

be seen from Clauses 10 and 11. Clause 10 reads:

The Registrar shall refer every application to an examiner, who shall ascertain and report to the Registrar whether the nature of the invention has been fairly described, and the application, specification, and drawings (if any) have been prepared in the prescribed manner, and the title sufficiently indicates the subject matter of the invention.

Then Clause 11 provides that "if the examiner reports that the nature of the invention is not fairly described, or that the application, specification or drawings has not, or have not been prepared in the prescribed manner," he may refuse the certificate, and then the applicant may appeal to the law officer. Afterwards the applicant may go further and appeal to the Minister, whose decision is final. It has been thought desirable to protect the issue of patents, by having the seal of the colony stamped on them. In other places the comptroller or commissioner, as the case may be, affixes the seal, but it is thought desirable in an important matter like this that every opportunity should be given to protect both the public and the patentee; and, therefore, when all steps have been taken, and the Minister has determined the patent may issue, he submits it to the Governor to have the seal attached. This part of the Bill embodies the law on the subject of patents, and the only important alteration is an attempt, I am informed, to put into statutory form a fair exposition of what a trade mark is. English Judges, it is said, have for many years been giving decisions on this question, and all the essential particulars of these judgments are embodied in the Bill, and made the test of whether a trade mark is original. The provision which appears in the Act for a deposit of £25 by any person opposing a patent, is absent from the Bill. It is thought desirable, in the interests of the public, to encourage as far as possible reasonable opposition to patents, and, therefore, the £25 deposit is not insisted on under the Bill; but it is provided that the unsuccessful party may be mulct in costs by an order, which may be made a rule of Court, as will be seen by Clause 45. Part V. deals with international and intercolonial arrangements, and these, of course, are an Imperial concern, and will not be objected to. Part VI. deals with the general proceedings at

the Patents Office; and I need not enlarge more on the scope of the Bill, which is more especially one for Committee, in which each clause may be criticised and amendments moved if desired. I do, however, desire to mention, in order to save Mr. Hackett trouble, that wherever the words "in Council" appear after the word "Governor," I intend to propose that they be struck out.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ROADS AND STREETS CLOSURE BILL.

Order read, for consideration in Committee.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the consideration in Committee be postponed until the following day. He had laid on the table, at the instance of Mr. Matheson, plans showing the various streets which were dealt with by the Bill, and it would be undesirable to proceed in Committee until hon. members had had an opportunity of looking through those plans.

Motion put and passed, and the consideration in Committee postponed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 5.30 until the next day.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 26th September, 1899.

Election: North Murchison—Papers presented—Question: Seabrook Battery, Railway Trucks—Question: Local Products and Government Contracts—Question: Mining Leases, Forfeiture—Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Amendment Bill, third reading—Bank Note Protection Bill, third reading—Public Service Bill, in Committee, Clause 6 to end, reported—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, postponement—Petition, Federal League; Postponement—Motion: Leave of Absence—Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Dentists Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Annual Estimates: Appropriation Message; Financial Statement, Committee of Supply—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

ELECTION—NORTH MURCHISON.

THE SPEAKER announced the return of writ issued for election to the seat for North Murchison, vacated by the death of Mr. H. E. Kenny; and that Mr. F. W. Moorhead had been duly elected.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the SPEAKER: Auditor General's special report on Excess Expenditure in the financial year 1898-9.

By the PREMIER: 1, Return showing Government Printing done by private contract, as ordered; 2, Return showing Goods indented through Agent General; 3, Metropolitan Waterworks Board, Statement of Receipts and Expenditure, 1896-9; 4, Commissioner of Police, annual Report, 1898-9.

By the ATTORNEY GENERAL: Crown Law Department, Return showing counsel's fees paid.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—SEABROOK BATTERY, RAILWAY TRUCKS.

MR. HOLMES asked the Commissioner of Railways: 1, Whether an officer of the Railway Department made a valuation of trucks purchased from Seabrook Battery Company. 2, If so, who was the officer, and what was his valuation. 3, What had been the cost of removing the water tank from each truck. 4, What had been the cost of fitting side doors and staying sides of each truck. 5, What was the estimated cost of alteration of draw-gear and buffers to enable trucks to be used in ordinary traffic. 6, What was the cost of new trucks of same capacity as trucks purchased from Seabrook Battery Company.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes; 2, District Locomotive Inspector, Northam: £80; 3 and 4, The work of removing tanks and altering doors is not yet completed, but it is estimated that alterations will cost £10 per truck; 5, £25 per truck. The work has not been done, nor is it intended to carry it out at the present time; 6, Between £80 and £90, according to prices ruling in England.

QUESTION—LOCAL PRODUCTS AND GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

MR. QUINLAN asked the Premier: 1, Whether he was aware that, in the

past, oats grown in Western Australia had been excluded from police contracts, and would he see that any future contracts provide for the use of products of Western Australia. 2, Whether he would take steps to insure that in all contracts for flour and bran, etc., for the various institutions, a condition be provided for the products of Western Australia, so long as the same were of approved quality. 3, Whether in all Government contracts for manufactured articles he would see that in all cases contractors should state separate prices for imported and local productions, and that, other things being equal, preference be given to the productions of Western Australia.

THE PREMIER replied:—1, I believe New Zealand oats were specified, but I gave instructions some months ago to discontinue the practice, which I strongly disapproved of. 2, Yes. 3, Yes; instructions have already been given.

QUESTION—MINING LEASES, FORFEITURE.

MR. VOSPER asked the Minister of Mines: 1, What leases situate on the Eastern goldfields (if any) were gazetted as forfeitable for non-payment of rent on or about 21st July last. 2, Whether such leases had since been gazetted as forfeited. 3, If not, when would they be so gazetted.

THE MINISTER OF MINES replied:—1, Those named in the *Government Gazette* of 21st July last (*vide pp.* 2100-2112). 2, No. 3, It is intended in the first week of October to recommend the Governor to approve of the forfeiture of all leases in the Eastern goldfields upon which rent and fines have not been paid.

WINES, BEER, AND SPIRIT SALE AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and returned to the Legislative Council with amendments.

BANK NOTE PROTECTION BILL.

Read a third time, on motion by Mr. A. FORREST, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration resumed from 21st September.

Clause 6—Recompense of members of the Board :

Amendment had been moved by Mr. LEAKE, in line 4, to strike out the word "eight" and insert "four" in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and negatived, and the clause passed.

Clauses 7 to 11, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 12—Regulations :

MR. QUINLAN moved that the following be added to stand as Sub-clause 4: "For regulating and determining the scale on which officers shall insure their lives." Later he intended to move that persons who might become employed in the Government service should insure their lives; but this provision would not be retrospective, and any one now in the service would not be subject to this provision if inserted in the Bill. It had been the custom in the past to make provision from time to time for those who had rendered service during many years, and to treat them more or less on merit, in recognition of services rendered. It would be a more business-like method to make it compulsory for anyone entering the Government service to insure his life. Insurance was made compulsory in the public services of New South Wales and Victoria, and it would be an excellent plan in this colony. The provision would not inflict hardship on any person at present in the service, and it was only right that persons who sought employment in the public service should make some such provision for their families. It would be within the power of the board to say what amount an officer should be insured for, and no doubt the amount would be in accordance with the position the officer occupied. Those persons already in the public service had probably been wise enough to insure.

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

Clauses 13 to 25, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 26—Members of certain professions, etc., may be appointed without examination :

THE PREMIER moved that in line 10, after "authorised to practise medicine or surgery, or" there be inserted the words "are authorised to practise as land surveyors, or."

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

Clauses 27 to 49, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 50—Officer to devote whole time to duties, and not to engage in paid work outside his office :

MR. WALLACE moved that in lines 2 and 3 the words "without the sanction of the Governor" be struck out. As he could not get part of the clause struck out, he proposed this amendment as an alternative means of placing all civil servants on an equal footing. It should not be inferred from his amendment that he was opposed to civil servants doing work outside of their departmental duties, but he did think that all civil servants should be put on the same footing, and that if one servant in a department was allowed, as he had seen, to advertise himself as a teacher of music and singing, having a board announcing this in front of his house, every civil servant should be allowed equal liberty to do private work. He would like all civil servants to be paid sufficient for enabling them to maintain a decent home, whereas it was well known that in many cases the salaries paid were not sufficient, and this poor pay was the real explanation of many defalcations and embezzlements occurring amongst civil servants who were entrusted with public funds.

THE PREMIER: It was not desirable to make a hard and fast rule, as proposed in the amendment, for the hon. member's desire appeared to be to open the door widely, and to do this because he could not get it open a little way. Generally, a public officer should not do private work so as to interfere with persons outside who might otherwise do such work; and it was not desirable therefore to open the door widely, as proposed by the hon. member. To make a hard and fast rule without exceptions would be undesirable, and the power proposed to be given in the clause might well be entrusted to the Executive Government, subject to the supervision of Parliament. This would be better than closing the door altogether. He did not know of many instances where private work was done by civil servants; but there might be exceptions, as in the case of a person having literary taste and writing for magazines or newspapers outside the colony. Would the hon. member stop a civil servant from exercising his talent in that way? If a civil servant had skill in music or

singing, it would not be well to prevent him from exercising his skill; and if a civil servant composed a beautiful song, for example, would the hon. member prevent him from selling it?

MR. WALLACE: The teaching of music and singing was what he referred to particularly.

THE PREMIER: Without referring to individual cases, which he did not wish to do, the public would be sufficiently protected by civil servants being prohibited under this Bill from engaging in any employment outside their public duties, unless in exceptional cases approved by the Governor-in-Council.

Amendment put and negatived, and the clause passed.

Clauses 51 to 61, inclusive—agreed to.
New Clause:

MR. QUINLAN moved that the following be added, to stand as Clause 39:

39. No probationer shall have his appointment confirmed until he has effected with some life assurance company carrying on business in Western Australia an insurance on his life, providing for the payment of a sum of money at his death should it occur before the age of retirement from the public service, or, if he survive till that age, of a sum of money or annuity on the date of such retirement. Such insurance shall be continued, and the amount thereof fixed and increased from time to time in accordance with regulations made as herein provided in that behalf, and no policy of insurance so effected shall be, during the time such person remains in the public service, assignable either at law or in equity.

Put and passed.

Schedules—agreed to.

Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BILL.

POSTPONEMENT.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir John Forrest): The Mining Institute at Kalgoorlie had communicated with him, asking that the further consideration of this Bill in Committee be postponed for a day or two, on the ground that that body had only just succeeded in obtaining a copy of the Bill. The reason for postponement was not a good one, for when a Bill of this sort had been on the table for four or five weeks, the employers of labour interested might have been expected to have obtained copies of it, thus obviating the necessity

for sending urgent telegrams asking for a postponement. Those gentlemen should be able to look after their interests better than that. A good deal of time had already been absorbed by the previous postponement of the measure, and he did not wish to be accused of having facilitated the delay, to which he was much opposed. The House wished to proceed with the Bill, and while he was glad to meet the wishes of those Kalgoorlie gentlemen, it was apparent they had not shown that amount of attention and energy in this matter that they might have done in the period of five weeks which had been at their disposal. He moved that the Order of the Day be postponed till Thursday next.

MR. MORGANS: While appreciating the force of the Premier's remarks, and admitting there had been some delay on the part of employers on the goldfields in reference to the Bill, still the postponement until Thursday would not help matters.

THE PREMIER altered his motion so as to postpone the Order till Tuesday next.

Motion put and passed, and the Order postponed.

PETITION, FEDERAL LEAGUE.

POSTPONEMENT.

Order of the Day read, for consideration of the petition.

MR. LEAKE moved that the consideration of the Order of the Day be postponed until next day.

THE SPEAKER: According to the Standing Orders, no action could be taken on the presentation of a petition, unless the member in charge of the same was prepared to bring forward a motion. The mere fact of that member entering on the Notice Paper the words "to be considered" was not sufficient.

MR. LEAKE said he intended to move that the prayer of the petition be granted. Was it necessary to give notice of that intention?

THE SPEAKER: It was not necessary; but it was always advisable to give notice of such motions. It was not absolutely necessary on this occasion, if the hon. member intended to conclude his remarks with a motion.

Motion put and passed, and the Order postponed.

MOTION—LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by the PREMIER, leave of absence for two months was granted to the member for the DeGrey, Mr. Hooley, on the ground of urgent private business.

AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

MESSAGE, APPROPRIATION.

THE PREMIER presented a Message from the Governor, and the same was read, recommending an appropriation for the purpose of a Bill to amend the Agricultural Bank Act 1894.

Bill introduced by the COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS, and read a first time.

DENTISTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, and read a first time.

At 5.30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

A Message from the Governor, transmitting the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the financial year 1899-1900, and recommending appropriation, was taken into consideration.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

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

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Right Hon. Sir John Forrest) said: Mr. Chairman, this is the tenth consecutive time I have had the honour of addressing this House as Treasurer of the colony. We have worked together many years. We have seen many changes in the colony, many changes in this House; and there have been a great many changes in the *personnel* of this (Ministerial) bench. I question whether there has been, in the annals of any Parliament of any country, and certainly there has never been in the Parlia-

ments of any of the Australian colonies, such an instance of unselfish support as has been given by hon. members of this House to the Ministry I represent here to-night. I have a long task before me this evening, but I am glad to be able to say, at the outset, that it is a pleasant one. That has generally been the case with me, when delivering to this House my previous Financial Statements; but last year I think my task was less pleasant than on any former occasion during the time I have been Treasurer of the colony. As far as I am able to judge, there are at present no dark spots on the sun of this colony. I have so much to say, and so many matters to refer to, that it will be impossible for me to give a very detailed account of any one subject for I must hurry along with the duty I have cast upon me to-night, in order that I may not unduly weary hon. members.

Population, and Prospect of Increase.

The first question I have always dealt with in my previous Financial Statements has been the subject of population; because we all recognise that no country can be great, or can occupy any prominent place in the world, unless it has a considerable population. You all know that when we obtained the management of our own affairs, our population was very small indeed, only some 50,000; and that we increased the population at a somewhat rapid rate, until on the 30th June, 1898, it had reached 170,971. At the end of August of last year it had still further increased to 173,407, and that seems to have been the utmost height to which the population has reached; for after the end of August in last year, the population began to decline till the end of March, 1899, when it was only 166,501. It had been on the down grade from the end of August, 1898, till the end of March, 1899. Since then, however, I am glad to say it has been continually increasing; the population barometer has been rising month by month, until on the 31st August of this year it was 170,069, and I am glad to say it still continues to increase. To every one who knows anything about this colony—its immense extent, its varied products, its many openings for enterprise—it must occur to him to in-

quire why it is that our population does not increase more quickly. The fact remains, the truth has to be told, that the majority of people who have come to this colony during recent years have not come here with any large amount of capital: they have come here, for the most part, to seek for work, and therefore have not been prepared with sufficient means to embark upon any of the industries of the colony, and have had to be, to a large extent, absolutely dependent on the colony's labour market. So long as that labour market was flourishing, so long were they able to do well in the colony; but so soon as work became scarce, a great many of those people who had come here to seek their fortunes and certainly to obtain employment for their labour, without having any considerable capital to carry them on, found themselves in an unenviable and sad position. That being so, many men who were working in the colony—whether engaged in the public service or employed upon the public works of the colony, or otherwise—so soon as their occupations came to an end, found themselves to a large extent stranded, and had to leave the colony as best they could. I venture to think there is no other country, where there are so many opportunities for a man with energy and strength, and a little capital, or where his prospects are better than they are in this colony. There is no other place I know of where there is always before one, if not the reality yet the chance and the hope of improving one's position. We are continually hearing of people going out, sometimes intentionally, sometimes by chance, and stumbling on a rich nugget or a rich gold mine; or of people who were poor one day, absolutely poor—and I know of instances myself—travelling along with swags on their backs, perhaps visiting a deserted mine, or a new piece of country, and finding themselves all at once possessed of something worth thousands of pounds. These chances, these opportunities, do not occur in many parts of the world; at all events, they seldom occur in the countries which I have had an opportunity of visiting. We must remember too, as a reason why population does not come here quickly, that except in the case of the young and those who are leaving their home for the first time,

there is a great disinclination to leave one's own country and one's old home; and it is only necessity, or a spirit of enterprise, which induces people to do so. The tendency of the ordinary person is to remain amongst his old friends, and in the country he knows all about, or of which he has had some experience. But, for all that, the prospects of this colony are so great that they must continue, and certainly will continue, to attract large numbers here; and although for a little while, owing to the fact that for a time work was not so plentiful, the population decreased, still, there is no doubt in my mind that the population of this colony must largely increase in the near future. There is so much solid progress being made, there are so many inducements for the investment of capital and there is so much room, so much scope, in this colony, that we may depend upon it the colony only requires to be known in order that more population may come to us.

Isolation of the Colony—Ocean Mail Route.

There is one reason, too, which has militated very much against persons with capital coming here, and it has also militated against population generally coming here, and that is our isolation; the fact of the principal Port, and the seat of Government, being so isolated and out of the way, and so inconveniently cut off from the mail route between the old country and the rest of Australia. I venture to say that fact alone has done more harm to this colony than almost anything I can mention; and it would have been better for this colony to-day if the seat of Government had been founded at Albany, although that port is far away in the Southern part of the colony, than that we, in the central part of the colony, should be cut off from the tide of wealth and civilisation which has been passing by us daily for the last quarter of a century and more. I think that this isolation has been one of the great hindrances to the onward march of this colony, but I am glad to say that I believe this great hindrance will soon be removed. [MR. VOSPER: Hear, hear.] At any rate, no effort has ever been wanting, and no effort shall be wanting on my part, to remove that hindrance; believing as I do that this is one of the great changes

that are necessary in order to hasten on the progress of the colony. When the metropolis is near the ocean mail route, when people can call and see us as they pass by, instead of having to make a pilgrimage to Perth and back again, as people have to do now; when we are placed, as I hope and believe we soon shall be, in connection with the high-road of trade and commerce, then I believe the day of Western Australia will have arrived. I have no communication to give to the House to-night in regard to this matter, except to state my firm belief that the day is near at hand, and will probably come before we meet here next year, when Fremantle will be made a port of call for the ocean mail steamers; and I look forward also to the time, which I am sure is not far off, when the mails will be landed at Fremantle for distribution throughout Australia.

The so-called "Depression"—Over-Capitalisation.

I need hardly inform hon. members that both myself and the Government have experienced an anxious time during the past year; although, looking back as I can to-day upon the year that has gone, I can see there is good cause for satisfaction. During the year, and especially the early part of it, after the 30th June, 1898, many of the great public works of the colony were nearing completion, and the labour employed on them had to seek new avenues; the consequence being, as I said before, that the employment of labour received a check. The colony was then suffering from over-capitalisation of its mines. I said all through, and I am sure hon. members will recollect it, that we had no real depression in the colony, as I will be able to show later on. But one of the great features we were suffering from was the over-capitalisation of our mines, and I regret to say it seems to be the regular thing for everything now-a-days in the way of investments to be over-capitalised. Our mining industry suffers in consequence; our timber industry is suffering in consequence; I have not the slightest doubt our coal industry will suffer in consequence; and the question arises, who is to blame for this state of affairs? I know that in London they

blame the Western Australian people for it, and that, of course, has done us much injury. Nothing does a country more injury than for it to get the reputation of people losing money in it; for no one thinks well of a country in which he loses money, while on the other hand, if he does well by investments in the colony, he generally has a good word to say for it. I do not blame the people of this colony for the over-capitalisation of properties, but I blame the British promoter, who was not satisfied with ordinary profit—it may not always be in gold, for sometimes it is in paper, but at any rate the profit is large, or he hopes it will be large—and like many other people, in this colony too, the promoter wishes to get rich all at once, at one bound. At any rate, whatever may be the reason, and whatever the result to individuals, I am sure that to over-capitalise any industry is disastrous to the best interests of Western Australia. I always said there was no real depression last year in this colony, and my reason for saying so was that our industries were all flourishing; and another index I had in my mind was that the Savings Bank funds, which are to a large extent investments by the poorer portion of the community, were increasing throughout the so-called depression; showing at any rate that, as far as the investors in the Savings Bank were concerned, they were not in a very depressed condition, because they were increasing their deposits.

Revenue, Estimates, and Results.

When we look back on the past financial year, and consider the revenue we have raised during that period, and when we reflect on all that took place during the year, I am sure there is less cause for real complaint than was generally thought at the time. The revenue received for the year ending 30th June last was £2,478,811, and our population was less than 170,000 people. Can anyone say that is not a good revenue for such a population to contribute under a tariff lower than that in force in any colony in Australia except New South Wales? I should say it was very good indeed, being almost as much as the revenue of South Australia, which has double our population. There

is no denying the fact that in this colony the people are better off than the people in any other part of Australia, the spending power being greater, man for man, than it is elsewhere, and I am sure those who have had experience of other colonies will bear me out in this statement. However, the revenue, large as it was, was £275,935 less than for the preceding financial year, and I regret very much to say it was £426,539 less than my estimate. It is, however, easy to be wise after the event, and I have no doubt some people will think it was a very bad estimate. I said at the time, or a month or two afterwards when I had an opportunity, that I thought it was too high an estimate; but the reason of the deficiency in the revenue was due to two departments principally, namely the Customs and the Railways Departments, both of which fell short of the revenue they had expected to receive. The Customs produced £140,480 less than was anticipated; the Lands produced £4,481 less than estimated, and the Railways produced £201,700 less than the estimate. Although the revenue of the Railway Department was very good, still it did not come up to the anticipation; for we thought that with the new railway lines opened we would get more revenue; yet, as a matter of fact, our anticipations were not fulfilled. In Mining also there was a falling off, but I am glad to say that time has gone by, and the mining revenue is now increasing. The mining revenue was £21,729 less than was anticipated, telegrams were £15,567 less, and stamps were £24,268 less; all showing there was not so much business being done during that time as had been anticipated.

Expenditure—how Retrenched.

I am glad to be able to say that when we found the revenue was decreasing, we did not sit still and trust to Providence, but we made every effort to curtail expenditure; and we were able to save during the year on our estimates of expenditure £174,076, and I am glad to acknowledge that £145,335 of that sum was saved by the Public Works Department and Railway Department. I am sure my thanks, and the thanks of the people of the colony too, are due to the efforts made by both the Public Works Department and the

Railway Department to curtail their expenditure, and I am pleased to say that they were able to do it successfully. Between the two departments they saved, as I have stated, £145,335 on their estimates. In the beginning of the year we were unable to economise much, owing to so many contracts being in hand, and there being so many persons whose services were to be dispensed with who had to receive a reasonable notice. Notwithstanding all our endeavours, the expenditure was £2,539,357; so that we spent £60,546 more than we received during the last financial year. As members all know, we commenced the year with a deficit of £186,803; so, with the additional deficit of £60,546, the actual deficit on 30th June last was £247,349. I can assure hon. members it was an anxious time for me and for the Government during the first five months of the last financial year, namely from July to November; for owing to the decrease of revenue—not to the increase of expenditure, but to the decrease of revenue and the large expenditure that was going on, contracts having been let—the deficit on the 30th November had reached the large amount of £341,502. I am glad to tell hon. members, however, as they doubtless now know, that the Government were able to turn the tide after November, and from December up to the end of August, nine months, we were able to save £137,035, so that the deficit on the 31st August last was £204,467; and as I expect to save some £45,000 during the present month of September, the deficit at the present time is about £160,000, and I believe this amount will be gradually liquidated. Perhaps hon. members have not considered the difficulties of the past year, and how the colony has responded to the efforts put forth. The expenditure for last year was £2,539,357, being as I said £174,076 less than the estimate, and £717,555 less than the expenditure of the preceding financial year. Fancy that! Nearly three quarters of a million less was spent out of the current revenue than in the year before, and still we were able to hold our own.

Retrenchment—Why it was Obligatory.

Of course it was necessary—I have alluded to it before—to reduce expendi-

ture by retrenchment, and many employees engaged by the Government had their services dispensed with, not only in order to economise (though of course that was a great factor), but on account of the completion of works. I am glad to be able to say, at the same time, that the efficiency of the public service has not been impaired. The works have lessened, and therefore the number of employees must lessen also. My own opinion is that the service is fully manned now: in fact, as far as I am able to judge, there is still room for some reduction. Much has been said adverse to the Government in regard to retrenchment during the past year; but I may point out that retrenchment was obligatory. There was no question of sentiment or feeling about it, but I repeat that retrenchment was obligatory. When a public work is completed, and you have to economise, retrenchment must follow. After all, those who came to this colony to seek their fortunes and to get employment, had several years of good employment, and I hope it was satisfactory to them. So long as the work existed, their services were retained; but it never could have been expected by anyone that when all these railways which were being constructed all over the colony were completed, we should go on building railways for ever, and that the services of the workmen and other employees, officials and clerks, would be retained. What took place could not have come as a surprise to any of those persons, because they must have known that what has happened here had happened everywhere in Australia; for if large public works are undertaken out of loan expenditure, there must come a time when that expenditure ceases, and workmen have to seek other avenues of employment.

Loan Expenditure.

The loan expenditure for the year ending 30th June was £1,023,943, as against £1,894,962 for the previous financial year. It will thus be seen that during last year, which was said to be a year of depression, the public expenditure on current account was £2,539,357, and on loan account was £1,023,943, making a total of £3,563,300, as against an expenditure of £3,256,912 on current account, and £1,894,962 on loan account,

making a total of £5,151,874 in the previous year; so that last year the public expenditure of the colony from general revenue and from loan together was £1,588,574 less than it had been for the previous financial year. It was no doubt a strain on the people of the colony to be deprived of this large expenditure in one year; but still, for all that, I am glad to say we were able to place our finances on a thoroughly sound and satisfactory basis, and thus to hold our own, and thus to lay solid foundations for the future.

Trade—Exports and Imports.

One of the most encouraging, though perhaps not the most enlivening, subjects in connection with the finances of the colony is that of our trade with other countries; and the trade of Western Australia has been for some time, and was last year and the year before, very large, and is fast becoming of great importance. The imports for the year ending 31st December, 1898—I will deal with the later figures presently—were £5,241,965, and the exports £4,960,006, making the total trade of the colony for that year £10,201,971, or only being £156,692 less than that of the previous year. Of the imports we only received £135,300 in coin, but we sent gold away to the value of £3,990,698. The imports last year represented £31 8s. 6d. per head, and the exports £29 10s. per head; and I think that is a great record, because the figures per head are nearly double those of any other colony in Australia. The trade of Tasmania, with the same population, is not more than one-third of the trade of Western Australia. Our trade was distributed as follows:—United Kingdom, £4,345,524; Australian colonies and New Zealand, £5,206,722; other British possessions, £303,815; and foreign countries £345,910. Who shall say, reading these figures, that the trade does not “follow the flag”? As to the £5,206,722 worth of trade with the Australasian colonies for the year ending 31st December last, we imported (nearly all in goods) £2,743,761 worth, and we exported £2,462,961 worth; and of the exports, we sent £2,319,094 in gold, and in produce and other things (some of them re-exported) £143,867. It will be seen that our trade is valuable to the

Australasian colonies, and we are one of the best customers those colonies have. I may say, without exaggeration, that we do as much good to those colonies in this respect as they do to us. I had a return prepared the other day which shows that from the 1st January, 1898, to the 30th June, 1899, a period of 18 months, the inward and outward cargoes at the port of Fremantle to and from the Eastern colonies were 1,186,651 tons, while the passengers for the same period, backwards and forwards, numbered 64,949. These figures are enormous, and yet they only deal with Fremantle and no other port of the colony. That return, which was prepared in connection with Captain Angus's report, now lying on the table of the House, was obtained in order to show the importance of the port of Fremantle, and with a view to inducing the ocean mail steamers to make Fremantle a port of call. Anyone who considers these figures must come to the conclusion that we are a self-reliant people; and, more, that we are "citizens of no mean city." I have had prepared a return showing the exports and imports of the colony for the six months, from January 1st this year to June 30th, and the figures, which are very satisfactory and keep up the record, will I think be increased considerably by the end of the year; indeed, I shall not be at all surprised if the trade, instead of being ten millions, amounts to eleven millions or more for the year ending 31st December, 1899. The imports for the period I have mentioned were £2,143,420, and the exports £3,131,604, making a total of £5,275,024 for the six months. It will be noticed, and I notice it with pleasure, as hon. members will, that this is the first time for many years that our exports have exceeded our imports, and this to the extent of £988,184 in the half-year, or nearly a million of money on the right side, showing that we are not living on other people's goods. The trade with the Australasian colonies in the last six months of the financial year has been — imports £1,130,821, and exports £1,390,893, or a total of £2,521,714. We imported £1,130,821 worth of produce, and paid for it in gold for the most part; only £42,985 being paid in produce of the colony, and the amount of gold sent during the six

months to the Eastern colonies being £1,314,000. On these figures no one can say that Western Australia is not in a self-reliant position, or that she has not done some good for others as well as good for herself. No one can look on us as a suppliant people, wanting advantage from anyone; but, on the contrary, it must be admitted that we are quite able to look after ourselves and hold our own.

Stock Returns.

Turning now to another subject, I would say that the stock returns of the colony show a slight increase. In horses there was an increase of 1,220, in cattle, 25,936, in sheep, 41,146, and in pigs, 7,587. The total number of stock in the colony on the 31st December last—I am sorry to see the number is not larger, especially in regard to sheep—was, horses 63,442; cattle, 270,907; sheep, 2,251,883; pigs, 39,396. These figures are only fairly satisfactory, because the time has arrived when they should be largely increased, and I think there is a great opening at the present time for what is called "mixed farming." There are, I am glad to say, a great many farmers now who own and till their land; and I think farmers generally ought to have a small number of sheep and other stock, in order to increase their output.

Education.

It has generally been said that the present Government have not paid as much attention to the education of the young as they ought to have done. The Government are said to be like those persons mentioned in the Prayer book: "we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done." All I can say is that I deny the imputation; and I desire to place a few facts before hon. members, to show that the Government have not in any way been negligent in regard to education. On the 30th June, 1896, there were 144 schools in the colony, while at the present time there are 190; and at the former date there were 252 teachers, and now there are 440. In 1896 there were 8,076 children attending Government schools, and now there are 15,140, so that the number has

been nearly doubled in three years. Besides that, on the 30th June of this year there were 305 boys being taught the use of tools, and 96 girls being taught cookery, in the State schools. There were no evening schools in 1896, and now there are 574 persons enrolled as attending evening schools in Perth, and 336 in Fremantle; with an average attendance of 396 in Perth and 184 in Fremantle. At these schools technical instruction is given in steam and electricity, while gardening, wood-working, and iron-working are also being taught in some cases. The expenditure in education in 1897-8 was £49,147, in 1898-9 £56,949, and on the present year's estimates it is proposed to expend £68,125; so that which ever way we look, there is as great progress in providing the means of education in the colony, as there is in any other department of the State. If these figures are examined, and if it is remembered that the Government has introduced Free Education into the State Schools, there will be found no reason for the statement that has been made, and made even in this House, that the Government have not been fully alive to the advantages of giving a liberal education to the youth of the country.

Land Settlement—Encouraging Prospects.

There is another important subject which has engaged the attention of the Government very much, and always has engaged our attention; that is the subject of settlement on the land. We have always, since we came into office up to the present time, taken a great interest in trying to induce extensive settlement on the land, and have done everything possible to further that object; and, I am glad to say, we have in the Minister of Lands (Hon. G. Throssell) one who has made this matter a hobby, and who takes every opportunity of doing his best to encourage settlement. During the last three years we have witnessed a great increase in cultivation and settlement. During that time 1,283 free farms, representing 196,756 acres, have been taken up by "free homesteaders." I would like to point out that this is the only colony in Australia where a holding of 160 acres is given free to any one who likes to take up the land and live on it. Such a settler can take up

additional land if he desires it, adjoining his homestead, or if land is not available adjoining he can take up additional land elsewhere by paying 6d. an acre per annum for 20 years for any quantity up to 1,000 acres. There is no other colony in Australasia that has a code of land laws so liberal as our own; for the one feature absent from the land laws elsewhere, but offered here, is that anyone, whether he has been a day or a year in the colony, or whether he came to the colony or was born here, can take up 160 acres as a free farm, provided he lives on it and makes the necessary improvements for entitling him to get the freehold. What an opportunity is here offered to the people of the mother country, if they only knew they could come out to a colony like this, with its broad acres, where there is room and scope, and the hope of making a sufficiency while they are young, and provide for a competency when they are getting old! Surely, if this were better known, means might be provided by which our countrymen in the mother land who have no hope of ever owning a piece of land, might be able to come out to this country, where by industry and economy they would be able to found a home for themselves and their families. It is a wonder to me why the opportunity has not, to a larger extent, been embraced. I said when I had an opportunity of speaking in London, that if people came to this colony they would have this great advantage, viz., that they would not be going away from their own country; that they would have all the privileges and rights they enjoy in the mother country; that they would have the protection of the same old British flag in this country as in the land of their birth. It is strange that with all these advantages, and with all these millions of acres waiting to be opened up and cultivated, the statesmen in the old country, and even the statesmen in this country, do not set to work and try to provide means for utilising to a greater extent than they are already utilised, the millions of acres in this country available for settlement and occupation. We are doing something. We are going slowly, but where there is such an immense area, almost a *terra incognita*—even to many members in this House—

in the hundreds of thousands, the millions of acres in the South-West corner of the colony, unknown to three-fourths of the members of this House, unknown to most of the people now in this country; a land with brooks of water, a climate in which you can live with comfort, and a fairly productive soil waiting for development, something more should be done to put that land to a profitable use. I would advocate a railway being put through that country to-morrow, if I saw there was a chance of people coming here in numbers to settle on the land. No doubt that is one of the works which must be undertaken soon, a railway from Bridgetown along the south coast through the Karri country to Albany, through land which is capable of sustaining people in comfort, a few acres of which will support a family, and where the climate is so good that one can enjoy life; an undeveloped part of the colony which would be a pleasant abiding-place for those who have had to put up with the discomforts of the arid interior, searching after gold. During the past three years the following lands were approved for sale or conditional sale: 778,043 acres under conditional purchase, that is at 6d. per acre for 20 years; 18,536,177 under pastoral occupation, and 1,480,817 acres as timber areas. Perhaps it will interest some hon. members to know the total holdings from the Crown, of which the Crown is the landlord; and hon. members will see that the people of this colony, although only 170,000 in number, are enterprising and are trying to do something to make the country productive. There are held under conditional purchase—and I may remind hon. members the conditional purchase regulations mean that a person has to fence in the land within a certain time and improve it, and in many cases the conditional purchaser has to live on the land. The conditional purchase system of alienation, with compulsory improvement, was introduced in its present form in 1887, and has been the law ever since. When the Land Acts were consolidated last year, the law of 1887, although it had been in force for 22 years, was practically left unaltered. Conditional purchases (with freehold in view) amount to 3,022,404 acres, the timber leases amount

to 1,600,000 acres, the pastoral leases to 92,000,000 acres, and other leases to 356,778 acres. The total holdings leased from the Crown to the people of the colony amount to 96,979,182 acres; and when we remember, that the whole area of the colony of Victoria is only 56,000,000 acres, we realise that the Government of this colony are landlords to the people of an area almost double the extent of the whole colony of Victoria.

Agricultural Bank and its Operations.

It is fitting, having mentioned land settlement, that I should refer to another institution in this colony which I am responsible for to a large extent, and which has been doing good work in assisting agriculture without any large expense to this country: I refer to the Agricultural Bank. We all know the opposition there was to the Agricultural Bank Bill a few years ago; but, like the opposition to many things this Government has passed through this House, the opposition has long since ceased. Up to the 30th of June last, this institution had advanced £71,525; and for this amount what has been done? The money is a loan only, a loan to people on the land and the improvements. An area of 38,112 acres has been cleared, of which 27,042 acres have been cultivated, 45,954 acres ringbarked, and other improvements such as draining, well-sinking, and the erection of farm-buildings have been carried out. The cost of the improvements to the owners, consequent on this loan of £71,525, is put down at £149,802; just about double what has been lent. The Bank has promised to lend £26,300 more on security of the same class of improvements, and when the work is done the area cleared will be 51,341 acres, of which 41,342 acres will be cultivated, 59,621 acres ringbarked, and 43 miles of fencing erected. I do not think the manager of the Bank lends to people who have nothing at all, but he advances money to assist people who have a little means, and comes to the rescue of people at a time when their capital has been all invested on the land and they require to be helped along, and the result is what I have told you. All this land, which would otherwise probably be lying unutilised and unoccupied,

has, through the assistance of the Agricultural Bank, been brought into subjection and made life-supporting. I am glad to say the Bank will soon be self-supporting as an institution, and I do not know of any other institution in the colony which is doing more good. This colony offers free land to the extent of 160 acres, with a loan from this Bank to improve it at 5 per cent. interest. Such inducements should be a good advertisement to the millions of people in the old country, as it has already been a good advertisement to farmers in Eastern Australia. The Bank has only been in existence a little over four years, and it has assisted 925 farmers. The manager is a most excellent man, and very capable for the position; and we were fortunate in obtaining such a suitable manager. In his last report he says: "Of this number (925 farmers) I feel sure there were very few who could have made substantial progress without the aid of the Bank"; and again he says, "So far, no losses have been made, and borrowers continue to carry out their obligations in a satisfactory manner." The free homestead farm and the Agricultural Bank are the foundations, in my opinion, of our liberal land laws; and there are no other land laws that I know of in any part of the world, not even those of Canada and the United States, that are so simple and liberal as ours.

MR. LEAKE: What does the Bank cost?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: It pays all working expenses, and, I believe, nearly all the interest. It is just about beginning to be self-supporting.

Banking Institutions.

The banking transactions of the colony are of great interest to us all. We look with eagerness to the returns of the banks as they periodically appear, and I am sorry to say, as I said last year, that during the year that has passed the banks doing business in this colony did not increase their business, but the contrary. The debts due to the banks on the 30th June, 1898, were £3,219,907, and on the 30th June, 1899, the debts due to the banks amounted to £2,885,609; so that during that time of difficulty, a time when all would have been glad if the banks had shown some public spirit, they seem to have gathered in £334,298. The Govern-

ment had to curtail expenditure during the same period, owing to the falling revenue, and it would appear that the banks contracted their advances in the twelve months by the amount of £334,298. I am sure no one will regard this as satisfactory. I think we have now found the right horse on which to put the saddle of "depression." I know the "depression," so called, was not real. Our industries were all flourishing—there was not a dark cloud on the horizon of our producing industries; our gold-mining industry was increasing by leaps and bounds; there was no real depression in our industries, and the only depression was that caused by the stoppage of the flow of British capital and curtailment of the advances by financial institutions. At a time when our gold, our timber, our coal, our agricultural and pastoral pursuits were all prospering, the financial institutions were curtailing their accommodation in this colony. I may say that I hope these institutions, which I have every respect for and which I do not wish to say a word to injure, will gain fresh heart from what I have said, and will not be afraid when there is no reason for fear. I hope their hesitation has already passed away, as I believe it has, and that during the year before us they will be as liberal and do as much to promote everything that is good for this country, as hitherto they have been accustomed to do.

MR. VOSPER: Is the leopard going to "change his spots"?

Savings Bank.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: There is one institution to which I always refer when I make my Financial Statement, an institution which does its business very quietly indeed, but which is doing a great amount of good in this colony; and that is the Savings Bank. I should like, however, to point out that the Government, who protect the savings of the poor and of those who have not too much money, have to invest this money in order to pay the interest; for if we were to keep the money tied up in a napkin we should be out of pocket, and the general taxpayers of the colony would have to pay the interest on savings deposited. We invest these moneys so that they may be made reproductive;

and we do not want to make more than sufficient to pay the interest that as much as possible should go to the depositors. This institution protects, as far as the revenues of this colony are capable of protecting, the savings of every man who puts his money into that bank. These savings are invested for their benefit, and are secured by the money deposited being made a charge upon the revenues of the country; so that as long as Western Australia exists, as long as there is a Government in this country, so long will the man who puts his money in the Savings Bank be certain of getting it out again. The progress of the Savings Bank is indicative of the progress of the colony. On the 31st December, 1889, that is 10 years ago, the balance due to depositors was only £32,146; and on the 30th June of this year, three months ago, it was £1,116,178. The balance due on the 30th June, 1898 was £1,072,057; so that during that year of depression, as so many have called it—a depression due to outside causes, and having nothing to do with the real development of the country—those persons who invested money in the Savings Bank, most of them being persons of small means and chiefly of the working class, increased their deposits by £44,121. The interest paid by the Government to the depositors during the year was £29,848—not at all an insignificant sum, distributed amongst the small holders of money in the community. Of course we all know how this money has been invested. To the Perth Waterworks we have lent between £350,000 and £400,000; the Agricultural Bank has had between £70,000 and £80,000; the Government have taken £300,000 on Treasury bills, and there is a considerable sum invested in freehold securities. All these investments, I consider, are excellent; they are all paying interest; and, as I said before, the Government are bound to invest this money so as to earn interest. We always keep a good reserve, something like a quarter of a million; but still we must invest the balance, so as to enable us to pay the interest, which, as I have already said, amounted last year to £29,848.

Money Orders and Remittances.

We have heard a good deal about the money orders in recent times, and of the

great drain caused by money orders sent away by men employed in this colony who have their wives and families elsewhere in other colonies. I am glad to be able to say the remittances from our own to other colonies are being gradually but surely reduced. In the financial year ending 30th June, 1897, we sent away £857,673; and I often wonder how we got on at all when we were sending away so much money in every direction. During the financial year 1897-8, we sent away £691,694; and during the financial year ending 30th June, 1899, we sent away £430,868; so that last year we sent away £260,826 less than we sent the year before.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The banks sent it.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I anticipated that remark "the banks sent it." I took the trouble to ask the bank managers if they would be good enough to tell me, which they did, how much they sent away in sums of £5 or under during the time that so much was said about the increased rate on remittances; and I got the information, showing that the total was less than £5,000.

MR. GREGORY: Sums of £5?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Where does the £5 come in?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: Five pounds or less is the usual amount that such persons do send away at a time, weekly or fortnightly, and less than that too.

MR. GREGORY: You said "under £5."

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I said, "£5 or under."

MR. MONGER: The banks were "having a loan of you," there.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: There was not so much sent away, and no doubt there is less being sent away now than there used to be. It may be interesting to know where we sent this money to? To Victoria we sent £222,395, to South Australia £76,312, to New South Wales £88,717, to Queensland £13,146, and to Tasmania, and these remittances I believe were mostly sent for betting "sweeps," we sent £23,422; and to New Zealand we sent £6,876. In the last two years we sent away £1,122,562; and we received back from all those rich and flourishing colonies to the East-

ward a total of £128,076; so that we are on the wrong side of the ledger for remittances in the two years to the extent of £994,486—nearly a million of money. When we remember the two and three-quarter millions worth of imports we obtained from other colonies, and the £430,868 in money we sent last year to families, for the most part—it used to be, as I have just shown, nearly a million—I think it must be admitted that we have not only been doing good for ourselves, but at the same time have been doing good to others.

Perth Mint, Local Coinage.

I should like to say a word about the Perth Mint, the branch of the Royal Mint which was opened here on June 20th. It has had a great deal of difficulty in getting a good start; but I am glad to say that it is now making satisfactory progress. It has already coined 294,256 sovereigns; and at present the Mint is capable of coining three millions a year; and I am informed by the Deputy Master that as soon as the men become better acquainted with their work, and some more machinery is set going, the capacity will be greater. I believe this Mint will prove a great boon to the gold-miner and to the colony. At all events it “hall-marks” Western Australia as a great gold-producer; and when the Mint is in full swing, it will pay its way; and I believe the advantages which will accrue to this colony through the Mint will in many ways be greater and more numerous than we at the present time realise.

Coolgardie Mining Exhibition.

I should like to mention that, during the past year, we have had an exhibition at Coolgardie; that it has finished its work, and has I think done a great deal of good. At any rate, it got together what those competent to offer an opinion say was one of the very best exhibits of gold which has been displayed anywhere in the world during a long time past.

MR. MORGANS: Undoubtedly the best.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: And that exhibit will be used, I am glad to know, in our West Australian Court at the Paris Exhibition. I regret to say this Exhibition at Coolgardie has cost the country a good deal of money. Last year

this House voted £5,000 for the purpose, and we embarked on the enterprise. There were financial difficulties almost from the outset; but the Government, having supported the project determined that it would never do to allow any disaster to come on the undertaking, and we therefore gave it full support. I am sorry to say, however, that it has cost the country some £15,000; though that includes a permanent building which is worth a good deal of money; but the building will, I have no doubt, in the end be given to the municipality or to some other public body in Coolgardie. This is a large amount of money, and we all know it was required at a time when money was not too plentiful; but if we reflect for a moment, no one will hesitate in thinking that the Government did the right thing in giving full support to this enterprise. Coolgardie deserved well of this country. It was that place, and the goldfield of that name, which first gave us a great lift forward; and I am glad indeed that this Exhibition was held there, because the expense was a little matter in comparison with the good this colony has derived from the Coolgardie goldfields.

MR. JAMES: Was it a charity or an exhibition?

MR. MORGANS: An exhibition.

MR. JAMES: I only wanted to know.

Public Batteries.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: During the year, we have, with the full approval of this House, inaugurated a system of public batteries—a policy which I believe will do an immense amount of good to the colony. In beginning a new system of this sort, it was not all plain sailing; and there were not wanting persons who found a great deal of fault. I suppose the fault-finders did good, because they put the Government and the department on their mettle; yet I am glad to say the difficulties that beset us were only such as beset everyone else in like circumstances—the want of water, the smashing of machinery, incompetent or intemperate managers, and so on; these are difficulties which beset everyone. But some people think that no difficulties should come in the way of the Government; that the Government should do everything right off

at once, and successfully. All that takes time; but I am glad to state I have been assured that everything is now in good working order. There are nine batteries, and they cost £55,329. The receipts to 30th June were £3,786; and 6,923 tons of ore have been crushed, producing 7,606oz. of gold. The cost of crushing was 15s. 2d. a ton, and the average time of crushing has been about four and a half months. If these batteries had not been there, if the Government had not instituted this system of public batteries, I expect that this £29,000 worth of gold which we have got out of the earth would now be where it was originally deposited. I am glad that everything is now in good working order; but I am sorry to say that Yerilla, the district which the omniscient member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) so well represents, does not find enough stone for the crusher; and that the district of another all-wise gentleman, the member for Yalgoo (Mr. Wallace), has not found enough stone for the crusher either.

MR. GREGORY: They have got the stone there, but they complain of your management.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: My information is that there has been a dearth of stone, and I have not the slightest doubt that my information is correct.

MR. GREGORY: You always say that.

MR. WALLACE: You are incorrect about Yalgoo.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I am satisfied that the information is absolutely right. The hon. member told me he never expected the Government battery to work night and day.

MR. JAMES: No Government servant does work night and day.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: A new battery is being erected at Peak Hill, and another has been promised at Payneville, 30 miles from Mount Magnet. The receipts for the last three months, since the 30th June, were £4,678; and information which I received from the department only yesterday shows that the officers have full confidence in the policy which has been inaugurated. It gives the prospector and the miner—the poor man whom some people are always talking about, but do nothing for—a

chance of having stone crushed at a reasonable cost, and of his getting the gold after the crushing.

MR. GREGORY: It takes you a year to erect some of them.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: If we had not listened so much to the hon. member, we might have been a little quicker. I hope the hon. member will not place the Government under the necessity of removing the battery from Yerilla, the place he so strongly advocated, but will write to his constituents and urge them to keep the battery well supplied with stone to crush, and we will do our best to turn out the gold.

Railway Department.

I come to another important matter, and may call it one of the greatest factors in the development of the colony. I am not referring to the gold, but to cheap, rapid, and easy means of communication. The revenue received from the railways for the year ending 30th June, 1899, was £1,018,300, and the expenditure was £749,129, so that there was a profit on last year's working of £269,171. The capital cost of our railways is set down at six and a half millions; so that the profit is equal to over 4 per cent. on the capital expended, after paying all working expenses. I think this is a great result, and I hope it will even be improved as time goes on. I am sure it is very encouraging to everyone in the colony, when he gets into a comfortable railway carriage or sees his goods transported to market at a rapid rate, to know that this great enterprise is being carried on without any burden on the general taxpayers, that those who use the railways pay for the service, and that the railways are not a burden on anyone. We thus get all the advantages of railway communication, and are not losing anything by it. I think the utmost credit—and I am glad to be able to make the statement—is due to those who have the control of this immense enterprise. The estimated revenue for this year is £1,160,000, and the estimated expenditure £810,800; so that, if our estimates turn out right, we will have a profit of £349,200 for the current year, which will give something like 5 per cent. on the capital cost. What we have to do is to extend our railways wherever they will pay, and we should have

faith in the resources of our country, which the railways are doing so much to open up. I cannot deal with the question of railways and their construction throughout this colony without saying a word or two which perhaps I might as well leave unsaid. I would like to ask, where are those who opposed the building of all these railways?

MR. MORGANS: On the other (Opposition) side of the House.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: Where are the members who opposed the South-Western railway, the Bridgetown railway, and the Collie railway? Some of them sit opposite me still—men who have used all their energies and abilities to stop the construction of these works—and some who opposed these works are not in the House at the present time. In all these matters have the opponents of the Government ever been once in the right?

MR. LEAKE: Oh, no, no!

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: Have they not been silenced by the progress and success attending our efforts?

MR. ROBSON: Opportunity makes the man.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: No. I took the opportunity, and made it. If it were worth while to search the pages of *Hansard* and to repeat the arguments of hon. members opposite, those who were here when all these enterprises were introduced, it would be found that those hon. members argued that the works proposed to be carried out would bring complete ruin on the country, and that these were the maddest schemes ever proposed. But the works have been successful from the very start, and no man even in all this great colony now dares to get up and say one word against these works. Have the opponents of the Government in this House ever been once right in regard to public works? Never.

MR. LEAKE: Will the Collie, the Bridgetown, and the Greenhills lines pay?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: The hon. member refers to Greenhills, a railway of 14 miles. I take the railways as a whole, but I am sure the Greenhills railway is justified, and in regard to the Collie railway the hon. member still has the effrontery to say—

MR. JAMES: Effrontery?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: Yes; the effrontery to say the Collie railway is not justified.

MR. LEAKE: I asked whether it was paying, that was all.

MR. MORGANS: Paying well.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: That line is fully justified. Again I ask: have the opponents of the Government, in regard to public works proposed in this House during the last 10 years, ever been once in the right? I emphatically say they never have been, and it was not likely they would be, because they had no knowledge of the colony and no knowledge of its requirements.

Public Debt.

I now come to another important matter, namely, the total indebtedness of the colony. The public debt of the colony on 30th June last, including Treasury bills which amount to £1,550,000 at the present time—I am not counting the loans raised by the Agricultural Bank and the agricultural land purchases, which are small sums amounting to £115,530, and are secured on the lands themselves and need not be taken into account as a public debt—the public debt was £10,372,824, and there is a sinking fund accrued of £310,373, which leaves the net total indebtedness on 30th June last at £10,062,451. The interest and sinking fund paid for the year ending 30th June, 1899, was £426,759. Of course the interest and sinking fund is increasing, but will not increase to any large amount unless we increase the authorisations. If I only had the time, which I have not, to give a comparison of the proportion of interest to revenue with other countries and other colonies as compared with our own, I think it would show that as far as our loans and interest and sinking fund that we have to pay are concerned—and I may say that in most other colonies they have not any sinking fund at all—our position in regard to indebtedness, the interest we have to pay in proportion to the revenue we receive, is far and away better than that of any other Australasian colony. And it must not be forgotten that a great many public works and buildings, which in other colonies are charged to Loan Funds, are in this colony paid for from current revenue.

The Future—Revenue and Expenditure.

Having dealt now with many subjects of interest and public concern, I will take a brief glance into the future. First of all, I wish to say the colony never was, as far as I am able to judge, in a better position than at present. The railway revenue is increasing, and the expenditure is well in hand; the gold-mining industry is going to surprise the whole world; the Collie coalfield has created a new centre of industry; the gold at Donnybrook and the tin at Greenbushes have changed those places into thriving communities; agriculture is doing well, and the pastoralists are extending their operations; the timber industry, though it has had difficulties and has difficulties at the present time, must for all that continue to be one of our greatest industries; and, as far as I am able to judge, there is every reason for confidence. The revenue for August was £236,274, and for this month of September the revenue will be over £240,000. The revenue for the year ending 30th June, 1900, I estimate at £2,795,480; and looking all round this great colony and knowing what is going on, I believe this estimate will be realised. It is £316,669 more than we received last year. Of this amount the railways are expected to provide £141,700; and the dividend tax—which I thought would have passed the Upper House to-day, though it has practically passed that House—will, if it becomes law, realise £94,000; the remainder of the £316,669 being made up from other sources. The expenditure for the current year is estimated at £2,616,363, being only £77,006 more than was actually expended last year. I do not think anyone who reviews this estimate will be able to say that either in regard to revenue or expenditure we have this year over-estimated. The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure have been framed so as to reduce the deficit by the 30th June, 1901, to £68,232, and I hope we may be able to do better than that. As I said before, the deficit to-day is only £160,000; we have reduced the deficit by £80,000 in two months; and although perhaps it is not wise to reduce it too quickly, still I feel sure in my own mind that when the 30th June comes round next year, if the profits I anticipate and the good results I expect are realised, then I believe we will have no deficit at all

on that date. I should have been glad, and was almost inclined to try, to frame my Estimates this year so as to leave no deficit; but on the whole I have thought I should be acting more wisely and doing more good to the colony by expending the money on necessary works, rather than trying to wipe out at once that unfortunate deficit, which I am sure we shall all be glad to see the last of. I may say that the Estimates of Expenditure make liberal provision for all the departments of the service, although the utmost economy has been aimed at. I regret to say that only small increases of salaries have been possible, and those as a rule have been limited to the lower-paid officers of the service, although of course there are some few exceptions.

Future Works, Buildings, and Grants.

Public works and buildings are provided for to the amount of £302,809, and I do not think that is a small amount to provide out of current revenue for these purposes. There is a great difference between our position to-day and our position last year, inasmuch as most of the public works and public buildings are new undertakings and have to be put in hand, whereas last year the large works were all nearing completion. I anticipate that, as soon as these Estimates are passed, we will have the Public Works Department in full swing, carrying out the new works as fast as possible. Amongst the votes for this year—I will not refer to many items, as there is not time and it is not necessary—I have only been able to provide £40,000 for roads and bridges under the ordinary vote, but for special bridges provision is made to the amount of £12,270, also for special roads £24,976, making a total of £77,246 under this head. For harbours and rivers £12,004 is provided; for general water supply, £29,738; and provision is made for buildings of various kinds all over the colony. Provision is made for commencing new Supreme Court buildings, to the amount of £5,000 for this year; and as soon as we can decide on a site, because I believe the plans are ready, the work should be at once put in hand. We propose to expend £26,850 on school buildings all over the colony; and the municipal subsidy is retained at £45,000, the same as last year. Provision is made for a bonus

of £5,000 for the smelting works at Fremantle, under an agreement made before the works were commenced. For the Paris Exhibition Commission, £8,000 is promised, with the understanding that another £4,000 will be provided, or even more if necessary. I anticipate the £8,000 will cover the present financial year, and if it does not, we shall have to make increased provision. We hope to have at the Paris Exhibition, early next year, a thorough representation of the principal products of this colony, and the Exhibition commissioners believe they will be able to produce an exhibit of gold unequalled at any previous exhibition in any part of the world. At any rate, I hope the commissioners will succeed in that object, and I feel assured—I think I can speak on behalf of hon. members—that this Assembly will do all it can to ensure a most effective display of our gold, timber, coal, and other products. Provision is made to the extent of £10,000 for the aborigines, because the statutory £5,000 has been found insufficient. Last year we had to spend an additional £5,000 under this head, and we have this year put an additional £5,000 on the Estimates. The aborigines have become pauperised all over the country, and the self-reliance they used to practise when they had to work and earn their living seems to have disappeared during the seven or ten years of “spoon-feeding” they had when there was an Aborigines Board with plenty of money—more money, indeed, than the board knew what to do with. For literary, scientific, and agricultural objects it is proposed to provide £13,800. I need not particularise further, but I hope that when hon. members have had an opportunity of seeing the Estimates, the proposals will generally meet with their approval.

Loan Expenditure and Results.

As hon. members are aware, nearly all the great public works authorised from loans have been completed; but two great works, still in hand and being pushed forward as quickly as possible, are worthy the enterprise of the people of the country, and in fact worthy the enterprise of any country: I refer to the Fremantle Harbour Works and the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Scheme. These two great works will ever remain a

monument to the wisdom and enterprise of the Legislature and the people of this country. Of all the works authorised by the Loan Acts of 1896, these two works alone remain unfinished; and while every effort will be made to rapidly push forward the works it is not possible for them to be completed for some time to come. When we look back at the immense amount of money expended on the great public works of the country, on railways, harbours, roads, bridges, and jetties, when we review the whole of these works scattered over this immense territory, I think that generally we have cause for satisfaction. Those works which were intended to be reproductive are reproductive; and hon. members can scarcely point to a work constructed since we have had responsible Government which can be considered a failure. I have said before, that in my opinion there is no need, so far as I can see, for any large loan authorisation at the present time. The practice of asking for more than is necessary for the year before us will not, I think, be readily repeated; because large authorisations not required for immediate use, stand as spectres at the doorway and injure our credit. I do not propose to-night—though it may have been expected by some that I would do so—to deal with the question of new loan authorisations, as it will be more convenient to do so when we are considering the Loan Estimates. I will then have to ask for a new loan authorisation sufficient for the year, to carry out the railways and other works mentioned in the Governor's Speech, and I hope I shall then receive the support of hon. members. In regard to the railways which I intend to bring under the notice of the House shortly, I can only say that they are urgently required and will pay, and I am positive they will assist in the development of the colony. These railways are not “sops” to anyone or to any constituency, as some persons have said; and, notwithstanding those taunts, no one can point throughout the length and breadth of the country, to any great work for which I am responsible which has not been remunerative. As to the proposed railway to Leonora, and the proposed railway to Norseman, the members representing those districts have gone over to the other side of the House, and I do

not think anyone can say that, in proposing these railways again, I am actuated by any desire to recover the support of those members. I do not want support, unless it be given to me freely and honestly. I am actuated by only one desire, and that is to serve the interests of the people of the colony, and I will do my duty to the districts represented by the hon. members I have referred to, in the same way as I would have done if they had continued to sit on this side of the House.

MR. LEAKE: Have you abandoned the Bonnie Vale line?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: The experience of the past in dealing with this question of railways should be our guide for the future. The Yilgarn, Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Menzies, and Boulder railways, the South-Western railway, Collie, Bridgetown, the Mullewa and Murchison railway, the Fremantle Harbour Works, and the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Scheme were all initiated by the Government and carried through this House.

MR. MORGANS: A splendid record!

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: We have the experience of these works to guide us in the future. Can any hon. member point to any of the works I have mentioned, and say they have proved a failure, brought disaster on the colony, or injured anyone? If any hon. member can say that, then he will have some reason for not voting for any new work I may later on introduce.

MR. LEAKE: You did not mention the Bunbury Breakwater.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I did not mention the Bunbury Breakwater because most of that was constructed out of revenue. The experience of the past in connection with these successful works, which have cost probably ten millions of money, should be our guide in the future; and I would like to ask again, who have been right all through in regard to these works? If the Opposition have been wrong in the past, as I say they have been, then they have no right to be our guides for the future.

Gold Production—World-famous.

I now come to the most important factor in our prosperity, namely, the in-

creased production of gold which is making Western Australia famous throughout the world. I came across a leading article in an English newspaper, the *Investors' Guardian*, of London under date of 12th August last, and there I read:

There are now no croakers—

I wish there were no croakers here!

There are now no croakers and the future of Western Australia as the greatest of all gold-producing centres is assured. We are convinced from the figures before us that this colony will become the greatest gold-producer that the world has ever known, and we do not think that we shall have to wait long for the fulfilment of this prediction.

I may say that the gold exported in the year ended 30th June last is valued at £4,899,287, as compared with the gold exported during the previous financial year to the value of £3,345,359, showing an increase of £1,553,928 in the twelve months. The export and Mint value of the gold during the months of July and August was £1,076,653, and it seems that every month the production will now exceed half a million sterling. The output of gold at the present time from the Lake View Consols Mine is a ton of gold per month. The total output of gold has now reached nearly 15 millions sterling, more than one half of which has been obtained during the past 20 months. Western Australia, as hon. members know, now holds the first place in Australasia as a gold producer, and I might go further and say the first place in the British Empire. I shall not be surprised if this year the gold production of this colony is greater than that of all the other Australasian colonies put together. Surely these figures are worth thinking over, because they show most clearly that though we are a small number of people, we control one-third of Australia, and I am glad to be able to say the most progressive portion. The production of gold in the last financial year was valued at nearly five millions, and, as I just now said, this year it will reach six millions sterling. Those of us who look at all into the future can clearly see that our prosperity is only beginning, and that we are just becoming known.

Western Australia not a Desert.

Western Australia has hitherto been looked on as an arid wilderness, and even

now people at a distance think there is nothing here but a few gold-mines and a lot of sand. That is the general impression people have of this colony, and many persons who came here told me that, although they knew we had some gold-mines, they never expected to see vegetation or farms; in fact, they expected to see nothing but a sandy desert. That is the idea many of the people in the other colonies have in regard to this colony. Did not Mr. Reid (late Premier of New South Wales), at the late Federal Convention, refer to myself as representing a colony with a few gold-mines scattered in a wilderness near the Western coast? People have no idea, not even in the other Australian colonies, that this colony has anything but some gold-mines and plenty of sand. But the fact that the dividends from our gold-mines will soon reach two millions a year, that our coal-mines are flourishing and our coal is almost exclusively being used on our railways at the present time, and that 50,000 tons a year are being consumed; when it is known also that we have cancelled the contracts with all the shipping companies for the supply of coal from Newcastle (N.S.W.), and henceforward are going to depend on our own coal-mines, people will begin to think there is something more in Western Australia than they have been accustomed to imagine. We know that we possess some of the best hardwoods in the world, which are getting a good hold in England. I saw the other day a private letter from a gentleman, calling attention to the fact that in a place in Lancashire some bridges or jetties were being constructed with Western Australian jarrah. When these things are known, when people know that we have land capable of producing nearly all the necessities of life, not for a few hundred people or 170,000 people, but for millions of people; when all these things are recognised and brought home to the people, this hitherto neglected portion of the empire will not be left alone and disregarded, as it has been until recently in the past.

Concluding Words.

Mr. Chairman and hon. members, I have now finished all I desire to say this evening. I hope I have been able to

show that through all the efforts of the Government "one unceasing purpose runs," and that is to do our duty in such a way as will uphold the credit and promote the prosperity of Western Australia. I hope I have shown that the future of this colony is bright, and seems to assure rapid advancement to all its industries and to all its products. I hope I have shown that to be full of energy and courage and full of hope, in time of trouble, is better than to be despondent. There are too many people who become afraid and get disheartened at the least sign of adversity. It is all very well to appear to be bold when there is no danger, but the true man is known in the time of difficulty and of adversity. I never ceased, myself, to cheer up those of my fellow-colonists with whom I came in contact, and I am glad to say I have had an ample reward in what I saw must result, and in what has since come to pass. I never could believe that there could be anything to fear when there was not one industry of the colony that was not advancing. I should like, before I sit down, to thank hon. members of this House for the support they have given to the Government; and I especially thank my friends on this side of the House for their continued support during so many years. I say again I do not believe there is an instance on record in the Australasian colonies where a party has so loyally supported a Minister during so many years as has been the case in this colony. I thank hon. members opposite, too, for the assistance often given to the Government in the work we have had to carry out. I should like also to thank the members of the Legislative Council for the consideration they have always shown to the proposals of the Government. I have always tried to support the Legislative Council in the position it occupies in our Constitution, which is one of very great responsibility. We have all in this House, whether as members of the Government, or as members sitting on the Government side or on the Opposition side, during the last nine years, had great difficulties and great responsibilities cast upon us. We have had to fashion and mould, in these early days of self-government, the laws and institutions of this country; and I hope and believe that in

all our actions we have recognised that we are but the trustees for those who will come after us; and have been determined to leave behind us an untarnished record, and also an example that may be surely followed. (General applause.) I beg to move the first item in the Estimates.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I move that the debate be adjourned until the next Tuesday.

MR. LEAKE: May I ask when the right hon. gentleman is going to make his financial statement?

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9-39 p.m. until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 27th September, 1899.

Papers presented—Question: Gold Exported, not Minted—Return: Free Passes on Railways—Return: Expenditure on Eastern goldfields—Bank Note Protection Bill, first reading—Companies Duty Bill, in Committee, Clause 25 to end; reported—Permanent Reserves Bill, Re-committal; reported—Municipal Loans Validation Bill, third reading—Executors' Commission Bill, in Committee; reported—Roads and Streets Closure Bill, in Committee; reported—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, Annual Estimates of revenue and expenditure, Consolidated Revenue Fund, financial year ending 30th June, 1900. 2, Report of Commissioner of Police, 1898-9.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION: GOLD EXPORTED, NOT MINTED.

HON. J. RICHARDSON asked the Colonial Secretary: If the attention of the Government has been drawn to the great quantity of gold shipped by the banks out of the colony; and whether, in view of there being a branch of the Royal Mint in Perth, they intend to take any steps to prevent the export of so much gold.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The Perth Mint is turning out 40,000 sovereigns per week, and until the staff is more experienced in the work, the turn-out cannot be greatly increased. The Government intend to do all in their power to ensure that all the gold produced in the colony shall pass through the Perth Mint.

RETURN—FREE PASSES ON RAILWAYS.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER moved:

That a return be laid upon the table of the House, showing: 1, The number of free passes granted by the Railway Department to other than members and officers of Parliament; 2, The names of those to whom such privileges have been granted; 3, The loss to the department by granting such free passes.

He had often heard the subject alluded to, and would like to solve the question by having the number of free passes brought before the House, to show what the real expenditure was in this direction, and to whom passes might reasonably be expected to be granted. Many strangers coming to this colony represented themselves to be visitors of importance, and obtained free passes; and he would like to have the names of those persons who had been so favoured.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell): Having already spoken to the mover on the subject, he had not the slightest objection to the return being furnished; but it was desirable that the motion should be more definite. If the hon. member wished to have a return of