

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

*Monday, 6th September, 1880.*

Proposed Loan of £310,000—Audit Bill: Memorial to Secretary of State—Point of Order—Message (No. 23): Grant of Land to Colonel Harvest—Message (No. 24): Assent to Bills—Alexander Forrest's Exploring Party: Money Grant to—Excess Bill: Report of Select Committee—Supplementary Appropriation Bill for 1880: first reading—Works and Railways Department: Cost of working: Adjourned Debate—Perth Working Men's Association Mortgage Bill: second reading; in committee—Supplementary Votes for 1880: Report of Select Committee—Municipal Institutions Act, 1876, Amendment Bill: third reading—Appropriation Bill, 1881: second reading; in committee—Adjournment.

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

## PRAYERS.

## PROPOSED LOAN OF £310,000: SERIES OF RESOLUTIONS.

## IN COMMITTEE.

MR. STEERE, in accordance with notice, moved the following resolutions:

"1. That in the Session of the Legislative Council held in 1874 a proposal was made by the Government, and acquiesced in by a majority of the Legislature, for the construction out of current revenue, at an estimated cost of £32,000, of an Overland Telegraph Line to Eucla connecting this Colony with the telegraph system of the other Colonies, and with Europe.

"2. That on condition of this work being at once proceeded with, the South Australian Government offered at its own expense to extend the Telegraph Line of that Colony to Eucla, so as to ensure through communication to Western Australia.

"3. That the Members of the Legislative Council were almost unanimous in the opinion that so extensive and costly a work should have been carried out by means of a Loan raised for that purpose, and only agreed to the proposal of the Government on being assured that on no other conditions could the work be proceeded with at once; and also because in the event of any delay occurring, it was known that

"the South Australian Government might be compelled to withdraw the offer which it had made, and which was a highly beneficial one to this Colony.

"4. That the construction of the Eucla Telegraph Line has been effected at a cost to this Colony of £50,000, being £18,000 in excess of the estimate; and although it has undoubtedly proved a most useful public undertaking, still the expenditure of this large sum concurrently with the disbursement out of General Revenue of further considerable amounts for various Public Works, which should properly have been provided for by Loan—notably an unauthorised expenditure of £15,000 upon the Northern Railway—has contributed to create a deficit, which, if paid off by annual instalments out of surplus revenue, might for some years to come cause the abandonment of important Public Works, and other measures necessary to the progress and prosperity of the Colony.

"5. That under these circumstances it is the opinion of the Council that in order to pay off a deficit which has been created principally by contributing from current revenue towards an undertaking, which the Council believes has in similar cases in all other countries been provided for by means of a Loan, and also to permit of the speedy prosecution of such Public Works as in the judgment of the Government and the Legislature will be advantageous to the Colony, it would be in accordance with sound financial principles to raise a Loan of £50,000, to recoup the ordinary revenue for the cost of the Eucla Telegraph Line, and thus fund the deficit at a small annual charge for interest.

"6. Taking the figures furnished to the Council by His Excellency the Governor, in the speech delivered at the commencement of this Session, as the basis of the financial statement attached hereto, the Council considers that it is justified in arriving at the conclusion, that by means of the sum proposed to be raised by this Loan in addition to an estimated surplus revenue during the present year of £10,000, the total indebtedness of the Colony on the 31st of December, 1880, would only

"amount to £7,661 18s. 4d., which, with  
 "an estimated expenditure during 1881  
 "of £168,894 13s. 10d., and inclusive  
 "of £13,950 interest on proposed Loans  
 "during that year, would amount to a  
 "total of £190,506 12s. 2d., against an  
 "estimated revenue of £192,154 for the  
 "same period, thus leaving a balance to  
 "credit on the 31st December, 1881, of  
 "£1,647 7s. 10d. It is however probable  
 "that should the Secretary of State  
 "sanction the raising of the Loans as  
 "hereafter proposed, not more than  
 "£100,000 would have to be raised  
 "during the year 1881, and interest  
 "would only have to be provided for  
 "that amount, thus leaving a consider-  
 "ably larger balance to the credit of the  
 "Colony at the end of that year.

"7. That in the opinion of the  
 "Council it is expedient in the interests  
 "of the Colony that the extension of the  
 "Eastern Railway direct to York should  
 "be proceeded with as soon as possible,  
 "and the route to be adopted shall be  
 "the one indicated in the Report of the  
 "Commissioner of Railways, who has  
 "estimated the cost at £220,000. The  
 "extension of this line has been already  
 "surveyed, and plans and estimates and  
 "all necessary information required by  
 "the Secretary of State can, the Council  
 "has reason to believe, be at once  
 "furnished by the Commissioner of Rail-  
 "ways.

"8. The isolated position of the  
 "North-West District, and its growing  
 "importance, more especially when  
 "viewed in connection with the early  
 "settlement of the vast extent of new  
 "country on the Fitzroy River recently  
 "discovered by Mr. Alexander Forrest,  
 "renders it highly desirable that Tele-  
 "graphic Communication should be  
 "established between Roebourne, the  
 "principal town in the North-West  
 "District, and Northampton, the farthest  
 "Northern point of our telegraph system.  
 "The total length of this line is 700  
 "miles, and its cost was estimated in  
 "1879 by a Government Commission at  
 "£39,200. The only way of reaching  
 "this district is by small sailing coasters,  
 "the length of whose voyages is very  
 "uncertain; and long intervals sometimes  
 "intervene without any communication  
 "with it. The exports from the district

"are very considerable in value, and the  
 "inhabitants contribute largely to the  
 "revenue; and the Council is of opinion  
 "that Telegraphic Communication would  
 "tend to their advantage and that of the  
 "Colony at large.

"9. That the Council considers that  
 "the financial position of the Colony, if  
 "relieved of a portion of the deficit in  
 "the manner proposed, is such as to  
 "warrant the works which have been  
 "indicated being at once proceeded with;  
 "and looking to the fact that the 1878  
 "Loan for £200,000 is now quoted in  
 "the London money market at from 103  
 "to 105, the Council cannot but think  
 "that a further Loan might be  
 "raised on terms advantageous to the  
 "Colony.

"10. Whilst unwilling to impose any  
 "extra taxation for the purpose of paying  
 "off the deficit by means of any yearly  
 "surplus revenue, the Council is willing  
 "to give its support to a Stamp Duty  
 "Bill, if brought forward concurrently  
 "with a Bill to raise a Loan for  
 "Public Works, and it is anticipated  
 "that an additional revenue of between  
 "£4,000 and £5,000 would be produced  
 "by the enactment of such a mea-  
 "sure.

"11. Be it resolved That an Humble  
 "Address be presented to His Excellency  
 "the Governor, requesting that he will  
 "take these resolutions into his attentive  
 "consideration, and that he will intro-  
 "duce a Bill to raise a Loan for  
 "£310,000, to be appropriated in the  
 "manner following:—

"Eastern Railway exten-	
"sion ... ..	£220,000
"Overland Telegraph Line	
"to Roebourne ...	40,000
"Eucla Telegraph Line ...	50,000

"Or in the event of His Excellency  
 "deeming himself precluded from intro-  
 "ducing such a Bill, that he will take  
 "the earliest opportunity of obtaining  
 "the sanction of the Secretary of State  
 "to its introduction, and should such  
 "sanction be given, that he will be  
 "pleased to call a Special Session of the  
 "Legislature for the purpose of consider-  
 "ing a Bill to raise a Loan for the pur-  
 "poses before mentioned."

"Financial Statement to be attached to the Resolutions of the  
"Legislative Council, with reference to the introduction of  
"a Bill to raise a Loan for proposed Public Works:—

	£	s.	d.
"Total Indebtedness, exclusive of "Loans, on December 31st, 1879 ...	79837	18	4
"Liabilities paid off since January "1st, 1880... ..	12236	0	0
	67661	18	4
"Surplus Revenue at end of 1880 ...	10000	0	0
	57661	18	4
"Proposed to be raised by Loan "for Eucla Telegraph Line ...	50000	0	0
"Total Indebtedness, exclusive "of Loans, on December 31st, "1880 ... ..	7661	18	4
"Estimated Expenditure "for 1881... ..	£16839	13	10
"Interest on proposed "Loans at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. ...	13950	0	0
	18234	13	10
"Total estimated Expenditure for "1881 ... ..	190506	12	2
"Estimated Revenue for 1881 ...	192154	0	0
"Balance to Credit December "31st, 1881 ... ..	£1647	7	10
<b>"PROPOSED LOANS:</b>			
	£	s.	d.
"Eastern Railway extension ...	220000	0	0
"Overland Telegraph Line to "Roebourne ... ..	40000	0	0
"Eucla Telegraph Line ... ..	50000	0	0
"Interest at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., £13950 ...	£310000	0	0

MR. STEERE said it would be scarcely necessary for him to offer any comments upon these resolutions, as they spoke for themselves, and the House had an ample opportunity of considering them, since they were in print. It would be in the recollection of hon. members that His Excellency the Governor—in the speech with which he opened the Session,—referring to the financial deficiency suggested that the extinction of the deficit should be effected by annual instalments, extending over three years, His Excellency calculating that by this means the whole of the deficiency would be cleared off about the end of 1883, when the Colony would be free to incur the liability of another loan for the prosecution of public works, and that in the meantime no effort should be made in that direction. That was a policy which he did not think would find many adherents in that House. He believed, however, that His Excellency conceived that, under the existing circumstances of the Colony, he was precluded from initiating any measure for the immediate prosecution of public works by means of another loan—that, in fact, he was under an obligation not to do so. No such obligation, however, rested upon the mem-

bers of that House, and it would be for the Legislature to consider and determine whether the scheme sketched out by His Excellency was that which, in the interests of the country at large, that House should adopt. He thought the majority of hon. members would agree with him that it would be most injurious to the Colony, as affecting its future progress, if they acted upon His Excellency's suggestion, and be content with a do-nothing policy for the next three years. As he had said on a former occasion, the Colony could not stand still all that time; and as there was no possibility of its going forward, if they adopted this *laissez faire* policy, the conclusion was forced upon them that it must retrograde. Hon. members were aware that he had always been of opinion that our present financial embarrassments were traceable in the first instance to our having undertaken the construction of the Eucla telegraph out of the current revenue instead of by means of a loan. The estimated cost of that undertaking was £32,000, but its construction involved the Colony in an expenditure of no less than £50,000, and this large outlay tended in a great measure to bring about our present financial difficulties—as, indeed, was predicted by many, at the time, that it would. It would be observed on reference to the resolutions now before the Committee that it was proposed to retrieve this error, by including in the contemplated loan a sum sufficient to recoup the ordinary revenue for the cost of this line—a course which he believed was in accordance with sound financial principles. He could not think for an instant that the Secretary of State would offer any objection to our adopting this course, for it was in consonance with the policy which had been adopted he might say in every country in the world, namely, that the cost of the construction of their telegraphs should be defrayed out of a public loan, and not be made a charge upon the general revenue. He had looked through the parliamentary records of the other Australian Colonies, and of other countries, and in none had he found that a work of such comparative magnitude as this line was to this Colony had ever been undertaken out of current revenue. He therefore thought we were perfectly justified in retrieving our posi-

tion, and in remedying what was now admitted to have been an economic mistake, by including in the proposed loan a sum sufficient to recoup the revenue for the drain made upon it by this undertaking. Doubt had been expressed as to whether there would, at the end of the current year, be a surplus revenue of £10,000 as was estimated in the financial statement attached to the resolutions before the Committee; but he saw no reason himself to apprehend that this estimate would not be realised. He had gone very carefully into the receipts for the first six months of the year, and, basing the receipts for the next six months upon the revenue derived during the corresponding period last year, and adding thereto the increase which might be expected consequent upon the additional taxation imposed last Session, he thought there was every reason to believe that their anticipations as to the amount of surplus revenue at the end of the present year would be realised. It must be borne in mind that the Customs receipts during the latter part of the year would be largely augmented by the arrival of the wool ships and the tea ships, and that this year there was reason to believe that the revenue derived from these sources would be very considerable indeed. As for the other objects for which it was proposed to raise a loan, he need not trespass upon the time of the Committee at this stage in discussing them. He thought they were all convinced that the extension of the railway from Guildford Eastward might be regarded as a work of necessity and one which it would be expedient, in the best interests of the Colony, to carry out as soon as possible, if they were going to derive those advantages from railway communication which the country had a right to expect, and which alone justified the commencement of the work. He did not think there would be any difference of opinion on that point. Possibly there might not be the same unanimity of opinion with reference to the other undertaking contemplated—the extension of telegraphic communication to the North-West District; but he did not think there would be such a difference of opinion as to the expediency and desirability of undertaking this work as would prevent its being carried out. He need not dilate upon the isolated position

or upon the growing importance of our North-West District, more especially when viewed in connection with the early settlement of the magnificent country recently discovered by Mr. Forrest in that direction. Nor did he think he need say any more in commending the resolutions to the consideration of the House, beyond expressing a hope that, when forwarded for the approval of the Secretary of State, they would go home with the full weight which would attach to a unanimous expression of the hopes and the desires of the representatives of the people of the Colony, in parliament assembled.

Mr. RANDELL said he did not know that it was his intention altogether to oppose the adoption of the resolutions before the Committee, but he should like to offer a few remarks upon the statements which they embodied, and upon the observations that had fallen from the hon. member who introduced them. If he were to go into the whole matter fully, he thought he should be obliged to traverse almost every statement which the hon. member had put forward, with reference to the Colony's finances. The resolutions contemplated the undertaking of two very important works of public utility—he admitted their importance, at once; and the hon. member had also set before the Committee a scheme for funding the deficit. He would not say much with reference to the latter, beyond stating that he was still of opinion that it was a right and proper thing, under all the circumstances in which the Colony then stood, that the construction of the Eucla telegraph line should have been undertaken and paid for, as it had been, out of current revenue; and that had it not been for the expenditure of the other large sums of money authorised by that House (without at the same time making any provision for meeting such expenditure), the country would never have felt the pressure of the Eucla telegraph expenditure. He did not concur with the hon. member that the scheme now put forward to recoup the revenue for the cost of that undertaking was based upon "sound financial principles;" nor was he in accord with the hon. member when he stated that in no other country in the world had the same course been followed as had been adopted by this Colony

with reference to the construction of its line of telegraph. When the hon. member said that he believed no country in the world had undertaken the construction of its telegraphs except by means of borrowed capital, the hon. member surely did not intend to include England in that category. [Mr. STEERE: Certainly, I do.] The telegraphs in England had not been constructed by the Government at all, but by private companies. As to other countries, he was not in a position to dispute the hon. member's statement, nor did he regard it of much importance, for what we had to look to was the peculiar circumstances of our own country. And, regard being had to all those circumstances—with a surplus of £26,000 lying idle in the chest and available for expenditure, and bearing in mind the desire felt and expressed for bringing the Colony into telegraphic communication with its sisters and with the outside world—under all these circumstances, he did contend that the construction of this line out of general revenue had been a right and proper thing to do. The hon. member, in putting forward his financial scheme for the approval of the Committee, had made no reference to the condition of the Colony already, as regards its indebtedness. Our present debts amounted, he believed, to £361,000, being at the rate of about £13 per head of the entire population; while our taxation already was something very near £6 per head, which, compared with the burden of taxation in other countries, was rather heavy. He thought there was scarcely a single colony in the Australasian group that was more heavily taxed, proportionately with the number of the population, than this Colony, excepting New Zealand, to which he would have occasion to refer before closing his remarks. As to the proposal to establish telegraph communication with Roebourne—although he should like to see it carried out as much as any member in that House—he did think that, regard being had to our present financial embarrassment, we were not in a position to undertake such a work. Bearing in mind that we were carrying on our present postal and telegraphic services at an annual loss to the revenue of about £20,000, he certainly did not think the House would be justified in increasing

that charge, by undertaking, at an expenditure of £40,000, the construction of a line of telegraph the revenue from which, he really believed, would not more than cover the expense of one officer connected with the department. With respect to the proposal to extend the railway from Guildford to York, the hon. member had put down the cost of this extension at £220,000, that being (in round numbers) the estimate furnished by the Commissioner of Railways. He would remind the House that they had a line already in course of construction between Fremantle and Guildford, which was estimated to cost £123,000, to which might be added £2,000, expected to accrue from sale of surplus land,—making a total of £125,000. Already there was spent, or apportioned,—including the whole amount of contract, permanent way, material, rolling stock, stations, and workshop,—£131,000, leaving yet to be provided goods sheds, crossings, sidings, semaphores, and numerous other necessary appliances, without counting cost of labor, etc., in the workshop, and which, from the calculation he had made, would bring the total cost up to not less than £140,000, before the line was completed. He also understood that the indent for the rolling stock was £29,000, whereas the provision made in the Commissioner's estimate was only £20,000. Here, then, was another sum of not less than £9,000 to be added to the cost of the line, which, as he had already said, would swell the total cost, before it was completed, to at least £149,000,—showing an excess of about 12½ per cent. on the estimate. These figures, he thought, ought to make them look very carefully into the figures put forward by the same authority as his estimate of the cost of extending the line to York. The amount estimated—and accepted by the hon. member who had framed the resolutions before the Committee—was £217,000, or, in round numbers, £220,000, which, with an extra 12½ per cent. (the proportion of the increase in the first section) would make the probable cost of the extension of the line about £240,000. Judging from their past experience in railway construction—not to mention our "Great Northern Railway" which he really believed would cost very nearly double that what it was estimated to cost—he

did not think these figures would be found any way beyond, but rather within the mark. He might observe, in passing, that he noticed that a sum of £7000 had been set down on the Estimates as the anticipated revenue for next year from the Northern Railway and the first section of the Eastern Railway. He had little or no hesitation in saying that this estimate was fully £2000 beyond what would be realised—judging from past receipts on the Geraldton line and what he felt sure would be the receipts on the Perth and Fremantle line. So much for the railway project. As to the estimate of the cost of extending telegraph communication to Roebourne (set down at £40,000), he would merely remind the House that the estimate for the Eucla line was £32,000 and the actual cost £50,000,—being an increase of fifty per cent. on the estimate. Applying the same scale to the proposed extension to the North-West District, the probable cost would be £60,000. This would give the cost of the two contemplated undertakings as £300,000, to say nothing of recouping the revenue the cost of the Eucla line—another £50,000. Looking at the probability that the loan would be floated at something considerably below par—at a sacrifice perhaps of not less than £11,000—and bearing in mind that provision would have to be made for a sinking fund (which seemed to have been overlooked in the resolutions before the Committee), he thought he was not far out when he stated that, if these works were undertaken, we should require to raise not less than £400,000. If they raised less, the ordinary revenue would be constantly encroached upon to supplement the charges in connection with these works,—if undertaken at all. Accepting his conclusions as correct, there would be a sum of about £43,000 to be provided annually in the shape of a sinking fund and interest on the borrowed capital. This £43,000 represented a sum of about £1 10s. per head of the population, which, added to the present amount of our taxation per head (£6), would be equal to £7 10s. per head, calculated upon the entire population,—which would be very considerably higher than the rate per head in any of the other Australian Colonies. Our public debt would then amount to about

£27 per head of the population. It was now £13 per head, and if we borrowed another £400,000 (as he contended we would have to do, if we were going to carry out the proposed undertakings), there would be £14 per head more. In Tasmania, he observed, the public debt per head of the population was £15 16s. 2d.; New South Wales, £16 16s. 11d.; Victoria, £19 7s. 11d.; South Australia, £21 8s. 5d.; Queensland, £42 8s. 11d.; and New Zealand, £62 13s. 8d. It would thus be seen that if we raised this loan, our indebtedness per head would be considerably in excess of the colonies of Tasmania, New South Wales, Victoria, or South Australia. It was true that Queensland, and still more so New Zealand, showed a much larger proportion of indebtedness, but we must not lose sight of the fact that those colonies, and especially the latter, possessed splendid resources, compactly situated. He was quite willing to admit that this Colony also had many resources, as yet undeveloped; but it was a notorious fact that the areas of good land in Western Australia were isolated, dotted here and there, and not in compact areas as in the other colonies—which rendered it extremely problematical whether railways connecting these isolated patches would prove remunerative, or could be regarded as reproductive works. Before quitting the subject of the financial position of New Zealand—a position calculated to exercise a sobering influence on the mind of the politicians of any Colony bent upon the contraction of public debts—he would trespass on the patience of the House for a few seconds while he read from the *Australasian* newspaper an extract from an exhaustive article dealing with the question of New Zealand and its obligations: “The case of that Colony,” the *Australasian* said, “is a peculiar one. It “entered some years ago upon a policy “of the most venturous character, and “the issue is still an uncertain one. The “policy in question possessed the fatal “characteristic that its advantages were “felt at the outset in the form of freely- “circulating capital and general stimulus, “while the disadvantages assumed the “shape of serious and cumulative diffi- “culties that would slowly but inevitably “accrue in the future. The first stage

"of glorious borrowing and spending,"  
 "has been satisfactorily got through,"  
 "and it was very pleasant while it"  
 "lasted.

"That time is past,  
 "And all its dizzy raptures."

"The present stage is the more tamely  
 "practical one of utilising these public  
 "works constructed with borrowed capi-  
 "tal, and trying how they will pay, and  
 "in the meantime of remitting the  
 "interest on the borrowed capital punc-  
 "tually to England. The experiment of  
 "carrying on public works with money  
 "raised by loans has been tested in New  
 "Zealand almost to its utmost extent,  
 "and therefore the working of the experi-  
 "ment is of great interest to the other  
 "colonies. But we have a higher motive  
 "than mere scientific curiosity in dwell-  
 "ing on the case of New Zealand.  
 "Many patriotic men in that Colony  
 "have sought, without reference to party  
 "objects, to urge the considerations  
 "of prudence and moderation on the  
 "attention of the public in dealing with  
 "its financial policy. And the opinions  
 "of those in other colonies who have  
 "given interested attention to the case of  
 "New Zealand, opinions formed without  
 "partiality or prejudice, cannot be alto-  
 "gether without effect in strengthening  
 "the hands of what we may call the  
 "party of prudent caution.

"We have before us a carefully-  
 "compiled statement of the taxation and  
 "indebtedness of New Zealand, which  
 "puts the matter in a very succinct and  
 "lucid form. The figures convey nothing  
 "new, but they tell the well-known facts  
 "in a very impressive way. We are  
 "reminded by this paper that the revenue  
 "proposed to be raised during the current  
 "year amounts to £3,564,600, or a rate  
 "of £5 1s. 8d. per head of the population.  
 "Add to this the taxes levied by local  
 "bodies, and we have a total of £6 8s.  
 "1d. per head. The United Kingdom is  
 "regarded as rather a heavily-taxed  
 "country, but there the public and local  
 "taxation amounts only to £2 18s. 11d.  
 "per head. The public taxation of  
 "Canada is only £1 2s. 2d. per head; of  
 "the United States, £1 12s. 10d.; of  
 "New South Wales, the most lightly  
 "taxed of the Australian Colonies, £1  
 "18s. 7d. per head; of Queensland, the  
 "highest of the Colonies, £3 7s.

"1d.; while in New Zealand it stands  
 "at £5 1s. 8d. per head. The bad pre-  
 "eminence which the Colony holds in  
 "the matter of taxation it also possesses  
 "in regard to its public debt. This was  
 "stated by the Colonial Treasurer the  
 "other day at £27,113,304, a sum which  
 "amounts to £62 13s. 8d. per head of  
 "the population. The annual charge  
 "entailed by the debt for interest and  
 "sinking fund is £1,516,176 or £3 10s.  
 "1d. per head of the population. These  
 "figures bring us face to face with a very  
 "serious position indeed. It is only  
 "when we compare the indebtedness of  
 "New Zealand with that of other  
 "countries that we fully realise its  
 "oppressive character. In Canada the  
 "debt is only £7 15s. per head; in the  
 "United States, where it exists as a  
 "legacy from the great civil war, it  
 "amounts to £11 8s. 6d. In the United  
 "Kingdom, where the national debt  
 "represents the outcome of many long,  
 "and cruel, and exhausting wars, it  
 "stands at £23 4s. per head." He had  
 "placed these facts and figures before the  
 "House because he considered it to be his  
 "duty to do so, in view of the proposals  
 "now before the Committee. He was not  
 "afraid of the debt at present incurred by  
 "the Colony, but before he could consent  
 "to increase that burden two-fold, he  
 "certainly would like to be afforded some  
 "indication of the country being able to  
 "bear it. They had heard nothing upon  
 "that point from the hon. member  
 "who had brought forward these resolu-  
 "tions. It was all very well to rush  
 "headlong into debt as New Zealand had  
 "done. So long as the borrowed money  
 "lasted all went merrily. But sooner or  
 "later the day of reckoning must come,  
 "when, like New Zealand, we would be  
 "brought face to face with financial em-  
 "barrassments compared with which our  
 "present difficulties were a mere trifle.  
 "Another thing which should not be lost  
 "sight of with reference to these loans  
 "was the fact that the money wrung from  
 "the taxpayers of the Colony to provide  
 "for the interest and sinking fund upon  
 "the capital all went out of the country.  
 "Not a penny of it was raised in  
 "the Colony. They all knew the na-  
 "tional debt of the Mother country was  
 "a very heavy debt, but it had this  
 "advantage over any debt incurred by

this Colony—the amounts paid in respect of interest and the sinking fund were mostly spent in the country, being borrowed from her own citizens, whereas in our own case all this went out of the Colony; and not only that, but the bulk of the borrowed capital itself found its way to the pockets of others, having to be paid for engines, rails, machinery, &c.,—and even the provisions for the men and horses engaged in the execution of the works, which were imported from the other colonies. These facts were indisputable, and he earnestly commended them to the serious consideration of the Committee.

MR. STEERE said the hon. member was in error in stating that he had overlooked the necessity for making provision for a sinking fund. He had overlooked nothing of the kind. The hon. member was probably not aware that there was no necessity for making any such provision for some years to come. The Secretary of State in a despatch addressed to Governor Ord, relating to the last loan raised by the Colony, recommended that in this respect we should follow the course adopted in analogous cases in other colonies, and begin the contribution to the sinking fund five years after the first issue of debentures. Surely, by that time, the Colony would be in a position to make this provision as regards the loan now proposed, when the works to which the chief part of the money is to be devoted will have been completed. And, if the anticipated earnings on the railway should happily be realised (as he believed they would), the revenue would receive seasonable relief from that quarter at the time when it would be most required for the purpose of commencing the repayment of the debt. As to the relative amount of taxation per head in the various colonies, he should very much like to know where the hon. member obtained his figures from. According to his (Mr. Steere's) idea, the taxation per head here did not amount to one-half what the hon. member said it did. The hon. member must have taken for his guide the total annual revenue of the Colony (say £180,000) and divided it by the number of the population (say 30,000), and thus arrived

at his conclusion that we were taxed at the rate of £6 per head. Surely that was not the way in which the amount of a country's taxation was to be arrived at. It could not be said that the rents which people paid for land, or licenses, constituted part of a country's taxation. The only taxation here, properly so designated, was taxation through the Customs; and, basing the amount per head of the population upon that, it would be found that our taxation was nothing like £6 per head. [MR. MARMION: About £2 10s.] As to the indebtedness of the colonies, the hon. member was about correct with regard to New Zealand, but he thought he had under-estimated the rate in Queensland, which he (Mr. Steere) calculated at £50 per head—or about double what ours would be, if we raised the loan now proposed. He considered the Colony was quite capable to undertake this additional burden, and that it could be done without having recourse to any increase of taxation at all. The hon. member said it was probable the loan would have to be floated at considerably below par, thus entailing a heavy loss; but by the mail which arrived from England that very day, they were told that the West Australian Four and a Half per Cent. Loan was quoted at 105. As to the conclusion which the hon. member had arrived at with reference to the probable cost of the railway extension, he thought the House should be guided rather by the figures placed before it by the responsible head of the department, than by those which any hon. member evolved out of his own imagination. Although he did not mean to say that the official estimate would not be exceeded—he thought very probably it would—still he would be sorry to accept the hon. member's figures as correct. The hon. member said he (Mr. Steere) could not have intended to refer to England when he stated that in no other country but this had telegraphs been constructed other than by means of borrowed capital. So far from his not having intended to refer to England, he had that country particularly in view when he made the statement. The telegraph lines in the Mother country were originally constructed by private companies out of capital subscribed by the public, and were afterwards pur-



chased by the Government with money raised by loan for that purpose.

The resolutions were then adopted without opposition.

#### AUDIT BILL: MEMORIAL TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

MR. STEERE moved, That the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole Council to take into consideration the Notice of Motion standing in his name, "That a Memorial be addressed by this Council to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, praying that he will not advise Her Majesty to withhold her assent to the Audit Bill lately passed by this House."

Agreed to.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

MR. STEERE moved the adoption of the following Memorial:

*"To the Right Honorable The Earl of Kimberley, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies."*

"THE MEMORIAL OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, HUMBLY SHEWETH:

"1. A Bill intituled 'An Act to regulate the Receipt, Custody, and Issue of the Public Moneys, and to provide for the Audit of the Public Accounts,' has been passed during the present Session of the Legislature. To this Bill, which Your Lordship's Memorialists consider a most important and greatly needed measure, His Excellency the Governor has by Message signified his intention to withhold his assent.

"2. Your Memorialists are therefore under the necessity of directly addressing Your Lordship on the subject, and of submitting the circumstances which have led to the introduction of this Bill for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, confident that Your Lordship will arrive at the conclusion that the action taken by the Legislature of this Colony has not been without cause, and will endeavor, so far as may be possible, to meet Your Memorialists' views, expressed as they are in all sincerity and earnestness.

"3. When the present Constitution was granted to Western Australia, the main object sought to be attained was, that the people through their represen-

tatives should have a voice in legislation, and should control the expenditure of the public revenue. That the Imperial Government intended this control of the Legislature over the public purse to be real and not merely nominal, Your Lordship's Memorialists implicitly believe. The contrary, however, has been actually the case. Successive Administrations have spent whatever they considered advisable, totally regardless of the question whether such expenditure was legally authorised or not. During the past ten years, over one hundred and sixty thousand pounds (£160,000) have been so spent, and the position of perfect independence in regard to all control of the Council over their expenditure which the Government have invariably assumed, has been mainly the cause of that feeling in favor of Responsible Government, which, at times, during the last few years, has been wide spread in the Colony.

"4. His Excellency the Governor in his Message to the House (numbered 22) points out that for this illegal action the Council is partly to blame, in consequence of Resolutions which it has frequently passed, authorising expenditure for which no provision has been made in the Estimates. In so far as this has been the case, the Council cannot of course complain, but a glance at the Excess Bills will show that by far the larger part of the expenditure they specify has received no such indirect sanction.

"5. In paragraph seven of the Message, His Excellency states that the direct responsibility of the Governor to the Secretary of State gives the country as full and ample security for the proper and economical expenditure of public money as would be provided by the Audit Bill from which he considers it his duty to withhold his assent. In regard to this expression of opinion, Your Lordship's memorialists are perfectly ready to allow that there has been but little positive extravagance on the part of the successive Administrations which have governed this Colony during the period in question, and that these Administrations in their expenditure of the public funds have been actuated by a sincere desire to promote the public good. But the Legislature has to

"complain, that, while recognising responsibility to the Secretary of State, the Government altogether ignore their responsibility to the Council, and spend whatever they consider desirable without reference to its votes, leaving to the Legislature nothing more than the mere empty formality of passing large Excess Bills. It was in the hope that, by means of an Audit Act, the theoretical responsibility of the Government to the Council in regard to expenditure might be practically enforced, Your Lordship's memorialists introduced the measure.

"6. The passing of the Bill was strenuously opposed by the Government, and, as Your Lordship will see from a perusal of the Governor's Message, chiefly upon the following grounds:—

"I. That the two first clauses are contrary to the Colonial Office Regulation which, in Colonies such as this, provides that the Imperial Government shall retain the control of all public officers.

"II. That the third clause is virtually opposed to the Royal Instructions, which authorise the Governor to nominate such officers as he may think proper to be members of the Executive or Legislative Councils.

"III. That it is questionable whether the Treasury and Audit Office Regulations contained in the remaining clauses are an improvement upon those already in force.

"7. In regard to the first of these objections, it must be remembered that the audit provided for in the measure which Your Lordship's memorialists have passed, is supposed to be carried out not so much for the satisfaction of the Government, which spends, as of the Council whose money is spent. Obviously, therefore, the Auditor General should not be the mere servant of the Government which he has been hitherto. Your memorialists do not anticipate that any Governor would be guilty of such a 'grave irregularity' as to tamper with the Auditor General, and interfere with him in the proper exercise of his functions. They are also aware that the Auditor General, even without the provisions contained in the first and second clauses of the Bill, is—so long as he does not exceed his duty—sufficiently secured and protected

against any arbitrary action. But, admitting that his actual security is complete, his sense of that security might, and doubtless would, be imperfect. His duty to the Legislature in carrying out the provisions of the Bill might frequently call for action on his part displeasing to the Government he served, and which therefore, in his present position, he might hesitate to take. There can be no question, on the other hand, that placed in the independent position which the two first clauses of the Bill are designed to secure, a more thoroughly fearless, and, therefore, more effectual performance of his duties would be the result. Your Lordship's Memorialists would in regard to these clauses respectfully submit that the Colonial Office Regulation to which the principle they involve is declared to be opposed, has not been rigorously and in all cases enforced, as it appears that, in Barbados, a Colony falling under the same category as Western Australia, the Chief Fiscal Officer is elected annually by the Legislature. The concession for which Your Memorialists pray is much more restricted, and they confidently anticipate that what has been granted in the case of Barbados will not be withheld by Your Lordship in their own.

"8. The second objection to the Bill, —that its third clause is opposed to the Royal Instructions in regard to the appointment of members of the Executive and Legislative Councils,—does not, to Your Lordship's memorialists, assume a very serious aspect.

"9. To the third objection—that the Treasury and Audit Office Regulations which the measure contains, are not necessarily an improvement upon those already in force,—Your Lordship's memorialists would reply, that the regulations they have embodied in the Audit Bill would undoubtedly, if properly carried out, cause the public accounts of the Colony to be kept in a regular and intelligible manner, would enable the Government and the Legislature at any time to ascertain their exact financial position, and provide the House with correct and easily accessible information of a kind which now members can only tardily and with much labor obtain. The regulations at present in

"force, however perfect they may be, have produced most imperfect results, and the difficulty which the late and the present Administrations have experienced in arriving at the exact financial position of the Colony points irresistibly to one of two conclusions,—either that the system of keeping and auditing the public accounts is extremely defective, or, on the other hand, that this system, though a good one, has been very badly carried out. Of the two conclusions, your memorialists prefer to adopt the first.

"10. Believing, as Your Lordship's memorialists do, that an Act to regulate the auditing and keeping of the public accounts is urgently required, and that the measure which they have introduced will tend to allay that discontent and irritation which has been mainly caused by the unwillingness of successive Governments to recognise in a practical shape their responsibility to the Legislature in regard to the expenditure of public money,—your memorialists would earnestly pray that, in the event of the Bill being re-introduced during the next Session of their Council, Your Lordship will be pleased to direct that His Excellency the Governor should not again withhold from it the Royal Assent.

"And your memorialists will ever pray, &c."

#### POINT OF ORDER.

MR. RANDELL rose to a Point of Order. He wished to ascertain the Chairman's ruling as to whether the memorial, which had only been placed in the hands of hon. members five minutes previously, was in accordance with the terms of the Notice of Motion, as it appeared on the Notice Paper? The notice was "for the adoption of an address to the Secretary of State praying that he will not advise Her Majesty to withhold her assent to the Audit Bill"—whereas, in reality, the Bill in question had already been vetoed by His Excellency the Governor.

MR. STONE also stated that it appeared to him the prayer of the memorial was entirely different to the terms of the Notice of Motion standing in the hon. member's name. The memorial asked that, in the event of the Bill being re-

introduced next Session, the Secretary of State would advise the Governor not to veto it, whereas the Notice of Motion given by the hon. member was that "an address be presented by this Council to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, praying that he will not advise Her Majesty to withhold her assent to the Audit Bill lately passed by this House"—a totally different object to that of the prayer of the memorial. He thought it was unfair that an important question like this should be sprung upon the House in this sudden way. He could quite understand that the hon. member for Swan should be anxious to extricate himself from the position that he had been placed in, consequent upon his having given this notice within a quarter of an hour of the House receiving His Excellency's Message vetoing the Bill,—which it was supposed by the hon. member would have been reserved for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure thereon. But surely it was due to the House that a proper notice should be given of what was the real intention of the hon. member in this matter.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) suggested that the wording of the Notice of Motion might be amended, in order to bring it more in harmony with the prayer of the memorial.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES said there was no occasion to amend the notice. He did not like having to rule in this matter, for, as members knew, he felt great personal interest in the question; at the same time he must say he thought hon. members who had raised the Point of Order were catching at a straw. So far as he had read of the practice in the House of Commons, it was always considered advisable that a Notice of Motion should be given in terms as near as possible indicative of the resolution to follow. This notice was, in his opinion, sufficiently so to place the hon. member in order in moving his resolution.

MR. SHENTON thought it would be as well to refer the point to His Honor the Speaker.

MR. RANDELL did not profess to have any great acquaintance with the practice of the House of Commons, but he had an impression on his mind that

they were very jealous that a Notice of Motion should be exactly in accordance with the resolution to which it referred. He did not intend to dispute the ruling of the Chairman of Committees, but it did seem to him that the memorial now before the House was quite a different thing altogether to the Notice of Motion. As he had already said, the memorial had only been placed in the hands of hon. members five minutes before the House met, and how was it possible for any member, within that time, to arrive at any clear and definite understanding of a series of resolutions nearly a yard in length? The course adopted was one that ought to be jealously watched by the House, for it might happen some time that a vague and indefinite motion of this kind might be turned to an advantage which the Council would not like.

MR. BROWN maintained that, in effect, the Notice of Motion was the same as the memorial. Notice was given merely that the House would be asked to adopt a memorial, the object of which was to solicit the intervention and the support of the Secretary of State with regard to the Audit Bill; and that was all the memorial sought to do. As to springing any resolutions upon the House, every hon. member must have been aware that some such resolutions as these, embodying the reasons for passing the Audit Bill, would be submitted to the Secretary of State, in the event of the Bill not becoming law this Session. There was nothing in the memorial that had not already been discussed in the House.

MR. MARMION contended that the memorial was by no means in accord with the Notice of Motion, and he defied the hon. member for the Swan or any of its supporters to prove that it was. The fact of the matter was, when the hon. member gave this notice he was impressed, like many other hon. members, with the idea that the Governor, instead of vetoing the Bill, would have merely withheld his assent and reserved it for the opinion of the Secretary of State; and the terms of the notice were in accordance with that impression. But, a few minutes after the notice was given, a Message was received from His Excellency the Governor informing the House,

much to the surprise of the hon. member, that His Excellency had himself vetoed the Bill; and the memorial was based upon that message, and not upon the impression that was on the hon. member's mind when he gave his Notice of Motion. He thought it was due to the House at any rate that the wording of the motion should be now altered, so as to bring it into harmony with the prayer of the memorial.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES said it was not competent for the hon. member to alter the notice now. The notice was not the substantive motion, but a mere intimation that he would move the adoption of a substantive motion.

MR. MARMION believed he was right in saying that it was a very common practice, with the leave of the House, to alter a Notice of Motion, and he thought, in this instance, the House was entitled to that much consideration.

MR. BROWN thought it was exceedingly undesirable for the Committee to continue a discussion upon a Point of Order, with respect to which the Chairman had already given his ruling.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES—referring to what had fallen from Mr. Randell, as to the practice in the House of Commons—said he had taken a great deal of interest in reading the debates and watching the proceedings of the Imperial Parliament, and he could assure the hon. member that we were much more orderly in our proceedings than the House of Commons was. A great many irregularities were practised there, that would not be permitted in our own Council. But, from what he had noticed and read, it was usual with members of the House of Commons to make their Notices of Motion as near as possible in accordance with the purport of the resolution which was to follow upon the notice. It appeared to him that the reason why members considered this out of order was simply because they had happened to know that the hon. member for Swan, when he framed his notice, was not aware at the time that the Governor would veto the Bill, but was under the impression that he would reserve it for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure with respect to it. The memorial of which notice had been given

was an appeal for the intervention of the Secretary of State, and the memorial itself was nothing else.

The Point of Order raised was then dropped.

Question put—That the memorial be adopted.

Committee divided as follows—

Ayes ... .. 9

Noes ... .. 7

Majority for ... .. 2

AYES.

Mr. Brown  
Mr. Burt  
Mr. Carey  
Mr. Crowther  
Mr. Grant  
Mr. Hammersley  
Mr. Higham  
Mr. Steere  
Mr. S. H. Parker (Teller.)

NOES.

The Hon. G. W. Leake  
Mr. Burgess  
Mr. Marmion  
Mr. Randall  
Mr. Stone  
Mr. Venn  
Mr. Sheenton (Teller.)

The motion was therefore carried.

Memorial to be reported.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES reported that the Committee had agreed to the memorial.

MR. STEERE moved that the report of the Committee be adopted.

MR. STONE opposed the motion. He said he objected to it because undue prominence had been given altogether by some hon. members to the rejection of the Audit Bill, and he believed that was entirely due to the strong feeling they entertained on the subject of the insertion in the Bill of the first and second clauses, relating to the Auditor being made responsible to the Legislature. He did not think that feeling was shared in by the country. When the country read the message sent down by His Excellency to the House—as constitutional a message as ever was presented to the Legislature—he believed it would adopt, almost unanimously, the views therein expressed. He did not think there was the least occasion to memorialise the Secretary of State on the subject, nor did he think the country would back them up in doing so.

MR. S. H. PARKER thought it was the most extraordinary argument ever adduced in a deliberative assembly, that because an hon. member conceived the idea that the country would not support the views expressed by other hon. members, the report of the Committee should not be adopted, after being carried by a

majority. It was only very recently that members were before their constituents, and he believed most of the candidates then expressed their views on this question, and declared their intention to support this Audit Bill. He thought the assertion that the country was not in accord with the action of its representatives in this matter was without any foundation whatever. If His Excellency the Governor thought otherwise, let him appeal to the country. Nothing would please him (Mr. Parker) better than that members should be sent back to their constituents to see whether they were in favor of their representatives' views on this subject, or of the views of the Government. He believed if that were done, the supporters of the Bill would return to the House with a very much stronger party at their back than they had now.

MR. MARMION did not believe anything of the kind. He did not object to an Audit Bill, so long as it was in harmony with the principles of the constitution. The hon. member for Perth said this question had been before his constituents, and that he had pledged himself to support this Audit Bill.

MR. PARKER: I didn't say anything of the kind—I said "an" Audit Bill.

MR. MARMION: You said "this" Audit Bill; I took down your words.

MR. PARKER: You took them down wrong, then.

MR. MARMION: Your constituents knew nothing about the provisions of the Audit Bill that was to be brought forward any more than you did.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) interposing: I think there is a very wholesome parliamentary rule, that members when discussing a question must address the Chair, and not each other.

MR. MARMION said the House had been told by the hon. member for Perth that he and other members when before their constituents had promised to support this Audit Bill. What he (Mr. Marmion) told his constituents was that he would support "an" Audit Bill; and that promise he was prepared to carry out. When he entered the House, under the present constitution, as the representative of a constituency, and promised to support any measure, that

promise was made in expectation that the measure would be in accordance with the principles of the existing constitution and not of a more advanced form of government. The hon. member had sought to introduce that form of government here, and now sought to introduce an Audit Bill in harmony therewith. And should he (Mr. Marmion) have the honor of occupying a seat in the House, when that more advanced form of government came to be adopted, the hon. member would very probably find him a thick and thin supporter of such an Audit Bill as that recently introduced. But until that time arrived, he was not prepared to give his support to any absurd measure that was altogether and utterly opposed to the spirit of the constitution, in anticipation that the Governor or the Secretary of State would assent to it.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) pointed out that the only question before the House was the adoption of the report of the Committee. He need hardly say he was totally opposed to the principle of the memorial, but under the circumstances, what were they to do? The object of the petitioners was to exercise a perfectly legitimate function—to remonstrate against what they considered to be a grievance, and to appeal to the Secretary of State for redress. He failed to see why the report of the Committee should not be adopted.

MR. RANDELL would support the motion. He hoped for the sake of its supporters that the memorial would be submitted to the Secretary of State, for, when that functionary came to examine it, and saw the puerilities it contained, he would be very much inclined, after reading the statesmanlike message of the Governor, to regard the hon. members who supported the Bill and who supported the memorial, like a lot of whipped boys who had received a good flogging at the hands of their schoolmaster. The Secretary of State's sympathy would probably be evoked to this extent—"Well, well! it's all right, boys, this time; but don't do it again."

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL said he had been in antagonism with the hon. member for Fremantle several times during the present Session, and he must

say, in regard to the hon. member's action with reference to this Audit Bill, that he could not understand it at all. The hon. member seemed to be arguing all along against his own wishes; he was anxious to see an Audit Bill passed, and agreed as to the necessity of passing such a measure, but, at the same time, when a measure was brought forward calculated to remedy the evils complained of, the hon. member opposed it. The hon. member said it was "absurd"—it was "unconstitutional." But who was to be the judge of whether it was unconstitutional? Could they appeal to a higher authority than that which they proposed appealing to—Her Majesty's Secretary of State? There was only one point with regard to which it was possible to say that the Bill was—not unconstitutional, but in opposition to one of the Colonial Office Regulations. They knew that that regulation had been relaxed and departed from in the case of another Colony possessing a similar constitution to our own; and it seemed to him perfectly absurd to say that the same thing could not be done in our own case. He did not mean to assert that it would—he didn't much care whether it would or not. But he thought it was worth while trying for it. It appeared to him that their main object all through had been to put a stop to unauthorised, and consequently illegal, expenditure, which in a great measure had caused that feeling in favor of Responsible Government which obtained in some quarters. He had heard some of the strongest advocates of that form of Government say that, if the Legislature, under the existing constitution, could only place some check and exercise some control over unauthorised expenditure, they would not wish to see a change in the constitution, at present. The hon. member Mr. Randell said the Secretary of State would send them about their business like so many whipped boys: but he would have liked the hon. member to have seen certain despatches which had come under the notice of some hon. members, emanating from the Secretary of State to a Governor of another Colony. The Secretary of State said that so long as colonial Legislatures did not complain to him of their grievances, he did not interfere, because

he presumed that, while they refrained from doing so, they did not altogether object to the action of the Government; but when a Legislature did bring under his notice the fact that the acts of the Government were not in consonance with the wishes of the representative assembly, and that money had been spent without legal authority, he felt bound to direct the Governor that he was not justified in issuing his warrant for the payment of a single penny that was not authorised by the Legislature. And that, he believed, would be the result of the present memorial.

MR. BURT conceived that the object which the supporters of the memorial had in view was to appeal to the highest authority available, on the question of whether the hon. member for Fremantle and those who contended that the Audit Bill was unconstitutional, was right; or, on the other hand, whether the opinion of the majority was correct. Were they (the majority) to sit down quietly, and not say a word, simply because the Governor had felt it his duty to veto the Bill? Were they to sit down, like a lot of craven-hearted cowards, and let the Bill go by the board, without moving a finger to save it—simply because it was believed by some hon. members to be unconstitutional? If the Bill was unconstitutional now, they must make it constitutional—that's all. This Colony would never advance a foot, beyond what it had already done, under the existing constitution, unless they did so. The argument of the hon. member for Fremantle simply amounted to this—that the public money under our present constitution is to be thrown away without check or curb; that so long as we continue under our present form of government we must be content to let the public funds be expended, without any legal authority, but that, when we obtain Responsible Government, the hon. member would be prepared to interpose some check against unauthorised expenditure. Our experience under the existing constitution had demonstrated pretty clearly, he thought, that such a check was now necessary; and what the Audit Bill sought was to provide that check. As to whether the check proposed was constitutional or not—were they to accept the hon. member for Fremantle's opinion on

that point, or appeal to Her Majesty's Secretary of State? That was the question. He, for one, with all due deference to the claims of the hon. member to be regarded as an authority upon constitutional questions, felt inclined to go to the Secretary of State. It might turn out that the hon. member's judgment on this point was perfectly correct; but, in the opinion of the majority, who thought otherwise, it was considered advisable to support the position they had taken up by forwarding this memorial to the home authorities. The language in which the memorial itself was couched was moderate and respectful, and in no way objectionable. It had been said that the Audit Bill was a measure which the country, if appealed to, would not approve; but so far as he was concerned, all he could say was that he informed his constituents that he would support such a Bill. No one who had taken the trouble of looking up the Audit Bills in force in other countries, but must have known that the main principle of the Bill would be that embodied in the two first clauses; and no one who referred to the subject when before his constituents, and promised to support the Bill, could have been ignorant that its main provisions would be such as were contained in those clauses. The country was sick of unauthorised expenditure, and quite prepared to endorse the action of its representatives, in endeavoring to interpose some effectual check upon what, during the past few years, had become a crying evil. And when they sought to provide a remedy, and that remedy was rejected as one that was not suitable to the constitution of the patient, were they to sit down quietly, and let the disease go unchecked and destroy the whole system, without resorting to any further measures, or consulting another and a higher authority. He concluded not. No one could say that the promoters and the supporters of this Bill were not animated by an honest desire to serve the best interests of the country. And who did the country belong to? Did it belong to the Governor for the time being, or to the people who lived in it, and who had made it what it is? He apprehended it belonged to the people. And what were the representatives of the people sent to that House for, but to look after their

interests? He could not understand—he would not say the want of patriotism, but something very akin to it—shown by some hon. members. As soon as they saw the Governor or the Secretary of State on the scene, or even at a distance, they were off—they bolted clean off the course. If members could be brought to feel that the country is our own, they could do a great deal more than they were now able to do, and exercise much more real power, even under the existing constitution, than the hon. member for Fremantle and others thought they could do. At any rate, he should have fancied that the endeavour to ascertain what the real power of the House, under the present constitution, was, would have enlisted the sympathy and support of those whose views on the constitutional question were in accord with those of the hon. member for Fremantle. If the object of the supporters of the Bill had been to bring about a change from the present form of Government to that known as Responsible Government, the steps they were now taking would be the very last they would have adopted. As he had said before, the memorial was simply put forward in order to ascertain, by reference to the highest authority, what were the real powers which the present constitution gave us, as regards controlling the expenditure of the public money, in the belief that those powers had never yet been exercised to their full extent, and that there was more good in the existing constitution than people gave it credit for.

Question put—That the report of the Committee be adopted.

The Council divided, with the following result:

Ayes	...	...	10
Noes	...	...	7
			—
Majority for	...		3
<b>AYES.</b>			
Mr. Brown		<b>NOES.</b>	
Mr. Burt		The Hon. G. W. Leake	
Sir T. C. Campbell		Mr. Burges	
Mr. Carey		Mr. Marmion	
Mr. Crowther		Mr. Randell	
Mr. Grant		Mr. Shenton	
Mr. Hamersley		Mr. Venn	
Mr. Higham		Mr. Stone (Teller.)	
Mr. Steere			
Mr. S. H. Parker (Teller.)			

The question was therefore carried.

MR. STEERE moved, "That the Memorial now adopted be transmitted by Mr. Speaker, together with a copy of the Audit Bill, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State; and that a copy of the Memorial be also presented by Mr. Speaker to His Excellency the Governor."

Agreed to.

#### MESSAGE (No. 23): GRANT OF LAND TO COLONEL HARVEST.

MR. SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:

"The Governor has received the Addresses of Your Honorable House, Nos. 28 to 41 inclusive, all of which shall receive due attention.

"The Governor entirely concurs in the opinion of the Legislative Council expressed in Address No. 36, as to the valuable services rendered to this Colony by the Honorable Colonel Harvest as Inspector of Volunteers, and will have much pleasure in submitting your recommendation of a grant of land to that officer to the favorable consideration of the Secretary of State.

"A copy of the letter in which Colonel Harvest acknowledges the Resolution of Council is herewith forwarded for the information of Your Honorable House.

"Government House, Perth, 6th September, 1880."

#### MESSAGE (No. 24): ASSENT TO BILLS.

THE SPEAKER also notified the receipt of the following Message:

"The Governor informs Your Honorable House that he has this day assented, in Her Majesty's name, to the under-mentioned Bills passed by the Legislative Council during the present Session of the Legislature:—

"5. An Act for preventing the introduction of Insects or of Matter destructive to Vegetation.

"6. An Act to amend 'The District Roads Act, 1871' (34 Vic. No. 26).

"7. An Act to amend 'The Jury Act, 1871.'

"8. An Act to amend 'The Scab Act, 1879' (43 Vic. No. 16).

"9. An Act to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the licensing of Public



"Houses, and the sale of fermented and spirituous liquors.

"Government House, Perth, 6th September, 1880."

**ALEXANDER FORREST'S EXPLORING PARTY: MONEY GRANT TO MEMBERS OF.**

**IN COMMITTEE.**

MR. GRANT, in accordance with notice, moved, "That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor praying that he will be pleased to take such steps as may be deemed necessary to recompense, by a money grant, the services of the members of the party that accompanied Mr. A. Forrest on his recent Exploration." The discoveries made by this party would benefit us more than the discoveries made by any previous expedition, and he thought every member of it deserved some recognition of the services they had rendered to the Colony. This had been done in former instances, when the House did not limit its mark of recognition to the leader of the party, but treated the members thereof in the same spirit. The Council had already marked its recognition of the services of the leader of the party whose claims were now under consideration, and he saw no reason at all why the members of the party should be overlooked, seeing, as he had already said, that Western Australia had profited more by the results of this expedition than it had ever done before, and the sufferings of the party were certainly as great as the hardships which any other expedition had endured. Under these circumstances he wished to leave it to the good sense of the House whether their services should be recognised or not.

MR. SHENTON said that, without going into the merits of the case in any way, he thought the motion of the hon. member was hardly in order. The Estimates had been passed, and even the Appropriation Bill had been read a first time, and he did not think the hon. member was quite in order in moving the House to agree to any further expenditure.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES said the hon. member was not out of order in moving the address, but, regard

being had to what the Governor had referred to in his Opening Speech, relating to the imprudence of adopting resolutions authorising the expenditure of sums of money on services for which no provision was made on the Estimates, he (the Chairman) thought it was very undesirable that the practice there condemned should be again resorted to. The hon. member, however, was not out of order.

MR. GRANT said the Governor had told him he would have no objection to the service of the party being recognised, if the House sanctioned it.

MR. RANDELL thought that, though somewhat late in the day to bring forward such a resolution, the House might fairly be asked to express its sympathy with the object in view. Their late action with regard to this matter had given rise to a feeling that the House had not acted altogether justly with respect to these men—that whilst the leader of the party had been recommended to receive a large grant of land in recognition of his services, the men who had served under him and toiled with him should not have their services requited in any way. He regretted the motion had not been made before, but he thought it was one that would commend itself to the good sense of the House, as well as to His Excellency's own sense of fairness and justice.

MR. MARMION pointed out that the motion did not affect the Estimates which had just been passed for the ensuing year. The address contemplated the immediate recognition of these men's services, and the proposition would have his hearty support.

MR. STEERE thought they would be doing very wrong to ask His Excellency to do that which he had blamed the House for doing in the past,—sanctioning items of expenditure not provided for in the Estimates.

MR. BROWN would like to know what amount of money it was proposed to be given to these men. He did not think the matter should be left entirely in the hands of the Governor, thus giving the House a chance of having a shot at His Excellency hereafter, for granting too much or too little. He thought some specific sum should be mentioned for each member of the party.

MR. VENN believed the hon. member who had brought forward the motion was quite prepared to leave the amount to be decided by the House. When the subject was mentioned to the Governor, His Excellency said if the Council adopted a resolution on the subject he would give it his consideration, and he (Mr. Venn) thought His Excellency added, his support.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) said the motion, if affirmed, would place the Governor in a false position. The obvious answer would be an expression of regret that the House had made no provision to enable him to give effect to its wish in the matter, and if His Excellency did so, the inevitable result must be a repetition of the vicious principle which had been so unsparingly condemned in connection with the Northern Railway and its supplementary votes.

MR. CROWTHER said his idea was that the Governor could do just what he liked in this as in other matters. It was evidently the desire of the House that these men should be rewarded, and he had no doubt means would be found to give effect to its wishes. When Mr. John Forrest's expedition returned, it was not the leader of the expedition alone that was rewarded; the second in command received a hundred guineas and the other members of the party got something like fifty guineas each. He thought if the Governor acted towards the members of Mr. Alexander Forrest's party in like manner, the House would be quite satisfied.

MR. S. H. PARKER said if there was one Bill more than another which he detested, it was an Excess Bill, wherein the House was asked to legalise unauthorised expenditure. For years past, they had had to pass these Bills, some of them for very large sums of money, and the Government had told them over and over again that they were the outcome, in a great measure, of resolutions passed by the House involving expenditure not provided for on the Estimates. He believed a great deal of capital had been made out of this practice which was not warranted by facts: nevertheless, no doubt, the practice was a vicious one. He thought he could not use stronger words against the practice

than what had been made use of by the Governor himself at the opening of Council—words of wisdom he might call them: "You are aware," His Excellency said, "that during the last few years the Legislature has authorised, by resolutions, the expenditure of considerable sums on services for which no provision was made in the Estimates. I cannot but think that this practice—imprudent at any time, but doubly so when the public resources are straitened—is to some extent to blame for our [financial] difficulties; and I would strongly urge on you to sanction in the future no items of expenditure but such as are included in the Estimates." He took his stand upon that. He should certainly not lend his sanction to any expenditure not provided for in the Estimates. He regretted extremely that no provision had been made in the Estimates, just passed, for recognising the services of the members of the party whose claims were now under consideration, and which, he believed, were fairly entitled to the favorable consideration of the House; but as no such provision had been made, he felt he was bound to follow the course recommended in this respect by the Governor, and he must decline to lend his support to any resolution asking His Excellency to spend any money for which no provision had been made in the Estimates.

MR. MARMION said if the House was not prepared to affirm the resolution now before it, he should move when the Supplementary Votes for 1880 came to be passed that the money required for recognising the services of these explorers should be provided for among those votes, for, after all, the item was one belonging to the services of the present year rather than of the next. He would suggest that Mr. Fenton Hill, the second in command, should be granted £100, and the other members of the party £50 each. He thought that would be a reasonable amount to give, and he could hardly conceive they would be justified in voting less.

MR. BROWN would vote for the resolution, as it seemed to be the general wish among hon. members that these men should receive a money grant, though he was sure that when the expedition was authorised by the House it

was never contemplated that all the members of the party should be thus rewarded out of the public funds for their services, over and above their pay, and the *kudos* of being associated with the leader of a successful expedition of this kind. Many an arduous expedition had been carried out, in the face of much hardship, by their earlier explorers, their Gregorys, their Austins, and other honored names, and the idea of a monetary recognition of the services rendered had never been suggested, or thought of by the explorers themselves. Those who accompanied them did so without the expectation even of receiving their actual expenses, and also found their own outfit. It was true that since then a precedent had been established by that House in respect of recognising the services of the members of an exploring party by a money grant, but there were a number of precedents for not doing anything of the kind, and he wished it to be distinctly understood that he did not look upon the motion now before the Committee as a precedent to be followed hereafter. He would want to know, before any future expeditions were authorised by the Legislature, whether the House would be expected also to vote gratuities for the members of such expeditions. He should prefer, in this instance, that no distinction should be made in the amount given to any of the members of the party, and he should like to see the resolution so altered as to limit the grant to £50 for each man.

MR. GRANT said he had not the slightest objection to the resolution being altered as suggested.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Sir T. C. Campbell) wished to be allowed to record his protest against the proposal to request the Governor to spend any money for which no provision had been made in the Estimates. Hon. members were all agreed that the time had arrived for putting a stop to illegal expenditure, and yet the very first opportunity which arose for encouraging unauthorised appropriations, the House expressed its readiness to avail itself of it.

Question put—"That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to recognise, by a money grant of £50 each, the services of the mem-

bers of the party that accompanied Mr. A. Forrest on his recent exploration."

The Committee divided as follows :

Ayes	...	9
Noes	...	7
Majority for	...	2

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Brown	The Hon. G. W. Leake
Mr. Carey	Mr. Burges
Mr. Crowther	Mr. Burt
Mr. Hamersley	Sir L. S. Leake
Mr. Marnion	Mr. S. H. Parker
Mr. Randall	Mr. Shenton
Mr. Stone	Mr. Steere (Teller.)
Mr. Venn	
Mr. Grant (Teller.)	

The question was therefore carried.

#### EXCESS BILL—REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. STEERE brought up the report of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the Excess Bill for 1879.

The report was received, read, ordered to be printed, and the consideration of it made an Order of the Day for Tuesday, 7th September.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL FOR 1880.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake), with leave, without notice, moved the first reading of a Bill to appropriate the sum of £3,775 2s. 6d. in addition to the sum of £176,256 4s. 8d. already voted for the year 1880.

#### WORKS AND RAILWAYS DEPARTMENT—COST OF WORKING: ADJOURNED DEBATE.

##### IN COMMITTEE.

MR. CAREY, with leave, substituted the following resolution in lieu of the motion submitted by him on September 1st (*Vide* page 297, *ante*): "That this Council is of opinion that economy has not been studied as it should have been in the Works and Railways Department. And that expenditure has been frequently incurred which, in the present financial circumstances of the Colony, has been unwarranted. And this Council trusts that the Government will not overlook this expression of opinion on the part of the Legislature." The hon. member said he wished to sub-

stitute this resolution in place of the other because he understood that in the opinion of some hon. members the latter indirectly reflected upon the manner in which the Select Committee had conducted its inquiries into the expenditure connected with the department in question. He trusted the present resolution was one which hon. members would feel no hesitation in affirming. They had been told the other evening that there was no truth whatever in the allegations he had made against the department, and a memorandum furnished by the Director of Works was put forward by the Colonial Secretary on Friday night purporting to reply to some of those allegations. In that memorandum the Director said that no estimate was ever made of the cost of the Northampton railway station. On reference to the Estimates for 1879, he (Mr. Carey) found that the very first item under the head of "Works and Buildings" was a sum of £400 for making this station, which also was to serve as a post and telegraph office. The next explanation offered by the Director was that in reference to the allegation that the turn-tables on the Northern line were rendered useless, in consequence of the introduction of the Fairlie engines. The Director's reply to that was that the Fairlie engines were intended for running the mineral trains only, and that there were two other passenger trains that required a turn-table. All he could say to that was, that if this short line of railway, where he might say there was hardly any traffic at all, required four engines to work it,—two for passenger traffic and two for mineral trains—he thought the resolution before the Committee would commend itself to hon. members. The next specific allegation to which the Director had replied in his memorandum was the allegation that the cuttings on this railway would have to be made wider in consequence of the adoption of the Fairlie engines. The Director got rid of that by stating that "if the engine proved too wide, it would only be necessary to lift the rails out a little way, which could be done in half an hour." He would ask any hon. member who had seen a Fairlie engine, or a sketch of one, whether a line which had not been constructed in view of such engines being employed on it—and

especially where there were any sharp curves—could be rendered available for running these engines within half an hour. He appealed to the common sense of hon. members, whether they could accept such a reply as that. The next explanation offered was with reference to the Perth railway station, but the Director had omitted to mention that the stone for this building had to be conveyed at the expense of the Government all the way from Fremantle, and was not included in the contract at all. This ought to be added to the cost of the building, which he thought before it was quite completed would involve an expenditure, as he had already said, of not much less than £5,000 or £6,000. With regard to the retaining wall at Beaufort Street, that portion of the memorandum which should have furnished the Commissioner's explanation in detail had been torn off, for some reason or other; consequently he was unable to deal with it. Before sitting down, he would like to draw the attention of the Committee to a return furnished by the Director of Public Works, and signed by the accountant, purporting to show, under the head of "Capital Account," that there had been no over-expenditure in connection with the first section of the Eastern Railway (*Vide* Sessional Paper, No. 16, Appendix C: "Votes and Proceedings, 1880"). On the other hand, a return made by an hon. member of that House (Mr. Randell) the other evening showed clearly that the Commissioner had already exceeded the vote for this work by very nearly £7,000. He was very much afraid they would have a heavy bill of "extras" to pay in connection with this line before it was completed, as they had had to do in connection with the Northern line; but he hoped that the bill would be settled without having further recourse to arbitration, as had been the case in the settlement of the claims of the contractor for the Geraldton Railway, and which had saddled the Colony with an unnecessary expenditure of thousands of pounds, for which he thought he might fairly say the Colony was indebted to the Commissioner.

MR. RANDELL wished to explain, with reference to the statement just made by the hon. member for the Vasse,—as to his having shown the other even-

ing that the cost of the first section of the Eastern Railway had already exceeded the estimate—that he did not wish it to be understood that the sum of £131,000 (minus goods sheds, crossings, sidings, etc.) had already been actually expended, but merely appropriated. He still adhered to the belief that the line would not be completed for less than £140,000, which for twenty miles of railway was, he thought, quite enough to justify the allegation that due economy had not been practised in connection with the department entrusted with the management of the work.

MR. CROWTHER could only regret that this question had not been brought before the House long ago. Everyone outside the department itself could see, and had seen for years, that there was a great deal more money expended in connection with works and buildings than was necessary, and he regretted that a commission had not been appointed to deal thoroughly with the whole question. Should it be found that there was no real ground for this outside feeling, all the better for the department. The Commissioner would be vindicated. But there was no question that, so far as outsiders could see, there had been gross extravagance and waste in connection with the department, and possibly in no place had this been so sadly exemplified as in connection with the Northern Railway. The fact of the matter was the ideas of the Commissioner were altogether too vast and too expensive for a poor struggling Colony like this; but he hoped the lesson taught him at the North would have a salutary effect in this respect. He would have been glad to have seen the Commissioner brought to the bar of the House, and to have thus given him an opportunity of publicly vindicating himself against the charges made against his administration of the department. If he could not do so, if all those charges which had been made against the department could be substantiated, all he could say was—the Commissioner ought to be dismissed the very next morning.

MR. CAREY said it was not for him to prove the Commissioner's innocence or his culpability. His sole object in bringing forward this matter, which he thought had now been sufficiently venti-

lated in the House, was to draw the attention of the Government to the excessive expenditure going on in connection with a public department.

The resolution was then put and passed.

#### PERTH WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION MORTGAGE BILL.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) in moving the second reading of this Bill, said the measure had been brought forward at the request of the Association in whose interests the Bill was introduced. The members of the Association, it appeared, were about to build a new hall on their own land, and in order to enable them to meet the charges incidental to the erection of this new structure, they were desirous of being able to mortgage their property. The Bill merely empowered the trustees to do so.

The motion for the second reading was agreed to, and the Bill was committed.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

The several clauses were agreed to, *sub silentio*.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY VOTES FOR 1880.

MR. STEERE, in accordance with notice, moved, That the report of the Select Committee appointed to consider the Supplementary Votes required for the services of the current year (1880)—which report was presented to the House on September 3rd—be adopted.

Agreed to, without discussion.

#### MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ACT, 1876, AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL, 1881.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake)—in the absence of the Colonial Secretary (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy)—moved the second reading of a Bill to appropriate the sum of £168,894 13s. 10s. out of the general revenue of the Colony for the service of the year 1881. The several sums constituting the amount proposed to be appropriated had already been fully discussed when the Estimates were under consideration, and he thought he should

discharge his duty on the present occasion by simply moving that the Bill be now read a second time.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill passed through Committee, *sub silentio*.

The House adjourned at half-past eleven o'clock, p.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

*Tuesday, 7th September, 1880.*

Return showing Financial Position of the Colony—Commission to Inquire into Departmental Expenditure—Message (No. 22) re Audit Bill: Consideration of—Slaughter House Ordinance, 1882—Financial Return—Excess Bill: Report of Select Committee—Excess Bill—Appropriation Bill for 1880 (Supplementary): second reading; in committee—Perth Working Men's Association Mortgage Bill: third reading—Appropriation Bill for 1881: third reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

### RETURN SHOWING FINANCIAL CONDITION OF THE COLONY.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) laid on the Table a return (moved for by Mr. S. H. Parker on 27th July) showing the exact financial condition of the Colony on the 1st July, 1880, inclusive of all outstanding liabilities on that date, so far as the said return could then be made up. The return showed an indebtedness on General Account (exclusive of Loans) amounting to £78,110 17s. 1d. (*Vide* "Votes and Proceedings, 1880," Sessional Paper, A 15.)

### COMMISSION TO INQUIRE INTO DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURE.

MR. STEERE, with leave, without notice, moved, "That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to appoint a Commission to inquire, during the recess, into the whole question of Departmental Ex-

penditure, in order that the House at its next Session may be in possession of such correct information as will enable members to judge whether any reduction in this expenditure can be effected without detriment to the Public Service; and that the majority of such Commission shall consist of "unofficial persons."

MR. RANDELL suggested there should be at least one Government official on the commission.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake): I shall oppose the motion. It looks to me like a reflection upon those who happen to be in the service of the Crown. The wording of the resolution is capable of that construction; but at the same time I should hope the hon. member for the Swan does not intend to give it that effect. If the motion were simply that a commission should be appointed to inquire into the question, I apprehend that the Council would accede to such a motion without demur—and without a word of comment—certainly without a word of comment from me. But I must say there are expressions introduced into the resolution, and somewhat accentuated, which cast a sort of distrust upon official persons; and the word "correct" information following upon that seems to imply that such information would possibly be withheld if the official element were introduced. It really strikes me that the wording of the resolution does not convey accurately even the meaning of the hon. member moving it, and that it might be somewhat modified. If, therefore, the hon. member will confine himself to moving for the appointment of a commission by His Excellency the Governor to inquire into the question of departmental expenditure, leaving it to the discretion of the Governor to appoint upon such commission any member of this House, official or nonofficial, I think such a motion would not be unacceptable to the Council. But I must protest, standing here alone as the representative of officialdom, against the resolution as it is now worded, implying as it does a distrust that if there are any official persons on the commission the information which the commission may be able to furnish to the House will neither be reliable or correct.