

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 21st August, 1906.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—LIQUOR LAW BREACHES.

MR. TROY (for Mr. Horan) asked the Attorney General: 1, Is it correct, as reported in the metropolitan Press, that certain persons were fined at Leonora for breaches of the Licensing Act? 2, In view of the opinion expressed by the late Judge Hensman regarding informers, will he withhold the proportion of the fines generally given to these people in the cases under notice? 3, Does he approve of the action of the Police Department in employing Italians to do that which they themselves were evidently unable to accomplish?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Yes. 2, It is not open to the Crown Law Authorities to withhold payment of one-half of all fines, penalties, and forfeitures to the person who has informed against the offender. 3, The employment of Italians or others as accessories or accomplices with a view to obtaining evidence necessary to support a conviction is not approved of unless absolutely necessary.

QUESTION—BANK BALANCES UNCLAIMED.

MR. CARSON (for Mr. Stone) asked the Attorney General: 1, Have the various private banking institutions carrying on business in Western Australia at any time furnished the Government with a list of unclaimed balances due by them to depositors and not operated on for six years? 2, Can such banking institutions be compelled, under any existing

law, to supply such information to the Government?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, No. 2, No.

QUESTION—PRISONER'S SENTENCE.

MR. CARSON (for Mr. Stone) asked the Attorney General: Will he, with a view to reducing the sentence if the circumstances warrant it, inquire into the case of a man named Cassidy who was sentenced at Geraldton Quarter Sessions, about four years ago, for tampering with mail bags in a brake-van attached to a train on the Midland Railway?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: The case of John Cassidy has already been inquired into, with the result that it was decided not to recommend any reduction of the sentence passed on him on the 3rd of June, 1903, at the Geraldton Quarter Sessions.

QUESTION—COPPER ORE CONSIGNMENT, LOSS.

MR. HEITMANN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it true that a parcel of copper ore, consigned by Troy and party from Day Dawn to Fremantle Smelters, was sent on to Adelaide by the Railway Department? 2, What compensation has been paid to Troy and party for loss of ore in transit? 3, Seeing that in the ordinary course the party would have received the returns from the smelters in about seven days, but owing to the mistake of the Railway Department they had to wait six weeks, is it the intention of the Government to compensate them for loss of time?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Assuming that Gray and party are the consignors referred to, yes. 2, None; but on proof of value the Department is prepared to meet the matter. 3, The consignors were informed in May last that a claim for a reasonable amount would be considered. A claim was subsequently sent in, but was not entertained because it did not cover that condition.

QUESTION—INSECT PESTS DEPARTMENT.

MR. H. BROWN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has his attention been drawn to a letter of Mr. J. J. Wallis, appearing

in the *Western Mail* of 11th August, 1906, which directs charges of neglect, incompetence, and waste in connection with the Insect Pests Department of the Department of Agriculture? 2, Is any reform contemplated? 3, Is the Department costing the country £12,000 per annum? 4, If not, what amount?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. 2, The staff has been reduced and every economy is being observed. 3, No. 4, £2,257.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES: 1, Regulation under Coal Mines Regulation Act 1902. 2, Purchase of Battery at Laver-ton.

BILLS—(2) FIRST READING.

Perth Town Hall, introduced by the PREMIER.

Contractors and Workmen's Lien, introduced by MR. DAGLISH.

BILL—FREMANTLE JOCKEY CLUB.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from the 16th August.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): This Bill is very short, and apparently a harmless measure; but there are one or two points about it which I think deserve a certain amount of attention from members. One of these points is that there is no provision whatever in the Bill providing for any audit in regard to the amount of moneys received under the trust referred to, and to see that such moneys have been properly disposed of; and no check whatever is provided in regard to the amount that may be deducted under Clause 4 of the Bill. One cannot help approving of the proposal for handing over this money by the Fremantle Jockey Club for Fremantle municipal purposes; and I wish to entirely support the Bill as far as that proposition is embodied in it. But the proposal to allow an unlimited amount as costs, and the absence of any proposal to audit the receipts and expenditure of the club when the money is handed to the Fremantle Municipal Council, seems to me an element of danger; and I think the House, before passing the measure, should see

that some check is exercised over the trustees in regard to the way in which the money has been disposed of, and to see that some limitation is placed on the amount alleged to be the costs under the Bill.

MR. TAYLOR: Amend Clause 4.

MR. DAGLISH: Clause 4 should undoubtedly be amended before the Bill is passed; or else the Minister for Works, who is in charge of the Bill, should furnish the House with some statement in regard to the costs that have been or will be incurred in the matter. Under Clause 2, there is a certain amount of indefiniteness. The trustees of the club are thereby empowered to devote the moneys received to certain purposes. In the following clause, with this object the trustees are empowered to hand the moneys in their control to the Fremantle Municipal Council, to be spent in this direction. But there seems to be again an undue absence of any check in regard to the trustees before handing over the money. If the Minister in charge of the Bill is prepared to provide some check on these two points, first in regard to the expenditure of funds by the trustees before the balance is handed over to the municipal council, and secondly in providing some limitation—a fair limitation—in regard to the costs under the Bill, then I am perfectly willing to assist in passing the measure. But without these two provisions, I shall certainly be compelled to vote in favour of the trustees retaining their trust until some such provisions are made.

MR. H. E. BOLTON (North Fremantle): I desire to support the second reading; but I should like to inform the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) that I will assist him, if he deems it necessary, to amend Clause 4 in Committee. The clause appeals to me as it appeals to him. Perhaps I may explain matters if I tell the House what I know of this transaction. Some years ago the Fremantle Jockey Club held races on a piece of land about four miles from Fremantle. Whether they were in financial difficulties during the whole of their existence I am not prepared to say; but prior to the winding up of the club they certainly were in financial difficulties. Then something happened that suited the club very

nically. The Minister for Mines resumed the land on which the club were conducting racing, and paid them £1,000 as compensation for the resumption. Most if not all of the members of the club were at the time unfinancial, and the club as a club was heavily in debt. Nearly £750 of that £1,000 was needed to clear off liabilities; and the statement of the member for Subiaco as to the accounts not being audited is hardly correct, for at that time all claims were advertised for and were cleared off; and, so far as I know, the accounts were audited and found correct.

MR. DAGLISH: But it is the work under this Bill that will need auditing.

MR. BOLTON: Just so. That is an entirely different thing.

MR. TAYLOR: What about Clause 4?

MR. BOLTON: I have already explained, and the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) might have heard had he been listening, that I will assist the member for Subiaco to amend Clause 4. I am dealing with a subject entirely apart from Clause 4.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, be more explicit.

MR. BOLTON: I am trying to be; and I maintain that 49 members out of 50 can understand my meaning. If the hon. member interjecting is unable to understand me, I cannot help that. The surplus remaining after payment of the liabilities was £270, which sum the trustees of the club placed on deposit in a bank. The money has been in the bank for some years, and now amounts to £290 or thereabouts. There are no members of the club; there is no club; neither is there any land on which to conduct racing, nor any racing that takes place there.

MR. DAGLISH: There will be no Fremantle directly.

MR. BOLTON: There is a Fremantle, and there are three parties mentioned by name in the Bill. I have no particular love for the parties, but I should like to see this matter cleared up. I think it a good suggestion that the £290 should be used for the improvement of golf links or of land on which golf is now being played. But as the member for Subiaco says, the Bill as drafted renders it possible to deduct £280 as costs of the Bill, and to pay only £5 to the Fremantle Municipal Council. I do not say that

this would be done; but as this is a private measure, members know that some costs have been incurred in preparing and introducing it. But I say that there was no necessity for its being a private measure. I think it would have been far better had the Government introduced it, with no cost to the club; and the whole of the money now on deposit could then have been handed over to the party to whom the remainder is proposed to be given. If the member responsible for introducing the Bill is prepared to give some guarantee that the expenses of its preparation and introduction shall not exceed a reasonable amount, members will, I think, support the Bill. But in its vague state Clause 4 empowers the club to pay all but £1 of that money to the gentleman who introduced this measure. In Committee I will assist those members who desire to alter Clause 4.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I have listened patiently to the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton); and so far as I am concerned I am no farther enlightened, and am not made to incline any more favourably to the Bill by his eloquent address to the House. The difficulty in my mind is with Clause 4. I may as well be candid. I think it would have been highly advisable for the Government to introduce this measure in another place. I am satisfied that Clause 4 should be struck out, and a clause inserted to the effect that the £290, or whatever the defunct club may have to its credit, shall be paid into the consolidated revenue; and the Government can then make to the authorities a grant for recreative purposes, if in the opinion of the House it is necessary that such a grant should be made. If not, the money can remain in the consolidated revenue for expenditure as the Government may think fit. I fail to see why a provision similar to Clause 4 should be in the Bill. The member for North Fremantle did point out that it was possible for £285 of this sum to be spent as the cost of piloting this Bill through two rocky Chambers. I do not see why there should be any cost attached to the passage of a measure of this description. If the Government thought it necessary that the Bill should be brought in, they

should have brought it in free of cost, in the same form as any other measure that comes before the House as a tax on the revenue of the State. While I hold these views, I wish to point out to the member in charge of the measure that when it reaches the Committee stage—and I have no objection to its reaching Committee—I will move that the sum of money in question be paid to the credit of consolidated revenue, and it will have to be for the House in its wisdom to decide how it shall be expended. I will support the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply as mover): I wish to assure members that I introduced this Bill to the House in my capacity as member for Fremantle, and not as a Minister. I think that this small attempted enactment has been subjected to rather severe and unwarranted criticism. I had no sooner finished introducing the measure than the Leader of the Opposition asked me questions which, if he had listened to my remarks, would have been quite unnecessary. Knowing that I was in charge of the measure, I think that members opposite might have notified me that they took exception to Clause 4; for that would have given me an opportunity of seeing my friend who introduced this measure in another place, and of getting from him some guarantee as to what the costs are likely to be. My desire was to take the Committee stage immediately after the second reading, so as to facilitate the passage of the Bill. As it is, I shall have to ask permission to go into Committee at the next sitting of the House, so that I may in the interim obtain the required assurance. At least, that is the course I suggest, and I hope it will meet the views of members opposite; for I am sure that their fear of excessive legal charges for preparing the Bill is absolutely groundless. At all events, the measure is in the public interest; the men in charge of the funds in question are not anxious to keep them; they do not care twopence, I suppose, whether the House passes or rejects the Bill. But the municipality of Fremantle is desirous of getting the money.

MR. TAYLOR: Clause 4 contains nothing to indicate that the Bill is in the public interest.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: But if you will read Clause 1, you will find the money is to be spent in improving and better fitting a public reserve for recreation, and for the promotion of athletic pastimes thereon.

MR. JOHNSON: The next clause rather contradicts that by saying that the money shall be handed over to the council.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will be handed over for that very purpose, to improve the reserve.

MR. JOHNSON: Clause 1 provides that the trustees may expend and use that money; and then you say that they will have to hand it over to the Fremantle Council.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It shall be lawful for the trustees of the club to hand the money, which they now have in their possession, to the council.

MR. JOHNSON: Clause 1 does not state that, but that they shall expend it on the golf links; and then it goes on to say that the council shall spend it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: In Committee these points can be clearly explained. It is difficult to give full explanation in answer to several interjections. But I wish to assure members that the Bill is framed in the public interest, or in the interest of the trustees, not in the interest of other individuals; and I think that when it reaches Committee I shall be able to give such assurances as to law costs as will fully satisfy the House, so that there may be no more trouble or question about the matter; and I trust the House will give the Fremantle Council the assistance it desires. The member for Mount Margaret has suggested that the funds should be paid into consolidated revenue. Now here was a piece of land in the locality of Fremantle, granted to a local institution for specific purposes; and the Bill proposes that the balance which remains over after the sale of the land and after all debts of the defunct club have been paid, and which balance has been for some years in a bank, shall be handed to the local authority to be applied for the benefit of another local institution. I think that is a fair proposal, and that there is no reason why this money, which is earmarked for a particular locality, should be paid into the general funds of the State. I trust

that the House will pass the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

EVIDENCE BILL.

RECOMMITTAL.

On motion by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, Bill recommitted for amendments.

Clause 11—Power to compel answers to incriminating questions:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved that the following subclause be added:—

(3.) The power conferred by this section shall not be exercisable by any justice or justices of the peace other than a police or resident magistrate.

This was brought forward in accordance with an undertaking given when the Bill was in Committee. The power in the clause would not be exercised by justices of the peace.

MR. HUDSON: It was pleasing to know the Attorney General admitted that he had made a mistake in regard to this clause. But the Attorney General would not go so far as he had been asked to go, or do what should be done; yet he had made a small concession as an admission of his own fault. As we could not expect to get from the Attorney General any more, or what was right, or what should be expected, we must accept what the Attorney General offered.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: One was surprised at the speech just made. When the clause was considered in Committee the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Dundas took exception to it. The matter was threshed out, and an undertaking given to recommit the Bill, and recast the clause to exclude from it the provision that the power should be exercised by justices of the peace.

MR. HUDSON: Would the Attorney General explain the distinction between a police magistrate who had not legal training, and a justice of the peace?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Police magistrates were selected with some care as to their qualification to discharge their duties, but justices of the peace—and he noticed the Leader of the Opposition was a justice of the peace—were appointed without any qualifications whatever. It had been the settled practice of the Crown Law Department to avail them-

selves of the opportunity, when retirements from the bench took place, to appoint duly qualified men.

MR. BATH: One was prepared to accept the clemency of the Attorney General without a remark on this question, seeing it was in conformity with a promise made in Committee. But the Attorney General had an unfortunate manner of dragging his coat-tails round in a promiscuous manner for members to tread upon. His (Mr. Bath's) object in moving the amendment was to exclude police magistrates also, leaving it only within the power of a Judge to exercise the powers contained in the clause; but the Attorney General was able with his majority to defeat the proposal. The amendment did not go as far as he would wish; but when the Attorney General was in charge of a Bill, we should be thankful for small mercies. There were justices and justices, and with a reasonable attention to their duties it was not so necessary that they should have legal training as some knowledge of the particular measures that concerned their duties. They should concern themselves with dealing out justice distinct from legal opinion; and he knew justices who took that view of the situation, and who often dealt out considerably more justice than did police magistrates. As far as he (Mr. Bath) was concerned, his parliamentary duties prevented him from occupying a seat on the magisterial bench for some time; therefore the joke of the Attorney General fell flat.

MR. HUDSON: No explanation had so far been given why the original law should be departed from. This power was confined to a Judge of the Supreme Court in the original Act, and no reason had been shown for extending that power.

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 12—Witnesses in revenue cases may be compelled to give evidence:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved:

That in line 33 after the word "person" the following be inserted, "except the accused in proceedings under paragraph 3."

This also was an undertaking given to the Committee. He had pointed out that it might be necessary to call other persons besides the publican prosecuted

for dealing after hours. And if a person who was on the premises was called as a witness, he might be giving evidence against himself.

MR. HUDSON: This was not for the protection of witnesses, then?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was for the protection of justices. Judges did not sit in courts of summary jurisdiction, and if these powers were conferred they must be granted to police magistrates or justices.

Amendment passed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved that the following be inserted as a new paragraph:—

(5.) This section shall not apply to proceedings before any justice or justices, other than a police or resident magistrate.

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Bill reported with farther amendments.

BILL—MINES REGULATION.

CONSOLIDATION AND AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from the 16th August.

MR. A. C. GULL (Swan): In speaking on the second reading of this Bill, I do so more particularly as most of the remarks and criticisms have come from the Opposition side of the House, and I want members on the Opposition side to recognise that members on the Government side are one with them in many of the remarks which have been made. I also wish to congratulate the Minister for Mines in bringing forward this Bill, which, after it has passed through Committee, will be very acceptable to the House. I quite indorse the remarks of the member for Ivanhoe as regards the danger of explosives, and the absolute necessity for the most stringent care being exercised in this respect. There is no doubt a great many of the accidents have occurred, not only fatal accidents when men have been directly blown to pieces, but fatal accidents have occurred in mines from the fact of charges burning off and filling the face with poisonous fumes. In the matter of ventilation, too, I am thoroughly with members of the Opposition, and will assist in every way that lies in my power to provide for such on the lines the

member for Ivanhoe has suggested, that is the boxing of the rises for ventilation purposes. Another vital point is the high stoeps; and in that, too, I am much in accord with the member for Ivanhoe. There is no doubt when a stoep is 15, 16, or 17 feet above a man's head it is dangerous, and a very awkward thing to detect the danger, although a fall from a stoep 10 or 12 feet high might kill a man just as effectually as a fall from a stoep 20 feet high; it is easier to discern that the place is dangerous at a distance of 10 feet than it is to see it at 20 feet. If we cannot have a maximum height there should be stringent regulations by which mining inspectors will have much greater authority in regard to this matter. In regard to the prevalence of putting up rises which are perhaps more than a miner may consider necessary, one always has to bear in mind that in working ore bodies it is a great deal easier to send ore down than to send it up; and although I admit that the dust nuisance is much worse, still I think this is a point where a great deal of care should be exercised, because the course adopted tends so much to easier and quicker work and to larger quantities being turned out than would be the case if one were confined to winze sinking. I quite agree also that there should be additional inspectors, and as far as the check inspectors are concerned I am prepared to think that the provisions as laid down in the Bill will be sufficient. Although I agree that it is difficult to get men to report to a mining inspector, for fear they might get the sack, still that is one side of the question, and the other side is that it might in some cases lead to too much interference with the mine manager. And I suppose, after all is said and done, none of these mine managers care to work on dangerous lines, and I am quite sure they would take the utmost care as regards danger; quite as much as they would do if there were provisional check inspectors. But I think that in large centres particularly we ought to provide more inspectors to keep in touch with the workings right throughout. As regards penthouses, that, of course, is a most necessary provision. I can understand prospectors taking additional risks, but I cannot understand that

any manager should allow such a thing as went on in the Boulder Deep Levels. Anyhow I am fully in accord with the suggestion of the member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan) that a penthouse should be used in a shaft 250ft. deep. The provision for the exclusion of foreigners underground, men who cannot understand the English language, is, of course, one of the best features of the Bill, and in that connection I almost fall in with the suggestion as regards foreigners working amongst machinery, except that I think the clause in the Bill deals sufficiently with it. There are so many leading hands besides men engaged underground that I do not think there is very much necessity to exclude foreigners above ground otherwise than is provided for in the Bill. As regards the remarks passed about the contract system, that, again, is another point that wants looking at from both sides of the question. I may almost say that it wants looking at from three sides of the question, because I recognise that there are two sections amongst the men themselves. There is a section that does not want the contracts, and there is a large section of first-class men who approve of them.

MR. SCADDAN: You are wrong.

MR. GULL: I do not think I am wrong. Anyhow, that is my experience. I think that members will admit that there is a divergence of opinion amongst the men as regards that.

MR. BATH: There may have been some time back, but it has been very much eliminated by the operation of the system.

MR. GULL: The question is often raised, and has often been very seriously discussed.

MR. HEITMANN: Not one in a hundred will go for it.

MR. JOHNSON: That existed about five years ago, but it does not exist to-day. They are unanimously against it.

MR. GULL: Of course, I can understand it from the point of view of the majority of the men, or a proportion of the men. But at the same time I realise that a lot of first-class men prefer it; at all events, that has been my experience. As regards the fortnightly payments, of course they are most desirable. I do not think there is any need to say more than that they should be adopted wherever possible. I quite hold with the exemption provided in the Bill by

the Minister as regards engine-drivers' certificates under certain conditions. That, of course, applies more to outside districts. I know that in my days on the fields we always found it a tremendous hardship that we had to employ certificated men and pay these men the same as a man who is in charge of a winding engine on the Boulder mine. The discrepancy is so great. I do not consider it would be wise to exempt a man engaged on a winding engine at the Great Boulder; but it comes hard on a man working on a little twopenny-half-penny winch, perhaps, when one is sinking in hard stuff, doing 15 or 20 buckets during a shift, and having to pay three men, as we had, 17s. 6d. a shift. That is a very trying thing for the prospectors, and I quite hold with the Minister's provision to exempt under certain conditions. Nearly all the prospecting shows are small affairs. As regards the big question of Sunday labour, wherever it is possible to do away with Sunday labour I say by all means do away with it, as long as there is no stoppage of machinery, because the stopping of machinery means a big amount of cost to get it going again. As long as the matter is restricted as much as possible and permission given to work on Sundays only where absolutely necessary, that will meet the case. When the Bill is in Committee I will assist in the directions mentioned by members on the Opposition side of the House, and I am sure this matter will be gone into entirely apart from the question of which side of the House it comes from, and that our joint deliberations will evolve a good and useful Bill.

MR. F. J. WARE (Hannaus): On rising to support the second reading of this measure, I desire to commend the Minister for Mines on the Bill. While the Bill is in no respect perfect, still I think we have here a solid foundation, and that when this Bill goes into Committee we will be able to make something of it, something for which the miners have been looking for a long time, but in vain. I am pleased that this Bill is being dealt with on non-party lines, members on both sides of the House having supported the measure, and having also supported suggestions thrown out by members representing mining constituencies. One

clause in the Bill which stands out prominently, in my opinion, apart from the others, is that of the employment of foreigners on our mines. I think that in this respect the Bill, even if it had only that one clause, would be worthy of a place on the statute-book of this State. The Minister is to be commended inasmuch as he has noted that it is dangerous and risky for white men, Australians, to work below ground with men who cannot speak the English language or read it. But I hope the suggestions thrown out by members on this side of the House re these foreigners working on the surface amongst the machinery will be taken into consideration by the Minister when in Committee. In regard to Sunday labour, the Minister has also made an attempt, although a feeble one, to deal with this question, inasmuch as he has inserted a provision that no man shall work more than 13 days consecutively on a mine. That, in my opinion, is certainly a step in the right direction, and I think that means may be devised when in Committee to improve this clause. I agree with the Minister that it is impossible and absurd to think about closing down our smelters during Sunday. These smelters cost a considerable amount of money to keep up the necessary heat, and it is impossible to think that men should knock off on Sunday and those smelters grow cold. It would take some considerable time and expense for those smelters to be brought up to the heat at which it is necessary to treat the ore. But while dealing with the Sunday labour question, I hope that, apart from the furnaces, the boiler and bailing men will be able to leave their usual work and enjoy their Sunday the same as other people do. The power of inspectors has been dealt with at some length by some members, and I hope that such power will be increased in the future. We have been told by the member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan) that inspectors have given orders for certain improvements and certain alterations to be made on underground workings of the mine to insure the safety of the miners below. The inspectors have gone away after giving these instructions, and on coming back to the mine at some later date have found their instructions have been ignored. They have issued other in-

structions and a similar case has resulted, no notice having been taken of their instructions. I hope that in a case like this inspectors will be given power so that they will be able to deal effectively with such matters. In regard to check inspectors, I hope that when the Bill comes into Committee there will be some provision whereby the system of check inspectors will be made practicable. Under the Bill as it is at present it would be almost impracticable for check inspectors to be appointed. While we find that the check inspectors, the same as ordinary inspectors, are brought under Clauses 9 and 10 of the Bill, and that they are responsible to the Government, the Government do not see their way clear to subsidise trades unions or other organisations for these check inspectors; and it is impossible to conceive that any miner will take the position of a check inspector under conditions that make his position in the mine almost impossible. It is well known that if any miner took the position of check inspector and made any complaint, his position would be vacant very shortly. With regard to penthouses, I was rather surprised to hear the remark of the member for Coolgardie that penthouses were more a source of danger than otherwise to the miners when sinking.

MR. EDDY: I said that some managers stated it.

MR. WARE: I thought it was the remark of the hon. member. I was rather surprised that a member representing one of the mining constituencies should make such a remark. I hope that I misunderstood him. I take his assurance on that point, but I certainly thought he said that penthouses were more a source of danger to the miners when sinking a shaft than otherwise.

MR. EDDY: I modified my remark.

MR. WARE: The member for Ivanhoe intends to move in this direction when in Committee, and I trust that members on the Government side will listen attentively to what is said, and vote according to their own convictions in the matter. Figures have been quoted to show that accidents are on the increase in our mines. This measure is brought forward with a view to preventing accidents, and I hope that members representing constituencies throughout the State will

recognise that in dealing with this Bill they are dealing with the lives and health of thousands of miners in this State. It is not my intention to speak at any great length. The matter has been fully debated on the second reading, and members on both sides of the House have commended the Minister for Mines on the introduction of the measure, though they have promised that in Committee they intend to move in certain directions. I trust that the Minister will consider the suggestions brought forward, and that he will meet members on both sides of the House as far as lies within his power.

MR. T. WALKER (Kanowna): After what has been said, more particularly by the member for Ivanhoe, on this measure, there is not much more to be said; but I sincerely desire to congratulate both the author of the Bill (the Minister for Mines) and the member for Ivanhoe, the former for the suggestive measure he has provided for discussion, and the latter for his excellent interpretation of it. If the Bill does not provide all that may be desired, it gives pointers in a direction which shows in what way we can get a perfect measure. The Bill is rife with suggestiveness, and shows a knowledge of all the difficulties and dangers and necessities of mining; and moreover, to my mind the most important feature of the Bill, it shows considerable sympathy with the workers, those who have to be miners for a living and have to receive wages from the managers. In that respect the Bill is valuable. It is in accordance with the popular policy which has for its watchword a "White Australia." It is the beginning, I believe, of an innovation in mining on the goldfields from which future operations will receive great benefits. I only hope that in Committee we shall extend the provision that is suggested in the Bill for preventing foreigners who do not understand the English language working underground, to all the working in places where the lives of men on mines are endangered by their operations. In the management of machinery, lives are just as much endangered, sometimes at all events, as in working underground, and no person should be in charge of a winding engine of a mine who does not under-

stand the English language, or even managing a boiler with a mate who does not understand the English language. I think it will be feasible with the foundation given to us in the Bill to make it impossible to employ these Italians, Austrians, and other foreigners imported straight from Europe and given employment by managers on the fields. I think it is a wise advancement in our mining regulations. Again I am pleased to see a provision suggested for giving to the men underground better air to breathe. In those small, deep stopes where in some instances men are for hours employed with no ventilation except that which the mere weight of the atmosphere from the shaft supplies, it is necessary to see that these men have breathing facilities, or enough air to keep their lungs alive; and more particularly should we be especially watchful in the case of those mines where explosives are used. There can be no question about it that the law as read from the New South Wales Act, I think it was by the member for Ivanhoe, making it absolutely necessary for two men to be employed (that is to say, that in all these workings men should work in pairs), and in cases where explosives are used, that there should be sent from amongst those working a miner to inspect, and not only to inspect but to report to the relieving gang—might well be introduced into this Bill. In short, nothing should be spared to give security to the lives and limbs of the miners, and that security should even extend to the examination, as suggested by the member for Ivanhoe, of the ropes and the general machinery of the mine. There should be provided some systematic means of inspection, so that not only the cages and the gear of the cages but also the ropes should be systematically tested, so that every man may feel his life is secure when he goes to his daily toil. On that question of contracts which should be introduced into this Bill, and which doubtless will be introduced or tested when the message gets into the Committee stage, I think the Minister for Mines will learn, when he makes his visit to the goldfields to make inquiries among the unions, that there is a "dead set," to use a vulgarism, amongst miners against the system at the present time, because it is not a contract system as it is worked; it is a means of enslaving men

and of reducing wages generally. That is its danger. If it were a contract upon a fair basis so that every man undertaking a contract could earn the standard wage of an ordinary working miner, there would not be any objection to it. At one time the supposition was that this would be the effect of the contract system. It was believed that gangs of miners might be able to take contracts and earn as much or more even than if they were working on the wage system. But what has the system turned out in practice? It has turned out that men are compelled to work for less than they might earn at the standard wages; and while they are doing that, they are preventing other men getting wages who would be taking their places if they had not taken the contract.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think that is quite borne out by all the evidence we have got by the Royal Commission.

MR. WALKER: I do not know that it is borne out by all, but I know that it is by some.

MR. SCADDAN: They did not obtain any evidence.

MR. WALKER: I know that during the time, a fair length of time, I was in Kalgoorlie I had deputation after deputation waiting on me laying complaints before me concerning this system of contract. They pointed out the use that was being made of it by the mine managers to reduce wages, and to a certain extent also to lessen the obligations and responsibilities of the mine managers, making the contractors, as it were, an independent body to work for a time for just what they could get, and if they were found to be earning more than they could earn as wage-getters their contract was immediately lowered. They had to work for less and less as time went on and as experience taught the mine managers that they could get men to replace them.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Would you abolish these contracts everywhere?

MR. WALKER: I think in all these cases of the ordinary working of the miner I would abolish all piecework. I think that when you have a large number of men employed under proper management with the proper bosses in the proper grades, your workmen under their protection will do more efficient work in

the mine, and the work will be properly conducted and with greater profit to the management, than by allowing I was almost going to say irresponsible bodies of contractors to be working throughout the mine. I think it would be more beneficial. At all events it would be safer to the men, because there is this danger on the fields where so many thousands of men are dependent purely on the wages they get out of mining, that the wages would be cut down. They are everlastingly the victims for getting dividends, and the particular mining companies who have their head offices in England have no earthly sympathy with flesh and blood. It is figures on the balance-sheet that interest them. The people working underneath the earth are mere figures to them. They have no sympathy with the miners whatever; and I am sorry to say that rich companies can always find bosses who will carry out their ideas and reduce the men to the very lowest stage of subsistence, in order that they can get the credit of making a mine pay and so that dividends may arise. There is no better instrument in the hands of the rich mining companies for reducing wages than this contract system; and I think that when this Bill gets into Committee we shall be able to say more about it. At all events the unions at present are against the contract system. If the Minister when he visits Kalgoorlie consults the men, as I know he will, to get their opinion on it, they will not hesitate for a moment to say that they object to this contract system. I admit that there will always be some who will be in favour of earning a little at the expense of their fellow-men. A certain number of men, as in every class of workmen, are only too glad to get into the billets of their mates. Then again, I am pleased to see that something has been suggested in the Bill for the appointment of check inspectors, but I do not know that the measure suggested here will satisfy at all events the large unions at Kanowna or in any other part of the fields. It is unworkable, as the member for Ivanhoe interjects. It is unworkable for this reason -- it is fitful. When the danger is imminent, it is deemed necessary then that a man should be appointed. He has to be appointed in a roundabout

fashion. A meeting has to be called ; he has to be selected and ballotted for, and he has to be sent on the brave task—for it is a brave task to him—of reporting on the management that supplies him with his daily work. What will be the result? What has been the result hitherto when, without being appointed by his fellow-men and given this invidious position, he has dared to complain even to the management in some cases of the dangers and defects in a mine? What has been the result? He has immediately been dismissed from his billet. And it is not only that the man who dares to go against the management runs the risk of being dismissed from that particular mine; but—and I am sure the Minister is aware of this fact—when once a man is dismissed from a mine, all the other mine managers learn about it. It is very little use for a man who has been dismissed from a mine for reporting or dealing with the self-will of the management to go to a neighbouring mine for a billet. He is a marked man. He is deprived of his livelihood on the field as a miner. He must either change his name or leave the country. He is doomed as soon as he has done it. Some check is needed, as every member is aware. In my short parliamentary career in this House I have had occasion to report to the department the lack of compliance with the reports of inspectors. There have been instances where the appointed inspectors of the State have failed to do their duty, or have done it perfunctorily. A portion of the duty has been neglected: the inspector has reported defects and an order for improvement has been made, or an order for alteration has been made, but the order has been ignored. This has been the case in more than one instance. I have one instance particularly fresh in my mind while speaking. It is not necessary to give the name, but the Minister can remember that I called on him some months ago in regard to this particular case. In that instance, there was not a man working on the mine but who knew of the danger he was running and of the defective ladders and the defective gear in every respect; and the danger every day to these men was enough, were it not that they were absolutely compelled to go down the mine for the sake of getting

bread for their wives and families, to keep those men out of the mine for ever. They dared not complain. No one dared open his mouth. If he had done so, he was a marked man and had to go from the district. The inspector had his attention called to the matter, and did complain, and insisted on improvements. But it was not until that inspector left and another inspector took his place that the improvements which were absolutely necessary for the safety of life were accomplished. Under circumstances such as these I have referred to, would it not have been wise if there could have been an independent worker employed in the place; I mean a worker independent altogether of the management, a man who dared to tell the truth to the Mines Department, who dared report to the inspector, who dared report to the management and tell them what was required; who could perform the full functions of a Government inspector, except that he would do it on behalf of the men as is done on behalf of the management?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Could not the Government inspector do that?

MR. WALKER: I dare say he could, if he carried out his duties absolutely and faithfully, and if there were enough inspectors to do all the work they are called upon to do. But there are not sufficient inspectors to be constantly on the watch in this respect. And then again, human nature is human nature; and inspectors are not less human than other people. It is not their fault, but it has happened in some instances that inspectors have been so well treated by the management, have been so flattered in every way that they find it hard in their hearts to tell the truth about a mine they have to report on. Again, owing to the paucity of inspectors and the distances they have to travel, and the times between the inspections, the managers know when to expect one of these inspectors. They know at any rate three or four days beforehand.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: There may be a few instances in Kalgoorlie where messages are sent, but it is not general.

MR. WALKER: It seldom happens that inspectors drop upon the mines suddenly, before there is time to make alterations or preparation.

MR. SCADDAN: Which he should do.

MR. WALKER: I am not saying anything against the inspectors. I believe for the most part they do their work very well, but they have too much work to do and too much ground to cover to accomplish what is necessary. It could not possibly do harm for the men to have an inspector of their own, on whom they could rely, a man in sympathy with them. What do the men want in an inspector? They want their interests guarded; they want their lives and limbs protected. There is nothing outrageous about that. The Government does much towards that by the regular inspectors; but the Government inspector is not always there to do something which may be required immediately. The inspector may not be on hand, but the check inspector may be. The men have no benefit in any way from a check inspector, except that he protects them from danger. To show members how dearly the men desire this, they are willing to pay for him; that is to say, if it could be done lawfully, I believe the unions of the State would pay for the check inspectors. But I do not think it is right to expect them to pay. These check inspectors might be reckoned as assistant inspectors to the regular inspectors, and therefore subsidised, as has been suggested by some speakers, by the Government, becoming Government servants. But they should be immediately in touch with the men on the mine in which they have to exercise their inspection, and they, as workers, are more likely to know just precisely the dangers that their brother workers are likely to encounter than the regular body of inspectors should be. I do not say the inspectors are incompetent to do anything of the sort, but these check inspectors would have more than mere knowledge, they would have actual human sympathy with their fellow men; and their object would be to protect them from danger, in the same way as the management protect their mines and take precautions to protect their dividends. One is protecting the lives, and the other the mines. We should assist men to protect their lives; and when the Bill goes into Committee, I have no doubt the Minister himself will take more or less the views which have been expressed on this side of the House. As

to Sunday labour in mines, I am glad to think there is to be no more of it than is necessary. This is one of the evils that has stirred to the depths the feelings of the population on the fields. There are opinions we may hold about Sunday or the Sabbath, but this is certain, that men require their regular rest, and if they are to have it, let them have it on the same day as their fellow men--have it and enjoy it. It will undoubtedly be a work of necessity in some mines to have a certain number of men employed; but extreme care should be taken in the permit given to the managers who employ Sunday labour. Hitherto I believe there have been open permits; that is to say, allowing managers to employ labour on Sunday, and not stating for what purpose or how many men shall be employed. I certainly say that not only should it be stated what the men should be employed for, but also how many men should be employed; so that the management may take no advantage of the Sunday labour clause; and the notice should be prominently posted on the mines.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That is the rule. The permit must definitely state the number of men to be employed.

MR. BATH: It is posted at the office of the inspector of mines.

MR. WALKER: But it should be posted on the mine itself, so that every worker may know the exact position. At all events, this Bill is more liberal in that respect than what we have had before. It points in a liberal direction; it enables us to get a Bill as perfect as possible. As far as perfection is possible in legislative enactments I think we can make this perfect. If it abolishes a large measure of Sunday labour which people are called on now to perform, it will in that one respect alone accomplish a great deal of good. Under these circumstances, I congratulate the Minister on the foundation laid down for building and constructing an excellent measure, which will be not only for the benefit of the industry, but for the men employed in the industry.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): In supporting the second reading of this measure, I desire to point out that the Bill is no stranger. I think this is the

third Parliament in which it has been brought forward. Unfortunately, in previous sessions time would not permit of the passage of the measure. I notice that each time it comes forward, it is presented in a more liberal form, and that is only what we may expect, having the experience of 12 months between each time the measure comes before the House. I notice also, as pointed out by the Minister in charge of the Bill, that it is largely a consolidating measure, for it consolidates the 1895, 1899, and the 1904 amending Acts. There is a number of new departures in the Bill, of which I am sorry the Minister for Mines, when introducing the second reading, did not give a greater explanation to the House, leaving so much for the Committee stage. There are a number of members who represent the goldfields and who know full well, from their experience in working underground under existing legislation, the necessity for the changes provided in the measure. A deal has been said on both sides of the House in favour of the Bill, and I am sure when the measure is in Committee I shall do all I can to assist in placing on the statute-book of the State as workable a Mines Regulation Act as possible. The member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan) has dealt very elaborately with this measure, as also have other members from the goldfields on this (Opposition) side of the House. I notice that this Bill gets credit for many things which are to-day embodied in our existing mining regulations. For instance, members on the Government side of the House emphasise the fortnightly pay principle, which has existed since 1904. The Mines Regulation Bill for 1904, passed by the Government of which I had the honour to be a member, made provisions for fortnightly pays.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It was by the amendment of your own Bill.

MR. TAYLOR: I would like to point out to the Minister that for the last six years, since I have been in this House, I have repeatedly, as *Hansard* will prove, urged the necessity of compulsory fortnightly pays.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It was omitted from the last Bill.

MR. TAYLOR: I am reminded by the Minister that it was omitted from the

last Bill; but I believe it would not have gone through this House without the inclusion of fortnightly pays, because we have had deputation after deputation to mining members during their tour through the districts, not alone from the workers but from the business people, urging the Government to compel the mine management to pay their employees fortnightly. That is practically provided for, and I am sure there will be no objection on the part of members to keep what we already have in existence. There has been a deal said in relation to check inspectors, and the Minister in charge of the measure evidently spoke with some authority by way of interjection to the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker), when he pointed out the necessity for check inspectors. The member for Kanowna pointed out that it was practically impossible for an employee on the mine to find any fault in the way of indicating the dangers which surround any particular part of a mine. My experience in mines has taught me—the same as is shown in every other walk of life—that when an old and experienced miner, who has worked in different classes of country, points out the danger which surrounds a certain portion of the mine which is being worked, other men with less knowledge of the safety of ground accept him as an authority, and in cases refuse to work there. If they do work there they are always on the lookout. Similarly in this House, if an old and experienced parliamentarian is recognised from his years of service in Parliament to be an authority on the procedure of the House, or an authority on constitutionalism, and he gives the value of those years to the House, younger members, and perhaps members who have had as long a service as that member but who have not made as close a study of procedure and constitutionalism, at once accept his dictum on the point. It is exactly the same in mining operations, when an old and experienced miner says, as he passes country, “I would not care to work there, it is not safe; it wants taking up here or taking up there.” If the underground boss hears he has made that remark, and that man has worked in some other end of the mine, that man may, as has been pointed out by the

member for Kanowna, find himself going up the shaft with his dismissal in his pocket; and he is also pointed out as a marked man. If he is found in any way, by his experience as a miner, to put the management to any inconvenience or supposed inconvenience in trying to make the mine more safe for those working in it, he is quite easily marked; and I would point out how easy it is in Western Australia to mark a miner, when members take into consideration that the companies are operating in nearly every mining centre in this State. We find a company in Kalgoorlie operating on the Golden Mile, and that same company is operating in Kanowna, in the Menzies district, at Mount Leonora, Mount Margaret, and a few places on the Murchison. We find one company operating throughout the length and breadth of this State, and if a man who has been in its employ in any portion of its property has made himself objectionable by perhaps casually passing a remark below, or in the interests of those who he feels are not so experienced in mining operations as he is, thus putting the company to any inconvenience, it is unfortunate for him to be marked, and he will not be able to get any more mining work in the profession he follows as a miner. It is easy to mark him when a company operates all over the State. If there were individual companies the black-mark system would not be so easily instituted; but I know full well what the black mark means in trying to earn a living. I have no desire to prolong the debate on the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: With regard to Sunday labour on mines, I find I was in error, and that the measure did include that provision.

MR. TAYLOR: I knew the Minister interjected without having refreshed his memory. I have Section 3 of the amending Act of 1904.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I meant the Bill brought forward last year. I find I was in error when I said that the provision was not made there.

MR. TAYLOR: I accept the statement made by the Minister. I want to point out that there is no necessity for me to make a long speech on the second reading, as the Bill has been threshed out not alone in this session but in two

previous sessions, and the only thing I am sorry for is that the Minister, in moving the second reading, did not give us more details of the new proposals in this measure, because when one brings down a consolidating Bill which has new legislation in it, it is necessary that the new legislation should be thoroughly pointed out by the Minister in charge of the measure. But I am sure the Minister will keep his promise to the House, and that when the measure is in Committee he will give the fullest information with reference to the new departures in this Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (in reply as mover): If no other member desires to speak in connection with this Bill, I would like to reply to some of the opinions that have been expressed in connection with the measure. I must thank members for the way they have treated the Bill on the second reading, and I trust that when in the Committee stage those members opposite—and I have no desire to blame them in any sense—will, in dealing with many questions which may affect the unions, give every consideration to both sides of the question. In all these cases, if we want to help the industry we have to consider the claims of all, and one great desire in front of us all the time is to endeavour to improve and better the conditions of our people. Still, at the same time, we must consider those things which are feasible, and which can properly find a place in connection with this Bill. The most important points that have been raised are in connection with the class of explosives that are being used in our mines, the question of ventilation, the question of Sunday work, and also that of inspections. There were many remarks made by some members dealing with the question of explosives which were, I think, hardly warranted, more especially if those members had read the report of the Department of Mines dealing with the inspection of explosives. Mr. Mann in his report states:—

The greatest improvement in the work of my department which has taken place this year has been under this heading, in consequence of the appointment of Mr. A. J. Guest as Travelling Inspector, and I cannot speak too highly of the excellent work performed by this officer during the year. In addition to

the actual work of inspection, his duties have included the issue of licenses and permits, and the sampling and testing of shipments of explosives whenever his presence in Perth has rendered this possible.

The report is rather long, and it shows that during last year we appointed a travelling inspector. We gave him an outfit so that he could go from magazine to magazine in the back country and see the mines, and take away explosives and see that they were tested. I see that he made 152 inspections of magazines and 206 other inspections. He condemned certain quantities in Kalgoorlie. He found some gelignite which had been allowed to remain there for some time and had deteriorated, and he condemned 234 cases. At Woodman's Point there was some dynamite which he condemned, and he also condemned some detonators. No explosives, no detonators, and no fuse are allowed to come into this country until they pass the department. We can easily make mistakes, because we do not test every packet of dynamite, nor every detonator—if we did, there would be none going to the fields—nor can we test every sample of fuse. But they take pieces from the cask, and every test which should be asked for is being made by our officers. Not only do they see that inspection is made at Fremantle, but we have now a travelling inspector going round throughout the goldfields, endeavouring to insist on every occasion that the explosives used must be of the best quality.

MR. SCADDAN: What quantity of explosives was condemned at Fremantle last year?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: One case of dynamite stored in the Government stores, and unclaimed, and one case of detonators, 10,000. It was all subject to test.

MR. SCADDAN: Was it permitted to land?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: When dynamite has been permitted to land it has passed the test insisted upon by the Analytical Department. There was a substantial test, but I cannot go into the technical details of the test. It says here:—

All explosives imported into Western Australia are sampled and tested immediately on their arrival, and are not allowed to pass into

consumption unless they conform to the required standard.

There is a set standard for all the various States, and it is the imperial standard which we insist upon here; therefore I think that the test which is being adopted is all that can be desired, and I say, more than that, we have a travelling inspector now who, as I have stated, goes from magazine to magazine, and carries an outfit with him so that he can make tests of the various magazines, and should he find explosives there which have deteriorated and which are dangerous, he has the power to instantly condemn those explosives. The new regulation as to fuse provides that—

No safety fuse whose rate of burning is less than eighty or more than one hundred seconds per lineal yard shall be used in any mine.

The manager will have to make his own tests with regard to that matter; for no matter how many tests may be made by the inspector, some fuse will occasionally "jump." Even though we inspected every coil of fuse, it would be quite possible that some little portion of it might, in practice, prove inferior. The inspector was telling me the other day that he made about 100 tests of one shipment, and found the fuse inferior. Notice was sent to the importers, who made tests of their own: and the inspector, at their request, went back again and made test after test, and could not find a single piece of the fuse which did not come up to the required standard. This shows how difficult it is to make exhaustive inspections. No matter how careful we may be, it is quite possible that at some time inferior fuse, or even inferior dynamite, may be admitted to the State. But the explosives branch are taking every care to see that no such dynamite and no such gelignite as would not pass the Imperial test shall be allowed to go into consumption in this State. Some members say the Bill makes no provision whatever for ventilation. In my introductory speech I told members that I regretted I had not the regulations to lay on the table. I had hoped that we should have been able to deal with the regulations while dealing with the Bill; but I promised members that as soon as the regulations have been placed in my hands and approved by the Governor, they will be laid on the table;

and they can be discussed by way of a motion, should any member think them insufficient. But the first general rules deal with the question of ventilation; and I think that every effort should be made by the department to see that our mines are efficiently ventilated. As to Sunday labour on mines, I pointed out in my introductory speech that I was not anxious to allow work to proceed on Sundays. The measure contains provisions which show that I am particularly desirous of insisting that at least once in every fortnight the men must get off on Sundays. But we know there are, on the Eastern fields, and more especially in the Kalgoorlie district, many classes of plants; and if we prevented some of the plants from working on Sundays, we should turn mines that are now profit-making into concerns of the very opposite character, and owners would simply lose money by carrying on. I speak of plants which include furnaces. But let us take the Ivanhoe mine, with 100 head of stamps. If we stopped that battery on Sundays, there would be no doubt a big loss involved by its stoppage and its re-starting. I have here a rather long letter from the Chamber of Mines, Kalgoorlie. It is too long to read; but I shall hand it to the Press for publication. It deals wholly with the question of Sunday labour, and the result of stopping the plants on Sundays. I wish members to understand that the Government do not want any unnecessary Sunday work in mines. In the exemptions provided by the Bill I notice a passage referring to sinking shafts in wet ground. We must amend that by inserting "when approved by the inspector." There are cases in which men sinking shafts in particularly wet ground certainly deserve exemption. I remember an instance on the East Murchison field, where we were asked to grant permission to sink a shaft continuously, and we gave it because there was such an inrush of water, and the country was so poor, that the work could not have proceeded had not the workmen been allowed to do it in the cheapest and most economical manner. Members will find that I shall be quite willing to amend the Bill in many ways, because many of its provisions are probably crude. When we see difficulties that need to be re-

moved, we sometimes have an amendment prepared which, on farther consideration, we find will not fully carry out our intentions; therefore, when any difficulties that may arise from passing any clause as it stands are pointed out, I shall be only too pleased to amend that clause. In summarising their observations, and pointing out what would happen if we closed their plants on the Sunday, the Chamber of Mines state that the probable effect for one year of the total cessation of Sunday work in the principal Kalgoorlie mines would mean a diminution in quantity of ore raised and treated of 352,135 tons; diminished output of gold, 209,008 fine ounces, valued at £887,805. The letter, of course, deals exhaustively with the details. I am quoting from a summary. They say that if we for one year prevent the plants in the Kalgoorlie field from working on Sundays, the output of the Kalgoorlie mines will be decreased by £887,805. They say, farther, that the reduction of hands which would follow this stoppage of Sunday work would amount to 598 underground employees—men not connected with the surface workings, but employed underground during the week, raising stone to keep the batteries running on Sundays as well as on week days. They say that the total reduction in the wages paid will be, for mining £122,863, and for treatment £37,255; so that if we prevent the plants from working on Sundays, there will be £160,118 less expended in wages to men underground and men on the surface than is being paid at the present time. They say that the capital value of shafts, plants, and machinery which would be idle on Sundays is £1,984,037; and the loss sustained per annum by 11 Kalgoorlie mines would be £589,038. These are big figures; and if we place in the Bill a provision to prevent the plants from being worked on Sundays, or even if we decide that at the end of one or two years Sunday work must cease, we have to face such difficulties as these. Members can peruse the figures, and must consider what is likely to happen. These are only the figures of the Chamber of Mines. I intend to publish them, and to meet the chamber and the miners' union in conference on this and many other matters; and I shall then be able to judge for

myself how much credence can be placed on the figures. If the change will mean that over £800,000 worth of gold will be deducted from the output, and so large a number of men put off, we have seriously to consider whether we shall or shall not insist on the batteries stopping on Sundays. As to work underground, members will notice I have inserted a special clause which will make it impossible for any man to be employed raising or breaking stone on Sundays without the consent of the Minister having been first obtained; and that consent will not be granted except in very special circumstances. These are questions for members to discuss in Committee. They will, I am sure, carefully consider the Bill from every standpoint. As I told the House in my introductory speech, I am personally not a believer in Sunday labour. I do not approach the question from any religious standpoint, but in the solid belief that a man who is continuously employed for seven days a week cannot be so good a citizen as one who works for six days only. Therefore personally, unless I see that very serious results will follow to the mining industry, I shall insist, except where it is absolutely impossible to stop a plant, that Sunday labour shall cease. It would be foolish to ask that such a plant as that of the Great Boulder should be stopped on Sundays, for its stoppage would mean a great loss to the management, apart entirely from the loss of time. I feel quite satisfied that if we insist on such stoppages the same number of men as is now employed in the mines will not be employed for more than three and a half to four days a week, owing to the reduced quantity of ore which will be treated by the plant. This letter of the Chamber of Mines I will hand to the Press for publication, for it is too long to be read here to-night; and I am sure that members will be better able to judge of its value by reading it in print. Members have discussed at some length the powers of inspectors, and the necessity for check inspectors in our mines. In the first place, members must seriously consider on whom they will place the responsibility for the administration of the Act. Are we not to hold a mine manager responsible for everything that occurs in his mine? I say we

must; and if we have inspectors continuously going into that mine and instructing the management what to do, surely we are asking the inspector to take the responsibility, instead of throwing that responsibility on the mine manager. I hold that we can go too far in the matter of inspection, but I go thus far. We must give the inspector absolute power to close down any portion of a mine which he thinks dangerous to the men employed there. I think that the Bill contains that provision; but if when we go into Committee it can be shown for a moment that the inspector has not that power, then we must provide in the Bill for giving him that power, so that he may close down any portion of any mine too dangerous for men to work in. When dealing with the amending Bill of last year some members said that certain inspectors denied that they had power to close workings. The inspector for the Coolgardie district did not say that. He had ample power, and recognised it; and I think that the Kalgoorlie inspector, whose report we read, was weak, as I pointed out when in Opposition. He drew the attention of a mine manager to the fact that a certain portion of the mine was dangerous, and ordered certain things to be done. When his orders were not attended to it was the duty of the inspector to take action against the manager, and not allow the same state of affairs to continue month after month, thus making his report so much waste paper.

MR. SCADDAN: The Crown Law Department agreed that the inspector had not the necessary power.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think so. I had the report of the Inspector in Coolgardie, who considered that he had ample power, and I think that most of the other inspectors were satisfied that they had ample power. At any rate, let us be on the safe side this time; and if we do not think that full power is given to enable the inspector to stop work in dangerous places, we must give him that power.

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (continuing): When the House adjourned

we were talking about the appointment of inspectors and the duties of those inspectors, and I was asking members to seriously consider, when this Bill gets into Committee, the advisability of agreeing to the request that has come almost universally from members on the opposite side of the House for the appointment of check inspectors from the various unions. We have on the one hand the mine owner and on the other hand the mine worker. Now, who should control the inspection of these mines and see that the administration of this Act is carried out? I say most emphatically the Government should. It is the duty of the Government to appoint these inspectors, and it is the duty of the inspectors to see that the administration of the Act is given effect to. We have heard several members, more especially the member for Cue, making statements in connection with the work of these inspectors. I do not think it is fair for a member to make these, I can only say, insinuations; because the member for Cue went so far as to say, in dealing with statements taken by inspectors in the case of accidents, "I may say that the report is generally more in favour of the company than the statement would have been had it been given *verbatim* as it comes from the injured party." That is to say that the inspector would probably take the statement in the case of an accident and place other words into the injured man's mouth with a view to doing good for the company. I do not think we have any inspectors of that sort in the employ of the Government, and had we such inspectors the sooner we got rid of them from the service the better it would be for all parties.

MR. HUDSON: There was no insinuation of that sort.

MR. SCADDAN: You said exactly the same when I told you that inspectors were not in the habit of making surprise visits. You said that if they did not do it they were not fit for their positions.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not the same. I said that the member for Cue insinuated that an inspector, in taking a statement from an injured person, would have that statement written out in favour of the company and not in favour of the injured person. It is the duty of the inspector on all occasions to

be absolutely neutral. If the inspector is appointed by the mine manager or owner, or on the other hand by the union, would we have that neutrality or that spirit of fair play which we should have by having inspectors whose work is done under an obligation to the Government and to neither side? The member for Murchison went so far as to say that the union secretaries would make good inspectors, because they would not be in the pay of the mine managers; but in whose pay would they be? They would be in the pay of the mine workers. I am sure it is the desire of every member to insist that we have proper and diligent inspectors, and that they should carry out the duties of the Act impartially to either party. If they are not impartial, if they favour the miner on the one hand or the owner on the other hand, they are not fit to carry out their duties; and I say that while we should give the inspectors every power, we should insist that they are absolutely impartial to either side. Therefore I cannot see my way, so far as I am personally concerned, to go farther than I have done in this Bill in connection with the appointment of check inspectors.

MR. SCADDAN: Then it is absolutely useless.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Then we can understand what it might mean. If the unions had power to appoint what would be to all intents and purposes permanent inspectors, and if any trouble arose on the fields, the mine manager who happened to be in the least degree obnoxious to the union would have a particularly bad time so far as his mine is concerned. [MR. HUDSON: Or *vice versa*.] The Government should be impartial. The inspector who is appointed by the Government should be impartial; and surely members will give us credit for this, that the main desire in the appointment of inspectors and seeing that the present inspectors are doing their duty, is to see that they are absolutely impartial. If they are not, then complaint should be made pointing out where these officers have not been impartial in their work, or where they are favouring either side; and if we find that they have not been fair and have not tried to carry out their duties equitably and in the best interests of both sides, then they are not

fit for their positions. So far as I am concerned, I have absolute faith in our inspectors. We are retiring a couple of them, not because they were not carrying out their duties properly, but because they are getting old and aged, and I do not think they are fitted to carry out the duties of their office. We need sturdy men, who will be able to travel through all parts of a mine, not aged and infirm men. So I am desirous of having young men in the service who will be able to carry out all the obligations imposed on them by the Bill.

MR. JOHNSON: Do you think you have sufficient inspectors in the Kalgoorlie district?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes; I do not think we should have such inspections on our mines as to take away responsibility from the mine managers. If we have inspections every day or every week in the mines, directing operations in them, we are naturally taking away from the manager a lot of responsibility that should be his. We place responsibility on the manager. The only reason for the appointment of inspectors is to see that the conditions required by the Act are being carried out.

MR. JOHNSON: Do you think the inspectors can do that?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Probably it would be better if we had a few more inspectors, but the argument against that is the cost of administration. We have so many inspectors now. We have inspectors of machinery, health inspectors, and factory inspectors, and with all these inspections the cost to the State is becoming so great, and we must always come to a point where we cannot spend any more. I am trying to arrange now for the appointment of another inspector to do the East Murchison field. If it can be managed, I shall be only too pleased to give more efficient inspection there. On the other hand, the Government should not take responsibility from the shoulders of the managers. Responsibility should be placed on the managers.

MR. JOHNSON: Under the Mines Regulation Act to-day you take responsibility.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: We do not take responsibility.

MR. JOHNSON: Then why do you have inspection? By the very fact that you

have inspection you take a certain responsibility.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The duty of inspectors is to see as far as possible that the conditions of the Act are carried out. Many points have been raised dealing with the rules. The member for Mount Margaret regretted that I had not gone more fully into the various details of the Bill when moving the second reading; but had I done so, I would have had to read almost all the rules, rule by rule. The member for Ivanhoe understands that I would have had to deal with what I afterwards will have to deal with when in Committee. I will have a complete schedule of the alterations made; and when any alteration from the old Act comes before members when we are in Committee, I shall be pleased to point it out to show the difference between the old Act and this Bill. Many points have been raised during this debate. One was in reference to penthouses in working shafts, and a good deal of conflict has arisen as to whether we should make penthouses compulsory. It depends entirely on the nature of the shaft being put down as to whether a penthouse is necessary. If a contract is let to sink a shaft 1,000 feet and no work is being done adjacent to the shaft, I do not think any manager would think it necessary to put penthouses in the shaft.

MR. SCADDAN: You could compel him to do so.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: We did so we might have an accident. If a shaft is being sunk and work is going on at various levels, penthouses are very necessary. That is the opinion of highly qualified men in whom I place a good deal of confidence. We have ample power in the Bill to insist on penthouses being placed in any shaft when the inspector thinks it necessary. The rule may be a little ambiguous, so the members may not have noticed it, but in Committee we can make it clearer. It was not clear to me. I was not sure that the provision was in the Bill, though I had given instructions that we should retain the power so that when in the opinion of an inspector a penthouse was necessary, it should be provided. The provision, however, must be made some

what elastic. We must leave a great deal to the discretion of the inspector.

MR. SCADDAN: Then you place responsibility on him at once by saying in one place that it is necessary and in another place that it is not.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It is highly necessary for that purpose. Some members have spoken of the power to rescind certain of these rules. We cannot rescind any of the clauses, as one member thought, but we can rescind rules, and it is necessary that we should have the power. Let us take, for instance, the provisions for regulating that there should be safety appliances in every cage. In an underlay shaft we have so far no method of fixing safety appliances, and in certain mines we have granted a permit, for instance the Cosmopolitan and the Sons of Gwalia mines where they have underlay shafts to great depths, to run cages up and down, and even carry men, with no restrictions except in regard to the strength of ropes. We varied the rules of the Act so that they could carry men on skips to the bottom of the mines. We found this was absolutely necessary as they were getting to great depths, because it exhausted the men to walk up and down 1,500 feet or 2,000 feet to and from their work; and they complained seriously in regard to the refusal of the department. Therefore, in the interest of the men and in the interest of the mine-owners, we accepted a certain amount of responsibility. There are many little things like that occurring continuously in connection with mining, so that power under the rules to make exemptions of this character is absolutely necessary. Members have spoken of the possibility of accidents arising by reason of stopes being too high; but it is an absolute impossibility to place a regulation height in a Mines Regulation Bill. You can go a considerable length in an underlay shaft without the necessity for mullocking up, whereas in a vertical shaft it is not safe to go to a similar height; therefore, in most of these cases you have to leave this matter largely to the discretion of the inspector, and to give him absolute power, as members have asked for and as I agree he should have. I think it would be wiser not to make the Act too strict, but to have a certain amount of elasticity in it. I do

not think it is necessary for me to deal with any other matters connected with the Bill at this stage. I may say again that I am pleased with the way in which the Bill has been met, and I hope when we get into Committee we will be able to deal with the various technical matters connected with this measure in a spirit of fair-play, and that moderation will be displayed by both sides of the House, so that we may have the Bill made as perfect as possible.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—LAND TAX ASSESSMENT.

SECOND READING.

Resumed from the previous Thursday.

MR. T. HAYWARD (Wellington): It is my intention, in a very few words, to support this Bill. A good deal of misapprehension appears to exist, especially in the country districts, as to the incidence and effect of the proposed tax. The speech of the Premier last week has considerably removed that misapprehension, and so also have the amendments that have since been proposed to be made in the Bill. The country expects a great deal from this Government in the shape of a decrease in the cost of administration; but at the same time we can scarcely hope that the saving that can be effected in that direction will materially reduce the deficit we are faced with. At the present time we must have increased taxation, or else stagnation; and it is better for us to put our hands to a certain extent in our pockets and prevent that stagnation. We must have increased revenue; and I see no better way of providing that than by the Bill now under discussion. I know it is the opinion of some members of the House that we should have an income tax; but I am not of that opinion. I think that the inquisitorial character of such a tax, and the way in which it is open to evasion, are very much against it. And I am also under the impression and am very much afraid that before long we shall also be compelled to adopt an income tax; and we shall, many of us, feel it pretty severely. The Premier, in the course of his remarks, alluded to the easy manner in which large estates were acquired in the early days. I had something to do with them. About 40 years ago I

was appointed by the Government, in conjunction with the resident magistrate, to value the improvements on the northern portion of Wellington Location No. 1. I went over the improvements and put a very fair, in fact a rather high valuation on them. The other gentleman also went over them, and when we compared notes I found that his valuation was very much higher, was in fact 50 per cent. beyond the real value of the improvements effected. We discussed the matter, and at last he told me, "It is merely a matter of form, and you need not trouble yourself about it." And it was a matter of form, for they took his valuation. And that applies to most of the other estates acquired in the early days. However, that estate has now been cut up, and another very large estate which has been mentioned has also been cut up; so that this Bill will not affect them in the slightest degree. Indeed, I can scarcely call to mind a single large estate which is unimproved or locked up; so that I do not think the Bill will have the effect which many people think, of bursting up large estates. [Interjection by Mr. MALE.] I am referring principally to the coastal districts. I am not speaking, as it were, of a matter which will touch the other fellow, because unfortunately the Bill will touch me both in town and country. If I could see any other means of raising revenue I should be only too glad. It is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. H. BROWN (Perth): It is my intention, and has been all along, to oppose the passing of this Bill by all legitimate means. This is a land tax; call it what you may, gloss it over with "unimproved," it is a land tax pure and simple. During my term as a member of this House, I have always been in favour of rating land on its unimproved value; but at the same time I have always maintained that there was no room for a national land tax. To show that I have been consistent on this point during my term in this House, I would like to refer to the first speech I had the honour of making in this House. Speaking on the Address-in-Reply, I said:—

As to the taxation of unimproved land values, even the Premier and several Opposition members seem to be unaware that there

is already a machinery for imposing such a tax; and I may add that a great many roads boards have taken advantage of the section in the Roads Act which permits of the impost. I can assure members that if such a local tax is imposed, there is no room whatever, in this State at all events, for a national land tax.

We have heard during the last few days that the Premier states he requires this money in order to provide interest on the proposed spur railways. I would be in favour of the rating of unimproved lands, but not the taxation of unimproved land values; and I say without fear of contradiction that if it were possible to bring under cultivation those lands that are at present unimproved, lying within four or five miles of the whole of the trunk railways in this State, there would be no necessity for spur lines at all for the next 10 years. If this Bill had been brought into the House by members opposite, I am certain that the party on this side (Ministerial) would have done all they possibly could to oppose its passing. We see by the speech of the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Horan) the other day that he is content to sit on that (Opposition) side and practically make use of this side of the House to carry through this item of the platform of his party. If there is to be a land tax, then I say there should be no exemptions whatever. All parties should bear the burden of taxation alike. I am sure it cost the Treasurer a great effort to make the statement he did when introducing this Bill. It was news to me, and I think it was news to most members opposite, to hear the Treasurer stating the opinion that the land belonged to the people. [Mr. TAYLOR: That has been recognised by this side years ago.] It is the first time I ever heard that argument used by the present Treasurer. We were also told by the Treasurer that the necessity for this tax was due to our entrance into the Federation.

THE TREASURER: No; that is not what I said.

Mr. H. BROWN: The Treasurer used that argument. He said that up to the present time we had been at a loss of half a million of money by joining Federation, and that it was absolutely necessary to raise this tax in lieu of the money we had lost. This is the first time any Treasurer in Australia has had to admit that taxa-

tion has had to be imposed through the entrance of a State into Federation; and I am sure that, in the circumstances, the Treasurer must be proud of that photograph, taken on our entry into the Federation, of Mr. Wilson and several of his friends who worked so strenuously and brought about the result of dragging us into this great Federation. [Mr. TAYLOR: A noble work!] I am glad to see there has been so much backing down by the Government on this question; because it proves that when bringing in this Land Tax Bill, the Government knew nothing whatever of the amount they were going to receive from it. We have had several estimates of the probable amount — £50,000 and £60,000; and what the amount is to be now that the proposed tax is to be three-halfpence in the pound we have not yet heard. The Bill provides for taxation on unimproved values; yet in the proposed amendments reference is made to the foot frontage. This is absolutely impossible. You must, if you are going to tax the unimproved value, leave the foot frontage alone. Again, exemption is made for improvements exceeding £50 to the foot frontage. A block might have a frontage of 10ft., or 20ft., up to 50ft., 100ft., or even 200ft. But there are in the city of Perth some lots which have no frontage abutting on a street at all. Under the proposed exemptions we find that all gold-mining and timber leases are to be exempt from taxation. The Premier, when in Kalgoorlie, referred to the fact that this Government was quoted as a goldfields-and-country Ministry; and I think the title is justified, unless the Government can offer some explanation why those particular industries are to be exempt from taxation under this Bill when all other classes of lands are to be taxed. Then a landowner who is residing away from the State for more than 12 months is to be mulcted in 50 per cent. higher taxation than other owners; yet foreign companies trading here are not to be penalised at all. I say that any foreign company trading in Western Australia only pays ordinary taxes, but should a resident of the State be away 12 months he is penalised to the extent of 50 per cent. We are told by the Treasurer that he requires this money for revenue purposes. It appeals to me that this is simply taking the money out

of the pockets of the residents with one hand and giving it them back in political sops with the other. We have only to refer to the Lands Department which I will quote later on to show the extravagance of the various departments. Is it reasonable that we are going to collect this tax for two per cent. up to seven per cent., as quoted by the Treasurer, when we find at the present time the administration of the Lands Department has gone up from 40 per cent. to nearly 82 per cent.? Assuming this tax is passed this session, what shall we find? Assent will not be given to the Bill until December, and is it possible in the six months to get in returns from the whole of the State and collect the tax? With reference to this machinery Bill we have not only to provide for to-day but for all time. At present the Minister requires only 1½d. and three farthings on the unimproved value of the land, but the time may come, and possibly those in Opposition hope it will come, when they will be in power and when the tax will not be a penny but will be raised to threepence or sixpence in the pound. It is really astonishing to find the Government introducing the tax at all. It will have a tendency to reduce land values, particularly in country districts. The Government have thousands of pounds secured on agricultural lands through the Agricultural Bank, yet the Government are bringing in a Bill to reduce their own securities. I referred just now to a pernicious system that pertains, I suppose not only here but in every State of the Commonwealth. If roads boards were to tax their lands even to a slight extent more than they are doing now, there would not be any necessity to raise this land tax at all. We were told by the Premier the other day that the average amount contributed by the roads boards for every pound the Government gave them was 3s. 6d. I have taken the trouble to go through the few figures which are given in the Public Works accounts, and I will quote them to members. It will be within the memory of members that I asked, when the Premier was referring to the Plantagenet District which collected 3s. 5d. in the pound for every pound the Government gave, what was the contribution from the district of Sus-

sex, and the Premier replied that he had not got it. The figures which I have are for the year 1904. It is regrettable that the report of the Works Department for 1905 is not before members, consequently the only figures I have to go on are those for 1904, and we find that for every one pound given to the Sussex district the local people contributed 1s. 8d.; and if we take the amount that was given to that district last year, and assume that they raised the same revenue last year as they did in 1904, the contribution per one pound would amount to 4½d. We then come, for the same year, to South Bunbury, and there the contribution per one pound realises the handsome sum of tenpence. At Collie we find that for every pound which the Government gave the district raised one shilling; and another very bad example is that of the Bunbury Roads Board district, where for every pound the Government gave them they raised the very handsome sum of fivepence. In the rich districts of Toodyay and Victoria Plains, in the former no rate was struck and £1,306 was given them by the Government, and in the Victoria district no rate was struck and £850 was given to them. I say that in these rich agricultural districts which I have quoted, if the settlers assisted themselves to a greater extent there would be no necessity to raise this fresh taxation. It may surprise members to know that during last session the roads and bridges vote amounted to within a few pounds of a quarter of a million sterling. The figures are here: roads and bridges, £70,000; special grants for roads, £28,000; bridges, £14,000; another grant for bridges, £7,531; roads board offices, £7,450; municipal grant, £69,488; purchase of land for a public purpose and improving the public grounds, £10,000; and out of loan money roads and bridges, in agricultural districts, £15,000. I say that if large exemptions are to be made the Government will require to save. Let the whole of the State go down together equally and do it by a reduction of the municipal and roads boards subsidies. But stop the pernicious system of those who clamour the loudest getting the greatest amount for their districts. It is really regrettable, I am not going to say whether the Government are right or wrong, but I say on looking up—this

is with reference to where money can be saved—*Hansard* the other day I find when the Treasurer was in opposition he read the Government party several homilies about loyally abiding by the decisions of the Arbitration Court, and he said, "If the Arbitration Court is no good, repeal it," and he mentioned—this in *Hansard*—that the time would come when things would be dull, and that there would be a reduction of wages all round. He trusted that when that time came the men would loyally abide by the decision of the Arbitration Court. Now we are told that we want this £70,000 odd a year to carry on with. Yet we find last December the Commissioner of Railways was drawn into the Arbitration Court, and there is not the slightest doubt the strenuous effort the Commissioner made prostrated him for some few weeks afterwards. An award was given in favour of the Government. Had a Labour Government been in power and had done what the Rason Government did, the present occupants of the Government benches would have stalked the country and exposed the Labour party, saying that they were using their power for preference to unionists. But we find the Minister for Mines admitted that a Cabinet meeting was held and a Cabinet minute was sent to the Commissioner of Railways telling him distinctly that he was not to enforce the Arbitration Court award. We have it stated by the Minister for Mines that in one class of wages alone a sum of £14,000 would have been saved by the award. I have it on good authority that by the award certain privileges and other things had been knocked off which would have resulted in a saving to the State of over £30,000 a year. I think the civil servants at all events could well make some contribution. Members were impressed the other day when reading through the figures given by Mr. Jull that out of an expenditure of 3¼ millions the huge sum of 1½ millions was paid in salaries alone. We have heard the Ministry preach to the country that they were going in for administration and saving, and I think the time is inopportune to impose this particular tax. One source of saving might be found in the Agricultural branch, more particularly in the Lands Department. Up to 1902

the cost of administration of that department was 40 per cent. In 1903 it went up to 50 per cent., and in one short year from 1903 to 1904 it went up to 75 per cent. of the total amount of revenue; and farther we were shown by the *West Australian* the other day in a sub-leader that at the present moment the cost of the administration of that department was 82 per cent. of the revenue. In one branch alone, the accountant's branch, we find this, that the accountant from the Public Works Department was sent to the Lands Department to reorganise the branch, and when he took office the staff consisted of four or five officers at the outside. We find now that there are 27 officers in that branch. The reorganisation required the assistance of 10 additional officers. We find with all the experience of this particular officer a Commission is now sitting to try and put the keeping of accounts on a firm and practical basis.

THE PREMIER: Is not that the correct thing to do?

MR. H. BROWN: It would be, but the Government got an experienced man or a man supposed to be experienced from the Works Department to reorganise the accountant's branch of the Lands Department, and now we have a Commission sitting on top of that, and whilst the Commission is sitting we are importing a man from the Eastern States also to go into this particular work. I am pointing this out to show that administration should be looked into first before farther taxation is imposed.

MR. HUDSON: You will be carpeted.

MR. H. BROWN: The members of my party will take this as fair criticism. I am totally opposed to a land tax and they know it, and I have said that I shall take every legitimate means of preventing the Bill passing into law. On every subject bar this particular one I shall vote for the Government, and support them all I possibly can.

MR. DAGLISH: This is the only vital question of the session.

MR. H. BROWN: Also we find in this Bill provision is made for the Government to appoint a valuer of their own, and we know full well that when the Government do step in they will not accept the valuations of the various bodies, both municipal and roads boards, but

they will go for the highest tax. The Premier knows full well that in the majority of cases in the municipalities at all events the valuations are kept very low. In fact they are done in a very haphazard way. As members know, there is not at the present time in Western Australia a single corporation which is rating on its unimproved land values, and it is practically optional with the valuers whether they put down the approximate value for the particular corporation they rate. I have taken the trouble during the last few days to go through the rate book at all events of the city of Perth, and on the present figures as propounded by the Premier, who stated that about 11 millions will be the amount on which the tax will be struck, one-third of that sum will be collected from the city of Perth alone, and possibly more. In several cases the value of land is almost 100 per cent. higher than the sum at which it is rated, and this will add considerably to the revenue to be derived from Perth's contribution. There is land in Hay Street East which is now under offer at £100 per foot, and it stands in the rate books of the corporation at £30. There is that corner, Hunter's corner, that so much has been made of lately, and it has been instanced in the leading articles of the *West Australian*. That piece was sold the other day for £60,000. The improvements on that land do not exceed £5,000, which would bring the value of the land down to about £55,000, yet we find at the present moment that the land is rated in the rate books of the city of Perth at £27,000. Another piece of land in St. George's Terrace was sold the other day for £190 per foot, and it stands in the rate-books at only £100.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Was that before the introduction of this Bill?

MR. H. BROWN: No. They cannot sell it now, since the introduction of the Bill. They cannot sell it at all.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: You said it was sold.

MR. H. BROWN: I said it was sold within the last two or three months at £190 per foot, and that no land has been bought since this Bill was introduced. You are driving it out of the market. Another piece of land, which you know

well I think, Mr. Speaker, is in Barrack Street. That cost £240 a foot only a year or two ago, and I believe the owner would be only too willing to get his money back. That stands at £150 in the rate books. So nearly in every case the valuations are considerably under value, and this Bill would tend to make Perth's contribution greater than it could stand.

MR. DAGLISH: You denied these under-valuations a year or two ago.

MR. H. BROWN: I say these valuations do not affect the rating. I am not pointing out the rental values, but the unimproved land values. I say they are no guide to go by. I admit that some city properties are not rated possibly as high as they might be, but they are rated at as much as they can stand.

MR. LYNCH: You are building up a good argument for the abolition of subsidy.

MR. H. BROWN: I can assure members that when this land tax comes into operation the rates in the city of Perth will total up to the huge sum of over 7s. in the pound. It is all very well for the Government here to state practically it is the owner who has to pay this particular tax. In nine cases out of ten, speaking for the constituency I represent, the majority of the land is let on lease, and the first clause in the lease generally is that the tenant shall pay all rates and taxes. The majority of members here think that they are getting at the particular owners, but they will not be doing so, at all events for some considerable time to come. This rate at all events on the unimproved property of Perth would be equivalent to a 1s. 4d. rate. Some year or two ago, in this House I showed from figures supplied by the State Treasurer, when advocating the rating of land on the unimproved value, that to receive the same revenue as we were doing then on a rental value would require a penny and eleven-sixteenths of a penny in the pound. Therefore members can easily see that the imposition of this 1½d. tax would be equivalent to a 1s. 4d. rate on the unimproved value, and to an 8d. rate on the improved value. I say again that I consider in a country such as this, where we are giving the land away on the one hand, it is quite unfair to tax it on the other.

Owing to the lower rate of wages in the old settled States in the East, huge quantities of foodstuffs—chaff and other products—are being imported here, to the detriment of the local farmer, and there is no doubt that as soon as the whole of the duties go off, the local farmer here will have to compete with, and be very severely handicapped by, those in the Eastern States. In New South Wales it is evidenced that even in that old-settled State the land cannot bear two impositions. Up to the present time every road and bridge outside a corporation in New South Wales has been constructed by the Government, and until last session of Parliament there was no form of local government at all outside municipalities. But last session a Bill, which I took the trouble to procure whilst there a few months ago—a new Shires Council Bill—was introduced in New South Wales, and Clause 33 gives the council there power to strike a rate for local purposes, of not less than 1d. nor more than 2d. in the pound, and in Sub-clause 2 of the same clause there is a provision that as soon as the local tax is inflicted for local purposes the land tax immediately ceases. The House will know that some of the local boards are rating even as low as a farthing in the pound, anticipating the probability of this land tax becoming law. Therefore, I think that if it were plainly put before the various district roads boards, they would for their own local purposes increase their local rates, and not come here to the Government for revenue. I think that the definition of unimproved land will give rise to a very great deal of litigation, as practically in regard to all the local authorities—I am referring to municipalities and roads boards—the definition in the projected Land Bill of unimproved land is different. Here it says that the unimproved value means the capital sum for which "such land would sell, under such reasonable conditions of sale as a *bona fide* seller would require, assuming the actual improvements (if any) had not been made." It is very mythical, I think, very indistinct as to what land would be worth, assuming no improvements whatever had been made. It appears to me that it would be much more suitable to base the valuation of the land on its value minus the cost of the improvements. In the

projected Municipal Bill it is provided that—

Except as hereinafter provided the value of ratable land shall be the estimated capital unimproved value thereof, that is to say, the price at which the land in fee simple, unencumbered by any mortgage or charge thereon, and if no improvements existed thereon, might be expected to sell at the time when valued.

It would be much more simple to have the provision which appears in the Roads Act, where it states :—

“Unimproved value” means the sum which the owner's estate or interest in any land, if unencumbered by any mortgage or other charge thereon, and if no improvements existed on the land, might be expected to realise at the time of valuation if offered for sale on such reasonable terms and conditions as a *bona fide* seller might be expected to require.

In New South Wales the difference is more amplified. What I am trying to urge is, that if one took up a piece of land of several thousand acres with no improvements whatever, if he improved it that land would be only worth the same as the land surrounding it. But what would be the value assuming 50 others took up adjoining blocks, and effected the same improvement? Would not that land absolutely go up in price, and be greater than is provided for in this particular clause as it reads here? The unimproved land value is what the land would be worth minus its improvements, but the definition here is absolutely vague, and I regret to see the attitude of members on this side of the House who absolutely came here pledged to vote against this particular form of taxation. I have a cutting here. Even the member for Murray (Mr. McLarty) whilst addressing his constituents in 1904 said—

He was opposed to the taxation of the land, as it would be detrimental to immigration, and, considering the many difficulties both agriculturist and pastoralist had to contend with, it would be a serious blunder to hamper them with extra taxation for State revenue purposes. Farther, there was already a land tax in existence in the rates levied by the roads boards.

He got cheers for that—

If the finances of the State really required farther taxation to keep them healthy, he would support an income tax.

That was in 1904. But we have a more recent convert than the member for

Murray. We have the Honorary Minister for Agriculture (Hon. J. Mitchell).

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Quote from the speech.

MR. H. BROWN: Everyone sympathises with him in the humiliating position he finds himself in to-day. We had that gentleman at Northam absolutely telling the electors there that, if they elected Mr. Watts, he (Mr. Watts) would be in favour of a swingeing land tax.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Quote from the speech.

MR. H. BROWN: That is from his speech.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Where?

MR. H. BROWN: In October last at Northam. He was not a member of Parliament. He would not have been if he had advocated that and had turned round as he has done since.

MR. FOULKES: He wants to know whether that was said before or after he joined the Ministry.

MR. H. BROWN: Before he was elected to this House. I obtained the extract by searching through the Library, either in the file of the *West Australian* or the *Morning Herald*. He stated that Mr. Watts was in favour of a swingeing land tax, and that he (Mitchell) was against such an iniquitous tax at all, as it would ruin the poor farmer. And I say that no one could be in a more humiliating position than the same gentleman occupied this session, when he made that memorable speech in which he said, “I do not believe in the land tax; but whilst I do not believe in it, I am compelled to support it.” Can anything be more pitiful than a Minister of the Crown coming into the House and telling us that? I do not know what pressure was brought to bear upon him; but he is against the tax, and is compelled to support it. [MR. BATH: Pressure by caucus]. I do not know whether he was compelled by a caucus.

THE PREMIER: What would you have done in similar circumstances?

MR. H. BROWN: Acted as I have always acted: opposed this tax, and done as you gentlemen on the Treasury bench ought to have done.

MR. DAGLISH: What is the difference between supporting the tax and sup-

porting the Government that introduces the tax?

MR. H. BROWN: I have said all along that I am against them on this Bill; but I must remain on this side of the House, unless the other side give me an invitation to go over to them; and that invitation I shall not accept. You gentlemen in Opposition are quite satisfied to sit tight and allow this Bill to pass. We have also had a speech from the member for Albany (Mr. Barnett), who said he recognised that some form of taxation would soon be necessary, and that when the time arrived he would advocate a graduated land tax, and a tax on the unimproved value of land. "In regard to the latter," he said, "great caution would be necessary; all land would not stand taxation." The member for East Perth (Mr. Hardwick) has not pledged himself to an unimproved land value tax. He practically pledged himself to a tax on land, to burst up the so-called large estates. Mr. Hardwick said: "A tax should be imposed upon large areas of land that were not being utilised and improved; and in the case of such lands being held by absentees, the tax should be increased." Those are my views exactly. I say, tax the unimproved land, and the absentee also. But we shall find the member for East Perth voting with the Government.

MR. LYNCH: When did he make that speech?

MR. H. BROWN: On the 23rd October last.

MR. LYNCH: He was then electioneering.

MR. H. BROWN: I will give the Minister for Works (Hon. J. Price) credit for stating that he was in favour of taxing the unimproved land.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Unimproved land values.

MR. H. BROWN: Taxing unimproved land.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Unimproved land values.

MR. H. BROWN: Well, the newspaper has misreported you. And he said also that agriculture should be helped and encouraged; and this is how he is helping and encouraging that industry.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: So he is.

MR. H. BROWN: I hope he will. In conclusion, from a city point of view I am quite certain that in a very short time a great financial crisis will occur in the city of Perth. I know well, and the members of the Opposition know well, that the tax will very considerably reduce land values. The majority of the citizens of Perth have borrowed to the fullest extent to improve the city; but by this tax we do not get at the mortgagee at all; and in nine cases out of ten the mortgagee has not only as great but sometimes a greater interest than the owners of the properties; and the mortgagee gets off scot-free all the time. But we shall find that in the very near future, as soon as land values go down, and go down they must, the various financial institutions and lenders of money here will require fresh valuations of the properties to be made; and we shall find that instead of renewing the mortgages, it will be either a case of pay up or reduce. And I do not see how any member for a city constituency can possibly vote in favour of what will mean absolute ruination to the city of Perth.

MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne): I do not purpose keeping the House very many minutes this evening, because I think that this subject is becoming nearly threadbare. But in my remarks on the Address-in-Reply I think I indicated pretty clearly that I was not in favour of the imposition of a land tax at this juncture. During this debate I have not heard anything so far which has had the effect of altering my views on this subject to the slightest degree. The land tax is to my mind an unfair tax, particularly because it is a class tax; and my friends opposite (Labour party) always object to anything in the nature of class legislation. And yet we find that they intend, or I am right in assuming so, to support this tax.

MR. BATH: You cannot call this a class tax.

MR. BUTCHER: I consider it is absolutely a class tax. I should like to know whom it will tax but those unfortunate people who are endeavouring to make a living, and in many instances failing to do so, out of the land. There is a small

population employed on our lands ; and if it be not a class tax which taxes those people and exempts all others, then I have no notion of what is class legislation. I am under the impression that so important a measure as a land tax Bill, one that is likely to disorganise the whole of our commerce and the whole business of the State, should never have been introduced so suddenly. I contend that the people of the State have not yet had an opportunity of voicing their opinions on this important subject. A session or so ago there was some talk of this tax, or of a similar tax, or of some form of taxation, because such a tax was a plank of the Labour platform, and as a Labour Ministry was in power at the time, the question naturally arose, and was to some extent discussed. But a land tax of this nature, I say, has never been laid before the people ; and the Government of the day are not justified in introducing a measure and forcing it through the House without giving the people of the State an opportunity of saying whether or not they agree with such taxation. As for me, when I was on the hustings at the last election, I told my electors that this was, I believed, a tax which would be imposed pretty soon ; but that no one was in a position to say what kind of a tax it would be ; whether it would be levied on the unimproved value of land, or on unimproved lands. I went on farther to say that if it were a tax which would by any means bring into use those huge areas of unused lands within reasonable distances of our present railway system, I should be found supporting it, and heartily. But on the other hand, if it were a tax imposed on unimproved land values, I should not be found supporting it ; because I considered, and I still consider, that a land tax of that nature is one which we should not dream of imposing at the present juncture. I go farther, and say that in my humble opinion the land tax is unnecessary. I dare say that the Treasurer is prepared to argue that point with me. But let me compare the State of Western Australia with a person's own private estate. Let any man find that his expenditure, owing to his addiction to billiards or from any

other avoidable cause, exceeds his income. His first thought is not how to increase his income : on the contrary he seeks to reduce his expenditure. The same principle should actuate the Government of a country. When it is found that the expenditure is exceeding the revenue, it is the duty of those in charge of the Treasury chest to see that expenses are reduced, rather than to turn round and tax some of our primary industries which cannot bear extra taxation, for the purpose of raising more revenue to squander. I say that the administration of this State is grossly extravagant. Perhaps some will accuse me of presumption for making that remark ; but I am led to make it because I have compared the expenditure of the various departments of this State with the expenditure of corresponding departments in other States ; and in every instance I find that our percentage is enormously higher than the others, and I can see no reason why our administration should be any more costly than administration in other States of Australia. I feel justified in saying that, until the present moment, the Government have not made one honest attempt to reduce expenses. We look around and find that in every direction they are still practising the old extravagance : giving £20,000 odd for the construction of a new and unnecessary Perth Town Hall, and incurring extravagant expenses in different parts of the country. This appears to me most singular, when we consider what is the population of the State. I think I am justified in saying that the population now consists of slightly over 260,000 people—men, women, and children. We have a revenue which, in proportion to population, is one of the largest in the Commonwealth, a revenue considerably exceeding three millions of money ; and yet we find it impossible to administer the affairs of the State without incurring an enormous deficit every year. But when we refer to the number of civil servants we have here, and the wages and salaries paid to them, it is easily seen that a reduction of expenditure may be made and a large saving thereby effected. Our expenses in wages and salaries amount to about £1,500,000 a year, or nearly so.

It seems to me that the administration of this country can be carried on at a lower rate than that, or I think it should be. I believe all members of the House have read the report of the Public Service Commissioner. In his report, the Public Service Commissioner gives an instance of a couple of Government officials who were sent to Kalgoorlie on some Government business, and if it is a criterion of the way our public money is squandered, I say it is quite time some alteration in the state of affairs should be effected. I would like to know if any of the members of this House, especially my friends opposite, when they travel about are as extravagant as one of these gentlemen. If so, I am inclined to think that the amount they receive for the work they are doing for the country, that is their salary, would be expended in a week or a fortnight, and they would be in a very funny state for the balance of the year. One of these officials received £420 per annum. He went to Kalgoorlie on some public business, I am not prepared to say what it was, but I find he took a cab to the station, for which he paid 5s. I can get a cab to take me from any part of Perth to the station for 1s. Then he found it necessary to give the porter at the railway station a tip of 3s. 6d.

MR. T. H. BATH: That is against the law.

MR. W. J. BUTCHER: Never mind; he did it. Probably, being a Government servant, he was exempt from the law. Then he had dinner, 3s. 9d.; and drinks, 2s. 6d. The next day, naturally, he had breakfast; and on arriving at Kalgoorlie he gave the porter 1s. Then his cab fare to the hotel was 4s.; and he had drinks, 3s. 6d. The next day there was cab fare to and from the racecourse, 5s. Do we give our Government officials cab fares to go to racecourses? Do we pay them salaries when they go away on trips of that description? Probably we do; but I object to the country paying cab fares for their pleasure. Then he had more drinks, and tram fares; then more drinks, then more drinks, and more drinks; and then he had a game of billiards, for which the country had to pay 1s. 6d. If a

Government official cannot win a game of billiards he is not much good to the State. Next day he went to the racecourse again and charged the country 5s. He had refreshments, and invited his friends, costing the State 6s.; then he had more drinks, 5s. His drinks the next day cost 13s. Naturally he wanted drinks the day after the race meeting. He went on, day after day, with drinks until he reached the 31st of the month, when he had to return, and he found it necessary to tip the housemaid. He was extremely extravagant in that direction; I fail to see why we should allow an official to give a housemaid 10s. Unfortunately she was of a comely appearance, and it cost the State 10s. Then he tipped the waiter 5s., and boots 2s. 6d. Then his cab fare to the station was 4s., and he only gave the porter at the station 1s. When he could afford to give 10s. to the housemaid, he might have given the porter at the station a little more. His hotel charges were £8 12s. 0d., which bring up the whole of his expenses to £19 3s. 0d. Yet the Commissioner says that with the exception of a few items the whole of the expenses were legitimately charged. It is disgraceful. It is grossly immoral that money taken from the taxpayers should be spent in this way; and the Government submit a Bill to tax people still farther to keep officials of this description in good appointments and to pay expenses of this nature. I am here to watch, as far as I am able, the interests of the people of this country as well as the interests of my own constituents; and I consider that I would be wanting in my duty if I supported a tax of this description when we have such a report as we find here from the Public Service Commissioner. I have no doubt that it is necessary to reduce the expense of administration. The Public Service Commissioner suggests that a 10 per cent. reduction on the present expense of administration would produce no less than £260,000 a year. That would overcome to a great extent our deficit, and it is only a 10 per cent. reduction. If we reduced the enormous amount given away to roads boards and municipalities and other semi-private or public institutions

throughout the State, it would be the proper course to take. By the way, I was severely attacked by the *West Australian* for holding such undemocratic views and sentiments as these. However, I am of opinion that it is the proper course to take. Much has been said with reference to the enhanced value given to agricultural areas through the construction of railways. Let me say that the railways are not only having the effect of enhancing the value of the agricultural areas they happen to run through, but, being main trunk lines, they have the effect of enhancing the value of city property, and property all over the State. It is unfair to attribute the whole of the enhanced values of the lands we seek to tax to the construction of railways. Even a railway is not an unmixed blessing in country districts, and this has been found out by farmers during the last few years. They have been severely taxed in replacing fences and buildings that are frequently burnt down through the passing of railway engines. Again, areas of land adjacent to our railways are not in a better position than areas 10 to 15 miles away, for if they happen to be between two stations or sidings they get no direct benefit from the railway. [THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: They can get a siding.] You cannot get a siding. If you approach the Commissioner for Railways for a siding in any particular place, he will charge you half the cost of constructing the railway from that point to Perth. He would charge about £5,000 a mile to put in a bit of siding, and that makes it absolutely prohibitive. I speak from experience. I found that he wanted half the value of my farm to put in a siding. I object to pastoral leases being taxed under this Bill. We should be consistent, and if we are to levy a tax on all leases I might be prepared to submit to it, but I find the Treasurer is quite willing to exempt mineral and timber leases. So far as the timber leases are concerned, where is the difference? Speaking as a leaseholder of pastoral areas, I say that we have absolutely no right or claim to the land. We are only allowed the pasture growing on the land. But we propose to tax pastoral leaseholders, whilst the holders

of timber areas in exactly the same position are exempt. I claim that they have no more right over the land than have the pastoralists; but they are exempt altogether from taxation. I would like to know the reason why. If we are to be consistent we should exempt the pastoralists also. As far as the unimproved value of leases upon which it is proposed to tax is concerned, it will strike the leaseholder far more heavily than the agriculturist generally; because there was no piece of land in Western Australia that was more useless to anybody than pastoral areas were to the leaseholders when they first took them up. It was only with the expenditure of a huge sum of money that it was possible to put any stock on these areas, and I know from experience that for 15 to 20 years it was not possible to make a living on the leaseholds. In fact, leaseholders were going back year after year and getting farther into debt; and it has only been within the last few years that they have been able to make anything out of their leases, and that only by the expenditure of an enormous amount of money. I could cite scores of leases which were not worth more than £1,000 or £2,000 and that have only become useful after an expenditure up to £25,000. Now we are to be taxed on these values. It is to my mind grossly unjust. [THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: On the unimproved value.] It is an absurd thing, because the unimproved value of one lease is what the improvements on the adjoining lease have given it. I shall give this Bill a certain amount of opposition. If we are to have exemptions, I shall only agree that the exemptions shall be upon conditional purchase land which has been held for a period of say two years, after which it shall not be exempt at all. In conclusion, allow me to say, as I have before remarked, that this land tax is being instituted long before it is necessary and long before the people of the country have had an opportunity of thinking over it, or even saying whether they should or should not be taxed. I notice that meetings are now being organised to discuss this land tax. It conclusively proves that up to the present the people have not had time to talk it over, or to

think over it ; and it would be unwise for the Government to attempt to force the Bill through the House until they have heard from the principal centres whether the people wish to submit to the tax. Of course there is a section of the community which will be always prepared to institute a land tax or any other tax so long as it strikes the other fellow. It is only fair that the other fellow should have a say in the matter, and that he should be allowed to say whether he is prepared to pay the tax, and under what conditions, before we pass a Bill of this description.

MR. J. BREBBER (North Perth) : I rise to express my appreciation of the Bill. I look upon it as one of the most important, if not the most important, of the measures now brought before this House. I look upon it not so much as a Bill to raise revenue, though the Government has told us that it is required to raise revenue in place of the customs duties we have lost ; but the importance of the Bill to me is that it introduces a new system of taxation, making a direct tax on the unimproved capital values of the State in place of the tax that is derived by customs duties. What appeals to me most is this, that through the customs the taxes of the State rest principally, almost wholly, on the poorer section of the people, but a tax levied upon the wealth of the State is levied on that portion of the people who are best able to bear it. We recognise that whenever a tax is raised from the wealth of the State, from those best able to bear it, then we hear a great deal about the injustice of the tax and the inability of the wealth of the nation to stand it. But the tax raised through the customs comes in such an insidious form that no one can recognise that he is paying it, for it is taken so much out of provisions, so much out of clothing, so much out of this necessary and that necessary of life, that those paying for the necessities do not recognise that they are paying a substantial sum to the State. But this land tax will come directly out of the pockets of people who have the unearned increment of the State in their pockets, and

will be felt and recognised as a tax on the wealth of the State ; so I hold that the tax is a most justifiable one. It has been said that it will not have the effect of bringing unimproved land under cultivation. I say this tax, as far as I am able to judge, will have the effect of placing unimproved lands under cultivation. Along our present railway system and along some of our branch lines there are lands which were bought, before any line was built, at less than £1 an acre. This land is lying idle at the present time. The State has made roads and railways to give that land conveniences to get produce to market, but although the conveniences are there the land is still lying uncultivated. The value of the land has risen from £1 an acre to £6, and even £10 an acre, through the expenditure of public money in constructing public works for the betterment of that land. Is it not just and right that those who own these estates should contribute a little towards the revenue of the State out of the accrued wealth that the State has given to the holdings ? Along the spur lines which we are building with borrowed money there is land which, when the railways are made, will immediately increase in value, and is it not right that that land should contribute something towards the revenue ? We know the railways have increased the value of unimproved lands and have made improved lands still more valuable. Let us apply that to our city lands, and exactly the same thing takes place. The original holders of land in the city of Perth are in the same position. When a tax has been applied to the vacant lands about the city those who own them have protested against the tax as bitterly as the member for Perth has. I can understand that member taking up the attitude which he has done, because the constituents he represents will be most affected by the tax. The people in his constituency will have the greater portion of the tax to pay, but I ask, is it not just that they should have have that greater part to pay ? To my knowledge the unimproved land in Barrack Street was bought for £70 a foot, and to-day it is worth £250 a foot at the very least. That is the unimproved value of

the land in Barrack Street, and is it not reasonable that the owners of such land should contribute something towards the revenue of the State by reason of the increased value which surrounding improvements have put upon that land? The same argument can be applied to land in country districts. Reference has been made to roads board grants by the member for Perth, and he takes exception to these. So do I. But I think that public bodies should be assisted in the making of main roads. The Government makes the railways, and the main roads are for the benefit of the State as a whole, and are not for the benefit of any particular district, therefore the funds of the State should be used to provide these roads. The main roads of the State should be placed on the same footing as the railways, maintained and kept by the State. I think the Government would do well by not being too mean and paltry with grants given to the various districts to support main roads which run through the State from one end to the other. The member for Gascoyne has referred to a reduction in the expenditure of the various departments of the State. I hold that there should be no unnecessary expenditure in the various departments, but I should like to see the resources of the State developed to such an extent that the various departments would have plenty of work to do. We have a magnificent State here, and with bold management and courage on the part of our Ministers we should develop that State, and not be afraid to borrow money and spend it for the development of our State. But this money should be spent on works which will pay interest and sinking fund. This State will stand any amount of development. There are the resources of mining, of timber, of coal and all sorts of metals, and these products, to be placed on the market, require a bold policy on the part of the Government by which means the resources would be developed so that the State would reap an advantage from the minerals now in the soil. The Government should develop our State as did the Government that was first in power after the granting of Responsible Government. If the Government de-

veloped this State as that Government did, we would find, in place of our departments being over-manned, the departments might possibly be under-manned. The resources of the State ought to be great enough not only to support the railway system as it is, but even to a greater extent. The Railway Commissioner is the servant of the State, and we ought to give that servant plenty of work to do by developing the resources of this State. That would be a better policy for the Government to adopt than the cheese-paring policy now in vogue. In regard to exemptions, I think it advisable that a few exemptions should be made both in the agricultural districts and in the town districts. I think the Government were well advised in making a concession to those people who have taken up small allotments of land to start making a home for themselves in the country. These people need all the encouragement we can give them. I know these people work hard, and I know the conditions they have to contend against are very severe, and I say these people ought to get assistance from the Government, either by remission of taxation or a contribution from the State funds. We have to recognise that in municipal and roads board districts the exemptions ought to be confined to exactly the same class of people, those who have put their little all into land to make a home for themselves. The exemption the Government proposes is £50 for unimproved land, and that will meet the conditions very well indeed. I am speaking from a little personal experience. I know people who have strained their finances to the very utmost to pay for a block of land by instalments, and a tax, however small, on these people would be a very serious burden and handicap. These are the people who ought to be assisted by the State, both in municipal and agricultural districts. Knowing that, I support the Government in the exemptions to the land tax, otherwise I would have supported the Bill without any exemptions whatever. I know the necessity for exemptions, and I know the advisability of such exemptions, therefore I support the Bill as it is at present constituted. I have much pleasure in

supporting the second reading of the measure.

MR. H. SMITH (Beverley): A lot has been said with reference to this measure and I think the question has been very ably handled. I just rise to say a few words and to express myself as being opposed to the Bill on the grounds that I consider it is premature by many years. We have a young State, not self-supporting by a long way. All our produce has to come from other States or somewhere else, and on these ground I think the tax is premature. We have a big revenue and a small population, and I think if proper economy were exercised this Bill need not have been introduced at all. I intend to oppose the Bill before the House on the grounds I have stated

MR. J. EWING (Collic): Unlike the majority of members who have spoken from the Government side of the House, expressing their views in opposition to the Bill, I rise to give the Government my support in bringing this measure before the House and the country. I do so with perhaps feelings of regret that such a measure is necessary, but I think those who have had the opportunity, I was not one, of hearing the condition of the finances of the State placed before the House by the Treasurer cannot but arrive at one conclusion, that it is necessary, and urgently necessary, for farther taxation and farther revenue as far as the State is concerned. It is a matter of little concern to us, now that the time has arrived when Federation has wrought the evils some think, that our revenue has fallen so much; but the fact remains that such is the case, and the Treasurer tells us that the deficit for this year will be something like £200,000. That being so, we must come to the conclusion at once that there must be farther taxation; and the only thing for us to decide is what form that taxation shall take, and let us get to work as quickly as possible and obtain the necessary revenue to carry on the business of the State. Different aspects of this question have been placed before the House. Some members think that the best thing to do would be to do away with municipal subsidies and roads board grants. [MR. DAGLISH: You cannot do

it.] I agree that if they were done away with, much more money would be saved to this State than this tax will bring forth. But we have to consider those people who are settling the agricultural portions of the State, those who are prospecting it and those who are opening up the great industries of Western Australia. I for one would always raise my voice to ask the Government to give all the assistance possible to those persons who are engaged in the work of making roads, and in other ways assisting in the development and opening up of this State. And in this connection I hope that the Minister for Works, when he is framing his Estimates, will err on the side of liberality, even though we are short of money, and give to the roads boards all the assistance it is possible for him to give. In regard to the municipalities, there are certainly some municipalities in this State which have had liberal assistance from the Government; and perhaps the time has come when they will be able to do with less than the large subsidy they are receiving at the present time. That may or may not be the case; but I ask the Government to be careful in this direction. I think that, so far as it can be done, assistance should be given to municipalities for some years to come. There is another alternative, and I join with the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher), who has placed before us a serious position in regard to the civil service. For a number of years every Government has been going to reform the civil service; yet we find to-day that the civil service is, in the opinion of many, over-manned. I will not say that it is over-paid, because I think the best men in the civil service are not sufficiently paid; but I do think that the service is over-manned. Yet this Government cannot, in a few days do what other Governments were not able to do in years. The Labour Government was in office for fifteen months, and did its best to deal with this difficulty; but that Government found there were grave and serious difficulties in the way. It went to work in the right direction and brought in a Bill for the appointment of a Civil Service Commissioner; and now we must give that Commissioner an opportunity of carrying out his work. I think he will be able to effect reforms in the

direction of providing that the good men in the service of Western Australia shall receive fair remuneration. I hold the opinion that there are many able men in the civil service of the State, men whom we would be glad to have in our private businesses, and these men are in a great many instances very much underpaid. Therefore it is necessary to consider the advisability of giving more responsibility and more pay to some officers, and see if we can get better work of them, so that we may not have so many drones as there undoubtedly are in the service at the present time. The member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) has interjected that only a small amount of money is likely to be derived from this tax. The Premier placed the matter clearly before the House and the country last week, in his speech, when he stated that he expected to get, under the revised taxation proposals, a sum of £60,000. It is evident to us, when we consider the figures placed before the House by the Treasurer, that this is only a small sum in connection with the reduction of the deficit; so it is apparent that it will be necessary for the Government at an early date to consider the advisability of so reforming the civil service as to perhaps save money in that direction also, and to see what other form of taxation is necessary in order to bring in the extra revenue required. I agree with the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) when he said the other night that side by side with a land tax we should have an income tax; and I think it will be necessary at an early date for an income tax to be introduced by this or any other Government that may be in power, in order to strengthen the finances of the State. Of course, in such a measure it would have to be provided that incomes derived from land should be exempted; because, unless that were done and the Bill now before us were to pass, those people would have to pay double taxation. With such exemption, I think they would find that the taxation they would have to pay under this Bill would be much less than if they had to pay under an income tax. An important point was raised by the member for Subiaco, namely that those persons who are deriving incomes from sources other than land are exempt from

taxation. That is a wrong position of affairs, because we should endeavour to make every person in the State bear his due proportion of the taxation in the State. The member for Perth stated that a number of members on this side of the House had spoken or voted against the principle of land taxation. I can only speak for myself in regard to this matter; and I say that when I first sought the suffrages of the people in what was then known as the South-West Mining District, I said distinctly that I was in favour of a tax on unimproved land values, with liberal exemptions for the early settlers and those who had borne the burden and heat of the day in regard to the development of our agricultural lands. I have always stood to that statement; and that is the reason I am here to-night, when it is necessary to support the Government in its land taxation proposals.

MR. JOHNSON: What did you say at the last election?

MR. SCADDAN: Would you like to refresh your memory?

MR. EWING: Most decidedly, if the hon. member can show me where I have stated that I am opposed to a land tax.

MR. SCADDAN: I will show you later.

MR. EWING: That brings to my mind a question which has just occurred to me. What the hon. member has to show me must be either a printer's error or information forwarded by a reporter which is not reliable; and I am glad of an opportunity of placing myself right on this matter before my constituents and the country. During last week I had the pleasure of travelling to Moora with the member for Irwin (Mr. S. F. Moore), and he asked me to attend a meeting of settlers which had been called to discuss the question of the land tax. Very much to my surprise, I was called upon to express my views on the subject, which I had not intended to do before I spoke in this House or had an opportunity of speaking to my constituents. However, I did express my views; and I read in the *West Australian* the following day that I had said the land tax was alarming. That would be inconsistent with the position I am taking up to-night. What I did say on that occasion was this, that the people of that district were possibly unduly alarmed

in regard to this land tax—which is a very different thing. Perhaps the other statement—of which I have no knowledge, and which the hon. member has in his possession—is the same. I do not know who was taking notes at the meeting, but in that report the reporter was in error. Members have all suffered from that kind of thing. If the hon. member will take up *Hansard* and turn over the pages—if he has not had an opportunity previously of correcting errors which will creep in even in *Hansard*—he may have quoted against him statements of which probably he had no previous knowledge.

MR. SCADDAN: To be fair, I am bound to say that you did not oppose the idea of a land tax; but you said, "It is not necessary at the present stage."

MR. EWING: That is quite right. And the reason for that was that the gentleman who is at present Agent General stated to the country that he was determined to so administer the affairs of Western Australia as to make it unnecessary to impose a land tax. But he was unable, during his term of office, to so reduce the expenditure as to make farther taxation unnecessary; and his successor, the present Premier, also finds that he cannot do so; and I regret that it is so. I give full credit to the Government in power to-day that they have had the courage in the circumstances to admit the position that farther taxation is necessary, and to propose this land tax.

MR. BOLTON: Would you support a land tax for any other than revenue purposes?

MR. EWING: Always, if the principle was the bursting up of large estates; but these do not exist to any large extent in Western Australia. I would always agree with the principle of the taxation of land, provided exemption is made in favour of those who are settling on our agricultural lands. It seems to me that the latest position in regard to this tax, as placed before us by the Premier, very much simplifies the Bill and has made it clearer to the people of the State—he certainly has made it clearer to me. The Premier, by his speech on the question, has done an immense amount of good and has cleared away many of the cobwebs previously existing. I am pleased also that the Government have decided

to reduce the proposed tax from 2d. to 1½d. in the £. The Government is now asking us to support a land tax of 1½d. in the £, with rebates up to 50 per cent. if certain improvements are done. The proposed rebate is an excellent provision, as it will encourage a man to improve his property; and I feel sure that the settlers in the State will see that improvements are effected in order that they may secure the rebate. In fact, the Premier stated that they would have to do so to fulfil the conditions under which they hold the land. Therefore, the tax will be really only three-farthings in the £. I have worked out this taxation in connection with many estates, and I find that it is not going to fall heavily on the people who hold and are improving the smaller areas in our agricultural districts. It may be a more serious matter in relation to large areas of 50,000 or 60,000 acres of land obtained in the early days at very low prices, which land has now become enhanced in value by the industry of others who have improved their holdings in and about the same district; but it is only right that the holders of these large areas of land should pay their due proportion towards the taxation in this State or any other State. The member for Perth has taken exception to the fact that a large amount of this revenue—in fact he says one-third of the revenue—will be derived from city lands. Though I do not agree that the proportion will be so high as one-third, I do not see that any exception is to be taken; because, as was pointed out by member for North Perth (Mr. Brebber), these city lands have enormously increased in value during the last ten or fifteen years—and how? It is apparent that the people who have come here in that time and made this State what it is to-day are the people who have given wealth to the city of Perth, and to the holders of city lands. That being so, it is only fair that the holders should pay taxation in connection with city lands. I do not believe that the hon. member made a reliable statement when he said there would be such a large proportion of the revenue derived from city lands; but I do believe that the Government have placed the taxation on the right shoulders. I, at any rate, have always held the opinion that the people should pay

according to their improvements, and I have pleasure in supporting this taxation. Exception has been taken to a Government, or a State, encouraging people to come and settle upon its lands, and at the same time say they are going to tax the land. When I had the pleasure of speaking at Moora the other day, I found that the people of that district did not know what this tax really meant; but they are now fully seized of its incidence, and I think we were then able to enlighten them, so that at the close of that meeting they were not so adverse to the Bill as they had been at the beginning. But in regard to immigration it must not be forgotten that the Government provide in this Bill for three years' total exemption from taxation for new settlers, and I want to bring under the notice of the Premier what appears to me to be a very important question, and that is the subject of people other than those who are taking up our conditional purchase lands being granted exemption during the first five years. When the Bill is in Committee I will move an amendment or place one on the Notice Paper to the effect that all persons taking up virgin land shall be exempt from taxation during the period of five years. I think they should have the same exemption as people who take up conditional purchase land. I cannot draw a distinction between a man who takes up 500 acres from the Midland Company or from someone else and the man who takes 500 acres from the Government. These people have to settle upon the land and they have to improve it. They have practically the same conditions as the Government impose upon its settlers, and it is manifestly unfair that they should be burdened with taxation from the time they start. I hope the Premier will see the advisability of allowing such an amendment as I suggest to become law, as it will be only just, equitable, and fair. I do not think it is necessary to speak at any greater length except to express a hope that the Bill will receive a more generous support than it has already received from the members on this (Government) side of the House, and that when we get into Committee an endeavour will be made to make the Bill a fair and equitable measure. I do not say I am pleased to advocate taxation. I

am sure the Government are not pleased to advocate increased taxation at all, because it goes without saying that any Government which imposes taxation upon the people is likely to become unpopular; but we must give the Government the credit of its opinions, and if we agree with Ministers we should give them our hearty support, at any rate in the proposals which are before the House. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. J. P. McLARTY (Murray): On such an important measure as the taxation of land I think every member, at all events on this (Government) side of the House, should express his opinion. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) has anticipated a good deal of what I was going to say. He has taken the wind out of my sails. I do not know whether it was through mental telegraphy or great minds running in the same groove. We all admit the necessity for increased revenue, and for that reason and for no other would I support this measure. Because, as to the bursting up of large estates, that is all bunkum. It is the custom for most politicians who get on the hustings to talk about this great State with its magnificent resources, but all I can say is that I am sorry this State with its great resources should be under the necessity of getting a land tax at this stage, with such a small population. The member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown) referred to remarks made by me during the last election. I do not remember all that I said during the last election, but I know that I addressed ten different centres and that at nine of them the question of land taxation cropped up. I stated at that time I was a follower of Mr. Rason and approved of his policy, and Mr. Rason had stated that he was against land taxation. But in every case I stated that the time for taxing land was not far distant and that when the time arrived I, no doubt, would have to support it. One thing about this taxation is the uncertainty as to what the tax will amount to. It has been placed at £60,000, but it will depend on the way in which the land is valued. If the amount is three farthings in the pound on unimproved estates and those estates are valued at £3 or

£4 an acre, it will come very heavily on the landowner. If it keeps somewhere near the roads board valuation, I shall not be so much afraid of the tax. I think with the member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) that the time is inopportune for levying the tax at all, and I agree with what the member for Gascoyne has said about railways. In some cases railways are a detriment to land unless you have a siding or something of that kind. If a railway runs through your property and cuts the land, it rather deteriorates its value. I see that the Bill provides for appointing officials to value the land, and of course if they value it fairly it will not fall so heavily on the people. I know that the Premier is rather enthusiastic. I know the value he placed upon land down South was considerable. The farmers are not prosperous, and it is a mistake to believe they are. It is only within the last few years that farmers have done well at all, since we have had the blessing, we may call it, of responsible government. They have gone in largely for clearing and cultivating the land, and to do that they have had to borrow money. I should say that 90 per cent. of the small farmers had their holdings mortgaged. The small farmers have gone to the Agricultural Bank, and those with larger areas have gone to financial institutions and got overdrafts from a bank. I do not think that is taken into consideration. A man may have an estate valued at £1,000, but it may be mortgaged, and with an income tax we should get at the people who hold the mortgages, but until we get an income tax of course those people go scot-free. I know that the Government will carry this measure, even if the few who spoke against it vote against it, because there is a party which thinks that the land should be taxed. Although displaying their good common sense in most measures, still on the subject of the land I do not know that party has much sympathy with the people on the land.

He jests at scars, who never felt a wound.

An income tax seems to me to be coming in the near future. According to the letters which have appeared in the paper during the last few days, that will be the next move. It seems that man never is,

but always is to be, blessed. There is something to make a place go ahead. I also agree with what the member for Gascoyne said in regard to keeping down unnecessary expenses in the various Government departments. There is one thing that strikes me. I do not believe that we shall ever do any good in Western Australia until we recognise that the conditions here are different from those in the East. People are constantly saying and speaking about what they do in New South Wales or New Zealand. When I was in New South Wales between three and four years ago I was at a place called Warrah, consisting of 260,000 acres of freehold, and the same company had another station of 400,000 acres of freehold. Of course there would be something to burst there. It is a well known company. What I am alluding to is to show the difference between this country and New South Wales. That station kept double the number of sheep that there are between Perth and Albany or the other side of Albany. Every two acres kept a sheep. And besides the sheep there were cattle, horses, and other things. The Riverina Company in New South Wales had a station of 200,000 acres on which they kept 100,000 sheep easily, and they had a number of cattle, horses, and other things. So there is no use in comparing this place with other States. Members ought to recognise that. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, but I hope that when the measure gets into Committee it will be fairly considered and will not press harshly on the farming industry or any other community.

MR. H. CARSON (Geraldton): I desire to make a few remarks on this Bill on the second reading. I think every member of the House recognises that a land tax on unimproved values is a legitimate form of taxation. But it is very necessary that we should endeavour to bring about a tax which will be as equitable as possible, and I think that all members of the House will endeavour to do so. Some are proposing to support the Bill not because they believe in the measure, but because they recognise it is very necessary for revenue purposes. I think we all recognise that the Government have to get revenue from somewhere.

That is one of the reasons why I support the measure. Certainly it is not a good advertisement for a State like Western Australia, that we should at this stage in our history have to resort to land taxation. There are some features of the Bill which I think will be remedied when in Committee. At any rate, I do not think it will be passed in its present form. It is more difficult to apply a tax equitably here than it is in States that are fully developed. This is a young country, and certainly it is owing to Federation that we have to pass this measure. We have had the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown) speaking very harshly in regard to this measure, and he is going to oppose it tooth and nail. I can quite understand the hon. member doing that in the interests of his electors, but certainly the city should pay the greater portion of this tax, because city land has increased at a greater ratio than have the country lands. There may be lands in the country which do not increase in value anything like city properties do. In some parts of the State lands may decrease in value. Those who have had anything to do with the money-lender know it is very rarely he will lend money on country property, but he is always ready to accept city property as security. It is the desire of the Government and of all of us, I believe, to bring about the settlement of our agricultural areas, and the Government are doing all they possibly can in this respect, going so far as to almost give the land away to the people. Therefore it seems to me that taxation at the present time will do much to retard the settlement of the land. The Government propose exemption of the conditional purchase selector for three years after he has taken up his selection. I think that is rather too short a term, and I would recommend five years, or even a longer period. The Midland Company are endeavouring to dispose of their properties, and I do not know how the Government are going to deal with them when they do so with regard to exemptions. Certainly it would be unjust, if those buying from the company did not receive the same consideration as those selecting land from the State. Then again, the Government suggested the exemption of agricultural lands not exceeding £250 in value. I think they

should go farther and exempt it up to £500 at least, at any rate in the case of a man the value of whose land does not exceed £1,000. I do not think it would be right to exempt up to £250 only. Members who have read the report of the Immigration Commission know that the Commission say it is impossible for a man to earn a livelihood unless he has 600 acres of land; therefore we shall prevent a man making a decent livelihood if we make £250 the limit of our exemption. Again, I think it will be highly necessary to employ an expert valuator if we are to have anything like a proper valuation of the lands of the State. It will be nonsensical to accept the valuations of roads board and municipal valutors. There are those who suggest an income tax. I verily believe, as the preceding speaker said, that this will be imposed. I think that the Government will find it necessary in the very near future. I shall support the second reading of the Bill; and I hope that every other member will endeavour to make it an equitable measure, dealing fairly with all classes of the community, and not preventing farther settlement of our lands.

THE TREASURER (in reply as mover): I am happy to-night to learn by the expressions that have fallen from members that they have had additional light thrown on the Government proposal for land taxation, and that many of them now see their way to support the Bill which we have introduced. Of course, the principle of taxation has not altered one iota; but it is a fact that as one dwells on the subject from day to day and from week to week, one becomes more familiar with the idea of such taxation; and notwithstanding that some members have thought that I, for instance, have always opposed taxation of this sort, we find that the idea is not so repugnant to us after all. And in this connection let me at once put the House right regarding the attitude of the ex-Premier, Mr. Rason. Members will recollect that when he addressed that large meeting at Midland Junction, prior to the general election, he stated that land taxation would undoubtedly have to come, but that he was not prepared and did not propose to introduce such taxation that year. The matter was broached from

time to time by other members of Mr. Rason's Cabinet. It has been referred to on the hustings by members of the Moore Cabinet wherever they have gone; and although, perhaps, we have not advocated land taxation for the same reasons as influence members opposite (Labour party), yet we have said from time to time that taxation of this nature would become necessary, and that we should have to face the inevitable and support the proposal, making due provision for those who are struggling for a livelihood on the land or in the towns. I maintain that the questions I put to myself in the House when introducing this measure—as to the necessity for such taxation, as to its fairness, and whether it would deter settlement on our lands—have not been answered in the affirmative or negative, in opposition to the measure, by any member who has addressed himself to the subject of the Bill. It appears to me that the necessity has been admitted all round, except perhaps by one or two members, such as the representatives of Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse), Perth (Mr. H. Brown), and I believe the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher), all of whom have told us that it was not necessary; but they have not tried to controvert the statements I made when introducing the measure: they have not pointed out any practicable or feasible plan whereby the finances of the State can be put in a satisfactory position without the imposition of this tax.

MR. H. BROWN: Reduce the subsidies.

THE TREASURER: Certainly, the subsidies will be reduced. And when members consider that at the present time I am grappling with the subject of a deficit of £300,000, when I am doing my utmost to cut down the expenditure of every department in which extravagance appears, when I am considering the reduction of the very subsidies, municipal and roads board, to which the hon. member refers, and that all these means will be needed, together with the proceeds of this tax, to balance or even nearly balance the revenue account of the country, surely members will at once admit the reasonableness of the proposal that we have to put before the House. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) made a strong plea that the mortgagee who has advanced money on land should

pay the tax, because he draws from the land interest for his loan. I wish to point out at once that this tax is on the unearned increment of the land; and therefore the man who advances money on the security of land, and derives interest, can be approached by means of an income tax only. That is the direct method of taxing such a man. The owner of the land, the mortgagor who still owns the land though it is mortgaged, derives the unearned increment of that land, and is therefore the proper person to be taxed by this measure. It is astounding to find people crying out right and left against direct taxation. I suppose that has been the experience of all politicians from time immemorial. Whenever you tax a man directly, when you ask him for 10s., £1, or £5, there is a hue and cry that the country will be ruined, that city properties will depreciate in value, and that the farmer will not cultivate the land. But if you propose to impose on each member of the community an additional £5 by means of the Custom-house, you hear nothing at all about the matter. Every man is willing to pay a tax through his grocer or his tailor; but when it is a question of directly paying £1, whether in the shape of a land tax or an income tax, then we have this hue and cry that is now ringing in our ears.

MEMBER: You are now taxing us by both methods.

THE TREASURER: No. The hon. member, when he was speaking, advanced arguments to controvert that statement. He pointed out that taxation through the Customs had decreased; he recognised the correctness of my figures; and his only mistake was the statement that I admitted the result was due to Federation. I am proud of the stand I took up many years ago on the question of Federation; and I do not think that any proof has yet been advanced to warrant the statement that Federation has brought anything like distress or ruination on our State. It is true we have had to labour under many disabilities, and one of the greatest is the reduction of our Customs taxation and our revenue; but I am not prepared to admit with the hon. member that Federation has been the sole cause of that reduction. As the country continues to produce that which its inhabi-

taunts consume, as the production increases year after year, naturally the Customs revenue will decrease, whether we have entered into the Federal bond or have remained out. I venture to say that had we remained free from the bonds of Federation, our Customs revenue would still have decreased; and happy should I be to see that decrease continue. So long as we know that we are building up our industries, whether they be agronomic or manufacturing industries, so long as we know we are providing for our wants by our own enterprise, and are by that means diminishing the importation of goods which are taxed through the Customs, then I think we ought to be happy indeed to see the day when our Customs taxation will altogether cease. The member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown) has taken a strong stand in opposition to this measure; and I wish to remark in his bearing that I think he has been ungenerous, to say the least of it, and also unfair. To talk about the Government wishing to raise additional revenue to be given out as sops to constituencies is to make a statement that no other member believes for a moment, and I venture to say that the hon. member himself does not believe in the statement he made in the Perth town hall the other evening and repeated here to-night.

MR. H. BROWN: Its truth has been proved by results.

THE TREASURER: It has not been exemplified by results, and the hon. member has not proved it. He has made a base assertion, and has brought forward no evidence whatever to prove that the Government have been dealing out sops.

MR. H. BROWN: I rise to a point of order. Is "base assertion" parliamentary? I ask for the withdrawal of the remark.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The remark is not personally applied; so I do not think that I can order its withdrawal.

MR. H. BROWN: He said I made a "base assertion."

THE TREASURER: I say the hon. member's statement was ungenerous in the extreme. He knows well that the Government are not guilty of dealing out sops to any constituency; and farther,

his references to me as member for Sussex were unwarranted. If the hon. member likes to go farther and compare the subsidies collected from the Government by roads boards scattered throughout this vast territory with the subsidies received by the Sussex Roads Board, he will find that the district of Sussex stands pretty low down in the scale; and I wish to point out to him that the city of Perth, which he so ably represents, receives very material assistance from the Government, and perhaps much more than the district I have the honour to represent. On the Estimates are votes here, there, and everywhere for the city of Perth. The hon. member has overlooked the fact that his public library, museum, and art gallery cost the country £10,000 or more last year. He overlooks the fact that the reclamation of the Perth foreshore, for which the city is indebted to the Government, has cost tens of thousands of pounds.

MR. H. BROWN: I did not ask for it.

THE TREASURER: The hon. member did not ask; but others asked. He did not decline it, at all events. And we find that the money is well expended. The parks and reserves and reclamation works to which I have referred will enhance the value of Perth properties; and yet the hon. member says Perth is to be ruined because of a land tax which will realise some £60,000 per annum. Notwithstanding the efforts of the hon. member to stir up strife and oppose this measure by a public meeting in the city of Perth, it seems to me that we have had no opposition from the large property owners or the leading business people of this city, each of whom recognises that fresh taxation must be imposed in order to keep the revenue commensurate with the expenditure of the country. Hence we find that the public meeting called by the hon. member, with the enthusiasm of a great mind, to protect his electorate, fizzled out and miserably failed. I hope that the Government and the Parliament of the country will be, and we intend to be, as reasonable as possible in these proposals. We do not wish to impose on the people a burden which they cannot bear. Hence we have taken time by the forelock. We have again and again considered what we can raise by a certain tax on the land; and

we have concluded that so far as this year is concerned we shall be justified in asking Parliament to agree to the 1½d. tax specified in the Bill which I shall move for leave to introduce to-morrow. As the Premier has explained, that will bring in a total of some £60,000 per annum. I have the figures here, but I do not propose to weary the House by reading them to-night. I simply say that the total, as worked out by the actuaries connected with the Government according to the information they have to guide them, is £55,000; but we have the peculiar position that, whereas alienated land and land in process of alienation outside municipalities is set down at 12,300,000 acres, yet the valuation placed on that land by the different roads boards pans out at an all-round value of only 9s. 6d. per acre; and it is reasonable to suppose that as agricultural lands adjoin some of our municipalities and townships, we will be able to get some increased value on them. Therefore I add on to the £55,000 which the Government actuaries reckon we will receive from the taxation to be imposed, something to bring it up to the all-round figure of £60,000 mentioned by the Premier the other evening. I hope members will see with us that, when the agriculturalists and farmers of this country oppose the measure which we propose to Parliament for acceptance, they have not as yet carefully considered the details of the measure, and that possibly they have not had the information to enable them to go into a very accurate calculation of the amount they will have to pay; but when they find that this measure proposes to protect the small man who is struggling to the extent of £250, and that all the small settlers will not be touched by the tax (which is only fair and reasonable), and when they see that every consideration is shown to them in the way of rebates on improvements, notwithstanding the expressions that have fallen from some bodies in the country districts, I hope we shall have the unanimous opinion expressed that the taxation we propose is reasonable and fair, is equitable, and is one which the interests of the country require us to impose at the present juncture. We want to open up the country and develop it by the construction of agricultural railways;

and we want to open up the goldfields by the construction of railways to tap our mineral areas. By that means we not only assist those who are settled in the districts adjoining the railways, but we certainly assist the towns, the metropolis, and the port of Fremantle through which the main trade of the country percolates to those who are consumers. The farmers should bear in mind—and I point this out especially to those who have advocated an income tax in place of a land tax—that were an income tax imposed to-morrow instead of the land tax we propose, the impost would be much severer and heavier than the land tax proposed in this measure. An income tax would amount to five, or six, or even ten times the amount proposed to be raised by a land tax, yet we have people in all earnestness advocating, on behalf of agricultural settlers, an income tax rather than a land tax. It seems to me to be a matter of sentiment, and a matter of sentiment only. The name of a land tax seems to attract opposition. I hope that this House at any rate will bear in mind that the necessities of the case warrant the imposition of a tax, that the cost of collecting the tax will be kept down to a minimum notwithstanding the prophecy of the member for Perth, and that the experience of other States is that it will not cost more than five per cent. at the outside. We hope, and it will be our endeavour, to see that the collection of this impost will not exceed that which has been the experience of the other States, that is five per cent.

MR. FOULKES: Do you mind telling us how you propose to collect it? Do you mean to take the valuations of the municipalities and roads boards?

THE TREASURER: Of necessity we must do that for the first year at any rate. No doubt assessors will be appointed; and if the tax is imposed next year, it may be collected more upon the valuations made by the Government assessors than upon the valuations of the roads boards and municipalities. For the present year, however, to a large extent the Government must of necessity depend on those values. It is unnecessary for me to labour this question any farther this evening. Members know just as much about the incidence of this tax as I do. They have had the measure

before them, and when the Bill gets into Committee no doubt they will suggest certain amendments. I do not think they will blame me, or the Premier, or my other colleagues if certain amendments are suggested from the Government bench. Our object is to make the tax as fair as we possibly can on all members of the community who are owners of land.

MR. BOLTON: I suppose you will extend the same consideration to amendments that come from other than the Government bench?

THE TREASURER: Have I not said so? Our object is that the measure shall be as workable and complete as possible; and if members on the other side of the House will assist us in that direction, we will be thankful to them for such assistance and will endeavour to assist them also in return. I may have made a slip in omitting to refer to amendments from members of the Opposition, but I am quite sure the Leader of the Opposition does not attach any importance to that. In conclusion I wish to remark that, so far as the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition are concerned, I cannot quite follow his reasons for supporting a land tax. I understood him to say that the Labour party did not support this tax for revenue purposes or for breaking up large estates.

MR. BATH: Not primarily. I said that we supported it because it was a just and equitable tax.

THE TREASURER: I must have missed the word "primarily." I confess that I could not understand why the tax was not supported on the ground of wanting revenue. I hope that members will pass the second reading of this Bill. When we get into Committee I hope we shall be able to turn out a measure that will work smoothly in the interests of all concerned.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

COUNCIL'S MESSAGE (REVISED).

Message (No. 9) from the Legislative Council received and read, requesting that two amendments be made in the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER: This message was in substitution for Message No. 8, considered at the last sitting.

On motions by the TREASURER, the consideration of Message No. 9 was made an Order of the Day for the next sitting; the order for the consideration of the Council's Message No. 8 being now discharged.

BILL—PUBLIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING MOVED.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Price) in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill to amend the Public Works Act in one or two directions, which will be useful to the department which I have under my control. It purports to give the Government power to carry a drain under a property without compensation, unless some injury has been done to the property in the course of the work. Members will recognise that at the present moment, in view of the early undertaking of the sewerage scheme for Perth, this is a very necessary provision. Already in some directions owing to the absence of a provision of this sort the Government have had to pay compensation to an owner whose property has in no degree been damaged; and it will be recognised that where no injury is done to property, it is only reasonable where a great work such as the sewerage of Perth is being carried out, that such easement should be given to the Government free of expense. The Bill does not in any way absolve the Government from the necessity of paying compensation where any injury is done to a property. Another portion of the Bill deals with bringing a stock route under the control of the department in a similar way to a public road. Up to the present there has been some doubt whether the Works Department have control over stock routes at all. This has led to considerable confusion in various districts, and to make the matter perfectly clear it is proposed under the Bill to put a stock route on the same footing as a public road. Then again, Clause 4 of the Bill makes the very useful provision that the Public Works Report shall be published at the end of the financial year. Up to the present the report has been

printed at another period, but for the future it is proposed under the Bill to make it coterminous with the end of the financial year.

MR. BATH: That is June 30th.

THE MINISTER: Up to June 30th. These amendments are required to facilitate administration in the Public Works Department, and in no way attack any vital principle. I think the House will agree with me that the measure deserves favourable consideration.

MR. FOULKES: What about Clause 5?

THE MINISTER: It gives power to repair and maintain bridges and culverts erected either before or after the passing of the Act of 1902.

On motion by MR. BATH, debate adjourned.

BILL—STOCK DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING MOVED.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. Mitchell), in moving the second reading, said: This is a small amending Bill, necessary as the interpretation of the words "disease in stock" is somewhat ambiguous at present, and is intended to include tick and lice in sheep. This alteration is asked for on the recommendation of the Crown Solicitor, who advises that under the present Act it would be difficult to obtain a conviction. As members know, there are both tick and lice in sheep in the South-Western portion of the State, and we desire power to eradicate the pests by compulsory dipping. Members also know we have regulations which make dipping compulsory, and it is our desire to enforce these regulations in order that stock may be kept free from these parasites. The alteration to Section 11 of the Act is of importance. Under the original law an owner is given 24 hours in which to report any discovery of disease or infection to the stock inspector. We think this report should be made forthwith. It would be possible within 24 hours to allow infected sheep to come in contact with other stock in a locality. That is undesirable, and for that purpose we desire to have the section amended. A member interjects that it will be impossible for a man to give notice forthwith; but members understand that

an owner of sheep has not always a stock inspector at his elbow. It is necessary to give notice with the least possible delay. This difficulty may occur under the original Act, for the notice may not have reached the inspector within 24 hours where sheep may be some distance from an inspector. That would not relieve the owner of the necessity of attempting to give notice. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by MR. BUTCHER, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 17 minutes past 10 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 22nd August.

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

PRAYERS.

MOTION — INSANE PATIENTS, MAINTENANCE BY RELATIVES IN OTHER STATES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) moved:—

That the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia be requested to pass a measure having for its object the maintenance of persons confined in hospitals for the insane or lunatic asylums of the various States, by relatives resident in a State other than that in which the person is so confined.

He said: Our Lunacy Act provides that