

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 8th October, 1902.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, By-laws passed by Upper Irwin Roads Board. 2, Amended Regulations under the Stock Diseases Act. 3, Regulations under the Land Act, restricting cutting of timber.

By the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS: 1, Locally-grown Timbers used by Railway Department; return ordered 18th September.

Ordered: To lie on the table.

QUESTION—ADMINISTRATOR'S SALARY.

MR. HOPKINS asked the Premier: What salary and allowances were being drawn by the Administrator whilst occupying the dual positions of Chief Justice and Lieutenant Governor.

THE PREMIER replied: Half salary of Governor and full salary of Chief Justice.

QUESTION—CONSTITUTION AND ELECTORAL BILLS, TO ADJOURN THE HOUSE.

MR. HOPKINS asked the Premier: Whether he would consent to an adjournment of Parliament for a fortnight, in order to direct public attention to the importance of the measures now before the House providing for an amendment of the Constitution and Electoral Acts, and

coincidentally to enable members to visit their constituencies and discuss with their electors the merits of those measures.

THE PREMIER replied: I do not see any need to adopt the proposed course. I have no doubt that the public are already alive to these questions, and will be able to follow them without the aid of a special visit from members of this House.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. JACOBY, leave of absence for one week granted to the member for Greenough (Mr. Stone), on the ground of illness.

STAMP ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

PAPERS—S.S. "SOPHOCLES," COURSE DEVIATED.

On motion by Mr. HASSELL, ordered: That all correspondence in connection with the deviation of the "Sophocles" from Albany to Fremantle be laid on the table of the House.

MOTION—HAWKERS TO BE LICENSED.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle) moved:

That this House is of opinion that it is expedient that a Bill should be introduced providing that the Hawkers Act, 1892, should be repealed, and hawkers' licenses be in future issued to British and naturalised British subjects.

He said: Probably the majority of members consider it is time that the Hawkers Act, which was passed many years ago under circumstances very different from those obtaining in the State at the present day, should be repealed. I believe I am right in saying that Western Australia is the only part of the British dominions where such a law exists. On the question of hawking generally, there can be no doubt that it is a great boon to settlers in the back blocks, distant from centres of population with their stores and other conveniences, to have hawkers coming with vans containing stocks somewhat

similar to those held by country storekeepers. For a number of years I have been in touch with men doing this class of business in the Eastern States. Before Broken Hill was opened up, hawkers went out from Adelaide away to the north-east, doing business with sheep stations in the back blocks of South Australia and New South Wales. Similarly, men went out with wagons carrying stocks in the far north of South Australia. A similar system existed in other Eastern States, and exists now where it is required. I consider it unfair that in Western Australia settlers remote from civilisation should be deprived of this boon. One drawback of the system in the Eastern States was the intrusion of the usual objectionable coloured person into this trade, and the same drawback may be experienced here if not provided against. There can be no reasonable doubt that much trouble was caused by coloured people—more especially by those called Syrians, who may have come from a Turkish province in Asia Minor—engaging in the trade. These coloured people showed themselves most persistent and highly objectionable in other respects. It is said in the Mediterranean that one Greek can beat two Jews, and that one Syrian can beat two Greeks. Whether that be so or not, I know these people constitute a serious menace to the system of hawking in the Eastern States. They are disposed to frighten women and children, they will not take “no” for an answer, and they make a practice of endeavouring to approach dwelling-houses at such times when the men-folk are away. My desire is that these objectionable people should be shut out from the trade. For the life of me, however, I can see no reason why this Act, passed many years ago under widely different circumstances, should be perpetuated. Of course, it may be rightly said that the storekeeper who pays rent, municipal rates, taxes, and so forth, should have some protection; but I fail to see that hawkers such as I have in view can compete with storekeepers having businesses in towns or in the near neighbourhood of towns. The natural avocation of the hawker carries him far beyond the centres of population and their immediate surroundings. At the risk of repeating myself, I must say that it would be a great boon to the people out back if

they could have brought to their doors those little odds and ends which are continually required in every household, however remote from business centres. I presume that ample reason existed for the introduction and passing of the existing Act at the time it was passed; but I confidently assert that no reasons exist at the present day for its perpetuation, and that, on the other hand, every reason exists for its repeal. Accordingly, I appeal to members to carry the motion which stands in my name.

MR. J. J. HIGHAM: I second the motion.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): The mover has supported his motion on two main grounds. One is that small settlers in the back districts require the aid of hawkers to bring goods to their doors. The other reason is that sheep stations far inland would also benefit from the trade of hawkers. I should like to know how many people of these two classes have approached the hon. member and asked him to introduce the motion; because those of us who represent agricultural and pastoral districts have never yet, so far as I know, heard the least desire expressed for the repeal of this Act, though many of us have frequently received requests to get the Act carried out more stringently. The reason for the enactment of the measure was that the people who occupied themselves with this class of trade, hawking, were nothing more nor less than blackmailers on the settlers in remote districts. The trade was mainly carried on by Afghans. I do not know whether Syrians engaged in it at that time, though I believe they have made their appearance in it since. At any rate, hawkers at the present day are very often a nuisance. These people evade the Act so far as they possibly can. I am sure that if the sense of the settlers mentioned by the hon. member were taken, it would be found to be almost unanimously in favour of strengthening the Act against hawkers, instead of repealing it.

MR. DIAMOND: But my motion shuts out the coloured hawker.

MR. HARPER: The motion deals with British subjects.

MR. DIAMOND: British and naturalised British.

MR. HARPER: There are plenty of Afghans who are British subjects, and there are plenty of Indians who take up hawking who are British subjects. This matter was gone into at the time the Act was introduced. The point was raised and legal advice was taken on the matter. The House then thought it was not wise or possible to draw a distinction between the coloured races and the white people in dealing with this question: that was established. An attempt was made some four or five years ago to have the Act repealed, but the feeling was so strong against repeal that the movement failed.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL (Plantagenet): Another great objection to the Hawkers Act being repealed is that the hawkers, white and black, act as sly-grog sellers and cause a great deal of disturbance, especially on back stations, which the mover says he wishes to benefit. These men are a nuisance to everybody, the settlers as well as the workers. I object to the repeal of that Act. I was instrumental in getting the Act passed some years ago, and I have not heard a complaint from anybody, and I travel a great deal out back. I have heard no call for the repeal of this Act, although the hon. member appears to have heard so much about it.

MR. T. HAYWARD (Bunbury): I indorse all that has been said by the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper). I have never been approached in any way by either white or black people who wished to be allowed to hawk. I had a communication quite recently from my constituents asking me to bring the matter of the nuisance caused by hawkers before the House if I had an opportunity. The settlers complain of the great nuisance caused by so-called Afghans. I never travel up or down the line in my district or anywhere else without seeing three or four of these men with packs on their backs.

MR. HASTIE: They have no licenses.

MR. HAYWARD: They run the risk, and it pays them well to run that risk. They are a great nuisance in the district I represent.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna): The mover might have given us much more information than he did. The longer this discussion goes on the more am I mystified. I travel a great deal about the

country, and I find everywhere Afghans and Asiatics who are practically British subjects. I gather from the discussion that hawking is illegal at the present time. If it is illegal, would it not be wiser for the hon. member, instead of bringing forward a motion to repeal the Hawkers Act, to bring forward a motion to enforce that Act which would have met the case much better than the motion he proposes? I do not know if there is any strong desire among people to have hawkers calling upon them. If it is possible to license white people, then I am with the hon. member, and will assist him in allowing white people to get hawkers' licenses; but this motion as framed will not meet the case. If there were any chance of the motion passing, which I do not think there is from the discussion which has taken place, I should move an amendment providing that no licenses of any kind be issued or renewed to an Asiatic. If something in that direction were done, I believe a very great safeguard would be taken; but the real question arising out of the discussion is that at the present time we have a large number of undesirable aliens, foreigners at any rate, who are doing an illegal act. Is there no power to prevent that? [**MEMBER:** The Act prevents it.] Then why is it not enforced? It is clearly not enforced in many districts I have been in, and other members have had the same experience. I strongly advise the member for South Fremantle to withdraw the motion, and bring the matter before the House in a different way.

MR. DIAMOND (in reply): It appears to me that some members have not read the motion which I propose. My motion, if carried, would allow decent white men to go hawking, and those are the men who would apply for licenses. It appears to me the whole of the hawking is now done by coloured men without licenses, and the reason it is only carried on by coloured men is that decent white men will not run the risk without licenses. I propose that the present Act should be repealed, and licenses issued to British subjects and naturalised British subjects. If a new law was passed, I think the wants of the people would be properly met. If coloured men could not get licenses and white men could, the law

would have to be carried out. The authorities would have to carry out the law against the coloured men who were hawking without licenses. But this would leave the main question untouched. We do not allow decent British people to go into the trade. I will simply satisfy myself by saying that in my opinion the time will come, and it is not far off, when the Commonwealth of Australia will treat all British subjects, no matter of what colour, alike. I would like to say with reference to what the member for Bunbury (Mr. Hayward) has said, that it is not at all likely people would approach the hon. member and ask him to introduce a Bill to license hawkers, because it might be antagonistic to the hon. member's business.

MR. HAYWARD: I am not in business.

MR. DIAMOND: As to whether I have been asked or spoken to on this subject, I do not think it is necessary to give names, but I have fairly frequent relations with a number of sandalwood cutters in the back blocks, not near any town, but a considerable distance out, who say they want good hawkers going round. I do not talk about men with packs on their backs, but hawkers who go round with vans and have a good stock. These men are entirely shut out. As the motion appears to be premature at the present time, with the leave of the House I will withdraw it.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

PAPERS—WATER CATCHMENT AREA (CANNING), TIMBER MILLS.

On motion by DR. O'CONNOR, ordered: "That all papers relating to the existence of the Canning Jarrah Timber Company's settlement on the Perth water supply catchment area, and the correspondence between the Government and the Waterworks Board with reference to the removal of the said settlement, be laid on the table of the House."

MOTION—WATER CATCHMENT AREA, TO PRESERVE.

DR. O'CONNOR (Moore) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, land in the catchment areas of Serpentine and Canning Rivers should not hereafter be alienated, leased, or let, or any settlement permitted thereon.

He said: I bring forward the motion in

consequence of the water supply of Perth becoming limited. The present water supply reservoir only holds one million gallons, whereas the daily supply for Perth is 1,500,000 gallons to 3,000,000 gallons. Therefore, the larger quantity of water supplied to the residents of Perth is obtained from the bores; and as the city of Perth will keep on increasing, it is the more necessary we should look forward and protect the catchment area, for insuring a sufficient supply of good water for the metropolitan district. The present catchment which supplies the Perth reservoir has had, for some years past, five or six hundred people living on the principal stream; and there is great danger of pollution from this source. In reference to the wording of the motion, I find that the Serpentine river takes in the Jarrahdale brook; therefore I would like to omit from the motion all reference to the Serpentine river, and confine it to the Canning river.

Question (as altered) put and passed.

JURY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by MR. PURKISS, and read a first time.

MOTION—FOREST DEPLETION, TIMBER CUTTING.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley) moved:

That in view of the rapid depletion of our hardwood forests, it is desirable that a searching inquiry should be made into the condition of the trade in this class of timber, with a view to ascertaining:—1, The world's supplies of timbers which come into competition with those of this State. 2, The supplies available in this State of each variety. 3, The area of Jarrah and Karri forests, respectively, already cut out. 4, The rate at which the forests are being depleted. 5, Whether the frequent reports of enormous waste are correct, and if so, what steps are necessary to prevent the same. 6, That until Parliament is in possession of this information, and can provide for the better conservation of supplies, no further leases of Jarrah or Karri forests shall be granted.

He said: In moving the motion I do not think it is necessary to enter largely into the question; but simply to say, as must be evident to everybody, that in our hardwood forests we have one of our principal industries, and that we have not adopted the custom which has been found necessary in other countries, where the Governments have taken possession

of the forests in a vigorous manner, and conserved them for insuring a supply of timber for all time. I am assured by many persons who have a knowledge of the subject, that the rate at which our forests are being slaughtered at present will, in the course of a generation or so, leave very little timber available; and if there is any danger of that being the case, it is better we should take steps to place the management of our forests on a firm basis, in order to secure for all time a sufficient supply for the requirements of this State. It would be poor policy if the State were to realise in future that all the marketable timber within it had been exhausted, and that we should then have to provide for our requirements by importing timber from outside the State. Our hardwood timbers are of a high class for many purposes, and they should be conserved and made to be a leading industry for all time; but there is so much want of knowledge in regard to the whole of the circumstances surrounding the subject, that before Parliament can do anything in the way of legislation a thorough investigation of the whole circumstances in connection with forestry generally, and ours in particular, should be made. The recent event by which all the timber companies in this State were amalgamated, and so got control of timber-cutting, has introduced a new element. Those companies, I have no doubt, are directed by some of the shrewdest business men in the world, and in their operations they will not be likely to consider the interests of this State, but only the interests of their shareholders. Therefore it is desirable that the State should take time by the forelock and look after its own interests. Some considerable timber reserves have been made available for the operations of these companies; and I hope that if the House pass this motion, it will have the effect of preventing the leasing of any more of these forests until we are in a position to act upon all necessary information, so as to deal with the industry as a whole. I beg to move the motion.

MR. H. J. YELVERTON (Sussex): I offer no objection to the motion, but am in accord with it. I fully recognise that something should be done to conserve the hardwoods of this country. The only portion of the motion to which I should

object is paragraph 6, affirming that no farther leases of jarrah or karri forests shall be granted until protective measures can be taken. I would like to say that I believe certain reservations have been made, and I think those reservations should be adhered to; but why, outside of those reservations, we should prevent men from taking up farther timber country I can hardly understand. One effect of the motion, if passed, will be to prove to the people that there is not the enormous waste of timber taking place at the timber mills that is supposed to be the case. I say of my own knowledge that during the many years I was engaged in timber-cutting at Quindalup and working the mills, I kept a strict record of the proportion of marketable timber as compared with waste timber, and I found that for many years the average of marketable timber amounted to about 50 per cent. of the logs cut. My practice was to take everything out of a log that was marketable, down to a 3in. by $\frac{3}{4}$ in. picket 4 feet long, and my average of marketable timber was only 50 per cent., the other being absolute waste that could not be converted to any marketable use. Only to-day I have heard a discussion among all the principal timber managers in the country in regard to waste at the mills, and whether it is possible to reduce the waste by cutting closer. The general opinion was that, notwithstanding the fact that many of the mills were cutting as close as they could, the waste is still at the rate of 48 to 50 per cent. I consider it necessary that Parliament and the country should thoroughly understand everything in connection with our timber trade; also we should know as to the amount of timber country that is being cut out; and I venture to say it is being cut out at a rate much greater than most people imagine, and that our forests are far from being the inexhaustible asset which some people suppose. I believe our forests will be exhausted, unless measures are taken to conserve them, and that this will come about in much less time than is generally supposed to be the case.

MR. W. ATKINS (Murray): Besides putting a check on the granting of more leases for timber-cutting, there ought to be better supervision about the licenses that are granted for cutting timber, par-

ticularly hewing, and more particularly hewing sleepers. A great number of the sleepers that are being used both publicly and privately are being hewn at present out of immature timber. Anyone going along and seeing this work will notice the half-circle at the crown of the timber, showing that only two or three sleepers are obtained out of the log; and that must be immature timber which ought to be allowed to grow. This motion asks that no farther leases shall be granted; but we should provide also for better supervision over the cutting of timber on Crown lands. A number of leases are held by timber companies; but there is a large quantity of timber land in the country which belongs to the Crown, and is getting slaughtered even worse than is the practice on the timber concessions, because those persons who do the cutting in a small way are not so careful as persons who are managing timber concessions. I would support any measure for stringently protecting the smaller portions of the great forests that are left out of those combined timber areas, so that they may be carefully protected and husbanded for future use. I agree that we shall be short of timber sooner than many people expect. Probably 20 years more will show a great scarcity of jarrah if the present waste goes on; and we shall then have to use timber of a worse class than we are using now, the best having been cut out. If the timber mills cannot use more than 45 to 50 per cent. of the logs, this means a terrible waste of timber.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna): From the expressions of opinion which we have had so far, it is apparent that this House must pass the motion. The House is indebted to the two members who have last spoken, because they are known to be timber experts, and they have assured us that we are approaching a time when the timber in this State will be scarce. That may appear strange to many persons who have lived long in Western Australia, to be informed that the timber will soon be exhausted; but it must be apparent that an enormous amount of waste is caused by the way the forests are being cut down, and the waste there is in using the timber. Let hon. members think of the quantity of timber which is being not used in this country, but

exported abroad, and let them think also of the statement made by those who ought to know, that more timber is wasted than is used.

MR. YELVERTON: It is not wasted.

MEMBER: It is not put to any particular use.

MR. HASTIE: I am not blaming those connected with the industry for wasting the timber, but I am asking the House to consider that those who are connected with the industry say that more timber is wasted than is used; that more than one-half the quantity cut down is not converted to any use except creating a bonfire. We must see that so far as the timber industry is concerned, this State is living on its capital, and that under these conditions its capital in the way of timber will soon be exhausted. Timber does not grow rapidly: it will probably be 50 or 60 years before we can expect another good crop. The member for Sussex (Mr. Yelverton), in speaking to this motion, said that he was thoroughly favourable to its first five paragraphs, but that he doubted the wisdom of the sixth, especially in its entirety. The sixth paragraph asks that until Parliament is in possession of the information asked for by the first five paragraphs, no farther leases of jarrah or karri forests shall be granted. I trust this paragraph will be adopted with the rest, as I believe that its adoption will be taken by the Minister for Lands as an instruction from this House to grant no farther leases, at any rate until most, if not all, of the information asked for by the motion has been supplied. I admit that the first two paragraphs are rather large orders. The first paragraph asks the Government to ascertain the world's supplies of timbers which come into competition with the timbers of this State.

MR. HOPKINS: When will the Government get that return?

MR. HASTIE: I presume the mover desires only a general answer to that question.

MEMBER: Approximate.

MR. HASTIE: Approximate in a general way. We cannot expect detailed information. The second paragraph asks the Government to ascertain the supplies of timber of each variety available in this State. That information would need to be largely approximate; but it is abso-

lutely necessary for us to ascertain, even though at best approximately, the quantity of timber lands available before we consider the advisability of granting farther leases. The information asked for by paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 can be obtained with comparative ease. There will be no difficulty in ascertaining the areas of jarrah and karri forests respectively already cut out, the rate at which the forests are being depleted, and whether the frequent reports of enormous waste are correct, and if they are correct, what steps can be taken to prevent such waste. It is very necessary for the House to have these questions answered before expressing a definite opinion as to the advisability of granting farther leases. No doubt, many persons will bring forward the objection that by restricting the area of ground available for the operations of timber companies we shall restrict the industry itself, and with the industry restrict employment. It is probably true that if we restrict the area of ground available for the timber companies we shall lessen the number of people engaged in the industry; but we must face this question sooner or later, and it is much better for us to see in the first place that our timbers are preserved for the people of this State, than to enjoy a few boom years with plentiful employment by exporting the timber for the benefit of people outside the State. The mover mentioned on a previous occasion, though not on this occasion, the fact that timber is charged dearer to the people of this State than it is to people in London and elsewhere. Now that we have a trust controlling practically all the timber of Western Australia, it does not seem possible for us to effect an alteration in that connection, and to provide that our people shall be treated at least as well as people elsewhere. The trust has shown that it does not consider our interests, but considers the interests of its own trade first and foremost. Therefore it behoves us, as a matter of self-protection, to see that the trust is not allowed to clear Western Australia of its timber supplies; for we can only expect that the timber trust will follow the lines which sooner or later all other trusts have followed, namely that it will soon swallow up all the small companies and make fair competition practi-

cally impossible. So that, if the issue of leases continues, it is apparent that the trust will in a very short time own every available timber area of Western Australia. The member for the Murray (Mr. Atkins) brought forward another point which has not been mentioned in the motion. He has referred to the fact that numerous timber licenses are granted to men who go in for timber hewing. I dare say the hon. member himself is strongly favourable to men getting this right, largely because it is apparent that unless small men are encouraged there will be no competition at all against the trust. Even though timber hewers constitute a desirable class, however, it is more than possible that they may destroy useful timber.

MR. HOPKINS: That is done by sawmillers and all.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: No.

MR. HASTIE: The sawmillers, no doubt, destroy useful timber; but it has been pointed out by various members that the bulk of the timber used by sawmillers is timber which has reached maturity. If it be true that the hewers are in the habit of taking timber which has not yet reached maturity, their operations should be, if possible, checked; and they can, to my mind, be checked in one way, and one way alone—by the employment of more forest rangers, and by the initiation of a stricter system of supervision than obtains at the present time. I do not believe that even those engaged in hewing find serious fault with what is proposed; because they must recognise that, if they cut down all immature timber at the present time, then in a very few years the opportunity of their continuing in that industry will practically have disappeared. I hope the motion will be accepted by the Government, and passed by the House, and I trust the Government will look into the matter seriously and endeavour to obtain full and clear replies to the questions asked.

MR. W. M. PURKISS (Perth): I have pleasure in supporting the motion, which when tabled I recognised as one of the most important introduced into the House for some time. It is just as well to take time by the forelock. In the timbers of this State we have an asset on which we pride ourselves, which

has advertised our State throughout the world; and I say, therefore, that it is an asset which we should hold in trust not only for ourselves, but for unborn generations. Undoubtedly, if the policy of the past is to be pursued in the future, if large concessions continue to be granted, very soon the whole of our available timber lands will have been swallowed up, and we shall have this large combine controlling all our forests. The timber combine will, no doubt, prove to be similar in character to those combines which we read of as being the great feature of the commercial life of the United States and other countries. Unless the combine be checked, we shall find within a comparatively few years that a valuable asset of this State has been swept away; and the pitiable spectacle will be beheld, at the end of perhaps 20 or 30 years, of our importing timber at heavy cost from other parts of the world. The keynote of this motion is struck by the sixth paragraph, which asks that until Parliament is in possession of the information asked for, and can thus provide for the better conservation of timber supplies, no farther leases of jarrah and karri forest land shall be granted. This paragraph of the motion affords a guarantee of immediate effect.

MR. MORAN: It is a guarantee for the monopoly.

MEMBER: Quite right.

MR. PURKISS: I do trust there will be no shilly-shallying in connection with this motion. We ought not to go on talking of general principles in mere *dilettante* fashion, as we have been doing in connection with the rabbit question. I trust that if the motion be carried, the Government will grapple with the business, and endeavour to give the views of the House practical effect at the earliest possible moment. I am thankful to know, at any rate, that the sixth paragraph affords a guarantee of the motion, if carried, exercising some force in the immediate future.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS (Boulder): It is a remarkable fact that in all timber countries the same belt of timber is exhausted several times over. It matters not whether an area has been cut over by splitters or sawmillers: one party will go through it one year, and will leave saying

it is exhausted, and another party will go through it the next year and do just as well. I have seen that kind of thing in the timber lands of Victoria. Splitters and sawmillers have intimated time and again that they have cleaned out a certain piece of country, and yet another party will go over that piece of country the next year and do well. I should observe that this remark applies more especially to country worked by splitters. The proposition tabled seems a very good one, and with the excision of the sixth paragraph would be quite unobjectionable. As for the first paragraph, I should say that by the time the Government have obtained information as to the world's supplies of timbers which come into competition with our timbers, all the little companies working in Western Australia at the present time will have been closed up, and the whole of our timber supplies will be securely controlled by the big combine recently registered. I should not like to say that it has been designedly done, but the motion appears to have in view one object, to shut down on the granting of farther timber leases for an indefinitely long period. I do not know whether that is desirable. Personally, I am rather inclined to think, in view of the formation of the large combine, that there is every probability of our seeing within the next few years the springing up of a number of smaller sawmilling companies. As it is certainly undesirable to prevent the establishment of small sawmills, I consider it wiser to waive the sixth paragraph of the motion. It is indeed a novel situation to find the leader of the Labour party advocating the taking away of timber country from the splitters for the purpose of handing it over to the big combine.

MEMBER: There are no splitters in Western Australia.

MR. HOPKINS: An hon. member says there are no splitters here, but I may inform him that a splitter is merely a hewer. For my part, I am inclined to regard the timber industry as an avenue of employment which should be kept open in view of eventualities. If adversity should come on the Eastern Goldfields, it is most desirable that the working men should have the opportunity of going into the forests and finding there the prospect of earning a reasonable wage.

It must be borne in mind that in the event of a serious industrial reverse on the Eastern Goldfields, those now there cannot go off along the rivers and catch fish to keep themselves going; they cannot carry their swags from one centre to another, getting a little work on the farms along the way—shearing, or whatever may be going. This country does not lend itself to that sort of thing. If we are going to shut up the forests, which would be at the disposal of these persons in time of need, we are running a very big risk. I move as an amendment :

That paragraph 6 [to stop leasing] be struck out.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth) : I second the amendment. I should like to point out that paragraph 6 is inconsequential on the previous portion of the motion, it is not germane to the other five clauses, it is inconsequential entirely. The first five subclauses are subheads for information to be obtained, and the opinion of the House is that this information should be obtained. I do not want to depart from that, and affirm that no lease should be granted in the future. The House is indebted to the member for Beverley for introducing this topic of importance. The hon. member gives a great deal of thought to matters of this kind, and at all times is studying questions of importance to the country. I would seriously ask the hon. member, and I do so to hear his reply : is it not quite true what the member for Boulder says, that if we prevent any more leases being granted, we are playing right into the hands of the big combine? That combine is now an established fact, and those outside of it who are timber cutting and timber getting are a very infinitesimal quantity. If we prevent any new combination or any new capital coming in, new people asking for leases, we prevent a benefit to the country, we prevent a rival that might spring up. We may prevent the country deriving the benefits from a rivalry between small mills, the small cutters, and this big combination. I quite agree that it would take some considerable time to find out reliable data as required by paragraph 1 of the motion, but a great deal of the other data asked for will be found in the report of the Conservator of Forests; yet I

admit that report is not up to date. I am heartily in accord with the motion; heartily in accord, too, with granting no more timber leases if we can prevent monopoly. Providing we are supplying the world's markets and our own markets, and our own wants and requirements, I do not see any occasion to allow more large grants of timber country if they be not required for the world's markets or our own. We can talk too much about conserving the immense heritage to the thousands unborn. We might conserve the gold to the thousands unborn.

MR. HARPER : The gold does not grow : the trees do.

MR. MORAN : Then the case is better for the gold. But I say the hon. member's object is to regulate the trade so that it may go on in the flourishing condition that it is in at the present time, and care is taken that the forests are not depleted. It is the duty of the House to do everything in its power in this direction. This has been a topic in the House ever since we have had responsible government, and I suppose long before that. We should try to conserve the forests and prevent the ruthless destruction of young trees, the cutting up of timber uselessly. We are assured by the mill-owners that they cannot possibly prevent the waste of 50 per cent. of the log. I do not know that anyone in the House will advance a theory as to how we can prevent that, but I am informed by the member for Sussex (Mr. Yelverton) that the tree feller, the timber hewer, wastes all except 15 or 20 per cent. of his log, in all cases.

MR. HOPKINS : What does the man who cuts piles waste? The whole tree?

MR. MORAN : The man who cuts piles only wastes the branches.

MR. HOPKINS : And half the trunk at least. It all depends on the length of the pile wanted.

MR. MORAN : I am informed that the man who cuts the piles uses more of the log than any other class of timber cutter.

MR. HOPKINS : But he cuts the tree when young.

MR. MORAN : I do not want to enter into a long discussion with experts like the member for Boulder and the member for Sussex. I second the amendment

with a view of expressing my wish that the member who introduced the motion should give us the benefit of his thought on the point; and will he tell us whether paragraph 6 will not tend to confine the monopoly to the great combine? I do not feel very strongly on the amendment. I only suggest that there should be some practical method of regulating the traffic.

MR. T. HAYWARD (Bunbury): Paragraph 6 states that no farther leases of jarrah or karri forest should be granted. I take it that does not apply to hewers of timber. Hewers take out a special license, and, therefore, the motion would not prevent the employment of men in hewing timber, or the employment of men in sleeper cutting. There is the objection that has already been raised, that the timber cutter takes all the finest growing timber. Where the trees stand thick, not much injury can be done; but the only way to prevent injury to the forest is to have special rangers who will go round and mark the trees which are allowed to be cut. In that way we should still preserve the forests, and not allow the destruction which is going on now. As the member for Boulder remarked, it is possible that in a short time we may want to provide employment for numbers of men. If the method which I have pointed out was adopted, there would still be employment for a large number of men in cutting sleepers and piles, and in other kinds of timber hewing. There would be no objection to the motion if this were done. I am in favour of no farther leases being granted.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. H. Rason): I think every member of the House, or a majority, is in favour of the motion; but I confess I have some doubts as to the advisability of paragraph 6, or the very stringent nature of the last portion of it; because it undoubtedly will have the effect, to my mind, of enhancing at once the leases held by companies now forming the timber combine, and it will go somewhat farther than that. I know that was the case not very long ago. A number of timber leases were taken up merely for speculative purposes. They were not being worked in any way, but simply held. The fact that no farther leases of jarrah or karri being available for some time to come would put an extra value

on leases held for speculative purposes, and I hardly think that a desirable object. Also, I am afraid that while this information was being obtained, and it may take some considerable time to obtain it, it would be desirable in the cases of small millowners, struggling against the big company now existing, to allow them to extend their holdings for some few acres into the forests, so as to continue their operations. If it was utterly impossible to grant these small men fresh leases or an extension of their leases, it would mean that they would have to shut down altogether. I should have preferred that the member for Beverley worded paragraph 6 to read as follows:—"That until Parliament is in possession of this information and can provide for the better conservation of the supplies, great caution should be exercised before granting any farther leases of karri or jarrah forests." If that were so, and with the debate we have been favoured with this afternoon, I think any Government would naturally take the very greatest amount of caution before issuing any farther leases of karri or jarrah country; but that should not absolutely prohibit the granting of leases, no matter how desirable, because it may be necessary to grant some small leases. Therefore, I think we should hesitate before passing the motion in the form in which it stands. I am afraid that the tendency will be to work an injustice and probably some amount of harm. I am sure the member for Beverley does not wish anything of that kind. He is actuated by the best of all motives, that the timber forests of the State should be protected as far as possible. I think if the mover accepted the suggestion I have made, but I have no wish to press it on him, his end will be reached, and no injustice done.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): This motion has been with us in every Parliament for a great number of years now, in one form or another, and, as with the rabbit question, nothing has been done. It seems that paragraph 6 of the motion is the practical clause. Hitherto we have talked about conserving the forests, we have talked about the waste, and year after year have passed resolutions but done nothing. I would like to mention that the Governments who have been in power have made a speciality, in trying to

get jarrah timber on the English markets and the markets of the world. A considerable amount of money has been spent, and page after page printed in the daily newspapers of Great Britain, for the purpose of spreading a knowledge of the fact that Western Australia has a most valuable article of timber. The market for our timber has been very materially affected during the last few years by the introduction of redgum from America, and for the recent contracts for street paving there has been strong competition between the American hardwood and jarrah, and it has taken us all our time to hold our own in these contests. Taking the first proposal of the hon. member, I do not think it is going to take any length of time to obtain an answer to the questions. A great portion of the information is already tabulated. The same difficulties that are confronting us have occurred in other countries where they have hardwood timber, that it simply is a matter of writing to the United States and to Canada and to other places to find out the estimated supplies. It would be very difficult to estimate fairly accurately the supplies available in the State of each variety of timber. It looks perhaps on the face of it rather a large order, but I am informed, and I think accurately, that the Tasmanian Government have already got a great portion of this information, and if the Tasmanian Government can get it, this Government can get it. There will be no great difficulty in obtaining the information, and no great delay in obtaining it. As to paragraph 3 in the motion, referring to the area of jarrah and karri already cut out, we have data in our printed returns up to the present time which should show the rate at which the forests are being depleted. The forest rangers ought to be able to give all the information required under this head. As to paragraph 5, asking whether the frequent reports of enormous waste are correct, and what steps are necessary to prevent the same, we know there are frequent reports of enormous waste and of an increasing area of timber being cut; but as to whether these reports are correct or not, it seems almost vain to ask the question, as everybody in the country knows that great waste is going on and that an increasing amount of cutting is

being done. To a large extent the waste is necessary, no doubt, but there is a preventable waste in connection with hewing and in the work of timber mills. I believe that if our forest rangers were more numerous, more active, and had more powers, a considerable amount of waste could be prevented; but it does seem a little strange that while we are doing our best and spending considerable sums of money in advertising our timbers in England and throughout the world, we should begin now to propose somewhat extreme measures for the purpose of conserving the timber itself. We know, and the mover has referred to the fact, that belts of timber are cut out and allowed to rest a while, and then another set of men will go through them and find fair supplies of timber. When I was in the timber business in Victoria some twenty years ago, it was reported that timber in the Daylesford forest (Mount Macedon) was getting very scarce, that certain lengths and characters of timbers could hardly be obtained there; yet I know that timber cutting is going on there now, although that kind of timber is not quick-growing and requires a long time for renewal. There is no doubt that much more care could be exercised in timber cutting in this State than is practised now; that much waste could be prevented, and the cutting of immature timber could be checked to a large extent. With regard to paragraph 6, affirming that no farther leases of jarrah or karri shall be granted until Parliament is in possession of the necessary information, I do not think the mover anticipates that he is going to lock up the forests for any long time, nor do I think the effect of passing the motion will be to lock them up for a length of time. Six months would be sufficient to get all the information required; and no great harm would occur if no farther leases were granted during that period. If in twelve months time it was found that our forests were in such a condition that we could lease a farther large tract of country, so much the better; but if on the other hand it should be found that timber is really becoming limited, and that it is necessary to take immediate steps to conserve the timber, every timber-cutter would then know that there was a danger of the Government refusing to grant any

farther leases, and there would be a rush for timber leases.

MR. HOPKINS: And those already granted would become immensely valuable.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The effect would be that the same combine would probably take up the timber country. It is true there is a great stretch of country in this State covered by jarrah, but it would be better if one-half more were covered with that valuable timber. The jarrah is down south, not on the gold-fields; and it has its limitations. We heard years ago that the jarrah forests in this country were so vast that the supply of timber was practically unlimited; but we are now getting to understand that it is possible to deplete our forests, and do a grave and serious injury to the State. There is no necessity to cripple the timber industry. All that we require is special care. In the forests of some other countries, arrangements are made for conserving the timber supply without crippling the industry. In some cases where permission to cut timber is granted, there is the condition that for every tree cut down a young tree shall be planted. That may seem to be a hard condition, but it is found effective to a large extent for renewing those forests, and we may have to do something of the same kind in this State. That question was suggested in this House some five or six years ago by Mr. Traylen, who proposed a system of replanting, but his proposal was not then taken up. Even though it should be necessary that a young tree shall be planted for every mature tree cut down, it is desirable that the country should control these forests so as to insure their continuous renewal. Rather than close the forests altogether against cutting, we want more rangers and better supervision, and we want some arrangement by which not only the immature timber shall be protected, but that provision shall be made for the renewal of the forests. There will have to be oversight and some expense for carrying this out; but the great value of the timber industry, and the circumstances surrounding it, are worthy the attention of the Government. I hope the motion will be carried just as it stands. I do not see any necessity for the amendment suggested by the Minister

for Works. Under the circumstances I do not think we should grant another lease until we have found out the present condition of the timber industry and the prospective supply of timber; and if we find that it is safe to give leases for cutting timber, let us go on and give leases, but if we find it is not safe, then to stop the issuing of leases which will not lock up the forests very long, as all the information required in this connection can be got inside of a year; so that when Parliament meets next year there should be no difficulty in continuing the granting of leases if we find it is wise to do so. We ought at present to stay our hand until we get the necessary information, enabling us to judge whether it is safe to lease any more of this timber country or not. The proposition before the House ought to commend itself to every member, and the mover deserves thanks for bringing it forward.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): I have great pleasure in supporting the motion as it stands, and with the permission of the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), who is so ready with his interjections, I will state my reasons for this opinion. We are not all experts on every subject that comes up, and we have to speak according to our limited knowledge. My idea is that this is a serious subject for the community. Anyone who has visited the various timber mills in this State will have seen that there is great waste going on. As to whether that waste is avoidable or not, we cannot take the word of timber millowners alone, and the point should be inquired into. The last paragraph of the motion, affirming that no farther leases should be granted until information is obtained, is in my opinion the spinal marrow of the proposition, and I shall support it strongly. Licenses to cut timber are annual and can be stopped. Most of the speakers have overlooked this fact, and especially the members for West Perth (Mr. Moran) and Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), who have told us that the carrying of the 6th paragraph would have a bad effect on the small men engaged in the timber business. I hope I am right in saying that all the timber leases, except those old grants such as the Davies's and the Canning timber area, are only leases or licenses from year

to year; therefore, at the end of the year the Government can cancel them if they think proper.

MR. ATKINS: There are one or two more old leases.

MR. DIAMOND: Now I call on the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) and the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) to take steps to get some of these leases cancelled, and have them worked by the people stated to be willing to work them. So far as the monopoly is concerned, I do not see that it matters one iota to this State whether 20 individual companies make profits out of our timber industry or whether the profits are made by one large company.

MR. DAGLISH: The price of the timber matters, though.

MR. DIAMOND: The price of the timber is governed by competition. The low rates at which our timbers have been sold in England for years past were the result of the absurd competition of the West Australian timber companies themselves, of which, I think, only two have ever paid dividends. The companies have been engaged simply in cutting each other's throats.

MR. MORAN: Competition with outside timbers enters into the question in London.

MR. DIAMOND: The continuance of the output is protected, and competition keeps the price down in London. In the present circumstances, there are 20 boards of directors, 20 managers, 20 offices in London, and 20 offices in Western Australia; and it stands to reason that this reduplication of administrative machinery means a terrible waste of money. If the holders of shares in the various companies can make a better profit by combining, more power to their elbow, say I! How can any injury result to this State?

MR. DAGLISH: The combine will send up prices.

MR. DIAMOND: If the combine sends up prices, it will not do business. We are to inquire, it appears, what competition our timbers have to encounter. As a matter of fact, there is plenty of competition in London.

MR. DAGLISH: But we are talking about competition here.

MR. DIAMOND: I am of opinion that, in view of the large number of

leases which have been granted and are being worked, the combination will encounter plenty of competition.

MR. HOPKINS: That settles it; that is what we want.

MR. DIAMOND: The general idea seems to be that the combine will regulate the output of timber as far as possible. So long as the employees of the combine get proper treatment and fair wages, it matters not one iota to the people of this State whether the profits made in the timber trade are earned by one company or by twenty companies. At the same time it is the duty of the House to protect one of our greatest State assets in every possible way. Therefore, I hail the motion with pleasure.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I have pleasure in supporting the motion. I listened carefully to the member for Sussex (Mr. Yelverton), knowing that he has been a timber manager or proprietor of a large saw-mill in his district. I also paid close attention to the remarks of the member for the Murray (Mr. Atkins). Both these members were referred to as timber experts by the member for Kanowna. From what I gathered by listening to their remarks, I am deterred from seeking to pose as a timber expert. I can certainly say, however, that I have helped to cut thousands of feet of timber with a pit-saw. I have also followed the sinful calling of a sleeper-hewer, concerning which the member for the Murray speaks so strongly. Perhaps I have even destroyed young timber. On the points of sleeper-hewing and the destruction of young timber, I can, therefore, speak with some authority.

MR. HOPKINS: Is it possible to get a pile without spoiling a young tree?

MR. TAYLOR: No. The loss of timber which has been referred to must be owing, I think, to the characteristics of Western Australian woods. If such a loss as 50 per cent. of the log had been made in the early days of sawmilling in the Eastern States, when sawmills were practically unknown and the bulk of the timber was cut by hand labour, prices would necessarily have been enormously high. Such great waste must, I say, be owing to the characteristics of the timbers of this State. They must be badly grown, wanting in uniformity of size, and hollow or faulty at the heart. In

the absence of such defects, no hon. member will be able to convince me that there is 50 per cent. waste in cutting up a log. Such a contention is absurd, unless the characteristics of the timber are as I have described. I have always been led to believe, however, that the West Australian timbers are the best on the continent. If the reasons which afford the only conceivable explanation of the tremendous waste alleged exist in fact, then our timbers are certainly not the best in Australia. I know of forests where not twenty-five per cent. of the log would be lost in cutting up by hand labour. Of course, there is stricter supervision by the sawyer, and greater care is taken to get the most out of a log when the system of hand labour is adopted, than is the case with a big sawmilling company. With reference to the statement of the member for the Murray that hewers are ruining our forests by cutting small timber, I have to point out that trees of a certain size are more suitable for the production of hewn sleepers than are larger trees. The log which for preference the hewer fells for conversion into sleepers involves far less waste than would the larger logs which are selected by the sawmiller for the same purpose. Such is my experience, and I have done a deal of sleeper hewing. I have heard from the sleeper hewers in this State that the conditions which I have described as obtaining elsewhere prevail here also. Certainly if one calculates that a young tree yielding perhaps only three sleepers out of a length will, after a certain number of years' farther growth, yield eight or nine per length, then from that point of view there is an undoubted loss; but the small log is certainly more suitable for the sleeper hewer than a large log would be. I have also to point out that in forests, as in other realms of life, all things do not attain large size. There are small trees in forests, just as there are small specimens in other forms of life. In passing, I wish to observe that in this case, as in every other, it is the small man who sins the most. Since I have been in this House I have learned that the greatest sinner in all cases is the worker. In this instance, the man working for himself is the worst sinner, and not the man hewing sleepers for a large contract. The man who contracts to

supply the Government with a few hewn sleepers seems to be regarded with most objection by the majority of hon. members. I maintain, however, that we ought to encourage the small man, instead of seeking to play into the hands of monopolists. The object of the amendment moved by the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) is to prevent monopoly. On the face of things, however, it is clear that a number of the small companies which take up leases do so merely for speculative purposes, with the object of disposing of their leaseholds later to the large combine.

MR. MORAN: But there are the labour conditions.

MR. TAYLOR: That may be; but before the small company puts on much labour, or expends much capital, it will endeavour to dispose of its leasehold to the large combine. That is really the position. There are cases in point. We have heard from the Minister for Works that large tracts of timber country now held under lease are practically locked up. If that state of affairs exists, it is a pity that this Parliament has not some power to alter it radically. I am given to understand that the various large companies now existing have leases running over terms of 30 years and even more, and that until those terms have expired nothing can be done. It behoves Parliament to try to do something in the way of breaking up the large combine, when the whole of our timber country is being locked up for speculative purposes. We ought to take steps to remedy such a state of affairs. I am perfectly satisfied that the carrying of the motion will not result in the creation of a monopoly, as feared by the members for Boulder and West Perth. The member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) has clearly shown that this motion, if carried, will merely authorise the Minister for Lands, or the Government, to cease issuing leases until some future period when our forests will be in such a position that fresh leases, or extensions of existing leases, can safely be granted. I fail to see that the adoption of the motion will tend towards monopoly in any way whatever. Therefore, I consider that the House will act wisely in carrying the motion as it stands.

MR. HARPER (in reply): The line taken by the Minister for Works seems

to me somewhat contradictory. The hon. gentleman says that the adoption of my motion will tend to increase the value of existing leases, and then he proceeds to argue that the adoption might work some injustice. I do not quite see how both these results can come about. Does the Minister imagine that the adoption of the motion will raise the value of the various companies' shares? I cannot imagine that it would have any such effect, as the operation of the motion will extend over too short a period of time to enable the companies to take steps to control more markets than if the motion were not carried. With regard to the adoption of the motion resulting in injustice, I do not see how that can be the case. Surely there are no companies working now on leaseholds so small that their timber resources will be exhausted within the twelve months representing the utmost limit of time which the obtaining of the information asked for by the motion should demand. As for the objections raised by the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), I must say I was not aware the hon. member is an expert in timber; otherwise I should perhaps have consulted him before moving in this matter. I think that if the hon. member had consulted the regulations he would not have made his speech; because he would have seen that the motion, although it deals with leases, says nothing about licenses.

MR. HOPKINS (in explanation): The mover in his reply is adopting the same course as was adopted by members who preceded him. In referring to timber hewers, I was answering certain arguments advanced by the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie). I want to be clear on that point.

MR. HARPER: I do not know now in what I am wrong. I understood the hon. member to say that if the sixth paragraph of the motion were carried, we should be aiming at the present holders of leases. Am I wrong in assuming that?

MR. HOPKINS: That is right, so far. Go on.

MR. HARPER: Then I say that the hon. member, if acquainted with the regulations, would have observed that this motion does not affect the holders of

licenses, who can cut timber irrespective of leaseholds.

MR. HOPKINS: But what I referred to was the establishment of small sawmills.

MR. HARPER: Small sawmills can also —

MR. HOPKINS: You propose to stop the issue of any more leases, and so you will prevent the establishment of small sawmills.

MR. HARPER: Plenty of sawmills working at the present day get their timber under license, and not from leaseholds. These sawmills are at the present time competing with the combine. Therefore, the hon. member's point is valueless in the argument. The second difficulty raised by the member for Boulder, that the information asked for by the first paragraph of the motion will take an immensely long time to collect, merely goes to show that the hon. member is not aware that this is probably the only State in the world which has not a pretty good record of its annual timber output. All the information asked for by my motion is available: it needs merely to be collected and digested. I hope, therefore, that the House will see its way to accept the entire motion. The last paragraph has been described by various members as the governing part of the motion, as no doubt it is. I would like to say one word with regard to what fell from the Minister for Works. Hewing should be regulated by the forest rangers. There is no harm in hewing small logs if they interfere with the growth of other timber: it is only a process of economy where the hewer does not harm other timber; but the hewer does harm now in this manner, that where a pile 50 to 60 feet long is worth four or five times as much as a pile cut into railway sleepers, the hewer who cuts the railway sleepers does not care if the tree will make a good pile or what it will make, he will cut it for his own purpose. That is where the control of the forests would do good. If we permitted the hewer to cut shorter lengths for railway sleepers, and preserve the longer timber for more valuable purposes, for piles, good would be done. We want more complete management and control over the forests. We have not been able to accomplish this yet, and we are not in a position to start with it until we get a little more information; and having got that

information, we shall be able to understand where we are, and see better what we can do. By that time I hope Parliament will see its way to establish a staff to control our forests, as is done in other parts of the world, and so use this asset to the very best advantage for the State.

Amendment put and passed.

Question as amended agreed to.

MOTION—BUILDING CONTRACTOR'S CLAIM FOR EXTRAS.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle) moved :

That the petition of John Maher be referred to a select committee of this House for their report.

It would not be necessary to go into the details of this case, because members would in justice grant a select committee, before which the matter could be threshed out. Some years ago Mr. John Maher, a well-known and respected contractor, with a good reputation in New Zealand and this State, obtained the contract for the building of the east wing of the Government offices. Trouble arose through the officer or architect in charge of the work, who it was alleged showed great hostility to Mr. Maher and imposed conditions according to which it was almost impossible to carry on the work. Mr. Maher did carry on the work, but made an appeal to the department, and the superintending officer was removed, which showed that Mr. Maher had grave cause for complaint. The injustice, according to Mr. Maher's statement, continued. Eventually another appeal was made, an inquiry was held by the department, and a considerable sum of money was given to Mr. Maher for the extra work which he had done, caused apparently by the officer in charge. Mr. Maher gave a receipt for the amount on account; he never gave a full receipt, and never recognised that his claim had been fully dealt with. Mr. Maher left for New Zealand, and in that colony he was stricken down with a serious illness, which kept him a sick man for some years. Mr. Maher returned to this State this year still in bad health, but with a desire to ask the House to make inquiry into the injustice which he alleged he laboured under. The Government had partially recognised the injustice to Mr. Maher, and although several years had lapsed,

the sense of justice which was inherent in all members would no doubt grant Mr. Maher a select committee to inquire into his claim for farther consideration.

MR. J. J. HIGHAM seconded the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. H. Rason) : It was rather awkward for a Government to oppose a motion such as this, and he would not do so for a moment if he thought any good could be done for Mr. Maher by the appointment of a select committee; but it was only due to the House that he (the Minister) should object to the appointment of a committee which would probably mean only waste of time to the members of the committee, without leading to any good result. Mr. Maher had been placed in the same position as any other contractor. If any dispute arose as to a contract it was referred to the Engineer-in-Chief as sole arbiter, and it happened in this case the Engineer-in-Chief adjusted the claim of Mr. Maher in the manner he thought right, and in what he thought the interests of justice. There Mr. Maher's finality was reached, unless he chose to take his case into the Supreme Court of the State. If Mr. Maher could not, in consequence of the conditions of the contract, take his case into the Supreme Court, then he should not make use of this House to do for him that which in the ordinary course of justice could not be done. Mr. Maher accepted the contract under the terms that if any dispute arose the Engineer-in-Chief for the time being was to settle that dispute. A dispute did arise; a claim for compensation was put in; it was settled by the Engineer-in-Chief, who awarded to Mr. Maher an amount which it was thought he was entitled to. That having been done, the House should not be asked to inquire farther. If a committee was appointed it could only find the facts as had been stated. Could a committee of the House say that the award made by the Engineer-in-Chief was not sufficient? This matter took place five or six years ago, and the Engineer-in-Chief who settled this case could not now be called as a witness, as he was deceased. How could a committee go into the matter at all, and how could a committee find that the award was not a good one? If any

good could be done to Mr. Maher, or any injustice removed, if an injustice had been done, by the appointment of a select committee, one would be the last to put any obstacle in the way; but he protested against matters like this being brought before the House.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS (Boulder): What would the position be if a select committee were appointed and found that Mr. Maher had been hardly dealt with? One supposed the next thing would be that the House would be called on to compensate Mr. Maher. It was not many years ago that the Swan River dragoons took possession of some miners on the goldfields, and took them to Fremantle, and when the House was asked to give those persons some compensation for the indignity they had suffered, there was no sympathetic assistance from those persons who represented Fremantle. Should members allow matters of this kind to occupy the attention of Parliament? If Mr. Maher had a legal claim, then the legal tribunal of the State was the proper place to decide it. If Mr. Maher was not in a position to take advantage of the courts it was traducing Parliament to bring the matter forward in the House. This was not the first time the House had refused to grant compensation, for when the alluvial miners were wrongfully imprisoned and the House was asked to take into consideration the granting of some compensation, Parliament decided not to do so, and Mr. Maher's case was not surrounded by one-fiftieth part of the hardship which surrounded the position of those alluvial miners.

At 6-30, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. DIAMOND (in reply) said he was sorry the Government did not see their way to support the motion. As it was clear that the feeling of the House was against the motion, he did not feel justified in going on with it, and by permission he would withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

MOTION--PUBLIC ABATTOIRS, INQUIRY AS TO SITE.

MR. W. B. GORDON (South Perth) moved:

That a select committee of this House be appointed to inquire into and report upon the

most suitable and convenient site on which to erect the public abattoirs.

He said: One of the principal objects in having public abattoirs is that they will assist in cheapening the cost of living by reducing the cost of meat. It appears to me that Fremantle offers the most suitable spot for the erection of public abattoirs, being a shipping port and most of the live-stock being landed there. But while expressing this opinion, I think also that the whole question should be inquired into by a select committee, so as to consider all available sites, and recommend that which appears most suitable. Not only Fremantle but the Eastern Districts should be taken into consideration, in permanently selecting a site for abattoirs. Claremont has also been recommended as a suitable place, and the select committee may find there are other spots worthy of consideration. I hope the result will be that the committee will select and recommend a site which we shall all be able to accept as the best. Therefore I think it will assist the Government to have the report of a select committee on the question, after thoroughly inquiring into it.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND: I second the motion.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): In my view of the question there ought to be no delay in the erection of public abattoirs; and I think there is no necessity for a select committee to inquire into the question of site, because there is only one site that is possible, only one site that ought to be adopted, and the work of erecting the abattoirs should be commenced as soon as possible. [**MR. DIAMOND:** Which is the site?] At Robb's Jetty. [**MR. DIAMOND:** We differ.] If members will take a little trouble to think on the matter, they will come to the conclusion that there is only one possible site. [**MR. HOPKINS:** Tell us why?] Nearly the whole of our supplies of live stock come from over sea. [**MR. GORDON:** Are they always coming by sea?] When they come from elsewhere we can make the necessary provision. To appoint a select committee means delay; and if 20 committees sat on the question, the conclusion would be that Robb's Jetty is the site for abattoirs.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner): The question has engaged

attention for some considerable time. We have had several views on the question, and at various times we have had different sites selected or recommended to us—Robb's Jetty, Claremont, Canning; then back from Canning to Claremont and Robb's Jetty. At present in the Eastern States our Chief Architect, Mr. Grainger, is inquiring into the question of abattoirs and as to the most suitable buildings for the purpose. In addition, the Government have promised to place on the Estimates a sum for building public abattoirs; and the Government think it would be advisable to have the opinion of a select committee for definitely selecting a site. At present, most of the stock for slaughter come over sea from Kimberley or the Eastern States. In constructing abattoirs, we have to consider not the requirements of to-day nor the expectations of to-morrow, but to look farther ahead. The select committee which sat on the food supply recommended a site at Claremont as suitable for abattoirs; but whether that is definite enough for the House to act on or whether it is expected the Government should come to a decision of its own I cannot say. I think that if a select committee is appointed, especially with the information which Mr. Grainger will bring back with him from the Eastern States, and he is expected to arrive here next Monday, the committee could arrive at a decision before the session closes, and the work could be gone on with straight away. It is an important work, and has been promised a long time. An inquiry by a committee such as is proposed need not take a long time; and if we can get a site definitely recommended by a committee, I think this House should be satisfied to let them settle the site. I presume we should put practical men on the committee, get their views, and so arrive at a decision satisfactory to all. The Government do not oppose the appointment of a select committee.

MR. M. H. JACOBY (Swan): While I do not oppose the motion, I would like to remind the House of the wish expressed by the Premier a short time ago, that the appointment of select committees should be restricted. In this matter the Government ought to have officers, either in the Stock Department or some other,

able to advise us on the question of site; and if the Government have no such officers they ought to have. It appears to be to a large extent a departmental question, and the responsibility of fixing a site should be on the Government. I wish to enter my protest against the multiplication of select committees. Matters of departmental interest should be settled by the Government, and not by this House.

THE TREASURER: Is it not rather past a departmental matter?

MR. JACOBY: The select committee on food supply made a recommendation on the subject, and the Government should have an opinion as to whether they can agree to that recommendation or not. If this committee be appointed, it will cost some money, and do practically the same work. I do not oppose the motion, but I do enter my protest against too many select committees on such small matters.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): We can avoid the necessity for a select committee if the Government will say they are going to adopt the recommendation of the committee which sat on the food supply. If so, the matter will be settled. If the Government are not prepared to adopt that recommendation without farther inquiry, then there is good ground for the motion. I differ from the member for the Swan in saying this is a departmental matter. It is a matter in which the public are deeply interested, because the selection of a site for abattoirs may materially affect not only the price but the quality of the meat supplied to the public. Therefore we cannot exaggerate the importance of the matter; and it is better for us to waste, if it be called a waste, a month's time in making proper inquiry into this question, rather than act hastily and incur an expense which may have to be duplicated at a later period. I shall support the motion.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS (Boulder): Though not partial to the practice of speaking on every question that comes before the House, I do not feel disposed to allow this motion to pass without offering a few remarks. I understood the Treasurer to say that Mr. Grainger, the Government Architect, is at the present time in the Eastern States, or on his way from them; that he has been

inquiring into the system of abattoirs there, and will shortly return with all necessary information. It is not long, however, since this State paid Mr. Cavanagh, a Perth architect of repute, a large sum of money to proceed to the Eastern States to inspect the same slaughter yards as have come under Mr. Grainger's observation. Mr. Cavanagh was instructed to obtain that information, and on his return to prepare plans and specifications. Those plans and specifications have been prepared, and are at the present time in the hands of the Government. Now the whole thing is to be gone over again. Why? For the purpose of getting out a design for slaughter sheds which, I venture to say, any butcher in the country would have built, if allowed, with nothing more than an axe and adze. If something more elevated, something on more scientific lines is required, then we have it in the plans and specifications already prepared by Mr. Cavanagh. Without disparaging Mr. Grainger in any way, I venture to say that Mr. Cavanagh is just as competent to do the work as Mr. Grainger is. These remarks arise out of the motion before the House and out of the observations which have fallen from the Treasurer. A select committee has already inquired into the question of abattoirs and has formulated certain definite proposals. Are we now to have another select committee to sit during this session to formulate similar proposals, and are we then to have another select committee inquiring into the business during the session to come, and so on *ad infinitum*? Is it not better that we should now determine the question of site on the reports before us? Eventually, I presume, we shall have to determine the question on the report here asked for or on the report of some other select committee to follow that now proposed. If we are not prepared to settle the question on the basis of information already available, it is preferable to declare that a select committee shall inquire into the question, and that the Government shall build the abattoirs on the site chosen by that select committee. I object to indefinite action in connection with important matters. A site was chosen by the select committee on food supply which sat last year, and which devoted a

good deal of time to investigation of the question. Certain members who sat on that committee, including myself, visited the site at Owen's Anchorage and also visited the proposed central site at Claremont, more particularly that reserve of Crown lands containing some 250 acres, adjoining what is known as the Perth Commonage. The reason why Robb's Jetty was not accepted as the site is that cattle travelling a long distance arrive so sore that after being swum ashore they are not able to stand. Some of them have been down for days before being landed, and to turn them out on hard limestone country will not do. Some hon. members may consider that the State should not build complete, suitable, modern abattoirs, but should merely take over the slaughter yards already in existence. I for my part, however, would be prepared to pay the owners of those slaughter yards some compensation, and have abattoirs with chilling dépôts erected on the latest and most approved principles. The sum of £8,000 set down for the purpose is sufficient to meet all the requirements of the metropolitan area for the next generation. I observe that at present objection is being taken by those interested to having the abattoirs at Claremont, which would be the most central site for the metropolitan districts. One objection urged is that cattle are frequently so sore on landing that it is more convenient to slaughter them as soon as they land than to put them in trucks, into which they cannot walk. I maintain, however, that a bullock which cannot walk into a truck is not fit to be slaughtered and passed into consumption. That is one reason why I think the site at Claremont is preferable. Plenty of room is available in that neighbourhood. On the publication of the report of the select committee on food supply, the *West Australian* condemned the erection of abattoirs at Claremont, though since the opening of this session the same paper has been advocating practically everything recommended by that report with regard to the establishment of abattoirs. However, the change of front is not surprising, seeing who are the parties that have made it. I am satisfied that if conveniences of time and place be consulted, if the best interests of the whole metropolitan area

be taken into consideration, the abattoirs will be placed at Claremont. The select committee on food supply inquired into the question most carefully, and I do not suppose that another committee will do better. I move, therefore, as an amendment to the motion :—

That the words "a select committee of this House be appointed to inquire into and report upon," in lines 1 and 2, be struck out, and that "is at Claremont" be added to the motion.

MR. G. TAYLOR: I second the amendment.

MR. J. J. HOLMES (East Fremantle) : I rise to oppose the amendment. With all due respect to the select committee which reported, I maintain that in recommending the adoption of a site at Claremont its members showed that they knew absolutely nothing of the subject which they had in hand.

MEMBER: Their recommendation was against the meat ring.

MR. HOLMES: This is nothing against the meat ring. I am entirely in accord with the establishment of public abattoirs, and should like to see them established at once. When the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) speaks of 250 acres of land at Claremont as adequate to hold all the cattle required to be slaughtered for the metropolitan area, he gives sufficient proof that he, at all events, knows nothing of the subject.

MR. HOPKINS: I did not say, sufficient for holding the cattle, but sufficient for holding the abattoirs.

MR. HOLMES: The cattle must be held somewhere, and I take it from the observations of the hon. member himself that the cattle cannot be travelled out of Fremantle on account of the limestone formation. The reason for adopting the site at Claremont—

MR. HOPKINS: Where do you confine your tick cattle now? In the yards.

MR. HOLMES: Tick cattle are now confined in the yards, but I must point out that only a certain proportion of the cattle slaughtered are tick cattle. The greater proportion are clean cattle, coming from West Kimberley and other parts of the North.

MR. TAYLOR: Is there no tick in West Kimberley?

MR. HOLMES: There is no tick in West Kimberley. The hon. member says that the cattle cannot be travelled out. For

the information of the House I may observe that all the clean cattle are travelled to paddocks situated about eight or ten miles out of Fremantle, where there are lakes containing plenty of fresh water and where the cattle are comfortable. If the abattoirs be erected at Claremont, cattle will have to be travelled over the bridges from Fremantle to Claremont and through the municipality of Claremont, and the only time at which they can be travelled is between the hours of 12 o'clock midnight and four o'clock in the morning.

MR. HOPKINS: That is what is done in Melbourne.

MR. HOLMES: I do not care what is done in Melbourne. To my mind, the establishment of abattoirs on any particular site is so important a matter that it should not be decided on the bald statement of the member for Boulder, even if that statement be backed up by the report of a select committee which knew nothing of the subject it reported on. I consider the time has arrived for definitely settling this matter; and the proper means of settling it, to my mind, is to appoint a committee of this House—a committee consisting of those who understand the subject. Thus we may arrive at a final decision. I support the motion for the appointment of a select committee.

MR. W. B. GORDON (mover): I oppose the amendment. The member for Boulder has referred to the report of the select committee which sat to inquire into the question of food supply. We know the hon. member has wide knowledge; on nearly every subject he can pass an opinion. I think it a great pity that the hon. member has not some conception of his own egotism. If he gauged that, we should find him less assertive. I did not know that the select committee which inquired into the question of food supply included the construction of abattoirs within the scope of their inquiries, and I do not know where they got the information on which to base a report.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont) : I oppose the amendment on the ground that I consider it advisable, before the site of the abattoirs is fixed finally, that a select committee should be appointed in order to give the people in the district affected an opportunity of being heard as to the advisability of having the abattoirs

placed in their midst. This is evidently not a matter on which we should make up our minds hurriedly. Even in the short space of time which has elapsed since the motion was moved, several conflicting opinions have been expressed. The member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) has suggested one site; the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) has suggested another; and the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) objected, if not to both of these sites, at any rate to one.

MR. HOPKINS: I did not suggest a site. The select committee on food supply suggested a site.

MR. FOULKES: By your amendment you suggested Claremont as a site.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes; on the strength of that committee's report.

MR. FOULKES: As we are informed that the Government Architect is returning from the East with certain information bearing on this subject, I do not see that any injustice will be done to the State by waiting the short time necessary to allow a select committee to go fully into the question. I believe the Estimates will shortly be laid before the House. On that occasion, again, we shall have an opportunity of discussing the question, since a sum of money will be set down for the construction of abattoirs. Thus two opportunities of debating the subject will arise. I must say that I object strongly to having a residential district like Claremont selected as the site for abattoirs—

MR. HOPKINS: There are abattoirs in the heart of Rome.

MR. FOULKES: Until the fullest opportunity has been given to the residents to be heard in objection. I shall oppose the amendment.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): I had hoped that this matter would be settled without the appointment of a select committee; but after the line taken by the member for Boulder, I do not see how the Government can do anything but accept a select committee. They hardly dare, in the face of the opposition of the member for Boulder and in the face of the report of the select committee on food supply, decide to put the abattoirs elsewhere than at Claremont. I feel confident, however, that if all the pros and cons of the two sites

suggested are thoroughly weighed, the decision will be in favour of the Robb's Jetty site. There are many objections to Claremont as a site, and the one objection raised by the member for Boulder to the site at Robb's Jetty does not appear to carry much weight: that as some cattle are not able to walk far, therefore it is better to take them to Claremont. I do not know what difference it would make to a bullock that cannot walk whether it is taken to Robb's Jetty or Claremont. Viewing the matter from a grower's point of view, I cannot see the slightest objection to the grower sending cattle to Robb's Jetty or to Claremont. As to the point raised by the Treasurer, it is not quite correct to say a large proportion of our live stock come by water, because sometimes very few come that way. The difference in freight between Robb's Jetty and Claremont is so small as not to be worthy of consideration. The facilities for grazing are in favour of the more southern place. I think there is no way out of the difficulty but to have a select committee; but I would point out in answer to the objections of the member for Cue, that there is no doubt the reports of half a dozen select committees are likely to be made to the House before money is voted. The report of the select committee ought to be got through in a fortnight or so, and if not, there is not the faintest hope, however much we desire it, that the Estimates will be through in twice that time, perhaps more than that. All things considered, it is desirable to have a select committee, if for no other reason than to get the member for Boulder to look at the other side of the question.

MR. HOPKINS: I have no desire to press my amendment. I wished to give the matter prominence, and I think I have done so. I hope the House will take a firm stand, and say that when the report of the committee is presented it shall be adopted. What is the use of a committee sitting every session and reporting, unless some action be taken. I ask leave to withdraw my amendment, and perhaps the member who moved the motion will add to his proposal that the report of the select committee when brought up should be adopted.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Question put and passed.

Ballot taken, and a committee elected comprising Mr. Daglish, Mr. Harper, Mr. Higham, Mr. Moran, also Mr. Gordon as mover; with power to send for persons and papers, and to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned; to report on this day three weeks.

AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James) in moving the second reading said: We have practically had the second reading discussion on this Bill a few days ago; therefore I do not propose to add anything to what I then said.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

MOTION—FOOD DUTIES, TO ABOLISH.

Debate resumed from the 1st October, on the motion by Mr. Hastie, "That all inter-State duties on butter, cheese, eggs, bacon, ham, potatoes, onions, and flour should be immediately abolished"; and on the amendment by Mr. Moran to strike out the words "potatoes, onions, and flour," and insert "fruit and vegetables, honey, jam, meats, and fish."

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): It is almost useless to endeavour to alter the opinions of members of this Chamber by addressing them on this motion. It will be remembered that a similar motion was before the House at the close of last session, and that it met with very little support. From what I can see now, the motion will meet with very little support from this House. I do not think that anyone, even with the eloquence of a Grattan, could move one member of this House in the least on this question. I do say that I believe if those members who are sitting on the Government side were really sincere in trying to have these duties removed, there might be some possible chance; but while hon. members on the Government side of the House, representing constituencies in most cases other than farming constituencies, still support the Government on this question, there is no possibility of carrying the motion. We see on the Government side the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), who was very strong when he addressed the House on the question in speaking in

the interests of his constituents; pointing out to this Chamber, in a very elaborate string of figures, the necessity for removing the food duties. We also see on that side the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss), who practically came into this House pledged to the reduction of the food duties, and who was loud in his place in the House in advocating their removal. We find also the Labour party, while anxious to relieve the burdens of the workers on the goldfields, still supporting the Government who are anxious to keep the duties on. We also find there are wonderful acrobatic feats of political bounding in this Chamber on the question. We find the member for Albany (Hon. J. Gardiner) spoke last year on the question, when he was not the State Treasurer, and argued then very feelingly in favour of not removing the duties at that time, but giving as his excuse for voting against the motion on that occasion that he had entered into a compact as a federalist, and felt bound by his hustings pledge to maintain the food duties for one year more, namely last year. The hon. member then said:—

Having taken an active interest in federation, and having pledged himself not to interfere with the sliding scale during its operation, he had said then, as he said now, that the food duties were little or no protection to the local producer. That view was indorsed this evening by the Treasurer and by the leader of the Opposition. These duties were merely maintained as revenue duties, being easy collectable. The benefit from these duties had not been great as affecting the producers in this country; for instead of decreasing importations in the principal lines of produce, we found a large increase in importations of the necessary articles of daily consumption. If the revenue continued to increase as it had done, he (Mr. Gardiner) would be one to support, next year, the reduction of the food duties, and would rather that the money now derived from them should remain in the pockets of the people than that the Treasurer should have the power of expending it. Frequently the money obtained by taxation from the people had not been spent wisely in this State, and it did not return so much benefit to the State as it would if left in the possession of individuals. [MR. GEORGE: Not this Treasurer, surely!] The remark was made with regard to all Treasurers, who spent in a lordly manner when they got the opportunity. As to the large amount derived from revenue, we never heard a suggestion showing that it would be easy, by wise and just economy, to relieve the people from heavy taxation. He believed that £180,000 now derived from the food duties

could easily be saved, and nobody be much hurt. Although not willing to support the motion at the present time, he held to himself the right to be relieved next session from the promise he made during the federation campaign when he contended that the food duties were not protective, but merely revenue duties; and his constituents were almost to a man in favour of the reduction of the food duties. In trying to adhere to his own pledges given to the electors, he asked, what did the other side do? They said the revenue would commence to drop from the day we got federation. They would not admit the contention of the federalists, that these were merely revenue duties. Those persons said they were protective duties. His contention was that wherever it could be shown that these duties were protective and a benefit to industries in this State, he would support them through the whole period of the sliding scale.

That was the speech of the member for Albany on this question last year; and we have heard him also this session, speaking as Treasurer, equally strong for the retention of the food duties, and also telling the House again in his usually loud and eloquent manner that he was a federalist, and was one of those who entered into the federal compact with the people of this State to retain the sliding scale. It is marvellous how circumstances alter cases, and when we find such acrobatic feats performed in this House, we can hardly take seriously the speeches delivered by some members in this Chamber. I know it is perhaps the feeling of a number of members that *Hansard* should be burnt by the public hangman as soon as the session closes, because it tells inconvenient tales. We have also heard from the Treasury bench the member for Menzies (Hon. H. Gregory), who is Minister for Mines, declaiming last year against the idea of removing the food duties; yet that hon. member came to this House after his first election pledged to the reduction of those duties, as a representative of the goldfields; and speaking in this House last year on the question he said at the conclusion of his speech that the reason why he would vote against the motion was:—

This motion could hardly do good. It was too late to bring in a Bill to give effect to it, and the evident desire of the mover was that the burden of the very heavy customs duties should be reduced.

The Minister for Mines cannot say it is too late this session to bring in a Bill, or that it is too late for this Parliament to

deal with the question. We well remember that those speeches were delivered on the last day of the session, and that was perhaps the reason why the hon. member uttered those words; but I do say that if members sitting on the Government side were sincere in bringing pressure on the Government for removing the food duties, in the interests of the workers and the people they profess to represent. I think we could not then accuse them of a conspiracy to simply talk to the gallery. We know there are on the Opposition side of the House several representatives of the farming interests, and three members representing farming constituencies are sitting on the Government side; so there is no doubt the Government are satisfied that they are able to defeat this motion. I do say that the goldfields members and those representing metropolitan areas, who believe that these duties are not a protection to the industries of this State and are merely a source of revenue, should use their best endeavours to bring the Government to the idea of removing them. I am a protectionist, and if I could see that these duties were a protection to a growing industry I would support them; but I find that they are only a source of revenue, and on these lines, knowing how heavily they press on the miners and the people generally, and that the industries of this State do not benefit by the duties, I feel it is my duty to vote for their removal, and to endeavour to make other members in this Chamber (who believe that these duties should be reduced or removed) to go about the matter in such a manner as will convince this House and the country that they intend what they say. There are certain powers that can be used in politics by members when sincere. What are we taught in every country by Parliaments?—concession for support. Where are the concessions for the support of the goldfields people at the present time?

THE PREMIER: Good honest government.

MR. TAYLOR: The Premier says "honest government." How does he judge of honesty?

THE PREMIER: I judge by your standard.

MR. TAYLOR: You can judge by the standard of the people of this country.

The Premier may smile, but if the

members who howl so loudly about those duties were as earnest as I am in trying to have them reduced or removed, the Premier would consider twice before he would smile, and those who are supporting him. That is the position I take up. I consider it useless to discuss the necessity for removing these duties while Parliament is constituted as it is, while we find members who have been returned pledged to the abolition of the food duties supporting through thick and thin Ministers claiming to be bound by some covenant or compact entered into with the farming constituencies during the federal campaign. To use the phrase of the Premier, this covenant, this compact is "all fudge." It exists merely in the minds of some unknown persons. I consider it useless to speak any longer on this motion; but I do hope that the members who have addressed themselves to the subject are earnest in the matter, and that they will use their best endeavours to relieve the burden of taxation now pressing on the goldfields people.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL (Plantagenet) : Believing as I do that these food duties constitute no protection to the farmers of this State, I shall vote for the amendment of the member for West Perth.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison) : If I were to follow the line of argument of some hon. members who have supported the sliding scale, I should find it difficult to avoid voting for the amendment of the member for West Perth. Speaking on the subject during last session, I expressed my concurrence with the opinion put forward by the member for Northam (Hon. G. Throssell), that as a means of protecting the farmer the sliding scale is of the smallest practical value. But we have to look at the matter not so much from the point of view of the farmer as from the point of view of the country as a whole—from the point of view, that is, of the public finances. The Treasurer, in speaking on this subject on a recent evening, laid before the House in language which I thought sufficiently clear and emphatic the difficulty which any Treasurer, no matter to what Government he might belong, must be in when he finds, during each of the next four years, a large portion of his revenue under the sliding scale taken away. I do not propose

to-night to enter into the question of precisely how much we shall lose under the reduction which takes place as from the 7th or 8th of this month. So many different opinions have been expressed as to the exact amount, that it would be unwise of me to add to the confusion and difference already existing by expressing an opinion of my own, especially as that opinion on such a point might not carry very much weight. It is at least certain, however, that we shall have to put up with the loss of a very considerable amount of money, which the very lowest estimate, I believe, places at something like £50,000, while other estimates put it at about £100,000.

MR. MORAN : But the general revenue is increasing all the time.

MR. NANSON : The hon. member reminds me that the general revenue is increasing at the present time, and that it has already increased materially. I intended to come to that point directly; but as it has been raised I may deal with it at once. When we remember how the revenue of Western Australia has increased within recent years, when we bear in mind that in the year 1900 the revenue from customs amounted to less than £1,000,000 sterling, and that the Federal Treasurer estimates that during the next financial year it will amount to a total of very nearly £1,400,000, we must admit that there is considerable force in the contention of the member for West Perth that, our revenue having increased so largely, we ought to give some attention to the reduction of taxation. I suppose members on both sides of the House, whatever may be their views with regard to the sliding scale, have given attention to the question of taxation. I presume all of us would be only too glad, if we felt it were safe or expedient to do so, to reduce in any way whatever the burden of the people. It is not only people outside this House who suffer from the high cost of living in Western Australia; but each one of us in this House, I suppose, suffers to some extent at any rate from that high cost. In dealing with this matter, the first question we have to ask ourselves, I submit, is whether taxation in Western Australia is at the present time absolutely and in fact excessive. Taking the evidence of statistics, and viewing the customs

taxation per head of the population of Western Australia as compared with the customs revenue per head in the Eastern States, undoubtedly one can return only the answer that our customs taxation is excessive; because we find that in Western Australia the customs revenue per head of the population during the current year is estimated by the Federal Treasurer at £5 10s. 6d., against a mean revenue per head in the other five States of the Commonwealth of £2 1s. While giving attention to these figures, however, we must also remember that there are certain circumstances which to a considerable extent modify their force. In the first place, we have to bear in mind that the proportion of the adult population of Western Australia to the general population is very much higher than is the corresponding proportion in the Eastern States, and in the second place that the proportion of the male adult population in this State is very much higher than it is on the Eastern side of Australia. For both these reasons we may naturally expect that the general taxation per head through the customs will be considerably higher here than in the sister States. Then, if we wish to go beyond the figures themselves in answering the question whether taxation presses with undue heaviness on our people, we have to look around and observe the general condition of the State at the present time. I care not in what direction inquiries are extended, throughout Western Australia at the present time one finds a higher general level of prosperity than is to be found in any of the Eastern States. The Savings Bank statistics show that the savings of the people are not decreasing but are steadily increasing; and I have never yet heard of a country where the people, if unduly taxed, found it possible to increase their Savings Bank deposits; and not only to increase their deposits in the Savings Bank, but also their deposits in banks of issue and other financial institutions of the State. Despite heavy taxation, our people apparently, so far as the evidence of monetary institutions generally is worth anything—and I submit it must be worth a good deal—find it a comparatively easy matter to save. Let us consider the general spending power of the people. Take the case of the railways. Is there any country in the world where the

population makes greater use of railway facilities than in Western Australia? Go to the racecourse on a holiday and see the spending of the people there. Go to-night into the Theatre Royal, and I doubt not the building will be found packed, as it has been almost for weeks past, with audiences who can afford to amuse themselves. And, indeed, I think we may congratulate the community as a whole on the existence of these prosperous conditions. I am not mentioning these facts out of any sense of grievance. I do not propose to take the line of the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) and read a homily, however much it may be deserved, to the goldfields residents in regard to their drinking habits. I am glad, at any rate, without expressing an opinion on the conduct of the goldfields people, that they should have a surplus out of their wages to spend in the fashion that to them seems best. If they do not spend it in the fashion which is absolutely best for themselves personally, at any rate they are spending it in a fashion which brings in a good deal of revenue to the State. Again—and this is another index of prosperity—we do not find that the people are leaving Western Australia. Emigration generally co-exists with excessive taxation. Where taxation is so heavy that to make both ends meet becomes difficult or impossible, the people leave the country. We do not, however, find the people flowing out of this country, going to the Eastern side of the continent, or to South Africa or some other place where openings exist for surplus population. Despite the high cost of living in Western Australia—and it is useless to deny that the cost is high—still we have people coming here from the Eastern States and—I am glad to say this—finding the conditions of this country such that they very rapidly become absorbed in our general population. I am aware that a certain amount of difficulty exists on the Eastern Goldfields in securing employment; but in no industrial community can the relations between supply and demand in the labour market be so nicely adjusted that there will not, at times, be some people who are unable to get work, and at other times some people who are unable to secure workers. At any rate, this much is certain: if wages happened to be even a trifle lower

than they are on the Eastern Goldfields, there would be little lack of employment. As showing the faith which the workers on the goldfields have in the resources of the country and in the power of the capitalists of this country to pay good wages, I may point out that we do not find those workers preparing to give up to any extent the high wages which have ruled so far. They prefer, as they have a perfect right to prefer, to judge the market. Rather than accept employment at wages lower than the ruling rate, they go without work. Here, again, I do not in any way blame the workers. They are the best judges of their own business. If a man thinks that by standing out for a certain time he can keep up the rate of wages, let him do so; he would be doing merely what we should do if we were placed in a similar position, and thought that thus we could secure a better reward for our exertions.

THE PREMIER: Look at the great bodies of men who have recently had their wages fixed for 12 months ahead on the assumption that the cost of living is high—timber mill employees, miners, and so forth.

MR. MORAN: The Arbitration Court must have overlooked the automatic reduction of the sliding scale.

MR. NANSON: The point raised by the Premier brings us to another aspect of the question. The working man has to consider whether he prefers a high cost of living in Western Australia with employment more abundant than it is in any other State of this continent, or a greatly reduced cost of living with employment reduced to the intense degree of scarcity prevailing in the Eastern States. Why, it is not very long since the South Australian Government, in order to cope with the unemployed difficulty, were providing work not at a wage, mind, but merely at bare rations, merely bare subsistence. Here we are in the fortunate position of being able to give the workers, under the Arbitration Act, a minimum wage fixed in accordance with a standard indeed liberal. But in South Australia under the great pressure of supply and demand, a pressure that cannot be absolutely overcome, no matter what legislation you pass, it has been found necessary in order to save the workmen from starving to offer em-

ployment at a bare subsistence, not for money at all but for a daily ration. That is the unemployed question in South Australia. The hon. member (Mr. Taylor) reminds me that we will have the unemployed question here. Perhaps we shall. We shall be fortunate if we escape it, but do not let us hasten the time when we shall have that question to cope with. There is one factor perhaps that more than any other accounts for the prosperity of Western Australia at the present time. Is it not the confidence that the people of Western Australia have in the future of the country? Is it not the confidence that the people outside have in Western Australia as a field for investment? Does anyone think that confidence will be maintained if we have a falling revenue and if we have a deficit instead of a surplus? The most deadly blow that can be aimed at that confidence would be a big drop in the revenue and inability of the Treasurer to make his income correspond with his expenditure. Depend upon it, we shall act wisely in recognising the wisdom of leaving well alone. It is easy now to talk lightly of having too much revenue; it is easy, as the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) in this House the other night suggested, that we should cut off the revenue because it is a dangerous thing to have too much. There may be some danger in being unduly rich, but I never yet heard of a private individual, because of the danger of his riches, voluntarily surrendering a large portion of his income. Because there may be some danger in the spending power the Government possess in the country, should we incur an infinitely greater danger by reducing the revenue and the capacity we possess of developing the resources of our country? When during the recess I happened to go to the Eastern Goldfields, and ventured to urge that Western Australia should continue upon that borrowing policy with which the name of Sir John Forrest is so prominently associated—when I ventured to urge that it was perfectly safe in borrowing money for carrying out reproductive works, that is public works that would earn the interest on the capital expended on them, I was told by the labour leaders in that part of the State that it was a mistake to borrow; that public works should be constructed

out of revenue; that we should shut down on the borrowing; that it tended to become excessive, and that we should construct the greater part if not all of our public works out of revenue. Whatever we may think of that view, if we look at the existing condition of the London money market we will see what the position of the money-lender at the present time is as far as Australia is concerned. If the Treasurer was in his place he would bear me out in what I say that at the present time it is no easy matter to float an Australian loan on the London market. It is ridiculous in the case of a country like Western Australia that it should be so, when we consider our bounding revenue and the manner in which our resources are opening up the country; but the solid fact remains that the London financier is determined he will hold the purse strings tight so far as State borrowing is concerned. With this fact staring us in the face it is essential, if we are to continue the development of the country in order that we may in that way make up to some extent our inability to borrow largely, the Parliament of the country will have to be in a position to vote sufficient revenue to carry out pressing public works. When we consider the vast territory of Western Australia, when we consider the enormous potentialities of this country under conditions of wise expenditure and development, if we could borrow as much as we liked for interest-bearing works, there would still be a heavy demand on the revenue of the country to carry on public works that cannot bear interest. Whatever may be the facts in regard to borrowing, all members of the House hope that we shall be able, in this country, to continue the policy inaugurated since the adoption of responsible government, of confining our borrowings almost entirely to works that are capable of earning some amount of interest. In a country of this kind large sums are required every year for the making of roads through country districts, to put up public buildings in different parts of Western Australia that in the past have been constructed out of revenue. It is more than necessary at the present time we should continue in that course, because it is no longer as easy as it was a few years ago to raise money in the

London market for this purpose. I remember in regard to the last Victorian loan, in the schedule of works proposed to be undertaken there appeared a large sum, I think if I remember aright it was a million sterling, for making roads through that small State of Victoria. Victoria is in the position of having to borrow money for these works. Western Australia within the last ten years, if it has spent any borrowed money on roads has spent a very small amount indeed. I think with our vast revenue we should be able to continue to provide that works of this description shall be paid for out of revenue. But there is one more aspect of the question to which I should like to refer before I sit down. It is this, that if in Western Australia we are to continue to have a high revenue, if the sliding scale is to be maintained, a very heavy responsibility rests not only on the shoulders of the Government but on the shoulders of every member of the House, to see that that vast revenue is wisely expended. There can be no question that if it can be shown that the cost of ordinary administration is mounting up, and that despite our high revenue less and less money is available for the construction of public works out of revenue, then we shall seriously have to consider whether the time has not come to reduce our taxation, because the only advantage of this high taxation is that the money so raised is used not in supporting an inflated civil service, not in extravagance or in unnecessary expenditure on ornamental and general purposes, but in opening up and developing the resources of Western Australia. I shall listen, as I suppose every member of the House will listen next week, to the Budget speech which the Treasurer will have to make to us, and I hope when the Treasurer makes that statement he will be able to show exactly how much money has been spent in public works, how much went towards administrative purposes, and how much went to defray the interest on our public debt. If we find an unduly large proportion of our revenue is spent in paying the salaries of a huge civil service, then undoubtedly it will be the duty of the House to intervene and let the Government understand, if they are not willing to do it themselves, that the

House at any rate insists that the expenditure on salaries must be brought down, that the civil service must, as far as it practicable to do so, be reduced, and that for every pound of revenue raised by the taxation of the people, we get a good solid pound's worth of benefit to the country in expenditure. If during the present financial year the Government are unable to afford us satisfaction on that point, if it should appear that the great revenue now being raised in Western Australia is being expended extravagantly, then undoubtedly the question of abolishing the sliding scale will have to come up. The only possible justification for the sliding scale is that it is raising revenue that can be used with advantage in developing the resources of the country. We can absolutely put on one side the question of protection to the farmers. What protection can there be in small duties which are being reduced at the rate of one-fifth every year? With the knowledge I have of the farmers in my own constituency, I never met a farmer who attached much value to the sliding scale from that point of view. It is of value to the farmer in one respect, that it enables the Government to find the funds with which to open up our country: that is the very best assistance that can be given to the farmer. Whether we open up mining country or agricultural country, we are equally inducing settlement; we are equally helping to find work for the farmer; we are equally adding to the wealth of Western Australia. It is because I believe that in the present condition of the loan market in London a very large revenue is necessary if this country is to be prevented from going back, that I intend to support the retention of the sliding scale. I join with every member of the House in deploring the fact that the cost of living should be so high; but I rejoice, despite the high cost of living, that it should be accompanied with an equally high rate of prosperity. I do not know at the present time, if we look the whole world through, that we will find a more favoured country than Western Australia. When we remember how easy it is by a little unwise interference to upset that admirable condition of things, we may well pause and decide that the wiser course, the more politic course, the more patriotic course is to let

the sliding scale stand at present, and leave well alone.

MR. HASTIE (in reply): I feel certain there will be a sigh of relief from members of the House when I have finished and a vote has been taken. It is six weeks since we started to discuss this question. I have had two experiences with this question. During the last session I was very anxious to see that whatever took place with the motion, we should finish the debate in one day. Then I was very strongly blamed for delaying the discussion of the motion. This year I have had the opposite experience. About six weeks ago the motion was first brought before the House and it has been frequently adjourned since then to enable several members to take part in the discussion, and to make up their minds which way they will cast their votes. I have also been blamed for delaying the motion; but with the exception of one day when, at my instance, the debate was adjourned owing to the absence of half-a-dozen members of the House who were at the funeral of the late Mr. Reside, I did my best to bring the motion to a conclusion at an early period. We now have before the House the motion which members will remember having seen so often on the Notice Paper, to which an amendment has been moved by the member for West Perth, seeking to strike out the words "potatoes, onions, and flour." These articles are still to remain and come under the inter-State duties. The amendment also proposes to add the words "fruit, vegetables, honey, jams, meats, and fish." I wish to say candidly I do not desire to have the words "potatoes, flour, and onions" omitted, and when a division is taken I shall vote for the original motion being carried, and if the original motion is not carried, then I shall certainly vote for the amendment of the member for West Perth.

MR. MORAN: That depends on how the question is put.

MR. HASTIE: So far as I have observed in this House, it is the custom of Mr. Speaker to first put the motion, and afterwards put the amendment; so that members who look on this question as I do will have an opportunity of voting for the amendment, if the motion is not carried. I trust members will

consider the position we are in before they cast their vote on this question. Next week we shall have the Financial Statement of the Treasurer, and it is only fair that the Treasurer should be made aware of the opinion of the House in regard to inter-State duties before he brings in his Budget; these being the only inter-State duties with which this House has the power to interfere, or even to influence. The Treasurer has given us notice that he will oppose the motion, and he has stated one ground only, that he as Treasurer wishes to get as much money as he can lay his hands on. No doubt he will be thankful to this House if it wishes to give him less revenue than he would otherwise receive, and that less revenue should be expended. In my remarks I shall not lecture members as to what they ought to do. I shall not point out their consistency or their inconsistency. Every member returned here has a personal responsibility, not particularly to any party in this House, but to his constituents; and every member should consider this question from that point of view alone. It is true the members from the goldfields have expressed their wishes strongly for a reduction of the food duties, and I hope their example will be followed by every member who represents a metropolitan constituency. If he does not, then I am not the person who will say I blame him. I only ask each member to consider the question quite apart from any political party, and to consider only what is best for him to do in the interests of the country. The member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) somewhat puzzled me to-night when discussing the motion and the amendment, and it was only at the last moment that he informed the House he would not vote for reducing the revenue. He appeared to be puzzled to know what the Treasurer would do if the House were to take off these duties, and the hon. member apparently anticipated there would be a loss of revenue to the extent of about £70,000 for the year. If my memory serves me correctly, the last estimate put forward by the Treasurer was a loss of something like £60,000 for the year. But surely no hon. member, with our experience of revenue during the last eighteen months and at the present moment, can anticipate that if the food

duties are cut off we will have any loss at all. Experience shows that our revenue has increased, and so far as we can judge it must increase in the future. It is true that from to-day the sliding scale is reduced 20 per cent.; but there is 20 per cent. not only on the items mentioned in the motion and in the amendment, but on all the other articles imported from other States. [MR. MORAN: On all articles produced in other States.] But no one here has suggested that we will not have a large increase of general revenue for the current year; so it is hardly fair to say that if we reduce this taxation we will be short of revenue by £70,000. We may be certain that the estimated loss of £70,000 through reduction of these duties will be more than made up by the increased amount from the general revenue of the country. The member for the Murchison went on to ask: "Is taxation excessive in this country?" And he answered that, judging by the standards in other States in Australia, it certainly is excessive. He also said that a higher general standard of prosperity obtains in this country than in most other countries in the world. That also I am bound to say, so far as I can judge, is absolutely true; but the hon. member stopped there and did not tell us that there is in this country, with our high standard of prosperity, a large proportion of people who find great difficulty in making ends meet. This country is more prosperous than other countries largely because the adult population, the bread-winners of the country, are immensely greater in proportion than in any other part of Australia. Besides that, we have been particularly anxious in this country to encourage men not only to come here, but to bring their wives and families to settle in the country; and although the standard of comfort on the goldfields may be good, and although wages may be better than in almost any other part of Australia, yet neither the hon. member nor any other member will suggest that it is possible for workers on the Eastern Goldfields to live with their wives and an ordinary number of children, and be in a good financial position. That is unfortunately true because the cost of living is so great. It is not to be judged by the single men, but is to be judged

always by the family, and I wish the hon. member had considered that. He said also that compared with the Eastern States we were getting a large increase of population from those States. And why? Because there is at present an almost universal slump in the Eastern States. Almost every State complains that it cannot find employment for its people, and they come here not because this country offers better attractions, but because the other States offer less attractions than they have done for many years past. The hon. member unwittingly led the House astray by telling us that some time ago many miners in the Eastern States obtained a general rise of wages by arbitration, and the Premier interjected that they got their wages fixed for 18 months. I wish to inform the leader of the Opposition that there was not, generally speaking, a rise of wages made by the decision of the Arbitration Court. The standard rate of wages is the same as before, and only a certain section of employees got their wages definitely fixed.

THE PREMIER: Was not the cost of living the basis on which that standard was fixed?

MR. HASTIE: The cost of living is one of the elements that will always be considered by an arbitration court. I am speaking as to whether there was a general rise in wages, to support the conclusion of the leader of the Opposition that we in this State are in a particularly prosperous condition as compared with workers in other States. I say that there was not a general rise. The Court decided to take not the highest nor the lowest, but a happy medium; and to save farther trouble it definitely fixed that standard for 18 months. From the goldfields point of view that is not a great matter, because during seven or eight years the wages have remained pretty normal, and have not fallen generally. The member for the Murchison also seemed frightened that we are to have a falling revenue, and he told us that the prosperity of this country depended principally on our credit in London. That is a curious statement from such a good financial authority, because Western Australian stock, so far as I have observed, are at a lower price in London than the stock of any other Australian State.

MR. MORAN: That is since the change of Government. Our stock has gone down three per cent.

MR. HASTIE: If our credit in London is lower than that of any other State in Australia, then according to the argument of the leader of the Opposition we must be less prosperous than they are. Our prosperity does not depend upon our credit in London, but on the productiveness of this State. Our credit will rise, and it may fall, in London independently to a large extent of what takes place here. On the whole, our credit must rest alone on the productiveness of this State. I agree that if we are to have a large revenue, we should see that it is expended judiciously. I shall always back up the hon. member in seeing that whatever public works are constructed shall be constructed from revenue and not from loan. But it is not wise surely for us to take revenue solely from these indirect sources—not from those who can best afford but from those people who can least afford to pay it, and to devote the money to improving the different parts of the country. If the hon. member is really serious in desiring to stop loans and to construct public works out of revenue, as I am, then let him bring forward a proposal by which we can raise some direct taxation, and with it construct public works. Generally the objection to the motion, and also to the amendment, urged by several members, is that the money must be obtained. If so, I submit this form of taxation is not the best for raising the money. If the £30,000, or £40,000, or £50,000 which would be sacrificed by the adoption of the motion or the amendment is still left to the Treasurer by the defeat of the motion, I have no doubt the hon. gentleman will find ways and means of spending it. No one fears that, if the motion should be carried, the country will not maintain its present measure of prosperity, or that the Treasurer will not be able to finance without difficulty. If he brings forward a proposal to raise any money he may require in the place of that which the removal of these duties will deprive him of, I feel quite certain, from what I know of the House, that hon. members will readily agree to such a proposal. But surely we ought not to continue to levy taxation in the present form. The

other objection brought forward to the adoption of the motion is that somehow or other the duties constitute a protection to the farmers. Only one or two members have seriously raised that contention, the others being very like the farmers I have met in this country, with whom the belief amounts merely to a sort of pious hope. However often certain hon. members are asked to explain how and why the duties protect the farmers, they always fail to give the information. In introducing this motion I expressed my own views concerning the farmers of Western Australia, and since then I have been severely blamed for eulogising them. The member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) strongly advised me, before speaking on the subject again, to go and see the farmers. I have followed that advice. Since I last spoke on this motion I have travelled about among the farmers a good deal. I have gone, I have seen, and to a great extent I have been conquered by the farmers; but my experience among them has taught me that in proportion to the amount of labour they expend on their farms, they are undoubtedly the best-off class in the whole community, and are in many times a better position than are the farmers of any other part of Australia. The prices they obtain for their products are good, and the demand for their products is practically unlimited. The climate is regular, drought being unknown.

MR. MORAN: The railway rates are bad.

MR. HASTIE: The average of the railway rates is the lowest in Australia, so far as I know; and moreover the farmers' destinies are presided over by a sympathetic, patriarchal Administration, which rarely refuses any reasonable demands. The Western Australian farmer lives where "every prospect pleases and only"—Governments are vile. At any rate the farmers, so far as I remember, found fault with nothing in this country except its government. One word more. The member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) charged myself and other members with being actuated, in bringing forward this motion, by a desire to rob the poor farmer; to let the miners and the workers generally have more money to spend in drink and in gambling on horse races, at the expense of the farmer. I hardly

think the House took that contention quite seriously. It is perfectly fair to say, however, that my experience leads me to consider the Western Australian farmer a particularly sober-living man, if he is well situated, residing about ten miles from the nearest "pub." Still, my experience of the people of Western Australia as a whole, is that no distinction can be drawn between any one class and another. My knowledge of the goldfields community enables me to say that it is much rarer to see a man under the influence of liquor on the goldfields than it is in any other part of the State. Seriously and finally, I again ask the House to remember the position we are in. We are now called on to say whether the food of the people is to be taxed. It remains with us to direct the Treasurer how to prepare his Estimates in that respect. I hope that hon. members, or at any rate a majority of hon. members, will vote with me for this motion; and, in the event of the motion being lost, they will, I hope, vote for the amendment moved by the member for West Perth.

Question—that the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the question—put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	35
Noes	...	...	2

Majority against ... 33

AYES.

Mr. Atkins
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Diamond
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Gordon
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Harper
Mr. Hastie
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Higham
Mr. Holman
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Hopkins
Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Hingworth
Mr. James
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Kingsmill
Mr. McDonald
Mr. Monger
Mr. Nanson
Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Pigott
Mr. Purkiss
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Reason
Mr. Reid
Mr. Smith
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Wallace
Mr. Yelverton
Mr. Jacoby (Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Hassell
Mr. Moran (Teller).

Amendment (Mr. Moran's) thus negatived.

Main question (Mr. Hastie's motion) put, and a division taken with the following result :—

Ayes	...	...	...	11
Noes	...	...	...	25

Majority against ... 14

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. English	Mr. Atkins
Mr. Hassell	Mr. Butcher
Mr. Hastie	Mr. Diamond
Mr. Holman	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Gordon
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Purkiss	Mr. Harper
Mr. Reid	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Higham
Mr. Wallace (Teller).	Mr. Holmes
	Mr. Hutchinson
	Mr. Illingworth
	Mr. James
	Mr. Kingsmill
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. Nanson
	Mr. O'Connor
	Mr. Pigott
	Mr. Quinlan
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Yelverton
	Mr. Jacoby (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

MOTION—CAMELS IMPORTATION, PETITION OF FAIZ MAHOMET.

MR. F. C. MONGER (York) moved :

That the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the allegations made by Faiz Mahomet in his petition to the House be adopted.

At the time the negotiations in reference to the importation of camels were first entered into, Sir John Forrest was Premier of the State, and was so for several months subsequently. On the 3rd October, 1900, Faiz Mahomet addressed the following letter to the Premier :—

Perth, 3rd October, 1900.—SIR, I have the honour to request permission to import camels from India in a ship to be chartered for the purpose. The number I wish to import is about 400 or 500. In support of this request I have, as you are aware, been for a long time in the habit of importing camels, and am well known in the colony. I farther have the honour to request that the men in charge of the camels be allowed to land with them. The number of men would be from 70 to 80, who are all natives of India and Afghanistan, and have been in the colony previously, and are able to write and speak English. I may remind you, also, that on a previous interview which I and Mr. R. S. Haynes had the honour of having with you, this matter was discussed. Will you be so good as to give me a letter containing the above

authority, which I may use in India to facilitate my proceedings?—I have, etc., FAIZ MAHOMET.

That letter was handed to the Premier, and at his request it was forwarded to the Colonial Secretary (Mr. Randell), who indorsed on it the following :—

Provided the facts are as stated, the Act enables me to do as requested, and I will have pleasure in granting the certificates. Although, if the persons mentioned can write English, there is no necessity for a certificate.—G. RANDALL, Colonial Secretary.

One of the legal advisers of Faiz Mahomet then addressed the following letter to Faiz Mahomet :—

The Premier, Sir John Forrest, referred your letter to him of the 3rd October to the Hon. Geo. Randell, the Colonial Secretary. I have seen him at the House to-night, and he has indorsed the letter which I now enclose to you. This letter, with the Colonial Secretary's indorsement, will be sufficient for you. I may mention that the Colonial Secretary is the officer administering the Alien Immigration Act, and not the Premier.—Yours truly, RICHARD S. HAYNES.—P.S.: Keep this letter, and attach it to the letters of 3rd October.

The indorsement made by Mr. Randell evidently referred to the men, but the original letter was addressed to the Premier. The next day the letter was sent to the Colonial Secretary's Department, and the then Under Secretary replied in this formal manner :—

Replying to your letter of the 3rd instant to the Premier, stating that you were about to import from 400 to 500 camels, and asking for permission to land from 70 to 80 attendants, natives of India and Afghanistan, with them, I am instructed to say that, if the men are able to write and speak English as alleged, they should be able to satisfactorily pass the test; this being so, the Colonial Secretary will be pleased to issue certificates on application, after arrival in the colony, if it be desired, although under the Act there would be no necessity for certificates.

It would be no use making a request to bring in a number of natives of India and Afghanistan, unless there was an object, and that was to accompany the camels.

[Attention called to the state of the House. Bells rung and quorum formed.]

MR. MONGER (continuing) : Matters went on smoothly until the 14th January, when Faiz Mahomet's legal advisers were informed that until the revocation of an Order-in-Council which had been issued in February, 1897, no camels would be permitted to land from any part of India.

All these negotiations took place during the administration of Sir John Forrest. In response to a letter written by Faiz Mahomet's legal adviser on the 14th January, a minute from the Under Secretary for Lands was sent to the Chief Inspector of Stock, virtually sending the matter on to him for consideration. In response to that, the Chief Inspector wrote two days later, to the effect that it appeared to him from the correspondence that the Colonial Secretary had advised Faiz Mahomet in such terms as he would consider to be a permission for the shipment of camels to this country; and the Chief Inspector remarked that this was very unfortunate, as he had himself refused other applications of the same kind. He suggested that the only way out of the difficulty would be for the Governor to exempt from the operation of the Order-in-Council this particular shipment of camels, and permit them to land at Fremantle or Geraldton, subject to quarantine restrictions. The then Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. G. Throssell) addressed a minute to the Under Secretary for Lands, stating:—

At this late date no one will be hurt if we give the permission asked for. It was evidently the intention of the Government to grant this permission.

On the 21st January, the Under Secretary wrote to the Chief Inspector of Stock as follows:—

Please note the Minister's minute and see the Secretary, Crown Law Department, re the matter, and have the necessary Order-in-Council drawn up, if possible in time for approval at this week's Executive Council.—(Signed) R. CECIL CLIFTON, Under Secretary for Lands.

This was an important point in connection with the business, because according to the report of the select committee, Faiz Mahomet's claim dated from the time at which instructions were given for this necessary order to be gazetted, namely after the 21st January. Matters were practically all arranged, and on the 26th February following the Chief Inspector of Stock was asked how it was that the necessary order had not been gazetted? His reply was:—

Virtually, permission has been given to the representatives of Faiz Mahomet to proceed with the shipment.

This clearly showed that as far as the department were concerned, some one

had given permission, and that it was clearly understood by the department the permission had been given for the camels to be landed in this State. For some unknown reason, this notice was not gazetted until the 21st May following. When Mr. Malcolm (assistant in Stock Department) in his evidence said he prepared the notice which did not appear, he was asked why the notice was not gazetted earlier, and his reply was that it would have been possible to have gazetted that order in February in similar terms to the order gazetted in May. Matters progressed until the Colonial Secretary (then the member for Cue) received a letter from Mr. Holman, residing in North Murchison, to the effect that plague was raging at Kurachi, and that it would be detrimental to the people of this State if camels or men from infected ports were landed here. The Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. G. Throssell) then caused a cable to be sent to India, to the effect that no camels or men would be allowed to come here from Kurachi. Matters progressed till Faiz Mahomet was advised that the camels were not sent. On the 21st May the necessary Order-in-Council was issued and duly gazetted. A farther change of Government took place; and, speaking with all due respect, the then Premier (Hon. G. Throssell) was the only person who could explain why that Order-in-Council was cancelled, and why that particular document was removed from the jacket among other papers relating to this matter. There were rumours that certain papers were missing, and when the new Premier (Mr. Leake) came into power and found that papers were missing, he said this matter must be undone. As to the reason why the particular documents were removed from the jacket, the Premier at that time (Hon. G. Throssell) gave his evidence to the select committee as follows:—

The decision was that these camels were not to be allowed to come in. And when the question came up before Mr. Moran, who was then Minister for Lands, I was given to understand that he emphatically set his face against the introduction of these camels, and caused a telegram to be sent to India that on no account were they to be introduced; so the matter went on. Then I found, without having been consulted in the matter, that permission was given by Mr. Moran, the then

Minister for Lands, that these camels might be introduced. This matter came before the Executive Council; it was never before the Cabinet. The Executive Council is merely a formal mode of approving of all matters brought before it, by passing the document for the Governor's initials. At the conclusion of the Executive meeting, I discovered that one of the things passed through in this fashion was a permit that these camels should be landed; and hearing strong rumours through the Stock Inspector, Mr. Morton Craig, that he and others had been approached, offering directly or indirectly £1,000 to anyone (to use his own words) who would engineer the arrival of the camels, I naturally was most surprised and indignant that the whole previous action should be reversed without any consultation having taken place between Ministers, and, on the impulse of the moment, I did what I immediately recognised to be a very foolish and wrong thing. I may say in passing that I explained it all to the late Premier, Mr. Leake. On the impulse of the moment I tore out the Executive minute and threw it into the fire. Not approving of the action, I instantly sent to the Lands Department to tell them that no farther action must be taken as to the landing of the camels; and the matter would have been settled, but while they took the action, they forgot to send to the printing office to withdraw the proclamation permitting them to be introduced; consequently my intended action to stop them and to adhere to the previous action of the Government was upset by the proclamation appearing next day in the *Government Gazette*.

It was only fair to the man who went away to India that such documentary evidence as this, which would seem sufficient for enabling him to arrange for bringing camels to this country, should have been available in this inquiry. This man had suffered considerable loss through changes of Government. Prejudices against coloured people should not lead us to act otherwise than fairly and reasonably. He appealed to hon. members to adopt the report with the recommendations of the select committee.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. W. Kingsmill): It was not the intention of the Government to adopt the proposal. If Faiz Mahomet had any rights in the matter, they were rights based on the law of the country, and were not abrogated in any manner by any change of Government, since the responsibilities of one Administration were automatically taken up by the succeeding Administration. Undoubtedly the injury, if any, done to Faiz Mahomet had not been caused by unfair incidence of legislation, nor by the introduction of any legislation

during the time Faiz Mahomet's negotiations were pending. Under the circumstances, Faiz Mahomet's remedy lay with the Supreme Court. There was a growing and regrettable tendency on the part of members to ask Parliament to usurp the functions of the Supreme Court. Solely on these grounds, and independently altogether of any prejudices which might possibly exist against Faiz Mahomet on account of his nationality, the motion for the adoption of the report ought not to be carried.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (North Murchison): Although a member of the select committee, he must oppose the adoption of the report on the short and simple ground that not one tittle of evidence had been adduced to show that Faiz Mahomet had been granted permission to land camels. Mr. Randell's minute merely provided that "if the facts were as stated" the Act enabled him to do as requested, namely to allow the landing of camel drivers. Mr. Haynes argued strongly that this was equivalent to a permission to import camels into the State. From the petition presented to Parliament it appeared that one of the reasons stated to have operated for the granting of the permission to land camels was the scarcity of camels then prevailing in the Murchison district. From his own knowledge of that district he could say that no such scarcity had existed; for just about the time when permission was said to have been granted, Dhost Mahomet, a Baluchi, left the Murchison with 110 camels, and shortly afterwards certain Afghans left with 50 camels, which facts clearly showed that the district was then overrun with unemployed camels. From the circumstance that Faiz Mahomet's application to land camel drivers was dated the 3rd October, that Mr. Randell's minute already referred to bore the same date, and that a letter was written by Mr. Haynes to Faiz Mahomet on the subject also on the same date, it was plain that the matter had been rushed. No doubt, Faiz Mahomet had suffered heavy loss; but that heavy loss was incurred in connection with a business transaction in which Faiz Mahomet, according to the evidence of his book-keeper, stood to make a profit of £17,000, and in which the Government were no-wise concerned. Faiz Mahomet had acted

on the advice given him by his solicitors. If he had a just claim, there were other ways and means of prosecuting it than through this House. That Sir John Forrest had given permission for the landing of the camels was a mere assertion, utterly unsupported by evidence. Mr. Randell's testimony was to the effect that, so far as he remembered, Sir John Forrest had never spoken to him, or in his presence, about the camels; that he had some impression Sir John Forrest was not available at the time; and that he had not known Sir John Forrest in the matter at all. In the absence of positive proof that permission had been given by Sir John Forrest to land the camels, Faiz Mahomet could not be considered to have any claim whatever.

MR. W. ATKINS (Murray): While having no desire to prejudice Faiz Mahomet's rights in the Supreme Court in any way, he yet wished to offer some remarks on Sir John Forrest's position in the matter. No definite proof had been adduced that Sir John had given Faiz Mahomet permission to land camels. Indeed, Mr. Haynes had said that permission was not asked because it was not known that permission was required. The following portion of Mr. Haynes's evidence made the matter plain:—

38. By Mr. Holman: If you had known of the Order in Council of February, 1897, at the time Mahomet came to you, would you have taken Mr. Randell's minute to be a lawful permission to land camels in this State?—No. Mr. Randell could not have given permission, because a proclamation and Order-in-Council would have been required. But of this I am as satisfied as that I am sitting here: if I, or Sir John Forrest, or Mr. Randell, had known of the Order, I need have only mentioned the matter, and proclamation would have been made.

39. That being so, would you not be responsible for the advice you gave Faiz Mahomet, seeing that the Order-in-Council was in force?—No. I am supposed to bring only reasonable skill to bear on my professional work; and I might well be pardoned for an error in not knowing of an Order which both the Premier and the Colonial Secretary, who had to administer that very Act, did not know anything about.

40. Yes; but I do not know that it was their place to give advice on a question like that when it came before them?—Surely they were the persons administering the Act; and we applied to them for permission, and they

said yes. That Order-in-Council is only a proclamation; it is not an Act of Parliament.

41. By Mr. Gordon: If you did not know of the proclamation, what was the reason for getting the permission? It seems peculiar to ask for permission if you did not know of the proclamation?—I knew of the Stock Diseases Act, though I did not know of the proclamation.

In the face of such loose assertions, the House would not be justified in taking any decided action, before a definite statement had been obtained from Sir John Forrest as to whether permission had been given to land the camels.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): Clause 7 of the select committee's report read:—

Your committee are of opinion that the evidence of the Premier who occupied that position on or about 3rd October, 1900, would materially assist in arriving at a quick solution of the claims as set forth in the petition; but with the explanations of such witnesses as the Chief Inspector of Stock and the Under Secretary for Lands, and their respective departmental minutes, your committee have come to the conclusion that Faiz Mahomet has suffered the loss referred to in paragraph 21 of his petition, and that the Government appear to be responsible for any losses which occurred after 21st January, 1901.

It seemed strange that hon. members, after reporting in this fashion as members of a select committee, should rise in their places in the House to appeal to hon. members generally not to adopt the recommendations of the report. Anyone reading the evidence must wonder why any report of this nature had ever been brought in. Not one shred of proof had been adduced to back up the recommendations of the report. The report should have been based on the evidence given before the select committee, and not on any departmental files.

MR. GORDON: The files had been laid on the table of the House for hon. members to read.

MR. TAYLOR: The report stated that with the explanations of such witnesses as the Chief Inspector of Stock and the Under Secretary for Lands, and their respective departmental minutes, the committee had come to the conclusion that Faiz Mahomet had suffered the loss referred to in his petition. The evidence given before the select committee by the Chief Inspector of Stock and the Under Secretary for Lands, it would be seen, did not support the findings of the com-

mittee. The only person who led Faiz Mahomet astray was his own legal adviser. The indorsement on the letter to the Premier was made on the same day that the letter was received. Mr. Randell was before the committee and stated that he never intended his indorsement to refer to the camels, as he had nothing to do in his department with the introduction of camels. He had only to deal with the introduction of Asiatics. Mr. Randell had pointed out that if the men could read and write the English language there was no necessity for a certificate from him. There was something behind this matter, or why was this hurry on the part of the legal advisers of Faiz Mahomet in getting the indorsement signed so quickly on the same day as the letter was received? Mr. Throssell had pointed out that it was rumoured by his departmental officers and the Chief Inspector of Stock that £1,000 was offered to him or anyone who could engineer the consignment of camels through. When these rumours were made, what sort of position did it place the Government of the country in? In the evidence there was no authority given by Sir John Forrest or anyone to land the camels. The legal gentlemen employed in this case wished to rush this business through. They were not satisfied with the chance they had before the Supreme Court, and Mr. Haynes stated that he had taken the advice of Mr. Burt, and it was decided that the wiser course was to petition Parliament.

MR. GORDON: What about Pombart?

MR. TAYLOR: The position was very different. Mr. Pombart stated he could prove collusion and malice on the part of officers of the department. There was nothing of the kind in this case. There was no one offering £1,000 to engineer Pombart through. The legal advisers of Faiz Mahomet wished to petition Parliament, but if they had a good case, no petition would have been brought forward. Legal advisers did not want retaining fees when they could sue the Government in the Supreme Court. Those supporting this petition had not a leg to stand on, and it was almost an insult to the House to bring up such a report as that presented. The members of the select committee were going back on their finding. If that was what select com-

mittees were coming to, the sooner there was an end to them the better. It was absurd to think that the Government should compensate Faiz Mahomet. If anyone should compensate Faiz Mahomet it was his legal advisers, who had told him to do certain things, which he had no authority to do. The member for North Murchison told the House that Faiz Mahomet stood to make a profit of £17,000 if the deal came off. But the deal did not come off, and one was glad of it. The member for York had stated that there was a verbal permission given by the Inspector of Stock. What was the use of stating that? Mr. Craig had no right to give a verbal permission when there was a proclamation prohibiting the importation of camels. Let members just read some of the evidence which was given before the select committee, and they would come to the conclusion that the whole of the misunderstanding rested with the legal advisers of Faiz Mahomet.

MR. MONAGH: Read Question 200.

MR. TAYLOR: This question was put by the chairman to Mr. Randell:—

And had it been in your power, you would not have placed any obstacle in his way with regard to bringing these camels?—If it had been in my department, I should have been pleased to do it, for I think they ought not to have been prohibited.

That proved nothing whatever. The Colonial Secretary had no power to give authority to land camels. The matter was not in his department. No one had any power. The indorsement of the Colonial Secretary only referred to Asiatics, and it did not require any permission to bring these men in if they could write and speak the English language. It was doubtful if they could do so, and it was doubtful whether, as had been stated by the legal advisers of Faiz Mahomet, the men had been in the country before: a few might have been. It was stated that Faiz Mahomet was receiving £20 per head to land 100 or 200 men in this country, and he had received something like £1,400 from the Indians or Afghans to bring them here. Was this a shipment of Asiatics to flood this country, or was it a shipment of camels? Were the men to work on the boat, and pay their passages as well? It seemed that it was "diamond cut diamond," and the "biter was bit." The member for York no

doubt thought that Faiz Mahomet had been badly treated, but there was not a tittle of evidence before the committee to uphold the findings of the report, and since the members of the committee had come before the House they had changed their opinion. If Faiz Mahomet had suffered any loss, he should try to get compensation from his legal advisers. It was to be hoped the House would not adopt the report.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas) : Looking at the several sittings held by the committee, and at the full attendance of members at all those sittings except one, it did appear to him that, as a select committee, this was really a model. As to the report presented by the committee, the whole matter could be summed up in paragraph 7. It would be seen that Mr. Holman, a member of the committee, had moved that a new paragraph be inserted in lieu of paragraph 7, and the new paragraph was to the effect that the claim of Faiz Mahomet should not be recognised. The division-list showed that the majority were in favour of paragraph 7 as it stood in the report. Another member of the committee, Mr. Gordon, had moved the insertion of another paragraph. He (Mr. Thomas) had read this report carefully, and as a believer in the appointment of select committees by ballot—

MR. HOPKINS : By pre-arrangement : that was the way select committees were usually appointed in this House.

MR. THOMAS : If select committees were appointed by pre-arrangement, it was the more shame on the House as a whole for permitting that to be done, though he said this without intending any reflection on the composition of this particular committee. He was satisfied from the evidence taken that the committee had not been partial in their examination of witnesses, and, in fact, the list of witnesses showed that everyone who could give important evidence had been called. The report being that of a majority of the members of the select committee, we should hesitate to refuse to adopt it. If by adjourning the discussion we could get Sir John Forrest's evidence on the point specially in dispute, it might be well to adopt that course. One would be inclined to bet that Sir John Forrest's evidence would be in Faiz Mahomet's favour. The members for

the Murray and North Murchison, who had served on this select committee, opposed the motion for the adoption of the report.

MR. HOLMAN (in explanation) said he had dissented from paragraph 7, and therefore opposed it now.

MR. THOMAS : The two members who had opposed the report might be assumed to have made it their business, as it was their duty, to see that evidence against the claim was called. The fact that such evidence had not been adduced must be regarded as strongly in Faiz Mahomet's favour. The motion for the adoption of the report would have his support.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco) : Perusal of the evidence left one wondering how the recommendations of the select committee could be supported at all. Boiled down, the claim came to this : Faiz Mahomet was damaged by not being allowed an advantage over other individuals in the matter of ignoring a proclamation, legally issued by the State in 1897 and enforced as against everyone else, prohibiting the importation of camels.

MR. MONGER : Only from certain ports. Camels could have been imported from Port Said without any permission.

MR. DAGLISH : Faiz Mahomet wished to obtain an advantage over other persons who desired to import camels. On the strength of services which Faiz Mahomet said he had rendered the State in the past, he claimed that an improper advantage should be conceded him by the Ministry of the day. If the Ministry of the day really promised to concede such an advantage, the promise was not binding, because a promise of individual Ministers could not override a proclamation by the Governor-in-Council. Apparently no attempt was made on Faiz Mahomet's behalf to have the Order-in-Council repealed at the time, and according to the evidence the Minister for Lands of the day (Mr. Moran) refused, later, to recommend the cancellation of the Order-in-Council. On May 24th a cancellation of the old Order-in-Council was gazetted, dated May 21st, and up to May 21st, 1901, anything Faiz Mahomet did was without the sanction of the proclamation : he had nothing more than a mere verbal promise. Faiz Mahomet took a trip to India to

make certain purchases; but he had no authority to bring in camels. The main purchases were made between January 20th and March 31st, 1901; and although it was claimed that he bought camels for the purpose of importing them into Western Australia, he had no power to introduce them.

MR. MORAN: Faiz Mahomet thought he had the power.

MR. DAGLISH: The State was not responsible if Faiz Mahomet was badly advised.

MR. MORAN: He was advised, unfortunately, by a Minister.

MR. DAGLISH: There was nothing in the select committee's report which was more forcible than the indorsement by the Colonial Secretary. The whole position seemed to be that if Faiz Mahomet suffered wrong he had a legal remedy; but unfortunately the Government did not take up that position when the committee was proposed. It was an unfortunate thing that the select committee was appointed at all; and he hoped, as far as the House was concerned, Faiz Mahomet would have to go to law to establish any claim against the Government. The House was not a proper judicial tribunal to deal with a matter of this kind without bias on one side or the other. The select committee having been appointed, it would have been reasonable to go into the question in a thorough manner; but the report admitted that the committee did not go into the matter thoroughly. The committee did not get a statement from Sir John Forrest, for importance would evidently be attached to such a statement from the then Premier, as it was essential to make the report complete. Why was not a letter sent to Sir John Forrest asking him about the matter?

MR. MORAN: What authority had Sir John Forrest to give?

MR. DAGLISH: No Minister had the power to give authority, therefore Faiz Mahomet had no legal position. There seemed to be a great deal of feeling on the matter in the House, which confirmed his statement that members could not deal with matters of this description in a judicial spirit. He would vote against the adoption of the committee's report, and against the adoption of the reports of other committees which endeavoured

to relieve persons who claimed to have grievances against others when there was a remedy in the courts of the land.

MR. HASTIE: As a rule, select committees performed useful functions; but it was to be regretted that this committee had been appointed. At the time the proposal was made he pointed out that if Faiz Mahomet had a legal claim, surely he could present his case before the law courts of the land. That advice was not taken, and members were met with the extraordinary result that the committee brought forward a report and asked members to infer from it that there had been a promise by some Minister of the Crown to Faiz Mahomet to allow camels to be imported. The member for West Perth stated that the Minister gave the promise; but apparently that was not in the report.

MR. MORAN: It was in the evidence attached to the report.

MR. HASTIE: It was not to be found. He had read the evidence and found nothing stronger than Mr. Randell's minute, which did not give authority to import the camels.

MR. MORAN: There was Mr. Throssell's minute.

MR. HASTIE: That was not a complete authority to Faiz Mahomet to have a privilege which was not open to anyone else. It had been said that the objectors on the committee had their opportunity to call evidence on the other side, and as they did not take that course they could not reasonably object to the evidence actually given. The claim was that Faiz Mahomet got special permission to do that which would have been illegal if done by anyone else. His statement was that he got verbal permission from Sir John Forrest; but surely if the then Premier did give that permission, he would have left a minute to that effect. All the members of the committee agreed that Faiz Mahomet had suffered a loss; but it did not appear who had caused him to suffer that loss, unless it was that he had been wrongly advised by his solicitor; therefore if he had suffered through acting on wrong advice, he should make his claim against the solicitor for compensation. The report was so inconsistent with the evidence as recorded, that it was very inadvisable for the House to adopt the report.

MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne): As a member of the committee, it had appeared to him that permission was given by the then Colonial Secretary, but it referred only to bringing the men, and not to bringing in the camels, because the Colonial Secretary had no power to admit camels. The legal adviser of Faiz Mahomet interpreted this permission to mean a permission to land the camels as well as the men; and the solicitor actually persuaded the Government that they had given permission, with the result that on the 23rd January the Government gazetted the permission to admit the camels. The Government were responsible for any loss incurred in connection with this matter after the 23rd January. The committee came to the conclusion that the petitioner had suffered a loss. The committee had not any evidence as to the amount of the loss incurred after the 23rd January, and they were not instructed by this House to inquire as to the amount.

MR. W. B. GORDON (South Perth): As a member of the committee, he felt like a lamb led to the slaughter. It appeared now that this House did not want the question investigated by the select committee, after having appointed it to do so. The Crown Solicitor had given the opinion that the Government were liable in the matter; and the evidence showed, with evident truthfulness, that Sir John Forrest gave verbal permission for the landing of one shipment of camels. Faiz Mahomet's statements, in the absence of statements to the contrary, must be accepted as truthful. Judging from Faiz Mahomet's manner, one must conclude that he was speaking the truth. Mr. Randell, who expressed himself very definitely, used the word "surreptitious," but in using it he had practically damned himself, because he had no right to sign anything of which he did not grasp the nature. However, Mr. Randell stated that he would have signed his minute just the same if he had known that camels were to be imported. Therefore, Mr. Randell's evidence was entirely in favour of Faiz Mahomet. The fact of the authority having been gazetted made the Government liable. Indeed, by gazetting the notice the Government admitted liability. Moreover, the Crown Solicitor had distinctly stated that the Government were liable. The reason why the matter

had not been taken to court was, according to Mr. Haynes's evidence, that Faiz Mahomet was at the end of his money, and that, apart from the legal difficulties involved by the plea, frequently raised on behalf of the Government, that any act complained of was an act of State, the case would have cost £7,000 or £8,000 and would have required two years' time to establish. The desire of some hon. members appeared to be to force a poor man into so unfortunate a position, in face of the fact that the Crown Solicitor had admitted the liability of the Government.

MR. HIGHAM moved that the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. M. H. JACOBY: According to report, great doubt appeared to exist in the minds of members of the committee concerning the position actually taken by Sir John Forrest, on which position a good deal hinged. In the circumstances, he moved as an amendment to the motion:—

That the report be referred back to the select committee, for farther consideration.

MR. DAGLISH called attention to the state of the House.

[Bells rung and quorum formed.]

MR. JACOBY: As there would be ample time to get Sir John Forrest's evidence before prorogation, he urged that the report be referred back to the select committee for farther consideration. From the minutes of the select committee he noticed Mr. Atkins had moved that Sir John Forrest be asked to state whether he had given a promise in September, 1900, to permit of one shipment of camels, about 500, being imported.

MR. H. J. YELVERTON (Sussex) formally seconded the amendment.

MR. W. ATKINS (Murray): The mischief was done at the time Faiz Mahomet went away to India; and Mahomet himself acknowledged that it was then he had got his permit, and that what responsibility the Government took had been taken then and not afterwards. He (Mr. Atkins) had therefore moved in the select committee the motion quoted by Mr. Jacoby.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): Was the oral promise of Sir John Forrest binding on the present Government, or would it make them responsible at law?

[MR. MORAN: No.] Then why refer the report to the committee from which it came? Sir John Forrest, if he had made such a promise, should have minuted it in his department, as such a promise would commit the country to an indefinite expenditure; but there was no such minute.

MR. MONGER: What about the missing jacket?

MR. TAYLOR: The member for Northam (Hon. G. Throssell) had stated in evidence that he had torn a leaf out of the jacket and burnt it, giving his reasons in the extract already read (by Mr. Monger), to the effect that he found the then Minister for Lands, Mr. Moran, had given a permit for the introduction of the camels, while he (Mr. Throssell) had heard from the Stock Inspector, Mr. Morton Craig, that Mr. Craig and others had been approached with an offer of £1,000 to anyone who would "engineer" the arrival of the camels; and that Mr. Throssell had been naturally surprised and indignant that the whole previous action should be reversed without any consultation between Ministers.

MR. MORAN: Where was the previous decision?

MR. TAYLOR: Its existence was affirmed by Mr. Throssell.

MR. MORAN: How could it be reversed by one Minister?

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Throssell's evidence went on to state that he had on the impulse of the moment foolishly torn out the missing page from the jacket. It only went to prove that there was nothing on record giving Faiz Mahomet power to import these camels. We had it on record that the Colonial Secretary (Mr. Randell) gave power to land the Asiatics. We also had it that he would have given power to land camels. There was no proof of any authority being given by Sir John Forrest. The House should deal with the matter. He objected to the report. Mr. Haynes led the Government heads to suppose he had a good case; but when we got a Premier with backbone, the legal faction found they had no case. Mr. Burt bore out the opinion that they had no case at law. He was also satisfied that Faiz Mahomet had come to the end of his money. Had Faiz Mahomet had money, the matter would have been tried in the Supreme

Court. If the House did not reject this motion, members would not be doing their duty to the electors and the people of this State.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): If we were to deal with the legal aspect of the question, the verbal permission of Sir John Forrest or any other Minister would not matter; but if we were going to deal with it as a question of right or wrong, Sir John Forrest's opinion would be of importance. The letter from Mr. Randell, backed up as it was by the Lands Department—the Minister himself and the Chief Inspector of Stock—was enough for any man to go to India on. There was no doubt as far as the Government were morally concerned. If he (Mr. Moran) were in office to-morrow as Minister for Lands he would give the permit again; and a Government that would go back on the promise made to Faiz Mahomet was not worthy of holding office for a day. Ministers were consulted and the Attorney General was consulted by him (Mr. Moran), and his opinion given. The thing could not go through the Executive Council without every Minister knowing all about it.

MR. HASTIE: Mr. Throssell did not know.

MR. MORAN: It might have escaped Mr. Throssell's memory, but that gentleman was the Minister who dealt with the whole thing. His (Mr. Moran's) final minute was:—

I have, since my appointment to this office, definitely set my face against any encouragement or permission being given for any new shipments of camels being allowed to land in this State. I have also done all I could to dissuade Faiz Mahomet from continuing the importation of the shipment which is the subject of this jacket.

He wired to Kurachi, but the camels were bought long before he joined the Ministry, and Faiz Mahomet had left the State before Sir John left it. The minute proceeded:—

It is perfectly clear to me now, after reading the whole correspondence up to date, that we should not any longer withhold formal sanction to the permission which there can be no doubt, by whatever means obtained, was obtained in substance, to land these animals before my time of office. I suppose we cannot doubt Messrs. Haynes and Purkiss's statement that their clients have been to some considerable trouble and expense, and have purchased several hundred camels already. Farther, that they have probably entered into

forward contracts for the supply. This being so, apart from the legal aspect of the question, we are, in equity, bound to fulfil our promise. But did it rest with ourselves as a matter of equity, we should have some discretion. The feature we cannot overlook, however, is the opinion of the Crown Law Department, on p. 18. Mr. Burnside having carefully perused the correspondence finds that Mr. Randall's minute is open to the construction that it was an accession to the request of Mahomet, and he goes on to point out that this opinion is strengthened by the minute of the late Minister for Lands, on p. 5, in which he says 'It was evidently the intention of the Government to grant this permission.'

Before that minute was written by Mr. Throssell, Faiz Mahomet had gone away. The minute went on to say:—

He farther says that the letter to Abbe Dullah and Mahomed Rassaul, refusing them a permission to land camels, confirms the fact that Faiz Mahomet had the permission, through a misunderstanding, to land his camels. He farther makes reference to the minute of the Chief Inspector of Stock, p. 9, which minute by the Chief Inspector of Stock confirms clearly that verbal permission has been given to the representatives of Faiz Mahomet to proceed with the shipment.

MR. TAYLOR: Who said that?

MR. MORAN: Mr. Morton Craig, the Chief Inspector of Stock.

MR. TAYLOR: He did not say that before the select committee.

MR. MORAN: It was in the written files of the department. The minute went on to say:—

And Mr. Burnside gives the opinion clearly that "in the face of these facts, it would be highly dangerous to attempt to repudiate the concession," as of course, were the matter referred to a law court, we should have to produce this jacket and disclose all its contents.

MR. TAYLOR: His legal advisers had informed him.

MR. MORAN: Mr. Burnside goes on to say:—

Farther delay on our part, therefore, would be injudicious, and would lay us open to the charge of unnecessarily harassing these people, who have undoubtedly got the best of us.

He (Mr. Moran) did not read the jacket carefully first, and he said he would give no permission to land camels. Then he read the jacket carefully through, and it was only when the Crown Law Department said the Government were legally responsible, that he held they were morally responsible. There was one little matter he was rather astonished about: the action of Mr. Leake and Mr.

Throssell. The action on the part of both these gentlemen was not what might be expected in dealing with a subject of this kind. It was a bit of theatrical display. Mr. Leake jumped to a conclusion, but he was mixing two cases up. It was unworthy of Mr. Throssell and Mr. Leake to make this histrionic display. Mr. Leake took notice of a rumour, but he was mixing up two cases. If Mr. Leake had waited a day or two he would have found that he was wrong, and no doubt would have been sorry for what he did. If Mr. Leake had not taken notice of the rumour, Faiz Mahomet would have brought the camels in, and it would have been a good job for Western Australia if he had done so.

MR. HOLMAN: There were hundreds of camels here idle already.

MR. MORAN: The more camels in the country the better for the prospector, whom the hon. member always pretended to befriend. If the House was going to be guided by what Sir John Forrest might say, then the report might be referred back to the committee. If not, let the matter be done with now and for ever. There was sufficient evidence in the jacket to prove that the Forrest Government gave the permit. The House should take the moral, and not the legal, view of the question.

MR. HOLMAN: The hon. member (Mr. Moran) had told us what he did when in office, and what other members ought to do when they might attain office; but the hon. member himself had minuted to the effect that tricks were used in getting permission, or rather that it had been made to appear, by a trick, that permission had been given.

MR. MORAN: The camels were bought before he joined the Cabinet at all.

MR. HOLMAN: The position of the Under Secretary for Lands was perfectly clear: the evidence showed that that officer believed his department to be committed. It had been said that Faiz Mahomet had no money to prosecute his claim in the law courts; but he would have something to go on with if Messrs. Haynes and Purkiss would return him a little of the money he had paid to them.

NO QUORUM.

The MINISTER FOR MINES moved that the debate be adjourned.

Motion put, and passed on the voices.

MR. THOMAS called for a division.

THE SPEAKER: There was not a quorum present, and therefore he would not be able to accept a division. If his attention was called to the fact that a quorum was not present within two minutes of a call for a division being made, he must adjourn the House.

MR. THOMAS withdrew his call for a division.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member could not now withdraw the call. We were in division, and the Speaker was bound to take notice of the fact that a quorum was not present.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member could withdraw his call for a division.

MR. MORAN: But the bells had been rung for a division.

THE SPEAKER: Yes; but we had been discussing the point of order as to a quorum not being present in a division, and that was why the bells had been ringing. No one had drawn his attention to the want of a quorum; but so soon as the division lists were handed to him he would be made acquainted with the fact that a quorum was not present, and he would then be compelled to take action.

Motion (adjournment) formally agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11:59 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 9th October, 1902.

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Papers ordered: Tick-infested Cattle	1491
Waterworks Inquiry, change of a member	1491
Bills: Justices, third reading	1491
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Railways Acts Amendment, in Committee, progress	1491
Indecent Publications, second reading (adjourned)	1495
Public Works, in Committee, progress	1497

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS: 1, Return of the number of applicants for Pastoral Leases in the Kimberley District. 2, Department of Lands and Surveys—Regulations for the Guidance of Surveyors.

PAPERS—TICK-INFESTED CATTLE.

On motion by Hon. C. E. DEMPSTER (in the absence of Sir E. H. Wittenoom), ordered: That all papers in connection with the recent prosecution of W. D'Arcy Uhr, for illegally removing tick-infested cattle from quarantine contrary to the regulations dealing with transportation of Kimberley tick-infested cattle to the goldfields, *via* Fremantle, be laid on the table of the House.

WATERWORKS INQUIRY.

On motion by Hon. H. BRIGGS, the Hon. B. C. Wood was discharged from attending the select committee; and, after ballot, the Hon. J. A. Thomson was appointed in his stead.

JUSTICES BILL.

Read a third time, and *passed*.

MARINE STORES BILL.

Read a third time, and *passed*.

RAILWAYS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL. IN COMMITTEE.

Resumed from the previous day; the MINISTER FOR LANDS in charge.

Clause 13—Commissioner may requisition for rolling-stock, etc.:

HON. J. W. WRIGHT moved that the words "apply in writing to the Minister