simpson
Sir J. G. Lee Steere
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Venn
Mr. Traylen (Teller).

Noes.

Mr. Clarkson
Mr. Darlôt
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Molloy
Mr. Monger
Mr. Phillips
Mr. R. F. Sholl
Mr. H. W. Sholl
Mr. Solomon
Mr. DeHamel (Teller).

The amendment of the Legislative Council was therefore negatived.

The House having resumed,

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES reported that the committee had considered the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Bill, and had agreed to some, but had disagreed to another.

Report adopted.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved, that a committee, consisting of Mr. Paterson, Mr. Traylen, and the Mover, be appointed to draw up reasons for the inability of the Assembly to agree to amendment No. 3 proposed by the Legislative Council.

Question put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt), on behalf of the committee, brought up the following Report:—

Report of committee appointed to draw up the reasons of the Legislative Assembly for disagreeing with the amendment of the Council proposed in Clause 36 of the Post and Telegraph Bill.

The sub-sections of the clause are designed to check the growing evil of gambling, and have been found necessary in several of the Australian colonies. The powers granted by the section, being granted to a Minister responsible to Parliament, are not likely to be abused.

SEP. BURT,
W. TRAYLEN,
W. PATERSON.

August 28th, 1893.

Ordered—That a Message be transmitted to the Legislative Council, informing them that the Assembly had agreed to Amendments Nos. 1 and 2 made by them in the Post and Telegraph Bill, but had disagreed to amendment No. 3, and forwarding the reasons for such disagreement.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at a quarter to 11 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 29th August, 1893.

The Royal Marriage: message from the Governor—
Criminal Law Amendment Bill: third reading—
Constitution Act Amendment Bill: committee—
Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at half-past two o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

THE ROYAL MARRIAGE.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) announced the receipt of the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:—

"The Governor forwards to the Hon. the Legislative Council a copy of a despatch from the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, conveying the expression of Her Majesty's cordial thanks for the loyal congratulations and kind wishes of your Honourable House on the occasion of the marriage of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York."

Downing Street, 11th July, 1893.

SIR,

I received and laid before the Queen your telegram of the 6th inst., on the occasion of the marriage of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York.

Her Majesty was pleased to receive very graciously the contents of the address voted by both Houses of Parliament, and to command me to request that you will convey to them the expression of her cordial thanks for their loyal congratulations and kind wishes.

I have, &c.,

(Sd.) RIPON.

Governor Sir W. C. Robinson, G.C.M.G.,
&c., &c., &c.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

This Bill was read a third time, and passed.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3.—"New Legislative Council:"

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker) moved, as an amendment, That the first five lines of the clause be struck out, and that the following words be inserted in lieu thereof:—"Notwithstanding anything contained in the Principal Act, the Legislative Council constituted by that Act shall not cease to exist on the coming into operation of Part III. of the said Act, but shall continue and subsist until the issue of the writs for the first general election of members to serve in the Legislative Council constituted by this Act, when such last-mentioned Legislative Council shall take the place and have all the powers, functions, and privileges of the Legislative Council constituted by the Principal Act." He said: The object of this amendment is to make it clear that this Council shall not cease to exist until the first writs for members to serve in the new Legislative Council are issued.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: The object, I understand, is to keep in existence the Legislative Council, not only as a whole, but in its parts; that is, that there shall be no interval in law between the vacating of a seat and the election of a gentleman to fill it. But will not this interfere with the question to be raised later on as to whether elections shall be held the moment a seat is vacated?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): No, it merely extends the life of the present Legislative Council until the issue of writs for the new Council.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: Then there will be no Legislative Council between the issue of the writs and the return.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): Of course; that must be.

Amendment—put and passed, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4.—"Constitution of Council":

THE HON. E. T. HOOLEY: I move to strike out the words "twenty-one" in