

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 18th February, 1902.

Question: Coolgardie Water Scheme, Reticulation, etc.—Question: Coal Supply—Question: Battery at Norseman, Insufficient—Question: Libel Prosecution (Mr. Spear)—Paper presented—North Perth Tramways Bill, third reading—Leave of Absence—Motion: Inter-State Duties on Produce, to Abolish (negative)—Land Act Amendment Bill, Amendments reconsidered—Royal Commissioners' Powers Bill, all stages—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, Council's Amendment—Health Act Amendment Bill, Council's Amendment—North Perth Tramways Bill, Council's Amendment—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—COOLGARDIE WATER SCHEME, RETICULATION, ETC.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS asked the Minister for Works, without notice: 1, If the full amount of two and a half millions sterling, authorised by Section 2 of the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Supply Loan Act of 1896, has been raised? 2, If it has been raised, will it cover the cost of construction of the main scheme to Kalgoorlie, without any reticulation at all? 3, What balance, if any, is available to carry out the reticulation? 4, Is it intended that Item 6 of the Second Schedule to the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Supply Loan Act of 1896 shall include reticulation? Item 6 reads: "Distributing mains, including trenching, laying, jointing, etc., averaging, say 12in., £161,000?" 5, Will the Government order the engineering branch of the Public Works Department to immediately prepare the plans and specifications for the pipes and pipe lines required for reticulating Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and the other centres which it is intended the Coolgardie Scheme shall embrace? 6, If the request contained in Question No. 5 is not immediately proceeded with, is it not a fact that it will take an additional two years to secure a market for the water, owing to the time that will lapse in legislating for the constitution of the waterworks board or boards, the formation of those boards, the appointment of engineers, the preparation of plans, specifications, and the taking of levels by those engineers, the raising of funds as required, and subsequently, the completion of the reticulation?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. H. Rason) replied: 1, The two and a half millions authorised by the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Supply Loan Act 1896 has been raised. The net proceeds available for expenditure are £2,273,681 6s. 4d., but it must be remembered that £461,000 of the two and a half millions was reappropriated for various other works. 2, Yes. It will cover cost of works required for delivering water into reservoirs at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, and possibly to Boulder. 3, Probably none. 4, No. The provision made under item 6 was for distributing mains such as that from Coolgardie to Kalgoorlie. 5, The data for preparation of working plans and specifications is not as yet available, but as soon as the necessary surveys are completed, the working plans and specifications will be proceeded with without delay. 6, It is not considered that it will take as long as stated to secure a market for the water. As stated in answer to question No. 5, the working plans and specifications will be prepared as soon as possible.

QUESTION—COAL SUPPLY.

MR. EWING asked the Minister for Railways: Whether it is his intention to accept any fresh tenders for imported coal, having in view the report of the Select Committee on the Coal Mining Industry, and also the large stock of imported coal in reserve.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. W. Kingsmill) replied: As it is imperative that a sufficient reserve stock of coal should be stored, and as it is also necessary that, to avoid excessive deterioration in the quality of such reserve stock, it should not be allowed to lie in the stacks too long, the department is obliged to use a certain quantity of imported coal from the reserve stock, which is replaced by fresh importations. For these reasons it is proposed to accept tenders for the supply of a certain amount of imported coal should such tenders be satisfactory.

QUESTION—BATTERY AT NORSEMAN, INSUFFICIENT.

MR. THOMAS asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Whether he is aware that there

are thirty-five leases on the Norseman field raising stone for the public battery, and that there are over 1,500 tons awaiting treatment. 2, Whether he will send a competent man to examine the district to see if a larger battery is warranted.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory) replied: 1, Latest advices are to the effect that 1,000 tons await treatment. 2, There are so many applications for public batteries that no funds will be available for increasing the number of stamps at Norseman, but no expense will be spared in putting this plant in good working order.

QUESTION—LIBEL PROSECUTION

(MR. SPEAR).

MR. HOPKINS asked the Attorney General: 1, Whether it is correct that the Crown intend proceeding against the editor of the *Spectator* newspaper, on another count of alleged libel on Mr. Justice Parker. 2, Whether the charge upon which such action is contemplated is one upon which the defendant, Mr. Spear, was committed to take his trial at the last December criminal sessions conjointly with the count upon which two juries have already disagreed. 3, Why defendant was not arraigned for trial on his present charge at the sessions to which he was committed. 4, Why, and on whose advice, this present charge was previously abandoned. 5, With what object (in the face of two distinct disagreements of juries on a more momentous count) does the Crown now renew these proceedings. 6, Whether senior and extra Crown prosecuting counsel, Mr. Sept. Burt, when the action of the Crown in then dropping the present charge was questioned by defendant's counsel, did not express the opinion that the charge upon which he is now to be arraigned was "simply a comment on Mr. Parker's fitness for the position of Judge, and that there was nothing in the article to suggest fraud or dishonourable conduct on his part." 7, In face of senior Crown counsel's opinion so expressed, why the prosecution is being continued. 8, Why the Crown Solicitor did not conduct these prosecutions. 9, Who is retained to conduct the prosecution in the present case. 10, What has been the total cost to the State of the two previous trials, inclusive of witnesses, juries, and counsel's fees.

11, What is the present trial likely to cost. 12, If the Crown fail to gain a conviction, whether the defendant will be entitled to costs. 13, Whether Mr. Justice Parker is paying the costs of the prosecution, or any part thereof; if so, to what extent. 14, Whether there is any limit to the expenditure that is being incurred in this prosecution.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. Leake) replied: It is not usual to discuss the merits of, or the reasons for, a criminal prosecution whilst the case is pending.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Perth Fire Brigades Board, Report for 1901.

Ordered: To lie on the table.

NORTH PERTH TRAMWAYS BILL.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS, leave of absence for the remainder of the session was granted to the member for the Greenough (Mr. P. Stone) on the ground of urgent private business.

MOTION—INTER-STATE DUTIES ON PRODUCE, TO ABOLISH.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, all inter-State duties on butter, cheese, eggs, bacon, ham, potatoes, onions, and flour, should be immediately abolished.

While regretting that the motion had been delayed, having been on the Notice Paper for a lengthened period, he did not think the plea of want of time at this stage of the session would be sufficient, because if a strong expression of opinion were made by the House in favour of the motion, ways and means might be found for giving effect to it. It might be objected also that a matter of this kind was too important for a private member to bring before the House; but he must submit, by way of justification, that it was an unfair attitude to say that private members should not take up questions of this kind, for every member was sent to this House to say how the country should be governed, and the responsi-

bility rested upon each member individually. If this question were left to the Government, opportunity might be seized by members to shirk their responsibility. As the present Government would soon have to make up Estimates for the next financial year, it was only fair that members of the House should give some indication of the lines on which they desired taxation to go. It was unfortunate that the motion was delayed, particularly by the occurrence of political complications some three months ago. He recognised that the motion was of a contentious nature, and some members might object that the list of articles in the motion was too small; but when the motion was framed, a select committee was inquiring into the food supply, and as a result of that inquiry he would be glad now, if it could be done, to include some other articles of imported produce from which duties should be removed. This House passed a resolution a short time ago protesting against the extra taxation which would be consequent on the Federal Tariff as introduced in the Federal Parliament; but the effect of that resolution, which was forwarded to Melbourne, was discounted by the manifest hypocrisy of this Parliament in maintaining duties on produce from other States, thereby continuing unnecessary taxation on the people in this State, and doing the very thing of which this Parliament complained in reference to the Federal Tariff. The objection as to this State continuing a system of double taxation was made stronger by the fact that federation had not long been started in Australia; and while every other State had stuck closely to the idea of free-trade between States, Western Australia was the only exception in maintaining unnecessary inter-State duties. The food duties were not a small item in regard to taxation; and although the principal complaint, when the question of duties was discussed in this House, was as to the percentage of the respective duties, yet the fact seemed to be overlooked that in these fixed duties on imported produce this State was charging more than was proposed to be charged through the Federal Tariff. Butter imported into this State was charged, by these fixed duties, at the rate of 20 per cent., cheese 30 per cent., eggs

about 18 per cent., hams and bacon about 22 per cent., potatoes and onions about 35 per cent., flour about 22 per cent.; thus showing that this Parliament was levying taxation much greater than the Federal Parliament proposed to do, although this Parliament had complained strongly about the action of the Federal Government in introducing the Federal Tariff. There was an idea that the sliding scale of duties was a necessary part of federation; but he must point out that it was only a permissive measure at the start of federation, to make the introduction of the new system easier for this State. This Parliament could, at any moment, stop or limit those duties. In some parts of the country there had been a strong desire to retain the sliding scale, which was said to be absolutely necessary for the protection of certain interests, and to encourage and increase local production.

MR. GEORGE: As a matter of fairness.

MR. HASTIE: And this feeling had been so strong that the leaders of the federation campaign promised they would not willingly abolish the sliding scale. That promise had often been referred to as a compact; but he submitted that the bargain, whatever it was, was not binding. Its sole object was to encourage and increase local production, whereas the local production of the articles mentioned in the motion had not increased. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Nonsense!] After diligent inquiry for a considerable time, he had found no authority who maintained there was an increase; and official returns proved there was not any. The first product mentioned was butter. In 1896 the total local production was 243,000lbs., and in 1899 294,000lbs. These were the statistics of the Department of Agriculture, the accuracy of which he had never heard questioned. They were, he believed, compiled in the office of the Registrar General. In 1900 the total production of butter was 297,874lbs.

MR. GEORGE: Producers had not known what would happen, and therefore had not cared to speculate.

MR. HASTIE: The production for 1900 was 4,000lbs. less than for 1899. The figures for 1901 were incomplete; but on inquiry he had been absolutely assured there had been a decrease.

MR. GEORGE: Owing to a bad season.

MR. HASTIE: In the item of cheese there was an increase. While in 1900 the country produced 332lbs., in 1901 it produced 346lbs.; and in that year a new manufactory of cheese was established which produced almost 200lbs. extra; so that the total for 1901 was about 500lbs. For eggs statistics were not available, as the local hens did not count the eggs they laid. Regarding local bacon and ham, the total production of both for 1898 was 154,000lbs., for 1899 196,000lbs., and for 1900 199,123lbs., being a slight increase of about 3,000lbs. So far as could be ascertained from the Department of Agriculture, there was this year no increase, but a vast decrease, mainly because within the last year or two the price of fresh pork had gradually risen, so that farmers would not cure ham or bacon, but preferred to sell pigs as fresh pork. One would think potatoes a very suitable crop for Western Australia; but they were not much cultivated. The greatest production was in 1899—8,372 tons; while for 1900 the total was 4,836 tons.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: There was a blight that year.

MR. HASTIE: And there had not been an increase last year.

MR. DOHERTY: The price of potatoes fluctuated greatly.

MR. HASTIE: Possibly; but in 1896 the production was 2,000 tons, next year 4,000 tons, next 5,000, and the next 8,000 tons—an average of about 5,000 tons a year.

MR. GEORGE: How much had been imported?

MR. HOPKINS: The duty last year was £8,489.

MR. HASTIE: Inter-State duties did not tend to increase the local production of this article. The remaining item, flour, was in one respect different from the others, being a manufactured article. There was a tax on imported wheat which somewhat restricted the import, and the House were not asked to remove that duty. But the production of local flour was not to any extent increasing. In 1898 it was 8,460 tons, and in 1900 12,539 tons—(MR. DOHERTY: Fifty per cent.)—and on all hands he was assured that the production of flour for last year had decreased.

MEMBERS: No.

MR. GEORGE: Who was the hon. member's authority?

MR. HASTIE: Authorities would be quoted. Practically all these articles were by-products, and there was probably no man engaged in the production of all of them. The man who made butter did not produce bacon and ham; consequently if he got the benefit of the duty on his product, he had to pay the extra duty on the other articles. At most none raised more than two of them; therefore not only the people of the gold-fields and the metropolitan centres would be benefited by the abolition of the duties, but the benefit to the agricultural community would be as great. There was no desire to find fault with the productiveness of the local soil, nor was it necessary to assume that the country was not suitable for the production of those articles because they were not grown. The reason for their non-production was that in a new country it was more profitable to grow green crops and to raise fruit, beef, and other products, rather than dairy produce. The land was good but new, and all intelligent persons were aware that not till a country had reached a certain stage of development, and until it had a large population, was there ever a plentiful production of those articles. Regarding the objection that if the duties were removed the articles would be cheap, and as to the instance often given a few years ago that the abolition of the duty on beef would make meat cheaper, there was here a great distinction. Dairy produce, with the possible exception of butter, was not perishable, and when imported did not require much preparation before sale. If middlemen made for a month or two an additional profit there would be a great increase of sellers, which would soon reduce the price. In the case of beef, special circumstances prevented the reduction, mainly because the supply and facilities for keeping large stocks near the market were limited. The next objection that might be brought forward was the financial one. Many members would ask, could we afford it? His idea was that the Treasurer never could afford to do without any taxation which he had. One had never yet heard of a Treasurer in any part of the world wishing to reduce taxation, unless immedi-

ately after a general election during which a reduction of taxation had been the principal theme of discussion. Although we had a large amount of money at the present time, it was not long since we thought ourselves comparatively hard up. Not many months ago we anticipated we should have to do with a smaller revenue than at present, but it seemed we should have during this financial year £300,000 or £400,000 more than was calculated; and the Treasurer could spend it all, and he would be assisted in spending it all by a number of members of the House. One did not doubt that, if the Treasurer had two million pounds extra, he would find ways and means of spending it, and at the end of that time many members would bewail, to their constituents, that the Treasurer had no money to spend. The amount of money which a country spent depended on the amount of money it could get. We were very prosperous just now, and the principal reason was not necessarily that we had a double tax. The principal reason was really that we had borrowed three millions during the last eight months.

THE TREASURER: That did not affect it at all.

MR. HASTIE said he believed it did, and he believed if the Treasurer borrowed another three millions pounds during the next 12 months the prosperity would continue.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes; until the Treasurer began to pay back again.

THE TREASURER: Not a shilling came direct to the country.

MR. HASTIE: If the Treasurer had not made arrangements for the three millions of money, there would not have been anything like the amount paid into our customs; we would not then have had the present boom, and there would not have been the amount of employment there was now.

THE TREASURER: It had not made a particle of difference.

MR. HASTIE said he could not accept the dictum of the Treasurer in this case. So far as he knew it made all the difference in the world. Every country that did not borrow money found it had to economise in many ways and could not get along so smoothly. However, we were getting this amount of money, and the motion meant

that the revenue ought to be decreased by £100,000. Although that seemed to be a big sum, he would ask members to bear in mind that from the beginning of October next the present revenue from inter-State duties would be reduced by 20 per cent., counting from the beginning of October, and it was proposed there should be a reduction amounting to £80,000. This was a big amount, and many would blame the Federal Government for making it possible; but really we had to blame, not the Federal Government, but this Parliament, which exacted duties on articles from which no other part of Australia considered desirable that duty should be obtained. Five-sixths of the people declared the duties unnecessary, and so far as the farming community were concerned, almost all those who had spoken on the subject declared that they could get along without those duties. He would point out to those members of the House who were not likely to agree with the motion that members of the House had readily agreed to any species of taxation that was in any way considered necessary. If the money was to be devoted to the agricultural parts of the country, the House had been ever ready to grant it, the only conditions imposed on any grant being that the people benefiting should do something for themselves. This motion would assist the goldfields to a large extent, but he submitted it was not only a goldfields matter, but one that would affect the whole of the country. All agreed that the main thing which the country wanted was population. The great aim ought to be to encourage population, and although there had been an increase it was not as great as we all desired. If we wished to make the country more desirable to live in than at present, if we wished to induce people to come here, and when we got them to cause them to stay here, then we must make the conditions as easy as possible, and one way to do that was to cheapen articles of consumption. The main complaints heard were as to the double taxation, especially on articles of food. People found that the price of living was an urgent question. He would read a letter which had been addressed to Mr. Connolly, who intended last week, in another place, to bring forward a similar motion to the one he was moving.

The writer was particularly pathetic. The letter stated :—

Dear Mr. Connolly,—I see you are trying to reduce the duties. Be sure and add jams and other lines used by the family man, starch, etc. I am the father of a dozen, and if living is not made cheaper, I will not be able to live, and must throw up the sponge.—Yours truly, HOPE.

There was one particular peculiarity about the taxation of food, that it was not a class tax, but was practically a poll-tax which fell almost equally on everyone; and the unfortunate thing was that the larger the family a man had in Western Australia, the more he had to pay.

MR. DOHERTY: That applied all the world over.

MR. HASTIE: It did not apply all the world over, for in every other country he knew of there was a fair amount of direct taxation, and when there was a direct taxation there was always an exemption in favour of those who had very little money. The object was to make people pay who could afford it, but in Western Australia no attempt was made in that direction. People were made to pay alike, and in nine cases out of ten the poorer the man the more he had to pay.

MR. DOHERTY: He paid according to the amount he spent.

MR. HASTIE: This was not applicable to all parts of Western Australia, as the people in new districts invariably paid more than their fair share. Generally attempts were made to equalise matters, and this being one of the first attempts in that direction, he asked members to agree to the motion. We should not sacrifice the general welfare to the possible assisting of a section of the community. There might be no clear relation between the rates of remuneration and the price of articles of living, but the price was the most material factor. If it was the desire to develop this country and attract population, we should alter things so as to leave a margin between the necessary cost of living and the remuneration. Unless a man could obtain a partial independence he could not develop the gold and the other industries which we wished to see established. We possibly had in this country the best circumstanced and most hopeful community on earth: let us preserve it, and not make the lot harder

by increasing the price of the necessities of existence.

MR. F. McDONALD (Cockburn Sound) seconded the motion. The mover had said he was certain that if this were a question of cheapening the cost of living, the prices would be reduced by competition as soon as the duty came off. As an instance, he knew as a fact that when the Federal Parliament remitted part of the duty on tea and condensed milk, the full benefit of that reduction was given to customers by storekeepers in Perth and Fremantle the very next day. Taking the first four items in the motion, the abolition of the duty on these to the working man would mean a great saving. There would be a reduction of 2d. a lb. on butter, 2d. on cheese, very little being made here, and practically all coming from New Zealand; 2d. a dozen on eggs, coming from South Australia and Victoria; and a reduction on hams and bacon, all imported from Victoria and New South Wales, except a small portion from New Zealand. He had pleasure in supporting the amendment.

THE TREASURER (Hon. F. Illingworth): In speaking on this motion, he was not quite sure the opinions he intended to express would be those of the Government. The first aspect of the motion which struck him was that the terms of it were impracticable; for the hon. member was asking that these duties should be struck off "immediately." It was impossible for the Government to act on a motion of this character, because before they could remit any duty imposed by statute they would have to consult this House, and a Bill would have to be passed through Parliament abolishing the duty on the particular items. The hon. member had pointed out that one of the principal articles, cheese, coming mostly from New Zealand, represented the most revenue in the list of articles he had given. There was a good deal of assumption on this question, that a much heavier taxation rested on the people in regard to these items than was really the case. There had been a large increase of revenue as compared with the amount estimated for the current year. Those members who had advocated federation all declared that the Federal Tariff would be higher than the tariff of this State. It was argued, on the contrary, that this

country must necessarily lose something like £300,000 a year on its revenue by adopting federation. Those who had said, during the federation campaign, that the Federal Tariff would be greater than the tariff then imposed in this State had proved to be correct. There was a distinct understanding in this House that the appeal which was to be made to the people on federation was to be based on the relief that was to be given to the producers under what was called the sliding scale. A bargain was a bargain, even though it might prove afterwards not to be exactly what was expected; and there was a distinct understanding in this House and out of it, that we should stand by the Federal Constitution Act, including the sliding scale for Western Australia. In fact the motto of the federalists, started first by the present Premier, was "the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." There was an assumption at present that the large increase which had resulted from taxation in the present year was consequent on what were called the food duties. He wanted to assure the House, as Treasurer, that the large amount we had received this year, and would receive up to October next, was not due to those duties, but was due to alcoholic liquors imported into the State. The fact was that it was a whisky tax which was giving us, to a large extent, the increased amount of revenue. Under the sliding scale we were compelled to charge upon similar articles from abroad the same rate of taxation as we charged on similar articles from any of the States of Australia. We had been importing from Victoria brandy and whisky; consequently, as we retained our State duty of 16s. a gallon under the sliding scale, we were compelled to charge the same rate of duty on whisky and brandy coming from other parts of the world. This excess revenue was coming largely from the 2s. a gallon extra which had to be imposed under the sliding scale on alcoholic liquors coming from outside countries. In October next we would have to fall back on the decreasing duty for spirits, according to the sliding scale; and if hon. members would take into their minds the consideration that for many years past more than one-half the revenue had come from alcohol

and narcotics imported into this State, they would see what would be the immediate effect of the falling duty in October next, when we must lose not only 2s. a gallon extra charged on foreign spirits imported, but 3s. 8d. a gallon on all spirits imported from the other States. In the Estimates for next year we must take into account that our fall in revenue from spirits would be £80,000 or £90,000.

MR. HOPKINS: What about the increased consumption?

THE TREASURER: The mover had stated that we should locate the present increase in revenue to our farming policy; but there was a better location for it, and that was the increase of population—not only the increased population, but the decided prosperous condition of the State. This State, man for man, had never been in a more prosperous condition than at the present time.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: Not individually.

THE TREASURER: Yes; individually.

MR. DOHERTY: The hon. member had better consult Forrest about that.

THE TREASURER: In saying what he had done he was speaking with a good deal of knowledge behind him, and he affirmed that there had never been in the history of this State a time of greater prosperity than the present. All persons who were acquainted with political economy knew that the drink bill always rose in times of prosperity; consequently the proportionate taxation was not merely the 2s. a gallon extra duty, but the greater consumption of the particular articles which largely increased the revenue. He agreed that, in principle, a borrowing policy caused a temporary prosperity in a country; but our circumstances had been peculiar, for assuming that we had borrowed three millions of money in the present year and that it all came to this State in cash or goods, no doubt it would have given a material fillip to the prosperity of the State for the time being; but as we were only borrowing this year to repay what had been borrowed in a previous year, not one shilling of that money had come to this State either in cash or goods during this year. He would show how this statement was correct, and particularly because the *Bulletin* newspaper of New South Wales, which he

did not read but from which he had seen an extract, assumed that because this State was said to have raised three millions of money during this year, therefore the spending of this money was the cause of the present prosperity. This State had never raised more than a million in any one year prior to the present year; and it was assumed by the *Bulletin* that the larger amount raised this year was being spent this year, and that this was the cause of our prosperity. Firstly, one million of the money raised this year was raised to pay off Treasury bills in London; and if there was any advantage to this State from the borrowing of that million originally, it was in the year when the million was obtained, and not in the present year when the million was merely repaid. In regard to the balance of the borrowings during this year, the money was raised and used to pay off an overdraft to the London and Westminster Bank; and as that money had been borrowed and brought previously to this State, that money had no effect on this State in the present year. In regard to the million and a half which was recently negotiated, we had not even got the money yet, nor was it the intention of the Government to bring any of that money into this State, because we had to meet obligations due to the London and Westminster Bank. There was no overdraft now, and no Treasury bills were afloat. The present Government were returned to put the finances straight, and so far they had done it. Not one shilling of the three millions which had been negotiated during the present financial year had come to this State during the year; consequently while it was true, as a principle, that the borrowing of money did largely increase the business and create a false appearance of prosperity in a country, yet the actual prosperity of the present year was not based on borrowing, but was the actual prosperity resulting from the condition of the country.

MR. HOPKINS: The result of borrowing money two years ago.

THE TREASURER: The excess duty of 2s. a gallon which this State levied on foreign liquors would disappear in November next, by the decrease resulting from the operation of the sliding scale; and the increased revenue at present was

also due partly to the increased consumption of those articles. Therefore he hoped that neither in this House nor out of it would there arise a feeling that the prosperity which existed now was fictitious or temporary. It was neither fictitious nor temporary. Though it was proposed in the motion that all inter-State duties on the products mentioned should immediately be abolished, the mover knew that the motion if passed would become so much waste paper, for there could be no abolition of duties unless the House would consent at once to deal with the tariff question. Nothing could be done until next session, say June, July, or perhaps later. In October we should have our first experience of the operation of the sliding scale; and he asked the House to act cautiously with respect to finance. In the responsible position of Treasurer, he had surely a right to make that appeal. Do not begin to disorganise the finances until the effect of the reduction of the sliding scale was apparent. Within one or two months after October he would be able to judge what would be the effect of the gradual abolition of these duties during the remainder of the five years for which the sliding scale continued, which effect could not be estimated during this year because of unusual conditions. There had been a special spirit duty of 16s. per gallon which we should never have again, and the effect of the lower duty was not calculable. The spirit duty represented nearly half the customs revenue, and as spirits manufactured in the other States could be brought here much more cheaply than foreign spirits, none could say how the revenue would be affected by the change. If the duties mentioned in the motion were immediately remitted, the relief thus granted would be, till the 31st December next, scarcely more than £25,000; and to get that relief the basis of the Treasurer's calculations must be seriously disorganised. Therefore, while he sympathised with the motion as with any attempt to reduce taxation, and particularly taxation affecting the breakfast and dinner table, still we must be cautious during the next few months. There had been a prosperous year, and he believed the prosperity would continue; but he, as Treasurer, strongly urged the

House not to experiment with any reductions or to interfere with the tariff until one month after October next, so that there might be some basis on which the effect of the Federal duties could be calculated. We had borne the evil of the food duties for many years; therefore, let us bear it a few months longer till we could deal practically, not only with the duties mentioned, but with the whole of those comprehended in the sliding scale. There might be an expression of opinion at the beginning of next session, when the Government could make a reduction; but even then he would still urge that there should be no interference until the practical result of the first year's reduction of 20 per cent. under the sliding scale was apparent. No doubt the mover had the sympathy of every member in his desire to reduce the cost of living—[MEMBERS: Query?—]—but there were other things to consider. It was better to try to get for people the money to buy bread-and-butter than to try to make butter cheap. The first consideration was to keep our people employed at good wages, when the cost of living would not be so great a burden; but if we reduced the cost of living by a process which might reduce the rate of wages also, the result might not be satisfactory.

MR. HASTIE: Who had told the hon. member the latter result would follow?

THE TREASURER: Nobody. That was one of those things he had thought out for himself. Better defer the motion till it could be dealt with practically.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS (Boulder) supported the motion, but regretted that all the foodstuffs had not been included. A return prepared by the Collector of Customs showed that the duties levied on foodstuffs imported from the Eastern States were in 1899 £1 0s. 8½d. per head of the population, and in 1900 £1 1s. 4½d. It was a pity that there could not be an immediate abolition of the duties on products essential for the upkeep of every home; and the evil was not really in the duties themselves, but in the restrictions they imposed on traders. The select committee on the food supply had made some definite recommendations, one paragraph of their report reading:—

Given free facilities for an open market, competition will soon reduce prices to a normal basis, trade will be stimulated, the shipping

resources of the State be increased, while best and most important of all the health and welfare of the people will be materially benefited.

Members did not give much consideration to a question of 2d. or 3d. a pound duty on any particular item; but the report went on:—

What a cheapening of supplies means to the spending power of the people may be exemplified in that, taking a saving of 3d. per lb. and 10,000 people eating 1lb. per day as purchasing meat, there would be a saving of £456,250 per annum.

That showed at a glance what would be the saving to the people if some of these duties were removed. The consumer had to pay not only the duty but the profit on the duty, for which the wholesale merchant charged the retailer, who in turn, after adding his margin of profit, charged the whole to the consumer. As the duty on butter for 1889 yielded £36,797, and in 1900 £40,175, was not that increase a fair indication that we might immediately remove such duties? The only question was, could we spare the revenue? That we could, the Treasurer would never admit, as could be seen from his argument regarding the borrowing of three millions. True, if a man borrowed three millions and lived for three years at the rate of a million a year, he would assume an air of prosperity; and then if he borrowed three millions more to repay the first three millions, he would still appear equally prosperous. Yet the prosperity of this country was not the result of money borrowed within the last six months, but of money borrowed years ago, and expended in this State. In 1899 the duty paid on cheese was £7,685, and in 1900 £8,060, showing that the local supply had not overtaken the demand. On eggs we paid in 1899 £9,996, and in 1900 £11,290.

MR. DOHERTY: That showed prosperity.

MR. HOPKINS: And it showed that even with the duty the local supply was insufficient. That was why hon. members supported the motion. Whose fault was it that the sliding scale had been inserted in the Commonwealth Bill? Had that been done at the wish of the people? No. The delegates sent by this Parliament to the Federal Convention had secured the insertion of this ridiculous proviso. Had those delegates been

elected by the people, they would have studied federation before going to Adelaide; and Press and public criticism would have given them much information on the subject.

MR. DOHERTY: And we should not have federated.

MR. HOPKINS: The duty on bacon produced £20,320 for 1899, and £23,480 for 1900, while for those years the ham duty was £3,193 and £4,182 respectively. On potatoes for 1899 the duty was £8,983, and for 1900 £8,489; so that the local supply in that commodity showed that it had more than held its own. As to onions the duty paid was £1,951 in 1899, and the next year the amount paid was £2,078. With regard to flour, that had more than held its own, for in 1899 the duty paid amounted to £16,493, and during 1900 there was only paid £14,981 or £15,000; so that showed there had been evidently more wheat grown in the country, and more flour ground. The Treasurer told members that we could not estimate what the sliding scale would do; but it was possible to calculate what it had done. We had that in the report provided by the Collector of Customs. Many members might be inclined to say that there was no guarantee, if the duties were removed, that food would become cheaper. Referring to the report on the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum, one found a comparative statement showing the contract prices for food supplied to the South Australian Lunatic Asylums compared with the prices paid in Western Australia for the supply of articles to a similar institution. That was a reasonable basis to go upon, because the prices were arrived at by public tender in both Adelaide and Fremantle. Meat was given in Western Australia at 5½d. per lb., and in South Australia at 1½d. per lb. That was a remarkable, he might say a startling difference. Bread 3½d. per loaf in South Australia, and 6d. in Western Australia! That was an indication of the import duty on flour. Milk 4d. per quart in Western Australia and 2½d. in South Australia: that was only the natural result from the fact that South Australia had more grazing country in and around Adelaide than existed around Perth and Fremantle. Potatoes 9s. 11d. per cwt. in Western Australia, and 4s. 9½d. in South Australia; butter 1s. 6d. per lb. in Western

Australia, and 10½d. in South Australia: that was not a reasonable difference in the price of butter. It went to show that not alone was the import duty in freight charged, but also the profit on freight and import duty. Eggs in Western Australia 2s. a dozen, in South Australia 11½d.; oatmeal 11½d. in South Australia, and 1s. 1½d. in Western Australia. On all the articles there was an advance from 100 to 500 percent.; and he had yet to learn that there was such a difference in the wages of the working man between the two countries. Sugar was quoted at 2d. in this country, and 1½d. in South Australia; tea, 1s. 1d. in Western Australia, and 9½d. in South Australia. These were some items which went conclusively to prove that if these commodities were allowed to come into this country free, undoubtedly they would be sold at a cheaper rate than they were sold to-day. He had a table prepared showing the amount of duty which was being collected on all items of foodstuffs in Western Australia for 1899-1900, and had the whole of the duty been removed there would be a loss of revenue to the extent of £189,890 9s. 10d. This report had been prepared, because it was felt that it would be interesting to those members who wished to see the question of the food supply discussed; it was not a question of what the sliding scale would bring in, but what it had brought in during 1899-1900, and the amount which would be lost to the revenue. So far as people on the eastern goldfields were concerned, where living had to be carried on under greater disabilities than perhaps existed in any other part of Australia, no doubt the removal of the duties would be hailed with great satisfaction. If it could be shown that the protection given to the local producers, by having their markets nearer, by saving the sea freight between here and the other States, by saving railway freights from the places where the goods were produced to the seaboard—if it could be shown that that was not sufficient protection for the producer in this country, no doubt members would make a reasonable endeavour to assist the producer here, and would perhaps be inclined to submit to the taxation for an extra period. But for his part, he could say without the slightest hesitation that if this matter was referred

to the people of the State, it would be found that amongst the farmers there were those who had advocated, from time to time, a reduction of these duties. This was shown by the advocacy of the *Northam Advertiser*, which existed by the support of the farmers, and that paper advocated a reduction of duties in the interests of settlement, and in the interests not only of the individual welfare of the farming community, but of the whole of the people. He attended the agricultural show at Northam during the spring of 1899, and had the pleasure of having tinned milk in his tea, and had been supplied with preserved meats in the agricultural portions of the South-West. Wherever one went, if to Bunbury in close proximity to the historical butter factory, one would see Victorian butter. Duties on produce pressed heavily to-day on the miner and the artisan, and to a great extent they pressed on a large number of farmers who were living under hard conditions—the new settlers who had a “hard row to hoe.” If the agricultural members would give this matter farther consideration, they would come to the conclusion that the removal of the duties would not only be in the best interests of their constituencies, but in the best interests of the whole of Western Australia.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison): The Treasurer had referred to the fact that the State entered into federation pledged to the maintenance of the food duties in the interests of the producer. This was a consideration which we could not disregard; but as the hon. member pointed out, if there was any possibility of the food duties being reduced, we should take the pledge seriously into consideration. But this question was mainly a financial one, and connected with maintaining the revenue at the standard that would allow the needs of the State to be satisfied. If we had merely to consider the farmers, it was exceedingly probable, as had been pointed out by the member for Boulder, that on some commodities the farmers would not object to a remission of the duties in the sliding scale, on such articles as butter, cheese, eggs, bacon, for instance. No doubt the farmers in a great majority of cases paid as much in duties per head of the population as any

other member of the community, especially the new farmer going on the land, who had not had an opportunity of starting, who was clearing and putting in his wheat crop. In those cases probably it would be found that the farmer paid as much as anyone else as a taxpayer. In other commodities such as flour, wheat, and cereals generally, there could be no doubt that the removal of the duty would inflict a great hardship on the great body of farmers. In the South-West it would be inadvisable to withdraw the protection in regard to potatoes and onions. At the longest these duties could only last about four and a half years. We had to look at the question mainly from the point of view of the revenue; and though we could not forget that the revenue this year had been on an abnormal scale, he supposed the Treasurer would not contradict him if he asserted that by the time we reached the end of the financial year the revenue would be the largest Western Australia had ever known. The other day Sir George Turner, referring to inter-State duties, reckoned that we would obtain from them at the present time a revenue at the rate of half-a-million a year. From next October we should begin the work of reducing the revenue, and assuming Sir George Turner's calculations to be correct, that would bring in half-a-million from the inter-State duties.

THE TREASURER: Nothing like it.

MR. NANSON: For the sake of argument, taking Sir George Turner's figures as correct—and Sir George Turner knew something about what he was saying—next year we should have, in any case, whether we wished to do so or not, to make a reduction of revenue to the extent of £100,000. The Treasurer would admit we should have to make a considerable reduction, if it did not come up to the reduction which Sir George Turner estimated.

THE TREASURER: Eighty thousand pounds on whisky.

MR. NANSON: That on one item; so the £100,000 could not be far out. There could be no question that when revenue was flowing into the Treasury at the present high rate, there was a strong temptation to reduce taxation, because all members would like to see taxation reduced and the cost of living made easier.

But we should look not merely to this year, but should look some years ahead, and instead of the Treasurer having then a large surplus, he would probably be casting about to find means for bringing the revenue up to the requirements of that time, and might propose new taxation of a direct kind. In view of the fact that next year we should suffer a reduction of £100,000 in revenue, and go on automatically reducing while the sliding scale continued, he did not consider this was the right time to tamper with the revenue, and on that point he was at one with the Treasurer. We must all recognise our duty to safeguard the prosperity of the country; and we should not disguise from ourselves that although the present conditions were highly prosperous, yet a little change in the condition of other States might bring about a very different condition of things here. If a wave of prosperity were to come over the Eastern States, a considerable proportion of our present population now engaged in public works would leave our shores for those prosperous States; and then our revenue being so largely derived from customs taxation, the Treasurer would find himself with depleted resources. He (Mr. Nanson) agreed with the Treasurer that it would be wiser to ascertain how we got on when the sliding scale began to operate, and when we would be losing revenue at the rate of about £100,000 a year. The argument of the mover, that our prosperity was due in a large measure to the heavy loan expenditure in this country, was really against his motion, because as the loan expenditure must moderate within the next year or two, we would probably find the prosperity would not then be so great as now, and we should also lose some of our population, as the Commonwealth might then be undertaking large public works. Every member desired to ameliorate the conditions of life in this State; yet one could not indorse the view that the conditions in this State were so hard as they were made out to be; for if the conditions did press so hardly on the workers, then instead of population flocking into this State it would be flocking out. One member had pictured to us South Australia as being a delightful country to live in, with plenty of employment and good wages, while the cost of

living was said to be very low. If that country were so delightful and so attractive, the wage-earners of every degree would go to that happy country in order to enjoy the more favourable conditions prevailing there. We know, however, as a matter of fact that the cheapness of living in South Australia is due largely, if not wholly, to the fact that South Australia was now in a condition of almost absolute stagnation. Those of us who remembered the conditions prevailing in this State some fifteen years ago would remember that the cost of living at that time was very much less than now; but they would remember also that the conditions then were not so favourable either to the worker or the capitalist; that Western Australia was then very much in the same condition of stagnation as South Australia is in to-day. He challenged any member, who recollected that state of things in this country, to say whether he would prefer to go back to it and live under the conditions of fifteen years ago, when we had cheap food and very low wages. It was an almost universal rule that when the cost of living was high in a country, there was also a high standard of prosperity among the workers; and he ventured to predict that when the time did come in this State that the cost of the products of the soil were brought down to starvation level, this would mean that wages would be low and that the condition of the worker would not be so prosperous as it was to-day. If excessive burdens were imposed on the people here, the evil would manifest itself by the population leaving our shores; whereas the contrary was the fact, for there had never been a more prosperous time nor had population been attracted in a larger degree than at present, especially the wives and families of workers already settled in this State. He considered that, having the sliding scale, we must anticipate a large reduction of revenue in the next five years; therefore he did not feel justified in supporting the motion, although sympathising to some extent with the aspirations of the mover for ameliorating the condition of the people of this State.

MR. J. GARDINER (Albany): Having taken an active interest in federation, and having pledged himself not to inter-

ference with the sliding scale during its operation, he had said then, as he said now, that the food duties were little or no protection to the local producer. That view was indorsed this evening by the Treasurer and by the leader of the Opposition. These duties were merely maintained as revenue duties, being easily collectable. The benefit from these duties had not been great as affecting the producers in this country; for instead of decreasing importations in the principal lines of produce, we found a large increase in importations of the necessary articles of daily consumption. The Treasurer had put forward a good argument in saying we could wait and see the operation of the sliding scale with regard to the revenue. If the revenue continued to increase as it had done, he (Mr. Gardiner) would be one to support, next year, the reduction of the food duties, and would rather that the money now derived from them should remain in the pockets of the people than that the Treasurer should have the power of expending it. Frequently the money obtained by taxation from the people had not been spent wisely in this State, and it did not return so much benefit to the State as it would if left in the possession of individuals.

MR. GEORGE: Not this Treasurer, surely!

MR. GARDINER: The remark was made with regard to all Treasurers, who spent in a lordly manner when they got the opportunity. As to the large amount derived from revenue, we never heard a suggestion showing that it would be easy, by wise and just economy, to relieve the people from heavy taxation. He believed that £180,000 now derived from the food duties could easily be saved, and nobody be much hurt. Although not willing to support the motion at the present time, he held to himself the right to be relieved next session from the promise he made during the federation campaign, when he contended that the food duties were not protective but merely revenue duties, and his constituents were almost to a man in favour of the reduction of the food duties. In trying to adhere to his own pledges given to the electors, he asked, what did the other side do? They said the revenue would commence to drop from the day we got federation. They would not admit the contention of the federalists,

that these were merely revenue duties. Those persons said they were protective duties. His contention was that wherever it could be shown that these duties were protective and a benefit to industries in this State, he would support them through the whole period of the sliding scale.

At 6-30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. W. B. GORDON (South Perth): This question could not be decided altogether on the financial aspect. We had a vivid instance of the complexity of the question from the member for Albany, who was undecided. That hon. member had made a pledge and was trying to convince himself it was wrong, when the hon. member knew he would be doing right in sticking to his pledge. How much more should we consider the aspect of the country's pledge. We entered into federation fully aware of the obligation and agreement, and now we were considering, because there was some financial aspect attached to it, whether we should not put our word on one side and break the pledge of the State. He would not be a party to violating the pledge entered into in respect of the sliding scale. He intended to oppose the motion.

MR. W. M. PURKISS (Perth): The pledge which the hon. member and other hon. members referred to had been very often spoken of, not only by members, but by various organisations and organs of the Press of the State. A pledge implied something mutual in its character, and when the hon. member referred to a pledge he meant that when the referendum was taken, and when the question of entering federation was under discussion, then in consideration of getting the support of the country party and the country party constituencies it was agreed that there should be no interference with the duties on various articles of food. Let members see how this mutual arrangement worked out. Here was the pledge in respect to Beverley: for entering federation 86 votes, against 415; Bunbury, for entering federation 493, against 802; Greenough, for federation 18, against 411; Irwin, for federation 34, against 310; Moore, for federation 65, against 463; Northam, for federation

593, against 833; Toodyay, for federation 75, against 578; Williams, for federation 214, against 749; and York, for federation 139, against 670. What was the use of talking about a pledge?

MR. JACOBY: How would they vote now?

MR. PURKISS: If the country had been dependent on the agricultural districts, Western Australia would not have been able to enter the Commonwealth. There was no pledge: it had gone—it was not kept. The support of the country party was not given, and if we had depended on the support of the country party Western Australia would not have entered federation. It was difficult for him to talk on the question in anything like a moderate frame of mind. It seemed we were galloping to destruction. As sure as night followed day, in two or three years we should find that we had galloped to destruction. This was the only country he had any experience of that seemed to glory in frightful taxation.

A MEMBER: What about New Zealand?

MR. PURKISS: By and by he would show the rate per head in New Zealand. Members seemed to think that the prosperity of the country was gauged by the amount of revenue we obtained from the people of the country.

MR. JACOBY: They could pay it.

MR. PURKISS: Probably they could pay it, but the day would come when they would not be able to pay it. In 1899 the revenue of Western Australia was £2,478,000.

THE TREASURER: How much was from railway rates?

MR. PURKISS: In 1900 the revenue of Western Australia was £2,875,000: in 1901 the revenue was £3,078,000. This year the estimated revenue, according to the Financial Statement, was £3,478,000.

THE TREASURER: Of which £1,400,000 was from railways.

MR. PURKISS: From what had been seen the revenue this year would reach, at the lowest, £3,700,000.

MR. HAYWARD: What about the increase of population?

MR. PURKISS: The population had not increased in anything like the same ratio as the revenue. In 1899 the revenue was £2,478,000: this year it would be

£3,700,000, an increase of nearly 1½ millions. Could the country stand that kind of thing? We raised a revenue equal to that of Queensland, which had twice and a half the population of this country. This was a most serious question we were confronted with, and the Nemesis would come about as sure as night followed day. When one spoke of the reduction of duties on articles of food, it was no good saying that the revenue could stand it. One of the principal newspapers of the State always wound up its articles on the food duties by saying: "Anyhow we want it for revenue purposes." It was said we could not afford to reduce the revenue, yet in three years we had increased the revenue by £1,221,000. [MR. DOHERTY: A great record.] An extraordinary record, a record which would have caused a revolution in any of the other States. Our customs and excise revenue this year, on the £3,700,000 basis, amounted to £7 per head. To prove that this would have caused a revolution in any of the sister States, one need only refer to Victoria's customs and excise taxation for this year, which was £2 9s. 6d. per head.

THE TREASURER: Add to that the income tax.

MR. PURKISS: To the customs and excise duties he would confine himself. These were: in New South Wales, £1 18s.; Queensland, £3 4s. 4d.; South Australia, £2 7s.; and New Zealand, £3 13s. 6d., being an average of £2 14s. 6d., as against our £7 per head. People here seemed to imbibe taxation like mother's milk. If the prosperity of a country were to be gauged by its taxation, why not double the taxation and let us have £14 per head?

MR. THOMAS: The Treasurer would object.

MR. GORDON: The hon. member (Mr. Purkiss) was speaking against his own argument.

MR. PURKISS: There was no pledge to retain the sliding scale, because the votes of the country party had not been cast for federation. Then it had been said that these duties should be retained to protect local industries, whereas there were really no local industries to protect. [MR. DOHERTY: There were lawyers.] One item mentioned was flour. Country

members claimed, and statistics showed, this country could produce almost twice as many bushels of wheat to the acre as could be grown in South Australia. The member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) laughed; but the Paris Exhibition had disclosed that our wheat yielded flour of the very best quality. Still, in the face of those natural advantages in our favour, we imposed a tax of 50 per cent. on imported flour. A leading merchant in Perth had given him the prices. A fortnight ago the price of flour delivered f.o.b. in South Australia was £7 5s. a ton, while the price here was £9 15s. to £10 15s., according to the size of the bags. Was not that 50 per cent.?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: You said "duty."

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Fifty per cent. would be £11 2s. 6d.

MR. PURKISS: That was near enough. And yet our farmers asked for natural and artificial protection! In Victoria, whence we drew most of our bacon, that article was sold for 7½d. to 8d. per lb.; here the price was 11d. to 11½d. What was the use of talking about protecting the bacon and ham industry here? The price-list of the Perth Fresh Food and Ice Company showed the prices of the best Victorian bacon, and Queensland, English, Scotch, and Irish hams. Not one word was said about West Australian ham or bacon.

MR. HOPKINS: And there had been none at the agricultural show in Guildford.

MR. PURKISS: Could a local ham be bought in Hay street?

MR. DOHERTY: Yes; if the buyer had the money.

MR. GORDON: A ton of it would be sold by him if the hon. member were a buyer.

MR. PURKISS: Yet this large Fresh Food Company's price-list had no reference to the local article. Hams were 10d. per lb. in Victoria, and from 1s. 1½d. to 1s. 3d. in Western Australia, while butter was 1s. in the former country and 1s. 2½d. to 1s. 3d. here. At the Vasse, over two years ago a butter factory was started, and the local farmers had been instructed by an expert highly paid by the Government. The people then obtained from the Government a piece of land on which to build the factory.

MR. YELVERTON: No.

MR. PURKISS: And then they asked for £500 towards the erection of the building.

MR. YELVERTON: Wrong again.

MR. PURKISS: They put up the building, which, like all butter factories, was inexpensive, and then asked for another £500 to finish the building. Whether the Government gave them that did not appear. Then the factory started, and a few pounds of butter were made; but during the last 18 months the building had ceased to be used as a butter factory. What was the use of protecting a non-existent industry?

MR. GORDON: How did the hon. member know that it might not start again any day?

MR. PURKISS: What could we infer from a mere possibility? In regard to potatoes, it was claimed that there was soil here suitable for their production, and very little labour was required; yet in Victoria the price of potatoes was £4 5s. per ton, as compared with £7 10s. in this State—a difference of nearly 60 per cent. For onions, the price in Victoria was £4 10s. to £6 10s., as compared with £7 in this State.

MR. JACOBY: What wages did they pay? Four shillings a day!

MR. PURKISS: Cheese, which came to this State almost entirely from New Zealand, was sold there at 4½d. a pound as compared with 9½d. charged here; a difference of 100 per cent. People here would have the New Zealand article, because it was much superior. A cheese factory was started at the Vasse and a little cheese was made; but the merchants who tried to sell it said the cream had been extracted from the milk, and the cheese became as hard as a brick; whereas the New Zealand cheese had the cream in it, and was soft and palatable. Talk about retaining these duties for protective purposes! He must say we had nothing to protect. No ham and bacon factory existed in the State, and why protect an article that required no protection? On the ground of the pledge given to electors, on the ground of revenue, and on the ground of protection, those in favour of retaining the duties on these articles of food had no argument whatever. If we were to go on raising large surpluses by levying

excessive taxation, we would open the door to extravagance, and the day of reckoning would certainly come. For a family of five persons he was paying £35 a year in taxation to the State; and he often wondered how men having only £150 or £200 a year, as was the case with many Government servants, could manage to pay £7 a head in taxation, pay rates, and all the other necessary charges of living. The total amount of taxation levied now was equal to that of Queensland, which had two and a half times the population; while the average total of taxation per head in other States was £2 14s. 6d., as compared with £7 in this State. The revenue had increased by £1,221,000 within the last three years; and had the population increased in the same ratio? When a period of tightness came over this State, as it would, there would be great difficulty in economising and retrenching after a period of extravagance and large surpluses. Sir Harry Atkinson, when Premier of New Zealand, found himself obliged to meet a period of extreme tightness by reducing the salaries of all civil servants by 10 per cent.—a very hard thing to do, but unavoidable in the circumstances.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member's remarks had nothing to do with the question before the House.

MR. PURKISS: If this State went on increasing the taxation year by year, as it had done during the last three years, he warned the House that we should be confronted with a serious difficulty.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Williams): The speech of the hon. member who had just sat down, although excitable, really showed that in dealing with a special subject "the cobbler should stick to his last." The hon. member's remarks on a question which was one partially of revenue and relating to agriculture, showed that he knew very little about the subject; and it would be easy, if time were available, to show that several of his statements might be pulled to pieces and their errors exposed.

MR. HOPKINS: Why not refute them?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Referring first to the remarks of the mover (Mr. Hastie), and to some remarks of a similar kind made by other members, in regard to the promise made at the time of federation and in regard to these duties being pro-

tective in their character, it had been argued by the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) that the question was mainly a financial one. He (Hon. F. H. Piesse) was prepared to show that the duties were protective in their operation, and that the question was not mainly a financial one. There was a necessity for retaining these duties for the purpose of protection; and although they afforded only a little protection, yet that little was necessary to encourage increased production of the soil. At a time when this State had not a large population, there was no inducement to produce largely from the soil; but now, with a large population, there should be every inducement held out to the farming community to increase the productions from the soil. It had been said this evening that there were no industries in this State. He must say, on the contrary, there were many industries, and that the country was capable of producing all that was required; because it had been shown that although the population had increased abnormally, the increase of production had been also very large, thus proving that the country was capable of producing from the soil to meet the requirements of an increasing population. It could not be disputed that if the country was able to produce, the farmers should be encouraged to produce; because if we continued to import from abroad all the requirements of the population, there could not be that competition brought about in the country which would result in the reduction of prices, and would give cheapness to people in the State, and thus benefit the consumers. To show how this came about, he would refer to one article, chaff. If the farmer commenced to gain on the importation by producing more than sufficient for the country's consumption, and followed it up by producing more of other articles, there would be a benefit to the country. To-day in Victoria chaff was £4 5s. per ton; there was £1 duty with 30s. a ton freight, and expenses amounted to 15s., making the cost £7 15s. per ton to land chaff at Fremantle. To-day Victorian chaff could be bought in Fremantle at £4 a ton, £3 15s. less than it could be landed for here. That was brought about by the country being able to produce more chaff than was required; and

competition amongst the producers had brought about a reduction in price. The same thing would go on in regard to flour. Take oats, for instance: we imported largely from New Zealand and other places, and we found that the year before last the quantity produced in the country was 55,000 bushels. In the Williams district to-day the farmers produced one quarter of the oats required in this country. The member for Kanowna said that there had been a great increase in the production of flour.

MR. HASTIE: That was not what he said.

HON. F. H. PLESSE: The hon. member said that in 1899 10,042 tons of flour were produced here, and in 1900 12,539, which was a decided improvement. He could give a reason why in 1901 there was no apparent increase in the production of flour. In that year the farmers went in more for chaff. In 1899 the quantity of chaff produced was 70,078 tons; in 1900, 113,000, tons or an increase of 43,000 tons. The next year there was a jump again, because there was a big demand for forage in the country, and the farmer cut more hay than they should have done by 25 per cent., reducing the wheat yield and bringing down the price of chaff. There had been a very large and satisfactory increase in the cultivation of wheat. The Agricultural Bank had alone been responsible up to last year for clearing 60,000 acres of land. Members had referred to the population. Take the district which he represented: four years ago the population of the Williams was 1,200, to-day the population was something over 4,000. A large number of people had gone on the land, and it was these people who should have encouragement. We wished to see the miner given some incentive, but some inducement should also be given to the man who produced for the miner. There was not the excitement over the production of grain as there was on the goldfields: the farmer had to plod along without much encouragement. It had been said that the farmer did not get the benefit of the duty. He had refuted that statement previously: the farmer did benefit nearly to the amount of the duty. The price of wheat to-day in Adelaide was 3s. 1d., then there was 6d. a bushel duty, and 6d. shipping expenses, making

4s. 1d. at Fremantle. A penny for expenses brought the amount up to 4s. 2d. per bushel. The price of wheat at Katanning to-day was 8s. 8d., the cost of railage was 4½d., making 4s. 0½d.; another penny for expenses brought it up to 4s. 1½d., which was ½d. less than what wheat could be landed at Fremantle for; therefore the farmer did get an advantage. If there was a difference between the purchasing and the present price that wheat could be landed for at Fremantle, the farmer would still get the benefit. If there was no duty on wheat, the farmer would get so much less for his product. We had not reached the surplus stage of production, we were still within our requirements; but there was strong evidence of competition in several directions. Take butter and cheese: no inducement had been held out in the past by the imposition of duties to go in for the production of these articles. Unfortunately, the producer had not overtaken the demand. In regard to bacon, before a person went in for pig breeding he must first produce large quantities of grain or he could not produce the bacon. When there was a surplus of grain in this country, sufficient bacon was produced for the people; but people went in for chaff-growing and the grain yield fell off. Pigs were fed on offal from the grain and the by-products. It was the same in regard to dairying: the dairy stock were fed on the by-products from the manufacture of flour. All this went to show one thing depended on another; step by step we should go ahead, and the time would come when Western Australia would produce all that was required for the people. There had been no encouragement given to those who stood by the farmers, endeavouring to help them along. He had most sincere sympathy for those engaged in farming occupations, as they had a hard life: there was none of that excitement which one saw on the goldfields. It would be a mistake, notwithstanding the figures which the Treasurer had put forward in regard to the financial aspect of the question, to do away with the duties from a protective point of view until the expiration of the sliding scale, which was disappearing at the rate of 20 per cent. per annum. The time would come when the people would cease to pay under the sliding scale; then we

should be able to see what the result would be for the people. In comparing prices in Western Australia with those of South Australia, the member for Boulder had not given all the instances he might. The hon. member might have dealt with the condition of the people and the wages. A baker here might tell one that he had high rent to pay, that he paid more for his goods, that he paid a high rate of wages, much higher than was paid in the Eastern States. If one took the prices given in regard to the supplies for the Government in Adelaide, it was seen there was very keen competition in that country and prices were cut very low. Here the Government contracts had been looked upon as a sort of plum for the few firms who had tendered for the supplies from year to year; and until there was the same competition and desire to obtain contracts as existed in the other States, the Government would have to pay more for the goods. In regard to farming generally and the commodities mentioned in the motion, good progress had been made under the protection afforded, and there was every justification for the retention of the duties. The farmers should have encouragement given to them so long as this protection would last. If no progress had been shown there would be good reason for striking the duty off. He was sorry to hear members say there were no industries to protect in this country. Those who made such remarks were not patriots. This country would be found yet to produce all that was required. Improved cultivation was going on; appliances had been obtained to cheapen production in regard to harvesting, and in a very short time the consumption would be overtaken. This year what would have been the result if there had been the usual season? Although there had been no rain to speak of in the farming districts since October last, there had been good crops, showing that the farming industry had not proved a failure. A promise was made to continue the sliding scale by those who advocated federation. The member for Perth, in giving a list of those who voted for and against federation in the country districts, showed that more voted against federation than for it; and if the people in the country districts had to vote again

on the same matter, there was no doubt they would vote against federation, because they now saw difficulties and dangers ahead which were invisible to many who were anxious to enter federation. We had yet to learn the effect of federation, which was an experiment which might not turn out so advantageously as we hoped. To abolish the sliding scale would be to break a pledge. The duties would gradually disappear, and would doubtless have the effect of helping production. He would vote against the motion, but he hoped his statement of what the country was capable of would convince the mover that Western Australia would yet take its stand among the great producers of the continent.

MR. HOPKINS: Some of the last speaker's quotations were incorrect.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas) supported the motion. The question was first, what were the objections to the removal of the sliding scale in respect of the articles mentioned, and second, what benefit or injury would result? Who had made during the last federal campaign a promise that the sliding scale would not be interfered with?

HON. F. H. PRESSE: The federal leaders.

MR. THOMAS: On the goldfields nothing had been heard of that promise; yet it was practically the goldfields vote which brought about federation.

MR. GEORGE: And the coastal vote also.

MR. THOMAS: Yes; in Perth and Fremantle.

MR. GEORGE: And the voters were now "chewing their cud."

MR. THOMAS: At the last election he had been returned pledged to the removal of the sliding scale of food duties; nevertheless he would allow it to remain if it could be shown that the producer would benefit. In the past few years the local farmer had a splendid market and land which would produce anything; yet, strange to say, had done little towards producing the articles mentioned in the motion; in fact, the figures quoted by the mover showed that the local production of each of those articles, with the exception of cheese, had fallen off. [HON. F. H. PRESSE: No, no.] The many should not be taxed for the benefit of the few. As a member of the select committee on the

food supply, he could come to only one conclusion from the evidence—that the sliding scale should as soon as possible be removed. As an authority for that, he quoted Mr. Lindley Cowan, Secretary to the Department of Agriculture, who stated that in his opinion the removal of the specific duties on farm and dairy produce, so far from causing the employment of less labour and decreasing production, would have the opposite effect; that farmers naturally grew crops, such as hay and wheat, which paid them best, and that freight, loss in transit, landing charges, and commission on imported produce, were ample protection for the local producer; that while productive industries were worth encouraging, it was questionable whether any sound encouragement could at present result in developing those industries; and it was questionable whether it was not more desirable to follow the natural course of events; that it was only necessity which had driven Victoria to establish a dairying industry by protection; that so long as the agriculturist could make a fair living with little exertion he was content, and would always follow the line of least resistance, for which he was hardly to be blamed. To almost every question Mr. Cowan had answered in the same strain, as would be seen from the evidence.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member was hardly in order in alluding to a report of a select committee which had not yet been considered by the House, and was still an Order of the Day.

MR. THOMAS: Most people from whom he had inquired were of opinion that the removal of these duties would injuriously affect the producer, who would rather grow hay and chaff than produce butter, cheese, eggs, and bacon. In the farming districts he (Mr. Thomas) had frequently been served with Victorian butter and bacon, and with condensed milk; therefore there was no reason why the duties on these articles should not at once be removed. Unquestionably the conditions of life on the goldfields would not permit of miners bringing their wives and children to live with them; and every month a large sum was sent away to relatives in the sister States. The backbone of the mining industry must be the prospector; yet how could a miner save enough out

of his wages to enable him to discover new fields? That point alone would be sufficient to justify the motion. It was surprising to find the Treasurer opposing the motion because it would slightly reduce the revenue.

THE TREASURER: That was not what he had said.

MR. THOMAS: The removal of the duties would cause an influx of population, including miners' wives and families, thereby increasing our revenue and decreasing our public debt; and instead of losing £150,000 or £200,000 per annum, there would be a considerable increase. Even a decrease could be met by economy. Only recently the working hours of civil servants had been increased by half an hour a day.

THE TREASURER: Which had not been worked.

MR. THOMAS: Yet there had been no reduction in the number of officers. Let the Government carry out the promised civil service reform, and the Treasurer need not fear a decrease in revenue. One would welcome a decrease, because the result of economy would be a big surplus. We could appeal to the agricultural members of the House, of whom he was one (laughter), to vote for the motion. The present system was taxing the many for the benefit of the few. If it could be shown that a continuance of the food duties would benefit the producer, he would support the sliding scale. Take the example of the storage-sheds which were built in different parts of the State by the Government to help producers in dealing directly with consumers, without the middleman taking all the profits: did those sheds stimulate the producing industry? No one made use of them. Therefore, he would not vote for retaining the sliding scale, because he was satisfied that to do so would not stimulate the production of these items, and the sooner the food duties were removed, the more production we would have in regard to these articles. That might seem a strange thing to say, but his opinion was that having had a heavy duty on these articles, which were handicapped in every way, some of the farmers having to use imported tinned milk for want of the local article, he believed the effect of removing the so-called protection

would be to stimulate the farming industry.

MR. D. J. DOHERTY (North Fremantle): Being entirely in favour of the motion, he regretted that the discussion had drifted into one of free-trade *versus* protection. He was satisfied that the people were over-taxed through the customs. The other evening the Treasurer brought in Supplementary Estimates amounting to £114,000, and that money was allocated for expenditure in certain directions, instead of leaving it in the hands of the people, who would make a better use of it than spending it as the Government proposed to do. The present Government came in entirely on the cry of reducing expenditure; yet when they were in power and in a position to reduce expenditure, instead of reducing they actually increased it. A comparison had been made with Queensland. That State had a population of 450,000 people, and its customs revenue was £90,000; whereas West Australia had a population of scarcely 200,000, and it raised through its customs £120,000! Every country had facilities for producing something better than was produced in other countries; and the agriculturists of this country had all the resources necessary to make a success of their business, without resorting to artificial means. On these grounds he supported the motion.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): The question before the House was one well suited for political purposes, and he believed it had been raised with that object. The mover, after making an excellent speech, cut away the ground from his argument, because in his excellent peroration he said there were the most hopeful prospects imaginable for this community. Well, if people were suffering here from the effects of excessive taxation, and were going to destruction as we were told, where was the hope for people here or for people to come here? That reasoning destroyed the hon. member's argument, for if this was such a hopeful country to come to, how could it be true that people were oppressed with taxation as compared with other States? One would suppose that the people were really suffering privation through enormous taxation levied in this State. It followed, also, that all

political economists in the past were absolutely ignorant of their subject, because it had been noted the world over that the drink traffic was the index to the prosperity of a people. He found that this community drank probably more than any community known in the world, and paid more for it.

THE TREASURER: Shilling drinks.

MR. HARPER: Members representing the goldfields claimed to have half the population; therefore they would not deny that one-half the population paid 100 per cent. more for their drinks than did the other half.

MR. HOPKINS: All people on the goldfields did not drink.

MR. HARPER: That did not alter the fact. Who were the men making large fortunes at the present time in this State? They were the dealers in liquor. If there was a genuine desire for economy, why did not those men who cried out about high expenses induced by high wages, knock off half the expenditure on drink and something off the cost of dress, and then an enormous saving would result to the community? Drink and dress were causing the high cost of living in this community.

MR. HASTIE: They did not dress on the goldfields.

MR. HARPER: One was sorry to hear that. It was said they had enormous difficulties to contend with on the goldfields, that the cost of food was high, and so on; but the truth was that the increased cost of bread and meat would be about 20 per cent., approximately, while the increased cost of that which was not necessary to health or life, namely drink, was 100 per cent. How could those men claim to penalise the producers of bread and meat, that they might pay 100 per cent. increase for drinks? It was not logical. In reference to the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss), who had enlivened the proceedings a good deal in his remarks on taxation, it was not necessary to say more than that the hon. member seemed to have overlooked, in his reckoning, that this community had the greatest number of miles of railway as compared with any other community in the world, and that therefore the revenue produced from the railways was equally large in proportion. Therefore to reckon that revenue as part

of the burden of taxation was absolute nonsense, because it was money paid for services rendered. The point he (Mr. Harper) would like to make in regard to that hon. member was that he said he had studied the matter carefully and for a long time, and had come to the conclusion that he could not understand it. That being so, one did not see it was worth while to follow him. What were the causes of the high cost of living? The main reason was the high price of labour. He had given to him to-day a statement by a gentleman who, four years ago, had four cottages built for him by contract, each having three rooms and costing £185. The same gentleman, wishing to build more cottages of exactly the same pattern, called for tenders on similar plans, and the lowest tender was £286 per cottage! This was an index to the whole thing—everybody, from top to bottom, was expecting more for his labour.

MR. DAGLISH: What about material?

MR. HARPER: The man who dug out clay to make bricks expected his proportion of increased wages, the same as the man who handled bricks in putting up the building. There had been a rise in every walk of life in this State. The form of the motion was very nice, and likely to serve its purposes by enabling members to go to their constituents and say what they had done on this question of the food duties. He asked members representing the goldfields to bear in mind that what we wanted was to be enabled to increase the railway communication between the coast and the goldfields—not only the eastern goldfields, but those in the northern districts, where there were said to be magnificent prospects and plenty of gold which only needed to be tapped by a railway. If we reduced our revenue now, we were not likely to get money to build those railways. While the country was flourishing, while everybody was earning good wages, let us make use of the revenue for developing the mining interest throughout the State, and so give farther opportunities to the producers to supply the requirements of an increasing population. He need not say that he was entirely opposed to the motion, not on the ground of free-trade or protection, but on the ground of—

A MEMBER: Economy.

MR. HARPER: Yes. When the hon. members from the goldfields could make the cost of whisky 6d. a glass on the goldfields, then he would understand they had learned what economy was.

MR. T. F. QUINLAN (Toodyay): The member for Beverley had very clearly stated that the revenue obtained from the duties mentioned was principally for the development of the goldfields.

MR. HASTIE: Why not do it?

MR. QUINLAN: No one could deny that three-fourths of the revenue for years past had been spent on the goldfields; and those who wished to abolish food duties had benefited mostly by the revenue. One had only to direct members' attention to the number of railways, dams, tanks, post and telegraph offices, the Coolgardie Water Scheme, police buildings, and supervision, to see what proportion of the revenue had been distributed on the goldfields as compared with what was spent in other parts of the State. In reference to the question of federation, it was agreed by a majority of the people in the State that if the vote were given in favour of federation the sliding scale should not be interfered with. He (Mr. Quinlan) was opposed to federation, but he had to bow to the will of the majority. He had had to pay in consequence, and he would have to pay more. A certain pledge was given, and for his part he felt bound to abide by the terms of the pledge equally as strongly as the Labour members felt that the Government were bound to a pledge to give them a grant of land at Fremantle. All were morally bound by the pledge not to abolish the sliding scale. Every year the duties would be reduced by 20 per cent., and it was only fair to abide by the arrangement made with the coastal districts; but one could hardly expect this from the Labour members, who seemed to look at everything from their own interests. Although he favoured the requests of the Labour members as a rule, he would not allow any section of the House to demand that any particular duties which affected themselves be done away with, and make everybody else blindly follow their lead. The hon. member for Albany had stated that he was as ardent a federalist to-day as he ever was, and that hon. member knew it was estimated by the Government

Actuary that this State must lose £300,000 per annum apart from the loss on the sliding scale. We knew that the Treasurer had to meet deputations appealing for help.

THE TREASURER: Yes; £6,000 a day.

MR. QUINLAN: Would the hon. member for Kanowna hesitate to ask for money for the wants of his district, although he was not willing to provide that money? Would not the hon. member go to-morrow morning to the Treasurer and ask for money?

MR. HASTIE: No. He had never done it.

MR. QUINLAN: Then the hon. member would never enter the House again. If the people in the district of Kanowna wanted a battery, the hon. member dare not tell the people that he had not the "cheek" to ask for it. One believed the hon. member had "cheek" enough to do anything, which was shown by moving the motion to-night. What was the difference in this country to-day from what it was years ago? He remembered well when the wages of a labouring man in the State were 4s. 6d. a day. What were they to-day? He recognised that rents had gone up, but he knew many men who had worked for years in this State for a wage of 4s. 6d. a day, and not a day of eight hours, but from six in the morning till six at night, sawing sandal-wood all the time.

A MEMBER: Good old times!

MR. QUINLAN: And what was the cost of living in those times? He would give just a few items to emphasise what he was saying: 1s. 2d. for a 1lb. tin of jam, which to-day cost 5d.; 1s. 3d. to 1s. 4d. a pound for candles, and to-day they could be bought for 5d. or 6d. a pound. The member for Beverley struck the key-note when he said that in these days we looked for too much "frill." To-day working men were receiving twice the wages paid years ago, and the cost of living was only half what it was in those times. Take flour: a few years ago it was 34s. to 40s. a bag; to-day it was 19s. 6d. Was it possible to get away from these figures? He did not believe in appealing to the electors from the floor of the House, and looking for the speeches in the next morning's papers. He wanted to compare the position to-day with what it was a few years ago,

and he trusted that the arguments which had been advanced would guide members in arriving at a decision. He was in sympathy more with the Labour members than with any other body, but he regretted that the Labour members were so narrow-minded in regard to wages. On every matter they came to the one point—wages. Only the other day he was reading the *Australasian*, and he came across an article which stated that throughout the Australian Parliaments the labour representation only clamoured for one thing: it was wages all the time. He (Mr. Quinlan) had to earn wages in the past, and in those days he had received one-half or one-quarter what was paid to-day. That was why he sympathised with the wage-earner, but the Labour members should consider other interests and other things besides wages. Being pledged to retain the sliding scale, he intended to adhere to his pledge. As the Treasurer had pointed out, revenue was required for development purposes. The members who had been returned by those places which would benefit most by the striking out of the sliding scale wished to bring about the change. If direct taxation was decided upon, he would not be afraid to pay his share. What would be the result? Employers would necessarily retrench, and many discharged civil servants and others must suffer great hardship before they could find new vocations. Under direct taxation he would be obliged to economise similarly. The motion was made because the mover was pledged to the repeal of the food duties.

MR. JOHNSON: No; because the mover felt their incidence in his pocket.

MR. QUINLAN: What! The hon. member (Mr. Hastie) was unmarried.

MR. HASTIE: And could not afford to marry, considering these duties.

MR. QUINLAN: The hon. member would not eat or wear more than the ordinary man, therefore the motion had not emanated from his pocket. Possibly the hon. member had encumbrances in the other States, like a good many people on the goldfields recently referred to by the Chief Justice of Victoria in terms stronger than it would be polite to quote. The fact that Victoria was a cheaper place to live in than this country did not justify

the abolition of the most easily collected and the fairest form of taxation—the customs duties.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): It was seldom the House had to listen to so much nonsense. The last speaker objected to an income tax because it would prevent him from wasting his money. The position was that nearly every member of the Government had been a strong federalist, and had stumped the country during the federal campaign, crying "the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill;" notably at a big convention at Kalgoorlie, which the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) had attended. Section 95 of the Act made a certain provision for protecting the farming industry; and to that section all federalists were pledged, no matter whether or not the farmers had supported the Act. As a fact, many farmers had considered that by Section 95 their industry would be protected during the next five years, and had accepted the Bill; therefore we were bound to support that provision. Undoubtedly taxation was now very heavy, particularly taxes on food. An enormous revenue made the Treasurer wasteful, for there were always numerous demands that it be spent, and the Treasurer had little excuse for not spending it. Undoubtedly the cost of government was too large; and when we had reduced our expenditure we might possibly reduce our income. Some time ago he (the Minister for Mines) had suggested a conference with the farmers. If they could be induced to go through the sliding scale to see what items could be eliminated, many might be struck out which would reduce the cost of living without hardship to the agriculturist. This motion could hardly do good. It was too late to bring in a Bill to give effect to it, and the evident desire of the mover was to express his conviction that the burden of the very heavy customs duties should be reduced.

HON. G. THROSSELL (Northam): It was impossible to uphold such a motion, brought in at the eleventh hour, and involving a loss of revenue amounting to £90,000 a year. It was unfair to thrust such a motion on any Government. The question should not be regarded from the producers' standpoint. Had potatoes,

flour, and onions been struck out of the motion, the producers as a whole would have supported it. The matter concerned the Treasurer, and if the Treasurer had been prepared to make the sacrifice which the motion involved, the producers would have accepted it with the suggested amendments.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco) supported the motion. The member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) had accused the Labour members of supporting this motion for the sake of popularity. Such an argument gave away the hon. member's own case, because it meant that the Labour members' electors were in favour of the action of their representatives. If not, then to support the motion would make members unpopular. Surely every member should recognise the will of the people. Did not the members representing agricultural districts like Beverley and Toodyay vote in a manner approved of by their constituents? Yet that was not a reproach against them, though it was against metropolitan or goldfields members! That argument coming from the hon. member, generally one of the most logical in the House, was most surprising. The motion was not in the interests of the wage-earners only, but of all people in the State who were not farmers.

MR. HARPER: That it was in the interests of wage-earners only he had not said.

MR. DAGLISH: So much the better. The motion would benefit the agricultural producers as well as the goldfields and coastal people. There were farmers who recognised that the food duties would not give them soil or climate. The reference made by the member for Beverley to the increased cost of erecting a building was unfair, and he (Mr. Daglish) must deny the statement that wages had gone up in anything like the proportion of increase in the cost of material. The member for Toodyay had referred to the duty of fulfilling a pledge; but that hon. member was mistaken in saying that he had supported the grant of land to the Trades and Labour Council in Fremantle, as the division-list showed he voted for the motion, and therefore against the grant. What the farmer in this State wanted was a market for his produce, and the best way to give him a market

was to attract population to the State. The only way to draw population was to make living cheap and the conditions pleasant. It had been said that the food duties were required to induce an increase of settlement on the land, and thereby increase the internal competition and reduce prices. But the fact was that those persons who were coming here to settle on the land, and those who had settled recently, would get little, if any, benefit from the sliding scale, because the sliding scale would be coming to a close by the time they got their first crop. The more protection was given to an industry, the more demand there was for protection. Natural industries did not require protection. This country offered free farms to people to settle on the land.

MR. HARPER: Would their hours be shortened, too?

MR. DAGLISH: In conclusion, he would cast his vote for the motion, not for any personal reason, but because he believed the people who sent him here demanded that the food duties should be removed as early as possible.

MR. H. J. YELVERTON (Sussex): Knowing the difficulties of the farmers, and the high rate of wages they had to pay when employing labour as compared with wages in other countries, remembering also how many people were induced to vote for federation by the promise that the sliding scale would be adhered to, he could not support the motion. Notwithstanding the outcry in regard to the high cost of living, he knew many men employed at the sawmills who could find time about Christmas to go the Eastern States for six or eight weeks, being able to find the money for the trip; and when these people got to the Eastern States, not only did they wish to come back to the conditions existing here, but many of them brought their families, thus showing that working men, after some experience of the conditions of life in this State, when they did return to their former home on the Eastern side, were glad to come back here and earn the rate of wages which prevailed here; also glad to pay the cost of living in this country. Under these circumstances he could not see any great hardship resulting from the food duties. As to the remarks made by the member for Perth in reference to the starting of a butter factory at the Vasse,

and as to the quality of cheese produced there, that hon. member was entirely wrong in his statements. The hon. member had been in the same position in regard to the codlin moth, when he spoke about that a few weeks ago. It was a misstatement to say that the Government gave the building site to the company which started a butter factory at the Vasse. The failure of the butter factory was due to the manner in which it was dealt with by the Agricultural Department, and because the Government failed to carry out the promises of assistance which had been given. The Agricultural Department, by representations made, induced the directors to obtain a larger plant than was necessary for the business, and also tried to induce the directors to get a still larger plant which would have cost £2,200. The factory was started on a grant of £1,000 obtained from the Government, and with a capital of £1,250 subscribed by the people chiefly interested in the district; and the shareholders subscribed this money upon representations made by persons acting on behalf of the Agricultural Department. Having expended this money, the company started the factory; but their funds being exhausted up to that point, they applied again and again to the Government for the financial assistance which had been promised. The Government failed to assist the company in its time of need; and all the company could do was to produce many tons of butter, which was sold in Perth at the highest rates obtainable for any butter in the market. The end came through want of capital to continue operations, simply because the Government failed to assist the company in accordance with promises made. With regard to cheese made in a factory at the Vasse, that factory had been producing over 500lbs. weight of cheese per week for some months back, the quality being equal to the best New Zealand cheese. He might demonstrate this by reminding members that the cheese which had been lately used in the Refreshment Room of the Legislative Assembly was made at the Vasse factory, and even the hon. member (Mr. Purkiss) was obliged to admit now that the cheese was of first-class quality, as he had tasted it within the last few minutes. As to the general question, one must say the

farmers of this country deserved protection, and should get it in accordance with the sliding scale, which should be adhered to; and he congratulated the Government on their action in now adhering to the sliding scale. If any members were still doubtful as to the quality of the cheese made at the Vasse factory, here was a plateful of it obtained from the Refreshment Room [holding up a plate with cheese on it], which any member could taste at his leisure.

MR. F. CONNOR (East Kimberley): Not wishing to give a silent vote on the motion, and being in favour of the proposal, he wished to remind members of a memorable occasion in November last when he discussed this matter with the Treasurer. On that occasion the Treasurer gave some figures which did not seem to be correct. They were in reference to the revenue likely to be received under the sliding scale of the Commonwealth Act. He (Mr. Connor) asked the Government to do what the motion suggested—to remove the duties from articles of food. When it was suggested that there would be a deficiency at the end of the financial year, the Treasurer pointed out that there would be a credit, and when asked what the amount of that credit would be, the reply was £1,300. In the face of that statement he (Mr. Connor) proposed that the duties on the articles of food should be abolished. How would he do other now than support the motion brought forward by the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie), when there was likely to be a credit balance at the end of the year of £200,000. The Treasurer did not know what the tariff was likely to produce, for he stated that the credit balance would be £1,300.

THE TREASURER: That was the estimate.

MR. CONNOR: The hon. member could read *Hansard*, page 1988, and he would there see what was said. He (Mr. Connor) had estimated that there would be a credit balance at the end of the year of at least £120,000, and he then proposed that the duties should be removed from butter, cheese, bacon, hams, bran, onions, and potatoes.

MR. PURKISS: The credit balance would be £300,000.

MR. CONNOR: All the more reason that unnecessary duties should be taken

off. In face of the fact that we were not likely to go to the London market and borrow money at a price the country would be able to pay, it was not wise, as Mr. Thomas had said, to tax the many for the benefit of the few. The time was coming when we should have to tax the few to give employment to the many. It was as well not to bring more pressure to bear on the Government, in matters of this kind, than was necessary. He had declared that he was going to vote for the motion because he believed the country was in a position to do without the extra taxation. But if the Treasurer had not put the position before him as was done at the commencement of the session, probably he (Mr. Connor) would not have been found voting with the member for Kanowna to-night.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): It was generally understood by the mover of the motion that he would get little or no support from the Government, and he was assured he would receive no support from the farming representatives. While he (Mr. Taylor) supported the member for Kanowna, he thought the farming community deserved some consideration from members, especially from those representing goldfields constituencies. There was no doubt about the hardships the farming people in the State had suffered in the past. People talked of the hardships which the prospectors had to undergo, and he had been a prospector in this country for eight years and knew the hardships of the prospector; and from what he had seen when travelling in the agricultural centres, he was satisfied that a farmer's life was not all "beer and skittles." But these duties did not protect the farmer. If they did so, he would vote against the motion; but these were revenue taxes. It was shown by the list of imports read out by the member for Kanowna that the duties did not protect the farming industry. He had heard it stated that in time this country would produce all that was required, and while he believed that there was a great future before the State from an agricultural point of view, it was necessary that the tax should be removed from these articles now. No person could settle on the land in this State under the same favourable conditions as people could settle in other countries. Persons who came to this

country to take up land for pastoral purposes in the coastal districts "went broke." He had risen for the purpose of stating that while the mover of the motion knew he had no possible chance of getting support from the Government, and knowing that he would not receive support from the farming representatives, and that members on the Ministerial side were pledged to support the sliding scale, he could only think that the time of the House had been given up to the Labour party to-night to discuss this motion as a concession for the support given to the Government during the past session. [MEMBERS: Oh!] What was the use of wasting the time of the House for five or six hours when there were more important matters which might have been dealt with satisfactorily? If this debate lasted much longer, seeing that there were important questions to consider, there was no hope of proroguing Parliament for two or three days to come. He was satisfied that there was any amount of conversion to democracy required on the Government side of the House. He was sorry the leader of the Labour party had been led so easily into a trap, because there was not a jingle of sincerity on the Government side of the House with regard to this motion. He would call for a division to find out the sincerity of members in regard to this question. If he knew the revenue collected from the people of this country was judiciously spent to build up the country, he would vote for the retention of the food duties. He believed a time would come when the people of this country would have to be taxed to build up the country. While the people were taxed up to their eyes, £30,000 was spent on the Ducal visit. He did not know whether that was a reproductive expenditure.

MR. DOHERTY: There might be a couple of knightships out of it.

MR. TAYLOR: That would not be satisfactory. If he could see the revenue of the country spent judiciously in the best interests of the country as a whole, he would vote for the retention of the food duties.

MR. DOHERTY: Had the mover a right to reply?

THE SPEAKER: Certainly.

MR. HASTIE (in reply): After listening to the member for Mt. Margaret

(Mr. Taylor), it was puzzling to know on which side he would vote—for the retention of the sliding scale or for its abolition. The motion had been moved to test the feeling of Parliament, and that without consulting the hon. member. To the hon. member might be left the decision as to whether other hon. members were sincere. Of that he (Mr. Hastie) did not pretend to judge. The motion had resulted in a particularly good debate, in which every member except those representing Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan) and Beverley (Mr. Harper) had stuck to the subject. These had introduced an altogether unnecessary element, maintaining that this was somehow a question of wages, and bewailing the fact that some people were now paid higher wages than they could obtain previously. The member for Toodyay seemed always to grudge that people had now any opportunity which that hon. member had not formerly possessed.

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member (Mr. Quinlan) was one of the "whitest" men in the country.

MR. HASTIE: But what was the hon. member's criticism? That he (Mr. Hastie) had no motive for bringing up this motion. The hon. member looked at all such questions with an eye to his personal interest, and it was impossible for him to believe that anyone else could do otherwise. It was true that people's incomes had increased in this State, but none had participated in that increase to a greater extent than the member for Toodyay. The Minister for Mines (Mr. Gregory) had said that at a certain goldfields conference at which he (Mr. Hastie) had been present, the question of adopting the whole Commonwealth Bill had been considered. That did not pledge him (Mr. Hastie) to the sliding scale. Not once during the federal campaign did he hear anyone make that pledge. No doubt many federalists made it, but he had not made it, nor was he bound by it.

MR. GEORGE: Did not the hon. member recognise his leaders?

MR. HASTIE: On the question of federation he had recognised no leader. Were we bound by a pledge made by a few people, especially considering that one of the parties to the pledge had not kept to the agreement? The under-

standing was that if the food duties were continued local production would increase, yet local production had not increased. Those who said it had gave no figures. The Government statistics for 1899 and 1900 showed there had not been an increase. The figures for 1901 were not complete, but the experts declared there had been no increase except in cheese; and regarding cheese, the few months spoken of by the member for Sussex (Mr. Yelverton) included only the last two months.

MR. DOHERTY: Why run down the country?

MR. HASTIE: That he had not done. No one claimed that the country could raise dairy produce. In no new country would farmers grow such produce when good prices were obtainable for other products. The member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse), in his interesting address, had asserted that these duties benefited the producers of butter and cheese. They could not benefit the producer of butter, for there was practically no local butter for sale.

MR. DOHERTY: Stick to the question. Could the people pay the taxes?

MR. HASTIE: At a pinch, people could pay a large sum; but hon. members seemed to make the false assumption that the great bulk of the people earned enormous wages. True, on the goldfields wages were high; but where wages were high employment was not absolutely constant. Many were not employed, and others never earned wages at all; yet to these people we must look for the development of the country. However, as this speech would not affect a single vote, he would divide the House on the motion. The real question was, should we take such measures as would make Western Australia a better country to live in? Should not food be made much cheaper than at present? The most desirable immigrants we could have were the wives and families of men already here; and it was encouraging to hear that the Treasurer had in the last six months assisted the introduction of hundreds of such people. That was the best method of populating the country, and such immigration could largely be encouraged more than by the abolition of these unnecessary duties.

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	15
Noes	21

Majority against ... 6

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Connor	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Dalglish	Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Doherty	Mr. George
Mr. Hastie	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Holman	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Harper
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Hayward
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Hicks
Mr. Oats	Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Purkiss	Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Reid	Mr. Kingsmill
Mr. Beside	Mr. Leake
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Thomas	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Wallace (Teller).	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Quinlan
	Mr. Bason
	Mr. Sayer
	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Yelverton
	Mr. Phillips (Teller).

Question thus negatived.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

AMENDMENTS RECONSIDERED.

The Legislative Assembly having amended the Bill, and the Council having agreed to eleven amendments and disagreed to three others, the latter were now reconsidered, in Committee.

No 8 (woodcutter's license fee):

THE PREMIER moved that the Assembly's amendment (reduction to 1s. a month) be not insisted on.

MR. JACOBY expressed regret that the Council had not assented to the Assembly's amendment; and this being a money question, he asked whether the Council's action was in order.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The Council having given way to the extent that the license fee should be reduced from 5s. to 2s. 6d., it would be better for the Assembly to agree to the Council's action rather than risk losing the Bill.

MR. HASTIE: This being a financial question, the Assembly should not agree to the Council's action. He did not think the Council would throw the Bill out on account of this amendment.

THE TREASURER: This being the last stage of the Bill, if the Assembly were now to insist on its amendment, the Bill might be laid aside and would not come back.

MR. DOHERTY: The other House had not shown a desire to facilitate busi-

ness, as it refused to suspend the Standing Orders for expediting Bills and forwarding the work of the country.

MR. HOPKINS: This House should maintain the amendment it had made.

MR. A. E. THOMAS: The amendment should be insisted on.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: This was an important Bill; and having gained a considerable reduction, the Assembly should try to save the Bill and not insist on its amendment. It was dangerous to do so, because he knew there had been an organised attempt to destroy the Bill.

MEMBER: Where?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: In another Chamber.

MR. DOHERTY: The hon. member must not say that.

MR. TAYLOR: The amendment of 1s. made by this House should be maintained. He was not responsible to the other House for what he did, but was responsible to the electors. We should not be scared by the fear of losing the Bill. Better lose all the Bills, and let those people in another place be responsible and not this Chamber.

THE PREMIER: This was an encroachment on the privileges of the House. Standing Order 309 said:—

With respect to any Bill brought to the House from the Legislative Council or returned by the Legislative Council to the House with amendments whereby any pecuniary penalty, forfeiture, or fee shall be authorised, imposed, appropriated, regulated, varied, or extinguished, the House will not insist on its privileges in the following cases:—1, When the object of such pecuniary penalty or forfeiture is to secure the execution of the Act, or the punishment or prevention of offences. 2, Where such fees are imposed in respect of benefit taken or services rendered under the Act, and in order to the execution of the Act, and are not made payable into the Treasury or in aid of the public revenue.

These fees were made payable into the Treasury, and were added to the public revenue; consequently in raising the fee the Council encroached upon the privilege of the House. In that case, Bill or no Bill, he must support the privilege of the House; therefore he moved that the amendment made by the Assembly be insisted on.

Question put and passed, and the amendment insisted on.

No. 10—Clause 4, strike out the words “a term not exceeding 21 years from the

date thereof,” and insert the words “such term not exceeding ninety-nine years as to the Governor may seem fit,” in lieu:

THE PREMIER moved that the amendment be insisted on, and for the reason that some of the matters referred to in the clause it would be impossible to give effect to in a lease so short as 21 years. No one would put up a large factory on a piece of land involving an expenditure of thousands of pounds if the lease was only for 21 years.

Question put and passed, and the amendment insisted on.

No. 13—Add the following new clause:—

Every application for land shall be accompanied by a statutory declaration by the applicant to the effect:—

- (a.) That the application is made by the applicant in his own interest and for his own exclusive use and benefit, with the intention of holding and improving the land in accordance with the prescribed conditions.
- (b.) That the application is not made in the interest of, or for the use or benefit of any other person whomsoever than the applicant.
- (c.) That the applicant has no interest in any land which should preclude him from making the application, or which, if added to the land applied for, would make the applicant the holder of a larger area than authorised by law.

THE PREMIER moved that the amendment be not insisted on.

MR. HOPKINS: It had been found necessary to have a provision of this description in the Eastern States, and from what he knew of the land administration of this country, such a provision should be introduced here.

THE PREMIER: It could be done by regulation.

MR. HOPKINS: It deserved serious consideration, unless it could be provided for by regulation.

MR. NANSON: This new clause was moved by himself, and he attached importance to it; but he attached more importance to the Bill, and rather than imperil it he would not insist on the amendment.

Question put and passed, and the amendment not insisted on.

No. 14—Add the following new clause:

It shall be a condition of any grant under Section 8, sub-section (a), that so far as any tramway may be constructed over a timber

reserve, that the grantee shall not cut any timber or firewood outside a limit of one chain on each side of the line.

2. If encroachment be made on the declared timber reserves by the person or persons having the license to pass over them, the Minister shall cancel the license.

[Sub-clause added by the Council]:—

(3.) The conditions upon which any license to lay down such tramway is granted shall be laid upon the table of both Houses of Parliament, if in session, within fourteen days after the grant, and such license shall be conditional upon both Houses of Parliament not disallowing such conditions.

THE PREMIER moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to. In the clause which authorised the laying down of tramways it said that the tramways might be at the will of the Government. This provision only added a new agreement, at the will of both Houses of Parliament.

MR. GEORGE: If an application came in during recess, would a special session of Parliament have to be called?

THE PREMIER: The application would have to be laid on the table as soon as Parliament met. The applicant for a tramway took the risk of the concession being withdrawn. It was a grant at the will of the Governor, and it might as well be at the will of both Houses.

Question put and passed.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

ROYAL COMMISSIONERS' POWERS BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and on motion by the PREMIER read a first time.

SECOND READING.

MR. W. F. SAYER (Claremont): I move the second reading of the Bill. It is intended to enable any Royal commission to issue summonses for the attendance of witnesses, to compel their attendance, and to examine them on oath. There is now considerable doubt as to whether such witnesses can be examined on oath, but there is no doubt whatever that a commission has no power to compel their attendance. These defects require remedying, and hence the Bill is introduced.

MR. D. J. DOHERTY (North Fremantle): This refers, I believe, to a

Royal Commission to be appointed to inquire into the Coolgardie Water Scheme. How can the report of the select committee on that subject be discussed if we are to prorogue to-morrow?

THE PREMIER: Discuss it to-night, or meet at noon to-morrow, if you like.

MR. DOHERTY: Could you not postpone the prorogation?

THE PREMIER: Not very well. This trouble has arisen from the somewhat long debate to-night over another matter.

MR. DOHERTY: The water scheme is a most serious question to the country.

THE PREMIER: I am perfectly prepared to give what facilities I can for discussing that matter. I am most anxious to have it discussed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

Clauses 1 to 3, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 4—Witnesses' expenses:

MR. W. D. JOHNSON: What was the "Supreme Court scale allowed in civil cases?"

THE PREMIER: That was a large question, the answer to which would fill a book. A general explanation was impossible. The fees were laid down by the rules of the Court and by the practice. Certain classes of witnesses were allowed certain fees, and the scale was fair.

MR. SAYER: This scale was the most liberal we had in the State.

MR. JOHNSON: Having been taken away from his work at 15s. a day to appear in Perth as a witness, for which he was paid 10s. a day, he objected to be dragged down to Perth and lose money by it.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and passed.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BILL.

AMENDMENTS FARTHER CONSIDERED.

Three amendments made by the Legislative Council (not agreed to by the Assembly), having been again returned, were now farther considered, in Committee.

Amendment No. 3 (claim of unionists to preference of employment):

The PREMIER moved that the Legislative Council's amendment be agreed to. The position was that the Council had sent certain amendments, of which this House agreed to accept a portion. The Council now took the last step by saying they insisted on a certain amendment; and this meant that the Assembly must accept the Council's amendment or lose the Bill.

MR. W. F. SAYER: The first amendment made by the Council was not insisted on, but the Council insisted on their second amendment, which was to strike out the sub-clause relating to preference for employment of unionists to non-unionists. Personally, the question involved in this amendment might be left over to next session, when probably other amendments would have to be considered.

SEVERAL LABOUR MEMBERS: Reject the amendment.

THE PREMIER: Did hon. members want to lose the Bill?

SEVERAL LABOUR MEMBERS: Yes; lose it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Bill was in our control now, having originated in this House. After the work done by this House in considering the Bill in all its stages, surely members would not stultify themselves by refusing to accept the Council's amendment, seeing that the provision itself was one made only recently in the New Zealand Act. Indeed this amendment was made in the Bill after this House had passed it in the first instance. By voting to reject the Council's amendment now, the Bill would be lost. The Council were within their right in making amendments in a Bill of this character, and if we insisted now we should simply throw out the Bill by our own action.

MR. HOPKINS: That being so, the only thing to do was to accept the best we could get.

MR. HASTIE: So far as one side were concerned, the court had full power to enforce their award. On the other hand if the employers objected to the decision of the court they would be at liberty to set the decision of the court at defiance. If the Upper House had struck out both amendments, he could have understood

it, but they struck out the provision in reference to the workers only. Would the Bill be lost if the amendment were insisted on?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The refusal to accept the amendment would reject the Bill.

MR. JOHNSON: Rather than give way on this clause, he was prepared to lose the Bill. This was a one-sided amendment. The Council practically said that a certain thing was good for the employer but not for the employee. If the Bill were lost, there was still the old Act in existence.

THE PREMIER: Which was unworkable.

MR. JOHNSON: If we amended the present Act it should be an up-to-date amendment. The Assembly had accepted several of the Council's amendments, but the Council would not agree to the Assembly's amendments. If the Bill were lost, the responsibility would rest with the Council.

MR. GEORGE: Was the Bill without the amendment a better measure than the present Act? That appeared generally to be the opinion. When Parliament met again in four or five months time this matter could be gone into. Were members prepared to throw away the improvements made in this Bill, which perhaps next session might not be agreed to?

MR. THOMAS: It was reasonable to accept the decision of another place and throw out the sub-clause. He had advocated conciliation and arbitration long before the Bill was before the Parliament of Western Australia. It was desired to see a workable Bill put into operation to prevent strikes.

MR. DAGLISH: There were over 100 clauses in the Bill, and a great number of them were valuable improvements on the present law. For that reason it would be a pity to risk losing the Bill. The amendment made by the Legislative Council was an unjust one, and in his opinion it was time we had but one Chamber in our constitution.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member should not say that.

MR. DAGLISH: It would be a pity to lose the Bill on account of one clause.

MR. HOPKINS: The problem was, which was the more acceptable—this Bill

with the sub-clause deleted or the existing Act? Between this date and next session the question involved in the sub-clause might not arise. Though his district was intensely interested in the matter, he would agree to the Council's amendment rather than lose the Bill.

MR. JOHNSON : The question was bound to arise.

THE PREMIER : It had not arisen.

MR. JOHNSON : There had never been an arbitration court.

MR. HOPKINS : It was lamentable that the Bill should have been left till the end of the session; he agreed that the amendment was unfair and unjust; but in the circumstances there was no alternative but to accept it.

MR. HOLMAN : How could the court compel a non-unionist to accept its ruling? The Bill dealt with unions only. It was not desired to force every one to be a unionist, but merely to provide that unionists should not be boycotted.

MR. TAYLOR : Being a strong supporter of Sub-clause (e.), he saw no reason for adopting the Council's amendment. Much was said of the spirit of compromise which should actuate members; but of nine amendments to this Bill sent down from another place, the Assembly had agreed to six and rejected three; and the Bill came back with those three retained. Yet this was said to be the people's Chamber! As a representative of labour, he would rather lose the Bill than lose the sub-clause. No member imbued with the spirit of fair-play would accept the amendment, and the other House would be responsible for losing the Bill. It was utterly unfair to delete Sub-clause (e.) and retain Sub-clause (d.). Towards the end of last session the principal Act had been introduced and passed; and this session we had done little else but amend the legislation of last year. Sooner than pass the amendment, we should lose the Bill and fight out the battle in the early part of next session.

MR. DOHERTY : Bring in an amending Bill next session.

MR. TAYLOR : There were too many amending Bills. Make this Bill as complete as possible. The fact that the Upper House would not accept this one amendment from this Chamber, while we

were called upon to swallow nine amendments of theirs, showed their unfairness. It was to be feared that members in another place knew how little real sympathy there was for the Bill in this Chamber, particularly on the Ministerial bench.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : That was unfair.

MR. J. EWING expressed astonishment that the Labour members intended to lose the Bill rather than accept the Council's amendment. He could not agree with them in that course of action.

MR. JACOBY : The provision favouring the employers was retained by the Council, whilst the provision favouring the employees was not retained by the Council. He would vote for not agreeing to the Council's amendment.

MR. HASTIE : This House must either accept the Bill as amended by the Council in this particular, or declare that we must be content with the existing Act. It was an unfair provision by which one side in a labour dispute was protected and the other side not. If the world were ruled by justice entirely, he would say we must insist on the clause standing as it left this House; but as prorogation was to take place to-morrow, the best plan was to accept the Bill, with an assurance that next session we would have an opportunity of remedying any defects in the Bill. His strong advice was that this House should take what it could get, in the circumstances.

MR. HOLMAN asked if there could not be a conference, in the event of the two Houses failing to agree.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : If the Council's amendment were rejected by a vote of this House, there would not be time for a conference in view of the prorogation fixed for to-morrow. If time were available, matters in dispute might be discussed fully. He advised members to accept the Council's amendment in the circumstances.

Question put, and negatived on the voices.

MR. TAYLOR called for a division.

MR. JOHNSON : Could one member call for a division? He understood there must be more than one voice.

THE CHAEMAN : A division had been called for.

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	23
Noes	4

Majority for	...	19
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AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Doherty
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Holman
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Taylor
Mr. George	Mr. Jacoby (Teller).
Mr. Gregory	
Mr. Hastie	
Mr. Hayward	
Mr. Hopkins	
Mr. Dillingworth	
Mr. Johnson	
Mr. Kingsmill	
Mr. Leake	
Mr. Nanson	
Mr. Oats	
Mr. Phillips	
Mr. Picse	
Mr. Rason	
Mr. Reid	
Mr. Reside	
Sir J. G. Lee Steere	
Mr. Thomas	
Mr. Yelverton	
Mr. Wallace (Teller).	

Question thus passed, and the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 8—Clause 85, strike out the whole of Sub-clause (2):

THE PREMIER moved that the amendment be agreed to.

MR. HASTIE: Clause 82, which the Council objected to, allowed the court to declare what municipalities were in an industrial district in which the award obtained, but there was no means by which people should receive notice of a matter to be brought before the court. It was obviously unfair, but it would not affect the workers so much as the employers. He regretted the amendment had been accepted by the Government.

Question put and passed, and the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 9—Clause 86, strike out the whole of Sub-clause (2):

THE PREMIER moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed, and the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

AMENDMENT FARTHER CONSIDERED.

The Council having made an amendment to which the Assembly disagreed, and the Council insisting on the amendment, the same was farther considered in Committee.

Clause 8—Strike out the words, "In section twenty-six the words 'one shilling' are substituted for the word 'sixpence'":

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This was a most improper procedure on the part of the Council. The Assembly had charge of taxation, and had there been an increase it would have been an infringement of the rights of the Assembly. However, it was not, and he moved that the amendment insisted on by the Legislative Council be agreed to.

MR. HOLMAN: The Assembly appeared to be dominated by the Council. We should not be dictated to in every matter. What could be done to put a stop to the dictatorial Messages received?

MR. HOPKINS: The other House was within its rights in refusing the proposal. It was not wise to have these important Bills dealt with at the end of the session. There were many instances in which the power of taxation should be increased from 6d. to 1s. If the Assembly had to accept the amendment, he would agree with regret.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This was the last issue between the two Houses except a conference, and there was no chance of obtaining that. If members did not like the present constitutional system they must take steps to alter it, but at present this could not be done.

MR. HASTIE: It was admitted in many instances that 6d. was not sufficient, and in such a case, if an epidemic broke out and the health boards wished to spend more money than could be raised by a sixpenny rate, would they have to come to the Treasurer and ask for more money?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That was probably the position; but whether the Treasurer would grant the money was another question.

Question put and passed, and the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

NORTH PERTH TRAMWAYS BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

Amendment (one) made by the Legislative Council now considered, in Committee.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the Council's amendment (school children under sixteen years to travel at half-fare) be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until noon to-morrow. It would be necessary to meet in order to consider Messages from another place.

MR. F. REID: Having waited to-night for an opportunity to discuss his motion on the Notice Paper (railway for carrying firewood to mines), it being of great importance to his district (Mount Burges), he trusted to have an opportunity of moving it to-morrow.

THE SPEAKER: If the motion had come on, he would have been obliged to rule it out of order, because it was substantially a question already decided by the House, and therefore could not be again proposed this session.

MR. REID: The former motion had not been defeated, but simply lapsed.

MR. JACOBY: Withdrawn?

MR. REID: It had lapsed on a private members' night, because the tea-hour arrived.

THE SPEAKER: Therefore it lapsed altogether.

MR. J. L. NANSON: Would an opportunity be given to-morrow to discuss the report of the select committee on the Coolgardie Water Scheme?

THE PREMIER: For that reason it was proposed to adjourn till noon.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 11.45 o'clock, until the next day at noon.

Legislative Council, Wednesday, 19th February, 1902.

Question: Torbay-Denmark Railway Charges—Standing Orders—Suspension—Land Act—Amendment Bill, Assembly's Amendments—Complimentary Remarks, Close of Session—Prorogation: Assent to Bills.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 12 o'clock, noon.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—TORBAY-DENMARK RAILWAY CHARGES, Etc.

The HON. W. MALEY asked the Minister for Lands: 1, If the Government is aware that the freights charged on the Torbay-Denmark private railway are excessive and oppressive to settlers. 2, If the Government will endeavour to have the freights assimilated to those charged by Government. 3, If the Government will endeavour to have a station-master placed at Denmark.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:—1, No complaints have been received. 2, The matter will be inquired into. 3, This is a matter which rests entirely with the owners of the railway in question.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. Jameson) moved:

That in order to expedite business, the Standing Orders relating to the passing of public Bills and the consideration of Messages from the Legislative Assembly be suspended during the remainder of the session.

Question put and passed, and the Standing Orders suspended accordingly.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY'S AMENDMENTS.

The Assembly having made amendments to which the Council disagreed, two amendments on which the Assembly insisted were now farther considered, in Committee.

Amendment No. 8—Clause 2, strike out the figures "2s. 6d." in paragraph (r), and insert the figure "1s." in lieu:

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the amendment be agreed to. Possibly members of the Council had altered this clause by an oversight. We