

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 9th October, 1900.

Petition—Cottesloe, etc., Light and Power Bill, in support—Papers presented—Circuit Courts Judge Bill, Message (appropriation), first reading—Question: Railway Clerks Imported from New Zealand—Constitution Amendment Bill (Federal Members, to disqualify), third reading—Distillation Bill, third reading—Land Act Amendment Bill, second reading, and Marriages Act Amendment Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Trustees Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Annual Estimates, in Committee of Supply, Financial Statement—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PETITION—COTTESLOE, ETC. ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER BILL.

MR. DOHERTY presented a petition, signed by 129 residents of Cottesloe, Buckland Hill, and Peppermint Grove, in favour of the Electric Light and Power Bill.

Petition received and ordered to be printed.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: Department of Agriculture, Supplementary report.

By the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Return showing Sale of Rails, etc., to and Purchase of Water from Goldfields Firewood Supply Company (as ordered).

By the PREMIER: 1, Paris Exhibition Photographs; 2, Customs Returns, half-year ended June; 3, Commonwealth Bill Referendum, Particulars; 4, Murgoo Telephone Office, Correspondence as to closing (as ordered).

Ordered to lie on the table.

CIRCUIT COURTS JUDGE BILL.

MESSAGE, APPROPRIATION.

The PREMIER presented a Message from the Administrator, recommending an appropriation for the purpose of a Bill providing £1,400 for the salary of an additional Judge of the Supreme Court (i.e., Circuit Courts Judge Bill).

Bill introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CLERKS IMPORTED FROM NEW ZEALAND.

MR. SOLOMON asked the Commissioner of Railways: 1, Whether it was necessary to import a person from New Zealand for the position of chief clerk for the Chief Engineer's department and pay him £375 per annum with promise of an increase, when he was receiving £300 per annum in New Zealand, and our late chief clerk for the Chief Mechanical Engineer had only been receiving £320 per annum; 2, Who engaged Mr. Triggs, the chief clerk referred to; 3, What are the ages of Messrs. Haldone and Sinclair, the clerks recently imported from New Zealand, their length of service in New Zealand, railway service, and nature of their experience justifying their being classed as "trained," and what steps were taken to ascertain if there were any trained clerks in the colony to fill the positions now filled by Messrs. Haldone and Sinclair; 4, What was the length of service of the eight men who have been dismissed from the service; 5, Whether the Government have received any communication from the New Zealand Government, complaining that members of their staff have been offered inducements to leave their service and come to Western Australia.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. B. C. Wood) replied:—1, Yes; 2, The Chief Mechanical Engineer; 3, (a.) Ages—26 and 25 years, respectively; (b.) Length of railway service—nine and eight years, respectively; (c.) The character of the work on which they were previously engaged justifies them being classed as "trained"; (d.) The Chief Mechanical Engineer, on taking up duty, ascertained that suitable trained clerks were not available; 4, The length of service of the eight men retrenched was as follows: One—One year and seven months, and one year and eight months previous experience. One—One year and four months. One—One year and three months, and eleven months previous experience. One—Eleven months. One—Seven months. Two—Six months. One—Four months. One—Three months; 5, Yes.

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT BILL.

[FEDERAL MEMBERS, TO DISQUALIFY.]

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

The SPEAKER announced there was an absolute majority of members present.

DISTILLATION BILL.

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

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from previous Thursday.

MR. MITCHELL (Murchison): I was somewhat surprised, the morning after I moved the adjournment of the debate on this question, to see a paragraph in one of the newspapers stating that I had moved the adjournment in consequence of a hint I had received from the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. G. Throssell). That I emphatically deny. In the first place, I was not in the House when the hon. gentleman spoke, and in the second place I am not in the habit of taking instructions from any one in this House. This may appear to be a small matter for me to bring forward, and I admit it is apparently so; but members know that a small matter is quite capable of being magnified into a large one, particularly from an election platform. Coming to the Bill, I can only characterise it as a feeble attempt to tinker with the principal Act of 1898; but I suppose we shall have to take it on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread. I am sorry this Bill has been brought forward—although there is not much in it—in what is called a dying Parliament, or, to use a more fashionable name, a moribund Parliament. Anything dealing with the land, which is the great question of the day, should be dealt with by the coming Parliament.

MR. FORREST: Why should it?

MR. MITCHELL: I think it should be. I am sorry the Bill has been brought forward at this late period, because the land question is, as I say, the great question of the day; for when everything else fails, we come back to the land. I regret that the Bill does not deal more with the classification of land. I refer particularly to the South-West Division, which embraces practically all the agricultural land on the sea coast of the colony; and until we get some better classification of the land, no satisfaction

will be given to anybody. In the southern part of the South-West Division, the conditions are so different from those in the northern part that any regulations which may be suitable for the southern part of that division are not at all suitable or applicable or acceptable to persons occupying land in the northern portion. Until we get this big South-West Division subdivided, we cannot have a good state of affairs. Let us subdivide this great division, and let the regulations be made suitable for each portion of the division: then I think we shall have a better state of affairs. Coming to the Bill, I have not much fault to find with Clause 2, which seems to be reasonable, because "what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander" in regard to priority of application for the same land. Supposing an application was received in Perth, and another application was received at the Albany Lands Office on the same day for the same land, I want to know whether both applications would count as having been received on the same day. The present law is that if two persons applying for a piece of land reach the Lands Office at the same time, say 10 o'clock in the morning, the one who rushes in first is treated as the first applicant for that land. Nothing could be fairer than that applications received on the same day should be treated as having been received at the same time; and under these circumstances the applicant entitled to the particular piece of land should be determined by lot. I am aware that in this clause there is a condition which says the Minister may depute a party or parties to decide who shall get that land; but I am very much opposed to that sort of legislation. Nothing can be fairer than to decide by lot as to the person who is entitled to the land, when more than one application for it has been received on the same day; and in Committee I shall move to strike out certain words, so as to do away with that innovation. I would like to have seen something in the Bill dealing with poison land. It is well known that in the Victoria District there are thousands of acres of poison land absolutely locked up for want of a proper system of inspection, so that people may see the land with a view to taking it up. I hope the Commissioner will take notice

of what I say, that these areas should be surveyed—I do not say cut up in blocks and surveyed—and notice should be published that anybody can apply for that land and obtain it, subject to the conditions. It may be said that this is the law in force now; but I say it is seldom carried into effect, and I wish to see it done systematically. If a rent cannot be obtained from that land, then give it to those who will use it, say for a period of ten years. The Government would do well to let the people have that land for ten years, and if they have eradicated the poison to the satisfaction of the department at the end of the ten years, they should get the fee simple of the land. Unless we do this, we shall never be able to get rid of this poison; and people who have stock near this poison land suffer terrible losses through their stock straying on to the poison land. If we can have the land classified and taken up, it will not only do good to the persons occupying it, but do good to people in the district who have stock which might otherwise stray on the poison land. In the principal Act, Section 68 deals with grazing leases. This is a sore point, for it provides that any person shall be entitled to select from a pastoral area pieces amounting to 4,000 acres of land, within another man's lease. I take it that the framers of that provision hardly knew what they were about. Take the case of a man who has a family grown up, all the members being old enough to take a block each: his wife and four children, say, might take up grazing leases to something like 20,000 acres altogether; and if we had a few families of that description, and they acted on their rights, the whole available land within a certain distance of the sea coast might be taken up in that way. It may be said, why not do it? I say that if the land is once granted as a grazing lease, the selector could not come in and select any land in that lease; consequently it would be hard if such a family as I have suggested could come in and take up portions of a squatter's lease. I do not agree with the system by which immense areas of grazing leases have been granted; because, after all, it is taking land from the pastoralist to be used by another person for a practically similar purpose to that for which

the pastoralist uses it. I want only the same fairness to everyone; and in regard to the selection of grazing leases in pastoral areas, I am not only the representative of the squatting interest, but of the farming interest as well, and I often feel myself as between two fires—something like the fellow between his satanic majesty and the deep sea. I do not represent any particular person, but I try to represent any and everyone in my constituency, to the best of my ability. Coming to Clause 6 of the Bill, I quite agree with it, because it discharges the farmer from the obligation of paying for the making of improvements from which no good can be derived by himself or by the colony. Therefore the clause provides that if the Minister be satisfied that the leaseholder has done all the improvements that are reasonably necessary, and that by going on to make other improvements which would be of no benefit to himself or the State, the Minister may discharge the selector from continuing to make improvements that would be unnecessary. With that provision I quite agree. Coming to Clause 8, the most important part of the Bill, I may say it has caused me a great deal of anxiety in my position as representing both squatters and agriculturists. There is no doubt this clause has been brought forward to rectify what seems to be a misunderstanding in our district as regards compensation for improvements made upon a pastoral lease. I say at once I have always held that the pastoralist should be entitled to receive fair compensation for improvements he may have made on land selected by another person as a grazing lease. That is only fair, and it applies not only to the pastoralist but to everybody. If we legislate for taking land from the pastoralist, and give it to some other person to use practically for the same purpose, we should grant compensation to the pastoralist, firstly for any improvements he may have made, and secondly for the severance from his lease. I want to know who is to pay the compensation? I hold strongly that it is not the selector who should be called upon to pay for improvements which will be of no value to him after he has selected the land for a grazing lease: that is my idea. It is a difficult

matter, and no code of regulations will give complete satisfaction to both sides; but I say the Government should give compensation to the pastoralist for those improvements, provided they are of any use to the person who selects the land within his lease. I hope this will be looked into and acted on. It is very unpleasant for me to have to speak on this point, as some people may say I want to revolutionise the law on the subject; but what I want is to see fair-play between man and man, and I hope all hon. members are actuated by the same spirit of fairness. Another matter, more particularly referring to the Victoria District, is that there is a most regrettable circumstance in connection with the alienation of land there. A great quantity of land was alienated in the early stages of settlement, and the land remains almost undeveloped and unimproved. A person may ride through miles of country over land that has been alienated from the Crown for many years without seeing any use made of it. It will be remembered that last year I asked a question as to whether the Government would bring in a Bill for the right of mining on private property; and I must confess the answer I received somewhat nonplussed me at the time, but when I considered it carefully I found it was quite right. The answer was that only the precious metal was reserved to the Crown, in granting the title of the land, and that neither the Government nor anybody was empowered to interfere with a property of which the fee simple had been parted with. Still, this is a painful state of affairs, to see so much alienated land lying unused and unimproved; and it is one which affects the progress of the district very considerably. I say we should tax that land as heavily as we can, thus compelling the owners to do something with it. It is not fair either to the State or the district that such land should be locked up and kept locked up. If I may take the answer given by the Minister of Mines to my question in June last as being correct, and I believe in its correctness, I say we have no alternative but to tax such land and get at the occupants in some way—make them either let it at a fair rent, or pay a heavy tax. I must apologise for speaking at such length; I seldom do so; but I feel very strongly on this Bill; and

having a great interest in the land question as it affects this country, I hope the next Parliament will bring in an adequate Bill dealing extensively and exhaustively with the land regulations of the colony. As it is, a clause is made to affect one district which will not suit another; and until we have a better classification of land than we have at present, no great good can accrue and no great satisfaction will be given to the people of the district to which I have referred.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra): While it is not my intention to offer any opposition to the second reading of this Bill, I must confess that in some clauses I find ground for, I might almost say, a laugh. In Clause 2 an innovation on the methods hitherto obtaining in this colony is introduced, an innovation of which, in the speech of the Minister who introduced the Bill, we heard very little. I refer to the optional appointment of a board to adjudicate upon simultaneous applications for land. I am informed that boards similar to those proposed to be created under this Bill have been in operation in some of the other colonies; but, so far, we have heard nothing from any hon. member about their good or bad effect upon land settlement in those colonies. Personally, I think that, theoretically, the system proposed to be introduced here is correct; but as it depends entirely upon the *personnel* of the board appointed, practically I am afraid it is open to a considerable amount of objection. The appointment of the board, in my opinion, is not made in this Bill a matter of sufficient importance. The clause states simply that the Minister may, in his discretion, appoint such persons as he may think fit. I maintain that a great power and a great responsibility is placed in the hands of the persons so appointed; and I think, if they are to be appointed, they should be appointed by the Government rather than by the Minister. Again, I would ask the Minister, in his reply, if he does speak in reply in this debate, to give the House some information if he has it, concerning the action of those boards, say, in Victoria, where they have been in existence for some years, or in any other place where they exist concerning which the Minister has any knowledge, and thus let the House have some evidence

in support of the proposal to introduce such boards in this colony; or if it is not his intention to speak in reply, I hope, when the House go into Committee on this Bill, such evidence will be forthcoming. Personally, with the knowledge I have on this subject at present, which I confess is very meagre, I do not feel inclined to support this innovation without strong evidence being produced in its favour from the experience of other colonies.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I should just like to make an observation in regard to what was said the other evening by some speakers regarding their desire to eliminate the words "appertaining to." I do not know whether they occur in this Bill.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Yes; in Clause 148.

MR. JAMES: They are also in the old Act.

THE PREMIER: They were put in for a very good reason; and if we wish to act justly towards the pastoral tenant, we must have those words or some words to the same effect. It was the habit of persons who wished to avoid paying for improvements to apply for land within the fenced enclosure of a pastoral lessee, and to take up such land to within a certain distance only of the fence; say, for the sake of an instance, within a chain of the fence. The applicant might go within a short distance of the fence without being charged with the desire to avoid payment. The little piece of land between the applicant's boundary and the fence then became useless to the pastoral tenant, and the applicant avoided payment altogether; therefore those words were put in so that the arbitrators appointed under the Land Act should have the right and the power to say whether a fence so close to the boundary of the land applied for, and which land was rendered useless when the application was granted, should be included in the payment—whether the applicant should pay for that fence. The plan worked very well, or fairly well, during the years I was in the Lands Department. People abstained from acting in that way: they generally took the land up to the fence, and were then willing to pay for that fence, and they had the advantage of it; whereas, if they went merely close to the fence, the fence was of

no use to the pastoral tenant, and of no use to themselves. That was why those words were inserted. I have looked through this Bill before it came to the House, and it seems to me, taking it altogether, it is a Bill which the House will do well to pass. Of course it liberalises to an extent, and to a very large extent in some cases, the conditions of the occupation of land, and removes all obligation to cultivate to the extent named in the Homesteads Act. As hon. members will recollect, the homestead farmer has to clear and crop one fourth of the area, 40 acres, within seven years. Of course, to a person taking up 160 acres as a homestead farm in the Eastern District, to clear 40 acres at an expenditure of £3 an acre would mean to him £120; whereas if he took the same area, 40 acres, in the Southern District, to clear that area would cost perhaps £20 an acre, which would be a very large burden upon a man before he obtained his Crown grant; and people of course were always anxious to get their Crown grants, and to comply with the conditions within the specified time. The Commissioner of Lands has suggested that the condition should be a money value rather than a specific area, that £120 should be the money value of the requisite improvements; that this would clear 40 acres in the ordinary acacia wooded country in the Eastern District, though of course it would clear a much smaller area in the Southern District, while the same amount of money would be expended in both cases. I do not think there is very much in the Bill other than that point. There is Clause 6, providing for a homestead farm; and there is also provision that grazing leases shall have the advantage of the clause passed last year to the effect that where the land is not suited for cultivation, instead of cultivating to the extent named in the Act, the Minister shall have power to allow a remission of the improvements, provided certain additional rent be paid. I think, taking it altogether, the Bill will be very serviceable; and in regard to Clause 10, my friend the Commissioner of Lands (Hon. G. Throssell) assures me it is very necessary to prevent residential areas being taken up for speculative purposes.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): The member for

Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) desires some information about the working of Clause 2 in the other colonies; that is to say, as to the appointment of a board to decide cases in which there is more than one applicant for the same piece of land. That system has prevailed in Victoria for 25 years. The Minister, as proposed in this Bill, appoints one or two officers—generally two—of his own department. They are usually men experienced in the working of the department, and they examine and cross-examine the applicants to find out which is the more eligible, whether it be from his means or from his independence. They also ascertain that he is not a dummy for anybody else, and that he is prepared, with his own capital, to take up the land and cultivate it. This system superseded the system of ballot which for some years had been practised in Victoria; and the present board system, so far as I know, has undoubtedly proved very beneficial.

MR. GREGORY: You had a board in that Mount Hardy Estate, had you not?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. The object, I take it, is to find the best persons eligible—the most likely persons to make good settlers.

THE PREMIER: In the Mount Hardy Estate case, the board worked well.

MR. HUTCHINSON (Geraldton): This Bill refers to notices being received on the same day. I have heard of cases where applications have been made outside of Perth for land, and the applicants have found out some time afterwards that someone had applied at the central office in Perth, and had been granted the land. I do not think the clause dealing with this matter will prevent a recurrence of such instances, and I should like the Minister to make some provision that an application shall hold good from whatever office it be made. Then there are the words referred to by the Premier, "appertaining to." I notice the member for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead) pointed out to us the other evening that this was the main reason for some recent law-suits in connection with this land question; and I believe the words are the main reason for this amendment in the Land Act having been brought forward. If this point is not made clearer than it has been in the past, there is no doubt the settlement of the land in the Victoria

District, at any rate, will be considerably set back; and it is to be hoped the Minister will find some means of defining to what distance on the block of land selected the words "appertaining to" shall refer. If they are to hold good for a distance of some miles, then no small farmer will think it worth while to try to take up, or think he has any chance of succeeding in taking up, blocks of land for agriculture. Another point referred to by the member for North Murchison is worthy of consideration. I understand that under this Bill the selector will have to pay for all improvements right off, while under the old Act the improvements are charged to him in instalments only. I hope the old system will be continued; because, if a man on selecting a homestead block of land has to pay for the improvements on it immediately, we shall have very little selection going on. Claims for compensation will be made by the squatters or large holders; it is difficult now to keep men on such blocks; and if the small agriculturist has to pay £30 or £50 for improvements, it will be almost impossible to get any such selectors at all.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell): As I explained the other day, the object of this amendment is simply to secure for the department that which experience has taught us to be necessary. With regard to the remarks that have fallen with respect to Section 148, the amendment proposed will not make any alteration in the practice. It is rather to make the language clear, and I am willing to confess that even the amendment now before the House is not sufficiently clear, and I hope to make it much clearer in Committee than it stands at present. Personally I cannot see why the sections of the Land Act and the Mining Act, which have to be handled by the people, are not put in the simplest language, so that the most illiterate man can understand them. Under the present system of amendment, it is proposed to strike out certain words from line so and so; and an ignorant man has to wade through pages of the principal Act before he finds out what it means. I hope in the future to do away with that, so far as the Land Act is concerned; to expunge the original section altogether, and bring

in an Amendment Bill, so that a man reading the amendment will read the whole of a clause. With regard to the remarks that fell from the member for the Murchison (Mr. Mitchell), as to grazing leases, I can only say that from personal experience I have learned that these grazing leases may be most useful under proper conditions. It goes without saying it would be wrong to encourage selections inside of improved pastoral leases which have been fenced in. With regard to grazing leases generally, I cannot help paying a compliment—and it is a deserved one—to my predecessor in office, for having introduced the question of grazing leases into the Land Bill, dealing with second and third-class land. I believe that the same system with regard to grazing lands—or homestead leases as they were formerly called—holds in the other colonies. We have first-class land at 10s., second-class at 6s. 3d., and third-class at 3s. 9d.; and we have what I prefer to call fourth-class, that being poison land. Dealing with the grazing leases in second and third-class country in the eastern districts and other parts, we have very large areas of sand plain unfenced and uncared for. We get 3s. 9d. for this land, and under compulsory conditions of improvement. We always consider that a man who selects such land, and improves it and fences it, is a benefactor to his country. I have been told by one member—whom I will not more definitely mention—that the grazing lease system is robbery. But I deny that it is a robbery. It would be a great hardship indeed if we were to encourage such selections inside improved pastoral leases. But when it comes to agricultural land inside these leases, history must repeat itself, and the department, if it is worthy to be called such, must take these agricultural lands and place them at the disposal of the people, and there is only one fair way of doing that. We should not continue the loose system we have now in some places, where a man goes into a pastoral lease and selects 500 acres of first-class agricultural land, admitted as such. It is quite right that he should have that land; but it is altogether wrong that he should be pestered by the pastoral leaseholder with large claims for compensation. It is unfair to both parties, although it is

very natural indeed—I am speaking from experience, as I am a pastoralist myself—that the leaseholder should resent free selection in his holding. The only fair and legitimate way of dealing with that land is to send an officer of the department to report, to resume it where it can be resumed, and throw it open for agricultural areas after giving the squatter fair compensation. Instead, then, of the squatter bringing claims for compensation against a hundred different men, it may be, he brings one claim for compensation for improvements against the Government: the matter is settled, and the land is thrown open. It is only in this way that the land can be fairly dealt with. In other parts of the colony, the Great Southern and the Avon Valley, a railway was constructed, and land being required for the people, it was resumed. The result is that to-day the country-side is dotted over with prosperous people. We must have land fit for the plough open to the people, on a fair basis. With regard to the remarks of Mr. Kingsmill, as to the custom of the other colonies with regard to a board, I am in a position to say that in the other colonies a board has existed for a long time. But if the Bill is examined, he will find that we do not wipe out the present course. We deal with the matter by lot in ordinary course; but if the Minister thinks it desirable to have a board to inquire into the application most desirable and grant the land accordingly, he may do so under this Bill. But as I said the other evening, that will seldom apply to agricultural land. We have the same course under the Land Purchase Act. I am dealing with an estate now where all the applications are placed in the hands of a board, and inquiries are made and the land is given by the Board to the most desirable person. This particular amendment is not introduced because we have any trouble generally in the Lands Office, because it is very seldom that there is more than one application for the land; but our practice has been, in the event of there being more than one application, to decide the question by lot. The clause gives power, however, to have a board in addition to the power of granting land by lot. The chief object is to deal with the residential areas on the goldfields, which are far away from the head of the

department, and it sometimes happens that owing to the desire to secure a lot there are ten or twelve, and sometimes twenty, applications for the same lot. If we have power to form a board, the board will make careful inquiries to see that there are no bogus applications, and to grant the land to the right applicant. I do not see any objection to it. We still retain the system of deciding by lot, but we simply take power to appoint a board when we deem it necessary. I have had very little experience of boards, because, except under the Land Purchase Act, boards have not been in existence here. I can assure members that the proposal for power to appoint a board has been made at the urgent request of the goldfields people generally in dealing with allotments. Possibly under a board sometimes there may be abuses, but are there no abuses under the allotment system? Where there is likely to be competition, people are very anxious to get a particular lot. A person has some relations and friends, and he applies in his own name, and his friends apply in their own names, and all the while it is one man, although there are six applications. One of the six may get the land, and shortly afterwards he transfers it to the real Simon Pure. Is not that an abuse? It is to do away with the possibility of this, that we take power to ourselves to appoint a board. However, I am very much obliged for the criticism of members, and I have no doubt that amendments in Committee will make this Bill more clear. The chief object of bringing the measure before the House is not to amend Section 148, but to make it clearer. The recent decision in the Supreme Court so startled us, and was so opposite to the practice and interpretation of the Act by the department, that it was thought absolutely necessary to make the language clearer. I am much obliged for the help and advice of members, and when we go into Committee we shall, I have no doubt, make a very useful measure of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon.
R. W. Pennefather), in moving the second

reading, said: This small Bill consists of a very essential amendment of the principal Act. It appears that much injustice has been caused by there being no provision in the principal Act to meet the case where parents have neglected to register the birth of their children within 12 months from date of their birth. Absolutely, under the present Act, if a parent neglects to register the birth of his child within 12 months, he is debarred from registering the birth, and that of course leads to very serious consequences. Members know how difficult it would be afterwards to prove the birth of a child, where the official documents were not available. The object of this Bill is to enable registration to be made at any time, but under such safeguards that, where a parent is so neglectful of his duty, he will have to take a little more trouble to effect the registration. Clause 3 of this Bill points out that where a parent neglects to register his child within 12 months after it is born, he must go before a district registrar, and if he does not register the birth of his child within seven years after its birth, he must get an order from a Judge of the Supreme Court to entitle him to register it. Then the next provision contained in the Bill is one to facilitate the registration of births and deaths of people. Under the present Act there is no provision made to meet the case of a parent who may be ill, and may not be able to attend personally, as he must do under the present Act, in order to give particulars to the Registrar. This Bill gives a parent power to forward those particulars by post, accompanied by a statutory declaration. These are the main provisions of the Bill. A slight amendment will have to be made to Clause 4 in Committee, but it is only of a verbal nature, and really affects the working of the office, and does not affect the outside public. I have much pleasure in moving the second reading of this Bill.

MR. MONGER (York): I would like to suggest to the Attorney General the advisability of making medical men, who perform certain duties, responsible for the registration of the birth of a child.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Supposing there is no medical man?

MR. MONGER: It seems to me that parents are placed in a most peculiar

predicament in matters of this kind. I only throw this out as a suggestion.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

SIR JAMES G. LEE STEERE took the Chair, in the absence of Mr. Harper.

Clauses 1 to 3, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 4—Registration :

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved, as an amendment, that the last paragraph be struck out. He said this paragraph dealt with the manner in which the statements were filed and set in order in the Registrar's office. He proposed to modify that by inserting the following words in lieu :—

The District Registrar shall file the statements so sent in to him in their order, and shall mark each statement with a number corresponding with the number of the entry in the register, and shall insert the name of the informant in the proper column.

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

Clauses 5 to end—agreed to.

Schedule and title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

TRUSTEES BILL.

SECOND READING.

MR. JAMES (East Perth), in moving the second reading, said : This is almost entirely a codification Bill, bringing up to date the legislation of this colony dealing with trustees, as it is at present in the old country. The amendments are based on the English Trustees Act of 1868, extended and amplified by the English Trustees Act of 1893. The provisions here inserted are largely questions of detail, dealing firstly with the manner in which trust money shall be invested, secondly with the manner in which trustees shall discharge their duties, thirdly with the payment of trustees. Two important alterations are provided for in the Bill. By Clause 5, Sub-clause (f), the area of investment in which trustees may place money is enlarged ; and by this clause as drawn moneys can be invested :

In the debenture or preference stock of any company now or hereafter carrying on business in Western Australia, and certified by notice in the *Gazette*, signed by the Colonial Treasurer, as a company in the stock of which trustees may invest.

That is a somewhat flexible provision, inserted to enable trustees to invest in the stock of companies such as, in the opinion of the Colonial Treasurer, are in such a position as to justify the investment of moneys by trustees. By Clause 12 an important provision is made, and one which is new, providing that trustees, in the discharge of all duties as well as in the exercise of all discretions, shall be responsible only for the want of due care and diligence. Under the present law, a duty is cast on trustees far more extensive than that cast on paid agents ; so that those persons who take up the position of trustee—in a great number of instances the position being taken voluntarily and as an act of friendship—find themselves saddled with liabilities which would not be thrown on the shoulders of paid agents. I have always been at a loss to understand why a person who takes voluntarily the position of a trustee should be held liable to a greater extent than would a person who acted in the position as a paid agent. Clause 12 provides that a trustee shall have no greater liability than would be cast on a paid agent, although the trustee has to exercise due care and diligence, for the want of which he shall be liable ; but having regard to all the circumstances of the case, he is protected to this extent, that if he exercise the ordinary care of a business man, he shall not be liable further than that. By Clause 13 we adopt the provision existing in the old country, by which trustees, under certain conditions, have the right to pray in aid by way of defence the Statute of Limitations. As the law stands at present, a trustee has no such right, and he is open to be called upon to account for his trust years after the matter has been closed. This right to pray in aid is not to apply where the trustee has been guilty of dishonesty, and the Bill makes no alteration in such cases ; but in the case where a trustee has not been morally dishonest, then he ought to have the right to pray in aid the Statute of Limitations, and insist that those who have the right of bringing an action against him should do so with due diligence, and not stand by for years until the witnesses are dead, or the papers or vouchers which might justify the trustee in his action are no longer available, and he is placed in a false position.

This provision has been adopted in other colonies of Australia, and has been found to work beneficially. With regard to the clause making a trustee liable for want of due diligence, this Bill is practically the English legislation up to date.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): The House must be indebted to the hon. member for having taken the trouble to frame this Bill, which brings legislation on the subject up to date and in accordance with the law in the mother country. It contains the two important provisions referred to, which are only right and should have been in operation in this colony before. The preparation of this Bill must have cost the hon. member much time and consideration in order to bring it before the House in so complete a form, and on behalf of the Government I thank him very much for the trouble he has taken.

Question put and passed.

- Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

SIR JAMES G. LEE STEERE took the Chair, in the absence of Mr. Harper.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

At 6.6 o'clock, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

A Message from the Administrator, transmitting the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the financial year 1900-1901, and recommending appropriation, was received.

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 eleventh consecutive time that I have had the honour of addressing this House on the state of the finances of this colony. Nearly ten

years have passed away since we took upon ourselves the cares and responsibilities of self-government; and during all those years I have had, through the confidence extended to me by this House, the task of informing hon. members and the people of the colony, year by year, as to the state of its finances. It has not always been an easy task, though I am glad to say that generally during all those years it has been so. We have had our difficulties, in the same way as private individuals have theirs; but whatever difficulty there may have been in the past, and however difficult at times it may have been for me to place the financial position satisfactorily before hon. members and the people of the colony, I may say that I have never had, during all the years I have been Treasurer of Western Australia, an easier or a more pleasant task than I have to-night.

A Plain Statement.

I have nothing sensational to tell—perhaps that is a matter of regret to some, although it is not to me—probably I shall say very little that is new, at any rate to those who closely watch what is going on in the colony. I will “a round unvarnished tale deliver,” which should convince everyone, not only of our unexampled progress, but also of our sound financial position. The task I have set myself is the same as that which I have always followed in the past; viz., to deal not only with the revenue and expenditure for the past year, and the probable receipts and expenditure for the current year—that, of course, would be a very small and simple matter; but the task I have set before me to-night is to review the condition of the colony in respect of all or nearly all its industries. I desire to inform hon. members of the condition of affairs throughout the colony; to omit as little as possible of those matters which are interesting, so that this Financial Statement may not only give an account of our financial position, but may also in a way be a description of the colony as it exists at the present time.

Population and Continued Increase.

The first question with which I propose to deal is one which is perhaps the greatest want we have in this colony,

namely population. I am glad to be able to say that the population is greater now than it has ever been before, though it has always been a cause of wonder to me that the population has not increased to a larger extent than has been the case, seeing the great discoveries of gold and of other minerals which have been made here, taking into consideration also our closeness to the large populations of the Eastern Colonies, and generally the position we have acquired, not only in Australia but throughout the world, as the greatest gold-producing colony of the Empire. However, it is gratifying to know that our population is greater now than it has ever been. On the 30th June last it was 178,192, and on the 30th September (three months later) it was 180,401; showing that in those three months the population has increased by 2,209 persons. Our financial year begins, as hon. members all know, on the 1st July and ends on the 30th June; and during the last financial year the population increased by 9,712; and from the 30th June, 1899, till 30th September, 1900 (fifteen months), it increased by 11,921. Taking the average, the increase of population during the last fifteen months has been at the rate of 800 a month. I think, in viewing these figures, we have at all events no reason to consider them unsatisfactory. Such an increase of population cannot but be of benefit; but, for all that, for several years past it has been a wonder to me that the increase has not been greater.

Labour in Demand—Openings for Enterprise.

Notwithstanding our increase of population, I am very glad to be able to say there is no surplus of labour, that wages are good, and there are no unemployed; so that these are conditions of which we may be proud. When we look upon the area of this country, even if we exclude from consideration the vast interior; when we look at the three thousand miles of coast-line which is certainly habitable and fit for occupation and for improvement; when we consider this vast area, there can be no doubt that our efforts should be in the direction of increasing the population of the western side of Australia. There have been various reasons why people have not come here. One is that we had not a

very good name in the beginning; and we know a bad name sticks to a place or people. Other reasons have been our isolation, especially as regards the central parts of the colony, and the metropolitan area; being out of the way, off the high road of traffic, the mail steamers calling only at Albany, and our being altogether unknown by the great mass of the people of Australia; for, except in regard to our goldfields, few people in other countries have any idea that we have large areas of good land; few people elsewhere have any idea that a man can come here and found a home for himself and those who come after him. These are the reasons, amongst others, which have operated to keep population from Western Australia. But now that all the conditions are changed, I feel certain that during the next ten years we shall have a very different state of affairs. At the present time it is a matter of wonder to me that more people do not seek the shores of Western Australia to make their homes here, seeing that this is by far the best colony of Australia for any young man who has good health and strength and a spirit of enterprise. There is no part of Australia where the opportunities for enterprising people are so good or so many as they are here. But the reason people have not come in greater number is, as I said before, that we have been out of the way and unknown; and therefore our country has not been attractive. Of course if people expect to come here and make fortunes in a few days—by some chance, by taking a lottery ticket, or by finding a gold mine—they may be disappointed. That is not the kind of people to whom I desire to address myself. My remarks are intended for those persons who, by care and industry, desire to build a home and gain a competency; and to persons desirous of doing that, I say there is a good opening, there is a fair field in Western Australia, not only for a competency but for something better.

Revenue of Past Year—the Estimates and Results.

I am glad to say that the revenue of the colony for the last year was excellent. It exceeded the estimate by £79,915. The estimate was £2,795,480, and the amount actually received was £2,875,395.

The Railway revenue exceeded the estimate by £96,812, and the Customs revenue exceeded the estimate by £54,801. I regret to say, however, that the Dividend Duty on companies, which was estimated to produce £94,000, produced only £55,015. If hon. members will compare, as I have no doubt some have compared, the items of revenue and expenditure of the colony for the last year, they will be bound to come to the conclusion that, taken altogether, the actual receipts were fairly near the estimates, and that the year's transactions were, on the whole, from that point of view at any rate, satisfactory. My friend the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) very often has a good cause of attack, or at any rate of remark, in regard to the colony's finances, by reason of our having over-estimated or under-estimated the revenue, as when he has said our surplus was too great or that there was too large a deficit; but I think it will puzzle the hon. member, in reviewing the transactions of the past year, to do so on this occasion. As the hon. member is, on occasions, generous, I hope he will now be generous and say we could not have done very much better, in regard either to the estimated revenue or the estimated expenditure during the last financial year. The expenditure last year was even better calculated or estimated by the Government than was the revenue; because the estimated expenditure was £2,640,724, while the actual amount spent was £2,615,675; so that we over-estimated the expenditure by £25,049. This matter is exactly as I should have liked it to be if I had had the arrangement of it—the revenue being greater than the estimate, and the expenditure less than the estimate. Of course, I need hardly tell hon. members that in an immense colony like this, stretching from Wyndham to Eucla, with so many centres of population on the goldfields and elsewhere, the greatest economy was necessary during the last year in order to obtain this satisfactory result; because we commenced the year, as members all know, with a deficit of £247,349, and every effort had to be made to reduce it. Of course it was not the amount of the deficit, though that was large enough—a quarter of a million or so, but it was the bad effect a deficit had on our reputa-

tion as a colony, for it meant we were spending more than we were receiving. Hon. members know where that leads us—that if we spend more than we receive, we are not doing well. That had been our case for twelve months, in fact for more than twelve months, previous to the beginning of the last financial year; therefore I made every effort, and was ably assisted by all my colleagues—we made every effort to get rid of this deficit, which fortunately we have been able to do.

Expenditure—the Deficit Paid off.

The actual expenditure for the past year was £2,615,675; and with the deficit of £247,349, there was a total expenditure of £2,863,024; while on the other hand the revenue was £2,875,395; and so we had the great satisfaction, on the 30th June, 1900, of having a credit balance of £12,371. Having been accustomed for so many years to a credit balance, and previous to 1897 we always had one, I can assure hon. members it was a source of great satisfaction to the Government to get away from deficit years, and to commence this current year, at any rate, with the credit balance I have mentioned. It rests now with us to see whether we cannot maintain a credit balance, and avoid deficits in the future. When we consider the circumstances of a colony like this, with so many applications and demands on the public purse, from one end of the colony to the other, the fact that we were able to pay off in one year a deficit of £247,349 and have a small credit balance at the end of that year shows, not only that we carry on the administration with care, but also that the colony has great resources and is able to meet difficulties when they arise.

Increasing Demands for Works—some Check.

I can assure hon. members that when they see the Estimates for this year, which I shall have the pleasure of putting before them to-night, they will realise the great care which has been exercised in keeping the demands of the people within the bounds of the revenue, however large that revenue may be; because this colony, as I have said over and over again, is capable of spending

twice its income, if that income were there to spend. I am glad to tell hon. members that notwithstanding the very heavy calls on the public purse during the last three months, the Under Treasurer informed me to-day that there was a credit balance on the 30th September of £3,195, showing that the previous balance of £12,371 has dwindled, although I hope the coming month will show a different state of affairs. The revenue is excellent, and all we have to do is to keep a tight hand on the purse strings, and avoid as far as we can the paying away of money unless such expenditure is absolutely required. I may say, in passing, that when good times come on us, as they have during the last year or more, there is a growing tendency, which it is difficult to prevent, to increase departmental expenditure. It may be asked, Why not alter that? But I regret to say it is not so easy to alter it; and I have an opinion that departmental expenditure at the present time is too large. To the large area of the country and the scattered settlement, we must look for the cause of this tendency, rather than to any desire on the part of the Government to increase the public expenditure. Every effort, however, must be made to prevent any increase of, and even to reduce, departmental expenditure in every possible direction; because, as I have said, it has already reached limits which cannot well be exceeded. However urgent the demands, if the money is to be obtained from current account, the Consolidated Revenue, it can be obtained only at the expense of some other work not being undertaken.

Contingents for South African War.

During the past year an event has occurred which gave the colony, in common with all the Australian colonies, an opportunity of assisting the motherland in obtaining justice and fair treatment for our countrymen in the South African Republics. We sent from this colony four military Contingents, one of which was paid for to a considerable extent, though not wholly, by the Imperial Government, and the other three were sent on our own account. The whole of the Contingents from this colony numbered over 500 men, with 500 horses and equipment; and I am glad to be

able to say, that these brave men have upheld the honour of this colony and have done signal service to the Empire. The expenditure on this account last year was £14,331, and you will be asked to provide £15,000 on the present Estimates. I am not able to inform hon. members to-night how much more will be required, but considerably more will be needed besides the £29,331 which has been and will be provided, and this balance will have to be provided hereafter when the accounts come in for payment. Most of the men are receiving only the Imperial pay; and as this colony has undertaken to make up that pay to the agreed amount, which is two or three times as much as the Imperial pay, of course this account will come up for payment when the men return, which we hope will be soon, and we shall then be glad to do them honour and give them a hearty welcome. We all no doubt regret the necessity for this war, and also the loss of so many valuable lives; but the war, at any rate, has had some good effects. The war has bound even more closely than formerly the British race, scattered throughout the world, and in that way has done an incalculable amount of good. It has also shown, I think, the solidarity of the Empire, and the willingness of the Australian people to share the burdens as well as the advantages of being part of the great British Empire to which we are all so proud to belong.

Loan Expenditure, Not Excessive.

During last year we expended from Loan funds (loan moneys borrowed on the London market) £1,012,672, as against £1,023,943 in the previous year. I think that looking ahead—if we continue our public works system as at the present time, it is probable our expenditure from Loan funds will be something like £1,000,000 a year for some time to come—I think for the next two or three years—and I regard that as a moderate expenditure which this colony can well afford. It may be interesting to hon. members to note how we spent this £1,012,672 last year, and I will give a few items. On the Coolgardie Water Scheme we spent £454,092; on the Fremantle Harbour Works, £132,577; on Rolling Stock £102,882; on Additions and Improve-

ments to opened Railways, £52,081; on Public Batteries, £28,195; on Rails and Fastenings, £48,654; Departmental expenditure, £42,409, and many smaller sums on various works of lesser magnitude. Hon. members will see that the expenditure has not been so large on these great undertakings as some perhaps may have thought. In regard to the Coolgardie Water Scheme, £454,092 is not a very large expenditure, nor is £132,577 on the great Harbour Works at Fremantle; and I think the verdict of those who have taken note of what is going on in the colony, and are cognisant of the circumstances, and of the large works in progress will be that the expenditure of a little over one million last year is less than might have been expected.

Fremantle Harbour Works.

I am glad to tell hon. members that the Fremantle Harbour Works are nearing completion, and already the P. & O. and Orient steamers make Fremantle their first and last port of call in Australia. That great work which this House agreed to carry out is now practically accomplished. It was a fortunate thing that in 1892 Parliament was wise enough to undertake this work. Of course we never thought then that we would have been able to spend so much money on the work continuously. It was thought that £300,000 was about what we would be able to expend, although we were told by the Engineer-in-Chief that the works would cost £800,000 before large steamers could come into the harbour. While we looked forward to the large steamers using the port, still that event seemed somewhat distant; and I say again we were fortunate in having a wise Legislature in 1892, and fortunate in having such an Engineer-in-Chief as Mr. O'Connor, he having the knowledge and the House having the boldness to undertake that great work. I can only say that amongst the many works we have carried out during the last ten years, there is no work I am prouder of being associated with than the construction of the harbour at Fremantle. The influence of this work on the colony's destiny will be immense, and we must not stop, but continue to improve the harbour

and make it worthy of being regarded as the "Golden Gate," the San Francisco of Australia.

Goldfields Water Scheme.

There is only one other work of great magnitude projected by the Government which is not yet completed; and I need hardly say what that work is, because everyone knows it to be the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Scheme. The work is, however, in a fair way to completion, and by this time next year I believe the water will be utilised for a portion of the way. Whatever may be said of this Legislature by persons who desire to speak ill of it, the Legislature can say, and I say for it, that this great Water Supply Scheme is our tribute to the Coolgardie goldfields. There is great necessity for the work, if we have any faith in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie; and when we think that these two mining centres have produced gold to the value of twelve million pounds sterling out of the total of twenty-one million pounds worth of gold produced in the colony, I do not think we are going far wrong, seeing that our hopes and aspirations for the future are largely built up with our belief in these goldfields. I say again, our aspirations and hopes for the future, the hopes and aspirations of the people of this country, are largely associated with their confidence in the permanence and richness of the goldfields of Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, and the surrounding country. Therefore, if we have this hope and belief in these great goldfields, who is there who has faith in this country who will say we are not justified in spending two and a half millions of money with the object of giving the people of those goldfields that commodity which is absolutely necessary in order to place them in the position of every other city in the world. A sufficient, a pure, and a certain water supply will not only do good to them, but will also provide a certain supply of water for our railways along the whole course of the route. I say again this great scheme is our tribute, and so far as my influence has gone in promoting it, it is my tribute to the Coolgardie Goldfields, which have done so much for every place and every industry in this colony. It has been a very difficult work—very difficult as far as the

Government have been concerned; for although we have had the support of a sufficient Parliamentary majority to repel the many attacks which have been made on this project, yet the task has been difficult and troublesome. Now that the work is well in hand, I say this great water scheme—and I make this statement without fear—will prove to be one of the greatest and best works we have constructed in this country, and with the Fremantle Harbour Works and the Railways of this colony, will remain as monuments of the first ten years of self-government in Western Australia.

Paris Exhibition, the W.A. Exhibits.

As hon. members are aware, this colony has been represented at the Paris Exhibition; and, strange to say, Western Australia was the only Australasian colony represented at probably the greatest exhibition that has ever been held in the world. As far as I can read and ascertain from the accounts of those who have been there, and from the newspapers, it was a most splendid exhibition of all the industries and wealth of the world. It is a matter for regret, that owing to the necessity to watch over the affairs of the colony and over our own interests, that so few of us had the opportunity of visiting this great Exhibition. Looking at the photographs I placed on the table to-night, and at a large number of others which came to me privately, it seems that such an Exhibition must not only have been most interesting, but must have been a source of great joy and pleasure as well. Some people have remarked in regard to the large expenditure incurred by this colony in connection with this Exhibition; but I look on that expenditure as nothing. It is the custom in this country, as I suppose it is the custom in every country, that people want to have the cake and want to eat it too. People are eager to be represented at exhibitions, they are eager to do this and that; but when the bill has to be paid, some of them seem to find fault. I hope any feeling of that sort will not be found in hon. members' minds on this occasion. We have had an opportunity such as we might have waited for years and years to gain, for exhibiting our most valuable products in probably the greatest and most splendid Exhibition the world has ever seen. The

gold exhibit we sent to Paris is, I suppose, unequalled: scarcely has there ever been a better or as good an exhibit of gold produced anywhere; and we have also sent exhibits of timber, which have been the admiration of everyone who went through the Western Australian Court. When we think of our timber and our gold, our wheat and flour, and the other products we sent to that Exhibition, when we think of our copper, our lead, and our tin, in fact everything we produce in this country—when we think that all these were exhibited to millions of people in Paris, coming as those people did from various countries, what is the use of our talking about the few thousand pounds it has cost to attain such a result? Had it not been for the medium of this Exhibition we might have spent millions, and yet not have attained the same result. I believe also that the most has been made of them, in the way in which they were presented to the people from all countries. Our thanks are due—never mind the little expenditure, that is nothing—our thanks are due to the President of the Exhibition, our friend the member for Wellington (Hon. H. W. Venn), and to all those commissioners who have been associated with him. They should have all the credit. The only credit I can claim is that I found the money; and probably I shall get blame for finding too much. I know very well there have been willing workers throughout the colony; and certainly the commissioners have worked hard and worked successfully to produce exhibits from this colony which have done so much credit to it. Therefore, if it will cost £30,000, we will never spend £30,000 better than we have spent that. Hon. members will recollect that £8,000 was provided last year in the Estimates; and in this year's Estimates they will be asked to vote £13,000 more. Though the total cost is estimated by some, I am not able to give an estimate myself. At present, the cost is £30,000, but included in that cost, we have £12,000 worth of gold specimens that we purchased, and of course they are worth full value, or nearly so—indeed many of the gold specimens may be worth more than we gave for them; and it is a question whether we should convert them into sovereigns or keep them for future exhibition.

Glasgow Exhibition, an Opportunity.

I may say the Government intend to submit to the House a proposal that these exhibits shall be removed to Glasgow, and hon. members will be asked to vote the necessary funds. For exhibiting at Glasgow, five thousand pounds will be provided in the Estimates, which will probably carry us through the financial year; but the total cost will be about £10,000, to exhibit at Glasgow in a way we desire. We have a great opportunity in Glasgow which should not be missed on any account. We have all the exhibits in Paris, we have the timber and the gold, and we can send fresh exhibits of wheat and flour; we have also the copper, the lead, and the tin; and as Glasgow is one of the great commercial centres of the British Empire, we should not lose the opportunity, more especially as we have the exhibits together, of sending them to the Glasgow Exhibition.

Trade—Exports and Imports.

I now come to a very important matter, one of great interest to everyone: I refer to the trade of the colony. That is what this country is dependent on: we are all depending on the trade of the country, and I have a magnificent record to place before hon. members. The trade of Western Australia for the year ending 31st December last—I will refer to the trade between December and June of this year later on—was: Imports £4,473,532, of which amount I should like to point out, because it is very interesting and also gratifying, £1,357,175 was admitted duty free. The Exports were £6,985,642; so that the imports and exports for the year ending 31st December last amounted together to £11,459,174. And I would like to point out that our exports were $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions more than our imports: which I think is very satisfactory. What a change has come over us. At one time our imports, when we were borrowing large sums of money, were a long way ahead of our exports: now the reverse is the case, our exports are greater than our imports, and even making allowance, as some hon. members do, for the dividends in gold mining that go away and never come back again, making allowance for that, a very successful state of affairs exist, because we have $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions surplus to reckon

with; the $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions more exports than imports. For the first half of this year 1900 the imports were £2,804,014, of which £881,120 worth were admitted duty free. The exports were £2,614,648, making with the imports a total of £5,418,662. Remembering that the trade of Western Australia when we obtained responsible government was about two millions a year, and seeing it was $11\frac{1}{2}$ millions last year, I think there is good reason for gratification. And there is another important matter, that in the imports of last year, valued at $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions roughly, only £447,956 was from foreign countries; and of the imports for the first half of this year, amounting to £2,804,014, only £294,296 worth was from foreign countries. It seems to me that at any rate in our case the saying is true, that trade follows the flag. I should like to mention that the timber industry during the past eighteen months has shown signs of returning prosperity, and I have reason to think that very shortly we shall have the timber industry in as flourishing a condition as it was a year or two ago. The value of timber exported in the last 18 months was £760,477, this being no mean item in our exports; and if we can only get our timbers into the great countries of Europe, as I believe we are doing, there is no reason why this export should not be largely increased. It may be of some interest to hon. members to know with what countries our trade is done. For the year and a half ending June last, the trade of this colony equalled £16,877,836, and we did that trade with the following countries: With the United Kingdom, £7,913,625; with the Australasian colonies, £7,340,875—hon. members will see that the trade between this colony and the United Kingdom is about the same as the trade between this colony and the other colonies of Australasia, being between seven and eight millions in each case; our trade with other possessions of the Empire was £667,085; and with foreign countries £956,251. It will be seen that during the last 18 months we traded with foreign countries to the extent of only £956,251 (less than a million of money), as against a total of over fifteen millions with countries of the British Empire. I think that is a splendid record, showing

how valuable is our trade with the United Kingdom and the Australasian colonies. It shows, too, that we are entering the Australian Commonwealth as a self-reliant and progressive people.

Stock Returns.

I am glad to inform hon. members that in regard to the live stock of the colony there has been a fairly good increase during the past year. The sheep in the colony on the 31st December numbered 2,282,306, being an increase over last year of 30,758; cattle 297,075, being an increase of 27,128; horses 65,918, being an increase of 2,314; pigs 55,953, being an increase of 16,520. One would not have believed there were so many pigs in the country. [General laughter.] We must bear in mind that this is notwithstanding the large numbers of stock going into consumption. We know that a great number are consumed here and on the goldfields; and I think it is very assuring that notwithstanding all that have gone into consumption, the numbers are still, I believe, greater than they have ever been before.

Education, Free and Progressive.

I come to another subject of great importance, that of education. Whatever may be said adversely of the present Government (and I suppose there will be something said as time goes on), it must always be said that the Government introduced free education into this country. If anyone took the trouble to look through the statutes from the end of 1890 to the present time, he would be astonished, I think, at all the good measures, the liberal measures, this House has passed. I believe we have just as liberal laws on our statute book as there are in any of the other colonies, and in many cases far better ones. I am glad to say that great progress has been made in the education of the young in this colony. It is greatly due—and I am glad to give credit where credit is due—to the Inspector General of Schools, Mr. Cyril Jackson, who brings to his work not only great learning, but also, which is just as important, great enthusiasm. Now there are 205 schools in operation in the colony, of which 125 are State schools, 14 half-time schools,

56 what are called provisional schools, 4 are schools in districts sparsely populated, and 6 are what are called special schools. There were on the rolls on the 31st December last 16,053 children, of whom 12,465 attended on the average throughout the year, this being equal to 79 per cent. Of course the education of this large number of children necessitates a large expenditure, and I want everyone to understand that in giving more education to the people we have to provide more money, not only for the teachers and others, but also in buildings, which are a very large item. Many new buildings and additions were made during the year, capable of providing for 1,844 additional children, and buildings were rented to accommodate 1,150 more. The total cost of the Education Department for the financial year ended 30th June last was £68,978, as against £56,949 for the previous year. The estimated expenditure for the current year is £82,900. While the expenditure on school buildings for last year was £21,650, the expenditure for this year is estimated to be £54,565. Hon. members will see there has been a great advance made in education throughout the colony, and the increase in the number of children is no doubt due to a very large extent to the advent of the wives and families of men who had come from the Eastern colonies to the goldfields. At any rate, I think it is a matter upon which we may congratulate ourselves; and so long as we have funds available in the Treasury we will not mind spending it on education.

Land Settlement, a Great Advance.

I have to say a few words in regard to land settlement. I think we have by far the simplest and best land laws in Australia. I will not go any further than that, although I have some knowledge of the land laws of other countries; but I have no hesitation in saying, from what I know of the land laws of the Australian colonies, that we have the simplest and best code of all. Great advance is being made in land settlement owing to the exertions of my friend the Minister of Lands and his staff of officers; and especially has there been a large advance of settlement along the Great Southern Railway. One of the things we must rejoice over in regard to our purchase of

this railway is that we have been able to open up the whole of the late company's land between Mount Barker and Beverley for agricultural settlement, and we have been able to place people on this land under our easy land laws. We also have been able to give them the advantages of the Agricultural Bank, which they had not previously. No doubt much of this great advance has been due to the energy and enthusiasm of one particular officer of the Lands Department; an old friend of ours (or of mine, at any rate), Mr. Ranford, who brings to bear not only knowledge, but, as I said in regard to the Inspector General of Schools, a great deal of enthusiasm. The result has been an immense settlement along that line of railway; and I think it will continue as long as there is land available there within easy distance of the railway. This increase of settlement will soon have the effect of disposing of the cry which we have heard so often, particularly from the late leader of the Opposition (Mr. Leake), that this country cannot supply sufficient food for its own people. I always stigmatised that as a ridiculous statement, made only by persons who have no real knowledge of the country and no faith in it. Instead of our not being able to supply sufficient food for our own requirements, in a very short time we shall be large exporters of products of the soil. I should like also to tell hon. members that the Act passed some years ago (1893-4), called the Homesteads Act, has worked well for this country, as I said it would. There are at the present time 1,600 homestead farmers, occupying probably about 160 acres each. They cannot have more than 160 acres free, but may have less. On the 31st December last the area held as free homestead farms was 218,628 acres, and during the last nine months 35,819 acres more have been added, which means a total of 1,600 homestead farmers in this country. The homestead farming system was a great factor in settling those wide lands of the United States and Canada. Notwithstanding that we had a good deal of difficulty in introducing the system into this colony, it was introduced; and I believe that so long as this country exists, so long at any rate as there is land open for selection, that Act will not be repealed. We have 1,600 homestead

farmers in this colony, which is a result we may all be proud of; and I think everyone in this House who fought for that measure should be satisfied that it was a wise and thoroughly useful measure. The other way of acquiring land in this colony, and the principal one used by selectors, is what is called the conditional purchase system with compulsory improvements; and this also has worked excellently. On the 31st December, 1899, there were 1,141,988 acres occupied, and on the 30th September 113,611 acres had been added, so that the total of farming land under this one section, the principal agricultural section of the Land Act, on the 30th September; was 1,255,599 acres. Under the Land Purchase Act, we have sold for settlement up to the 31st December, 1899, 26,880 acres, and from the 1st January to the 30th September this year 2,024 acres, the total now held under that provision being 28,904 acres. I may say, in passing, that I think this Act should be more largely utilised in the future. I have no doubt my friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands is desirous of utilising this Act; but looking over these figures to-day in preparing this information to give to hon. members, I could not but think there is no good reason why this Act, which has proved a self-supporting measure, should not be more largely utilised. I fear my friend has been a little afraid of the Act; but I can assure him, from my knowledge of the colony and my experience in land matters, that there is no need to fear so long as the land is fit to cultivate, if it is within a short distance of a railway, if it can be acquired at a reasonable price, and if there are people who want the land. Of course you can generally find out whether people are looking for land in the locality. This Act, which is so much utilised in other parts of Australia and in New Zealand, is an excellent one, and I hope it will be more largely turned to account than it has been. Certainly, up to the present time it has not proved other than successful wherever it has been tried in this colony. In addition to these remarks in regard to land settlement, I am glad to announce, what all of us in this House who have anything to do with pastoral pursuits know, that we have now good prices and a very good season; and we know that good prices

for agricultural and pastoral products cannot do otherwise than stimulate and encourage those industries, as is being done at the present time.

Agricultural Bank and Assistance to Farmers.

There is a very useful institution in this colony, I think one of the most useful, looking at it from an agriculturist's and producer's point of view; that is the Agricultural Bank. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] That institution was brought into existence some years ago by an Act of Parliament, and has proved most successful. It has been most economically managed by our old friend who was formerly the member for the Murray in this House, Mr. Paterson. I think it is the only institution of the sort in Australia; in fact I have never heard that such a bank exists in any other part of the world; but I am quite sure that so soon as its virtues are known, it will be imitated by those countries which are in the same position as we are, countries which desire more cultivation and more land settlement with a view to increased production. The great cardinal feature of this Act is, that whereas there are Acts in other countries which provide for lending money to agriculturists for the purpose of improving their homesteads or paying off mortgages, yet our Act has only the one object in view, the further improvement of the country; and all the money advanced under it must be for future improvements. The advances also are to be only three-fourths of the amount to be spent; so that a person to whom money is lent under this Act has to provide the other fourth himself, either in money or in labour. Up to the 30th June, 1900, the Bank had approved of loans to the amount of £110,395, of which £85,280 has already been advanced; and the value of work done for this money was £182,532. That is, for spending £85,280 we got work done which is valued at £182,532; and for this amount, the money actually paid, there has been done 47,630 acres of clearing, of which 36,108 acres were cultivated, 53,837 acres have been ringbarked; and we have 300 miles of fencing, with wells and other sources of water supply, costing £3,293, and farm buildings to the value of £9,226. And for the £25,115 which we have promised to

advance, and have not yet advanced, similar improvements will be made which will cost £44,107; and these works are in hand. Now, this splendid work is being carried out at no expense to the state: it costs the taxpayer of the colony nothing. All this work is being done, and the producers are being assisted and encouraged, and at no expense to the country. Last year there was even a small profit of £403 on the year's transactions. When I remember, too, all the opposition there was to the Agricultural Bank Bill when introduced in this House, it is a source of great satisfaction to me, and I am sure it is to hon. members who were here at that time and who supported us, that this Bank is proving so great a benefit to the colony. I say again, the Homesteads Act and the Agricultural Bank Act—two measures carried through this House at the point of the bayonet—are a heritage which we can safely hand down to those who come after us.

Banking Institutions and their Policy.

I now come to an important matter, often dealt with by other members of this House, but which I always refer to in dealing with the colony's finances; that is, the transactions of the banks doing business in this colony. The transactions of the banks in a colony are very interesting, and especially in a colony like this, as giving an indication of the trade and commerce of the country. On the 30th June, 1898, the debts due to the banks amounted to £3,219,907; on the 30th June, 1899, the amount was £2,885,609; and on the 30th June, 1900, those debts amounted to £2,670,144; so that the people of this country owe to the banks doing business here £215,466 less than they owed last year, and £549,763 less than they owed the banks on the 30th June, 1898. Now no one can say this is altogether satisfactory, for it does not show that enterprise on the part of the banking companies which we, I think, might have expected—[MR. MONGER: Hear, hear]—although it shows that the people are less in debt. The deposits in the banks on the 30th June, 1899, were £3,656,543, and on the 30th June, 1900, £4,408,214; so that the deposits have increased by £751,671 during the year, whereas the advances have decreased by £215,466.

MR. MONGER: Let us form a State bank, at once.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: The amount of coin and bullion in the banks on the 30th June, 1899, was £1,659,191, and on the 30th June, 1900, £2,594,885; so there was during the year an increase of coin in the banks amounting to £935,694. This, I think, is attributable in a large degree to the operations of the Royal Mint, which has had the effect of causing larger reserves of gold being located in the colony for distribution throughout the world; and the fact of this colony being made a distributing centre for sovereigns must, I think, soon have a beneficial effect on our trade. Notwithstanding that the trade and commerce of the colony during the last year have been thoroughly sound and satisfactory, as no one can gainsay, for if figures prove anything they prove that; yet, I regret to say the banks doing business here have not, during these two years, shown as much enterprise as might have been expected, and I regret to say this, because I feel it to be my duty to support the financial institutions of the country. I regret to say in regard to the two most powerful banks doing business here, that they have for a long time past been trading here without any imported capital. [MR. MONGER: Hear, hear.] Their liabilities in Western Australia largely exceed their assets in the colony. This is not what we have a right to expect, for these two institutions are sending our money out of the colony for investment elsewhere. That is not what we want: we want them to bring money into the colony for investment here; but they are sending our money away to other countries, instead of bringing money here for investment.

MR. MONGER: They will continue to do it, too.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I do not know what will be the state of affairs under federation, when banking will be carried on under the Federal law, but I certainly have no hesitation in saying that under our existing system, banking institutions have no right to expect to carry on business in this colony under the above conditions.

Royal Mint, Local Coinage.

I am glad indeed to tell hon. members that the Mint is working away, and that it has now been established for about 15 months, since the 21st June, 1899. It has already issued 2,180,122 sovereigns, and the output is increasing. I regret to say it is not assisted to the extent it should be by the large gold-mining companies on the goldfields. This Mint was established here in the interest of gold producers, so that the men who obtained the gold out of the earth should have an opportunity of getting full value for it at the least possible expense; but notwithstanding that we coin gold, as we are advised, cheaper than it is coined elsewhere; still, up to the present, we do not get the gold to mint from the very large companies.

MR. HIGHAM: Put a tax on gold exported.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: A great many companies outside Kalgoorlie—and amongst them I am glad to include the Mount Morgans, a large gold mine in which my friend the member for Coolgardie is interested—do send their gold to the Perth Mint, and a large quantity is now being sent there, nearly half the output; still, the other half, which principally comes from the great goldmines at Kalgoorlie, is sent away to England without being minted here.

MR. DOHERTY: Put 2s. 6d. an ounce on it.

MR. MONGER: That is the cure.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I am sorry for that state of things, because the charges at the Mint are so small that, unless we get about £4,000,000 worth per annum to coin, the revenue received will not equal the expenditure. However, we can only hope for the best; and altogether I am satisfied that this Mint has been of advantage besides greatly adding to our prestige as a great gold-producing country.

Savings Bank.

There is another institution in this colony which does a great deal of good, which works silently, and which few people know much about; that is the Savings Bank, which provides a safe investment for the thrifty. Those who invest in it are secured by the consolidated revenue of the colony. On the 30th June,

1899, the deposits were £1,116,178; on the 30th June, 1900, they were £1,299,144: so that we increased our deposits by £182,966 during last year. I think this is very satisfactory, and indicates that thrift and well-doing, especially amongst the working classes, are practised, because the country cannot be very depressed when these depositors increase their deposits by £182,966 in a year. One thing that strikes the reader of this return is the large number of operations that go on in the year. The deposits were no less than £1,112,250, and the withdrawals £962,371; and I am glad to be able to tell hon. members that the Savings Bank paid interest to the amount of £33,086 to the depositors, and its affairs were so well managed that we had the satisfaction of carrying a profit of £8,854 to the credit of the general revenue of the colony.

Money Orders—Remittances beyond the Colony.

The amount of money sent out of the colony to support the wives and families of men who earn money here has been a vexed question for many years. In 1896-7 there was £857,673 sent away in 1897-8, the amount was £691,694; in 1898-9, it was £430,868; and for the last financial year, it was £366,127; so that we are bringing the figures down slowly. But we must do better than this, because we received in money orders from the Australian colonies only £58,278, as compared with £366,127 sent away; so that we lost on the transaction £307,849.

MR. MONGER: What about moneys sent away through banks?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: We are working in the right direction, and the amount has been reduced, though it is still evident a large number of families live in the Eastern colonies and are supported from this colony.

Public Batteries, Cost and Results.

I shall refer now to the Public Batteries question, because it is one of great interest to the people on the goldfields; and I am sorry to say that, up to the present, the public batteries have not been successful financially. I am full of hope, however, that as time goes on and

good centres are opened up, the batteries will prove remunerative. The difficulty has been to obtain suitable sites, and very often after a site has been selected and a battery established, the quantity of ore sent to it is not sufficient to keep the battery fully employed. There is often a falling off in the ore, or the ore is poor, though more often the quantity of ore is not sufficient; and, as a result, in a few instances, the public battery has had to be removed. The receipts at all batteries last year were £19,468, and the expenditure £27,746, so that we lost £8,278: this is without allowing interest on capital cost, amounting to about £2,000. The total amount expended on public batteries up to the 30th June last is £68,090. Although these figures do not look very well, I am glad to say there is another side; and those who believe that these institutions, though worked at a loss, do pay indirectly, will get some satisfaction from the figures which I now quote. Public batteries in 1899 produced £80,000 worth of gold, and for the first nine months of this year they produced £70,475 worth of gold; and I am glad to say the average yield has been a little over one ounce to the ton. We have obtained gold to the amount of £150,475, which if these batteries had not been there would have been in the ground. It is confidently believed, and in this belief I share, that the establishment of Public Batteries will be largely beneficial.

Railway Department.

I now come to the great motive power in the development of the country, namely the railways, the means of transit. We have expended nearly £7,000,000 on railways, and these have paid their way—a very important and satisfactory statement to make. Last year the revenue from railways and tramways was £1,258,945, and the expenditure £884,860; so that we earned a profit of £374,085, or more than sufficient to pay interest of four per cent. on the cost and a sinking fund of one per cent. That is a splendid result, and a great deal of credit is due—and it is delightful to me to give credit where credit is deserved—a great deal of the credit is due to the General Manager of Railways (Mr. J. Davies) who, as those who have done business with him know, is untiring in

his efforts to protect the interests of the State. The Government, too, must take some credit; and my friend and late colleague, the member for the Williams (The Hon. F. H. Piesse), is entitled to be recognised for all his hard work and his solicitude for the public good in connection with the railway system. The result of these efforts is standing out in bold figures. Last year the working railways not only paid interest and sinking fund, but a sum of quite £50,000 was carried to the general revenue. The people of the colony have all the advantages of railways, with a splendid service, notwithstanding the complaints I see in the newspapers; and the people who use the railways pay for them. There is no burden whatever on the general taxpayer.

MR. VOSPER: Sometimes people who use the railways do not pay for them.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: Still there are to be found at this day, and in this House, those who oppose railway extension to places like the Norseman Goldfield, which has already produced half a million pounds' worth of gold. Those members will have to defend themselves—that is their lookout; but all I can say is that they refused to be guided by facts, and went off at a tangent on some other grounds.

MR. MORGANS: They will get a railway to Esperance now.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: For this year the figures are just as satisfactory. From the Estimates I will place on the table directly, the Committee will see that the estimated revenue from Railways and Tramways is £1,292,000, and our estimated expenditure is £920,716; so we expect a profit of £371,284. That result, I believe, will be realised, and thus again prove the wisdom of extending our railway system. In regard to railway extension, all I can say is that during the ten years I have been head of the Government, we have always been in the right, and the reason we have always been so is, that we know the colony and its requirements.

Public Debt—Loan Expenditure and Results.

Now I come to an important matter, on which there has been a great deal of

controversy by people who are uninstructed, and who do not want to be instructed—namely the public debt. On the 30th June last we owed £11,674,639, but if we deduct £377,160 Sinking Fund now in hand there remains £11,297,479; and if we further deduct the amount in hand belonging to Loan Account on that date, namely, £979,635, we have the actual indebtedness of the colony on the 30th June, £10,317,844. If we reckon the debt *per capita*, it is £57 per head, but to reckon the public debt *per capita* is misleading, for the real question is, on what works was the money spent, and are they reproductive? It does not so much matter how much per head we owe, if we have reproductive, self-supporting assets to show for the money expended; for where would any of us be, if we only took into account our liabilities and not our assets? We should all be in the Insolvency Court; and it is ridiculous to talk about the debt of the colony, and not to take into account on the other side the assets—what the money was spent on. Are the works self-supporting and reproductive? If they are, then I say there is no reason for fear. On the 30th June last, as I have said, we owed the public creditor £11,674,639. How has this loan money been expended? I will give some items: Railways (including the Great Southern Railway), £6,636,236; Telegraphs, £269,308; Harbour and River Improvements (including Fremantle Harbour), £1,437,419; Water Supply (including £627,353 for Coolgardie Water Scheme), £724,575; and Development of Goldfields, £677,728. We have built tanks and provided water supplies all over the waterless country of the interior, and by that means have made those districts habitable, at any rate to some extent and while I do not wish to take away credit from private people who are condensing, it must be remembered that the Government have also had condensers in many instances. Other items of expenditure are: Roads and Bridges, £141,287; Development of Agriculture (including £300,000 for the Great Southern lands), £353,865; on Public Buildings, all we have spent out of Loan was £63,876; and there are also Miscellaneous items, not enumerated, amounting to £86,545 these showing a total of £10,390,839. What country is

there in Australia which has done so much? Not one. A great many loans elsewhere have been spent on beautiful public buildings and unproductive works; whereas in this colony scarcely any works are unproductive; and, as I showed the other night, the unproductive indebtedness per head does not come to more than 5s. per head per annum. In regard to our railways, I must reiterate they not only pay their way, but also provide a sinking fund for the redemption of the loans. We will pay £404,042 for interest on loans this year, and for sinking fund £69,986, a total of £474,028; and nearly all this amount is produced without any burden being placed on the people. This is our record after ten years of office, that we have transformed this country by railways, by telegraphs, by harbours, by water supplies, by roads and bridges, and have done it all without adding one penny to the taxation of the people. This is our record.

The Future—Revenue and Expenditure.

I have now dealt with the past, and will take a slight glance at the future. I have no doubt this part of my speech, which I am glad to say will be shorter, will be more interesting, because it deals with what we do not know rather than with what we do know. The past is known to us, and it is a record of ten years of progress such as falls, I think, to the lot of few countries. I need not repeat that great care is necessary in managing the finances of the country, just as much care as in managing our own affairs; and we know how difficult that is, and how careful we have to be. The temptation to go too fast is greater, I believe, amongst those managing a great State than in managing one's private business; and that is due to two causes, perhaps more—due to a desire to develop the country, and also due in some measure, I fear, to the form of government under which we live, each party in the State trying to outdo the other. That is our form of government: we are each trying to outdo the other, and it is a very laudable ambition that we should try to do better for the country than somebody else. But in doing that there is a great temptation to go too fast. The revenue of the country at the present time is immense,

but the expenditure is very large also. We have begun the year, as I said, with a credit of £12,371; we estimate the revenue for this year at £2,900,000; an immense amount, within £100,000 of £3,000,000 a year. It is, however, only £24,604 more than we actually received last year; so that we estimate, with the £12,371 carried forward, that we shall have available for expenditure from the first of July last to the 30th June next £2,912,371. We expect an increase over last year's receipts of £33,188 on our Railways, and I am told by the General Manager that we shall get that: there are a few other small increases. We estimate from Customs that we shall receive £30,801 less than we received last year. The only reason for this reduction is owing to the repeal of the Meat Duties, which I hope will have the effect of reducing the price of meat to an appreciable extent. We have done our best in Parliament: let those who have the management of this meat business in the country see that they do something. This is the only reason I can give for this estimated reduction of £30,801 from Customs. My own opinion is that the Customs revenue will be realised if not exceeded. Altogether I think the estimate is a fairly reasonable one, and quite as large as it ought to be. I believe it will be realised, and I think no one will say we ought to have estimated a larger amount. The expenditure for the current year is estimated at £2,904,475. It is very large, owing to the many demands; and I may inform hon. members, to show the difficulty there is at present through the demands made on the Treasury from all parts of this wide territory, that when the Estimates came to me from the departments, and after I had revised them myself and when they finally came to me on Saturday last, the estimated expenditure was £228,000 more than the estimated revenue. I have been since Saturday last engaged in reducing the Estimates so as to get a small balance; and the balance I am able to submit to hon. members for the year ending 30th June next is only £7,896. The principal increases over the expenditure of last year on the Estimates are: Interest on Loans, £34,203; for our Federal Contribution I

have provided £8,000. Hon. members will see that the Customs service is provided for the whole of the year, but we shall have to pay for only half the year out of the Estimates, although we shall have to pay the other half to the Federal Government; therefore, it has not been thought desirable this year to alter the estimate. For the Police we shall require £5,992 more than was expended last year; for Defence £7,126 more; for Railways and Tramways, £35,856 more; for Public Works, £30,505 more; for Public Buildings, £81,695 more than we expended last year; for Commissioner of Crown Lands Department, £10,571 more; for Medical, £5,138 more; for Educational, £13,922; for Posts and Telegraphs, £24,422. I may say, in regard to the Post and Telegraph Department, the position is getting worse rather than better, the difference between revenue and expenditure this year being considerably more than last year. The reason for that, I suppose, is that the department is extending the mail service and the telegraph service in directions where the revenue is not great. It is also due, in some degree, to the increases in salaries. The expenditure proposed for all purposes is £288,801 more than the actual expenditure last year; £148,056 of this being absorbed by railways, public works and public buildings. As I said before, I estimate that on the 30th June next, and notwithstanding this immense revenue, we shall have a credit balance of only £7,896. There are some increases in salaries; and these are chiefly confined to salaries under £275 a year. There are a few others, but not many. We have given increases to salaries up to perhaps £275 a year, and in a few cases to those above that amount.

Future Works, Buildings, and Grants.

Amongst the principal items of expenditure on Works and Buildings are:—Roads and Bridges, which are provided for to the extent of £79,927; Harbours and Rivers, £8,900; Water Supplies, £24,270; Hospital Buildings, £16,950; Police Stations and Quarters, £15,200; Post and Telegraph offices, £22,050; Mines Department buildings, £6,050; Education Department buildings, £54,565; Municipal buildings, £9,875;

and many other works and buildings of smaller magnitude. Provision is also made on the Estimates for Subsidies to Municipalities, £35,000; the Paris Exhibition, £13,000; Glasgow Exhibition, £5,000; Improvement of Recreation Grounds, £5,000; Purchase of Recreation Grounds, £8,000; Perth Park, £2,500; Albany Parks, £1,500; Literary, Scientific, Agricultural, and other grants, £15,150; and many other minor works and services. These works and services I have mentioned are distributed all over the colony.

New Loan Authorisation.

In order to continue the Fremantle Harbour Works, and for the purchase of railway rolling-stock, rails, and fastenings, and other matters of importance, a fresh loan authorisation will be required. I propose to make it as small as possible, only sufficient for a little more than the current financial year. But I shall deal with this question later on, when I introduce the Loan Bill, and when the Loan Estimates are being considered. At any rate, I may inform hon. members that the new authorisation will in no way materially affect adversely the financial position of the colony.

Gold Industry.

I now come to the great factor in the progress of the colony, the gold industry. The value of gold exported and that minted at the Perth Royal Mint for the financial year ending 30th June last amounted to £6,431,063, and the total gold exported and minted now amounts to 21 millions sterling. More than half this amount of 21 millions sterling has been produced during the last 21 months; that is over 10½ millions sterling of gold produced in one year and nine months. This year it is believed the gold production will be equal to last year; that is, the produce of gold from our goldfields will be over six millions sterling. It will be of interest to hon. members to know where the gold which has been exported and that which was minted at the Royal Mint, came from during the last nine months. During the last nine months, in the Kalgoorlie district gold has been produced to the value of £2,198,217. That is our first, our leading goldfield;

and I shall give the other returns in their order as to quantity produced. Kalgoorlie being the first, Mount Margaret comes second with £392,363 worth, this being the goldfield to which we are going to build the Leonora railway: it is the second goldfield at present in the colony, and it has produced during the last nine months £392,363 worth. Coolgardie goldfield comes third, a good third, with £359,043 worth; North Coolgardie comes fourth with £296,486 worth; the Murchison fifth with £289,907 worth; North-East Coolgardie comes next with £158,733; East Murchison next with £153,645; Broad Arrow, £129,818; and Dundas (Norseman), to which hon. members would not authorise a railway being built the other evening, has yielded £112,347. The total from other fields not enumerated is £285,891. The total production of gold for the nine months of this year is £4,376,450. This production of 21 million pounds' worth of gold, nearly $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling of which was produced during the last nine months is the great promoter of all our industries. This is what our enterprise in building railways and opening up our colony has done. This is what the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Scheme is going to still further stimulate and encourage. I think it is a result that we may all be proud of. I would like to ask hon. members and the people of this country, what there is to be afraid of with such a record and with such an immense auriferous territory? We hardly yet know, as a matter of fact, how to extract the gold from the ores. People are experimenting even now in Kalgoorlie as to how to get gold from the ores. Yet with this record of 21 millions sterling of gold produced in this country, we still find some people afraid even to build a railway for developing the territory which has been the means of making Western Australia what it is. I may say again to the farmers and producers of this colony, that by assisting and encouraging the gold-mining industry and mining generally, by giving them means of transit by railways, we are stimulating every industry throughout the colony as well as providing markets for all our producers and manufacturers.

Concluding Remarks.

I have said all I desire to say to-night in regard to the affairs of the colony, and I will now as briefly as I can make some few concluding observations. As I said at the beginning, this is the eleventh consecutive time I have addressed the Legislative Assembly as Colonial Treasurer, covering a period of nearly ten years. They have been ten years of difficulty and toil to myself; but they have also been ten years of very great interest to myself, and I hope to all hon. members. [Several hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] We have been engaged in a task which I think has fallen to the lot of few people to be engaged in: we have been engaged in shaping the destinies of this country in the great forward and progressive movement which has come upon us through the discovery of gold. I, myself, if I may speak personally for a moment, have had the great privilege of guiding and directing, with the assistance of my colleagues and the members of this House, step by step, day by day, and year by year, for ten years, the legislation and the policy of this country, and the success which has attended our efforts probably finds few parallels in recent times. During all these years we have sought to uphold the honour of our Sovereign, and have laboured to promote the interests of the country committed to our care. We have, in my opinion, made good use of our opportunities; and, as if to consummate our work, we have now joined in the Commonwealth of Australia, and have taken upon ourselves the responsibilities of nationhood under the Crown.

Retirement from Office.

It is, sir, a fitting opportunity for me to tell my old friends and supporters who have been associated with me for so many years and in so many political victories, that I desire to be relieved for a time, at any rate, of the incessant labour connected with the duties of Premier of this great colony. It has rarely happened I think in any country, that support and trust have been accorded in a greater degree than has been extended to me during the last ten years; and it is indeed painful to me to contemplate the step I have referred to. I have not yet

decided as to my political future, or whether I shall even seek re-election for this House at the next general election; but I have decided, for many reasons, to ask to be relieved early next year of the office I have been enabled to hold so long, and I hope and trust not unworthily—[Several MEMBERS: Hear, hear]—through the great support given to me by my friends in this House. It is a great satisfaction, however, to me to know that I shall hand over to my successor a solvent and flourishing colony, with an increasing population (it was 50,000 at the beginning of 1891, whereas it is now 180,000); with an expanding trade (it was only about two millions at the beginning of 1891, whereas it is eleven and a half millions now); with an increased revenue (in 1891 it was half a million, whereas now it is nearly three millions); with a greatly increased gold production (the whole production of gold in the country from 1886, when we first discovered gold, up to the beginning of 1891, was less than a quarter of a million, whereas at the present time the gold production has reached a total of twenty-one millions sterling); with mines of coal (those coal-mines at the Collie which are supplying nearly all our wants on the railways at the present time, and which are a source of wealth to the community, but which, if some people had been listened to, would have been isolated and unused at the present time); with mines of copper, and tin, and lead (which are now flourishing, but which were then either undiscovered or unworked); with a magnificent harbour at Fremantle (at which the P. & O. and Orient steamers call, thereby placing the metropolis on the high road of trade and commerce, and not as it used to be, out of the way round the corner); with a permanent water supply for Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie assured; with railways, telegraphs, water supplies, public buildings, wharves, jetties, and roads all over the colony; with free education for our people; with adult suffrage; with liberal land laws; and generally, I say with confidence, with all those adjuncts necessary to enable a self-reliant and industrious people to work out their material and political advancement. This is our record, and it is a record which no one can ever take from

us. It is our record: this is what you and I have been doing during the last ten years. I thank hon. members for their courtesy in listening to me for so long, and I hope that whoever may be Premier of this country at the end of the next ten years, he will be able to give an account of a still more satisfactory record of what has been done during those ten years than I have been able to give in regard to the ten years that are now past. (General applause.)

On motion by MR. ILLINGWORTH, progress reported and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:38 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 10th October, 1900.

Papers presented—Question: Dredge for Albany, Particulars—Question: Perth Local Court, etc., Business hindered—Bills of Sale Bill, first reading—Public Service Bill, third reading—Truck Act Amendment Bill, third reading—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, second reading, resumed and adjourned—Constitution Act Amendment Bill (Members of Federal Parliament, to Disqualify), second reading, in Committee, progress, Division—Kalgoorlie Municipal Loans Reappropriation Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Municipal Institutions Bill, Select Committee's Report—Trustees Bill, first reading—Adjournment

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

PRAYERS.