

them not worth more than 3d. a lb., while others were worth 1s. a lb. He thought a uniform duty of 1d. upon every description of biscuits would be very unfair. He would suggest that the ordinary biscuits, in common use, should come under the *ad valorem* scale, and, in order to make up for it, that the duty on fancy biscuits be increased to 2d. At any rate he thought there ought to be some discrimination made.

MR. MARMION concurred with the hon. member for Carnarvon that a uniform rate all round would press unfairly upon the lower priced article. There were ship biscuits, which were not worth more than 2d. per lb. at the port of shipment, and it was now proposed to place a duty equal to 50 per cent. upon them. To be consistent, biscuits which cost 1s. a lb. should be liable to a duty of 6d. He thought 1d. a lb. on such biscuits as were used on board ship was too high.

No amendment was submitted, and the item was passed.

Item: "Butter, Butterine, and like substances, per lb. 2d.:"

MR. MARMION thought that butterine should be subjected to a higher duty than butter, and that no great harm would be done if it was doubled or trebled. But he would not press it.

Progress was then reported, leave being given to sit again.

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

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## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

*Friday, 23rd December, 1887.*

Victoria Public Library Bill: first reading—Australasian Naval Force Bill: first reading—Petition—Coastal Steam Service (Contract)—Geraldton and Northampton Railway Amendment Bill: third reading—Report of Tariff Commission: adjourned debate—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

### VICTORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY BILL.

Read a first time.

### AUSTRALASIAN NAVAL FORCE BILL.

Read a first time.

### ADELAIDE STEAMSHIP COMPANY'S CONTRACT.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser), the provisional contract entered into between the Government and the Adelaide Steamship Co., was referred to a select committee, consisting of Messrs. Forrest, Keane, McRae, Shenton, Wright, Venn, and the mover.

### PETITION.

MR. PARKER presented a petition from the Boot and Shoe Manufacturers of Perth, praying that in the proposed new tariff the duty upon various kinds of leather might be reduced.

The petition was received and read.

### GERALDTON AND NORTHAMPTON RAILWAY AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

### REPORT OF TARIFF COMMISSION.

#### ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The House went into Committee for the further consideration of the report of the Tariff Commission, and proceeded to deal with the schedule of specific duties.

Item: "Bran and Pollard, £1 per ton" (instead of 10s.):

MR. RICHARDSON said he did not know whether hon. members had considered what the effect of a heavy duty on bran would be. It meant this: dear bran spelt dear milk for the residents of the towns. The quantity locally grown did not supply more than one-third of the local consumption. He would move that bran be placed on the free list.

MR. MARMION said the argument of the hon. member for Roebourne applied to numerous other articles of general consumption. Did we produce anything like enough butter, or cheese, or potatoes, or flour? Did the hon. member intend to move that these articles should be placed on the free list? If the hon. member carried out his principle to its logical

conclusion, the new tariff would yield precious little revenue.

MR. A. FORREST said that those who had to buy milk in Perth had to pay a very high price for it, and the sellers could well afford this extra duty. If they couldn't, they would simply add a little more water.

MR. MARMION: That is a very milk-and-water argument.

THE COMMISSIONER OF TITLES (MR. J. C. H. James): Perhaps the duty on chalk could be reduced.

The motion to place the item on the free list was negatived.

MR. KEANE moved that the duty be reduced to 10s., as at present.

The committee divided, the numbers being—

Ayes ... ..	8
Noes ... ..	14
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Majority against ...	6

**AYES.**  
 Mr. Congdon  
 Mr. Hensman  
 Mr. Keane  
 Mr. McRae  
 Mr. Pearse  
 Mr. Scott  
 Mr. Sholl  
 Mr. Richardson (Teller.)

**NOES.**  
 Mr. E. R. Brockman  
 Mr. A. Forrest  
 Hon. Sir M. Fraser  
 Mr. James  
 Mr. Layman  
 Mr. Marmion  
 Mr. Morrison  
 Mr. Parker  
 Mr. Randell  
 Mr. Shenton  
 Hon. J. G. Lee-Steere  
 Mr. Venn  
 Hon. C. N. Warton  
 Hon. J. A. Wright (Teller.)

The item was then put and passed.

Item: "Cheese, 3d. per lb.":

MR. RICHARDSON moved that the duty be reduced to 2d. In the other colonies cheese could be produced and sold at 5d. or 6d. a lb., and it was monstrous that we should require to tax it at the rate of fifty per cent.

MR. MARMION said that, taking the quantity of cheese imported into the colony last year as his guide, the proposed reduction would make a difference of £700 in the revenue.

The motion was negatived.

Item: "Cigars, Cigarettes, and Snuff, 5s. per lb.":

MR. KEANE said these were certainly luxuries, and those who indulged in cigars and cigarettes should be made to pay for them; also people who took snuff.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton): No, no.

MR. HENSMAN could not agree that cigars were luxuries: they were rather

a necessary of life in every part of the civilised world.

MR. SHENTON said, as he was neither a smoker nor a snuff consumer, he could express an unprejudiced opinion on the subject, which was this: that to increase the duty as proposed would simply result in smuggling.

The item was passed.

Item: "Corn: wheat per bushel 6d. (instead of 4d.):"

MR. HENSMAN protested against the proposed increase. He thought that wheat, above all others, was an article the duty upon which the people's representatives ought to try to keep down.

MR. RICHARDSON also opposed the increased duty. Why should the whole community be taxed for the benefit of a few corn-growers? He did not suppose that this extra duty would result in an additional bushel of wheat being produced in the colony.

MR. RANDELL said the duty on imported wheat last year only amounted to £13 16s. 3d. There wasn't much weight, therefore, in the argument about keeping down the duty on the people's food.

MR. SHENTON said the reason why the Commission had recommended the increase on wheat was to equalise it with the duty on flour, which was £1 a ton.

MR. VENN pointed out that it takes fully 50 bushels of wheat to make a ton of superfine flour; therefore, if they were going to put 6d. on wheat, they ought, if they wanted to be consistent, to raise the duty on flour to 25s.

MR. RICHARDSON said there wasn't much consistency about a protective tariff.

MR. PARKER said the idea of the Commission was this: a ton of flour was equivalent in weight to 2,000 lbs.; a bushel of wheat weighed 60 lbs., and 50 bushels to the ton of flour would give 3,000 lbs.; but, out of that, there would be 1,000 lbs. of bran and pollard.

MR. MARMION moved that the duty be reduced to 4d. (as at present).

The motion was negatived, on a division—

Ayes ... ..	10
Noes ... ..	11
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Majority against ...	1

**AYES.**  
 Mr. Congdon  
 Mr. Hensman  
 Mr. Keane  
 Mr. Layman  
 Mr. McEae  
 Mr. Pearse  
 Mr. Richardson  
 Mr. Scott  
 Mr. Sholl  
 Mr. Marmion (Teller.)

**NOES.**  
 Mr. E. B. Brockman  
 Mr. A. Forrest  
 Hon. Sir M. Fraser  
 Mr. James  
 Mr. Morrison  
 Mr. Randell  
 Mr. Shenton  
 Hon. J. G. Lee-Steere  
 Mr. Venn  
 Hon. C. N. Warton  
 Hon. J. A. Wright

(Teller.)

Item "Dates, 2d. per lb." (in lieu of 1d.):

MR. MARMION thought the extra duty would needlessly enhance the price of an article of consumption largely patronised by the rising generation. The colony did not produce dates, to meet the local demand, and a duty of 2d. a lb. would simply be prohibitive, and the revenue would consequently suffer.

MR. SCOTT supported the reduction, dates, he said, being a particularly healthy fruit for children, especially in the absence of vegetables.

MR. SHENTON said the object of the Commission was to encourage the local cultivation of the date tree.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said that, while the date tree was growing, our children might be starving. There was an Arabic proverb to the effect that no man ever ate the fruit of the dead tree in his life. He did not suppose that a date palm planted now would yield fruit in less than about 50 years. Most of them would be dead by then.

The proposal to reduce the duty to 1d. was agreed to.

Item: "Flour, £1 per ton (as at present):"

MR. VENN moved that it be increased to 25s. He did so not only in the interests of agriculturists, but also of the miller. As they had increased the duty on wheat to 6d. a bushel, they ought consistently to make the duty on flour 25s. a ton.

MR. MARMION said that if he thought there was any possibility of the motion being carried he would address the committee at considerable length on the subject. It was all very well to talk about protecting farmers, but he would tell the hon. member that there was a general feeling among town residents that a duty of £1 a ton was a great concession to the local grower; and there were many people who would be inclined to

move for the removal of the duty on flour altogether. The friends of the farmers, if they were wise in their generation, had better let well alone.

The motion to increase the duty was negatived, on the voices.

Item: "Dried fruit, 3d. per lb.:"

MR. MARMION thought currants ought to be excluded from the category of dried fruit, under this head, and a lower duty placed upon them. While the colony produced raisins in considerable quantities, it produced no currants worth speaking of; and, as there was a large consumption, he thought they could very well afford to allow currants to come in at a lower rate. He moved that the words "currants excepted" be inserted.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Wright): What about current revenue?

MR. A. FORREST opposed the reduction. He thought it would be a good thing if we could keep currants out of the colony; they were the most indigestible things that children could eat.

MR. LAYMAN did not see that currants should be picked out for a reduced duty any more than other dried fruit. Currants might be the particular weakness of the hon. member for Fremantle, but there were others who might have a preference for some other fruit. He did not think the duty was too high.

MR. RICHARDSON thought the result of the revised tariff would be that every man, woman, and child in the colony, who had a mouth, would migrate out of it.

Question put—That the words "currants excepted" be inserted.

Committee divided, with the following result—

Ayes ... ..	6
Noes ... ..	15
Majority against ... ..	9

**AYES.**  
 Mr. Congdon  
 Mr. Hensman  
 Mr. Keane  
 Mr. Pearse  
 Mr. Richardson  
 Mr. Marmion (Teller.)

**NOES.**  
 Mr. E. B. Brockman  
 Mr. A. Forrest  
 Hon. Sir M. Fraser  
 Mr. Layman  
 Mr. McEae  
 Mr. Morrison  
 Mr. Parker  
 Mr. Randell  
 Mr. Scott  
 Mr. Shenton  
 Hon. J. G. Lee-Steere  
 Mr. Venn  
 Hon. C. N. Warton  
 Hon. J. A. Wright  
 Mr. James (Teller.)

Item: "Lead (sheet, pig, and piping), per cwt. 2s. 6d."

MR. MARMION moved that this item be struck out. He did not understand why sheet lead should be made to pay a duty of 15 or 20 per cent., when sheet zinc and sheet tin were only liable to 5 per cent., and sheet iron was to come in duty free. He thought 5 per cent. would be quite high enough, under the circumstances, for sheet lead.

The motion was negatived on the voices.

Item: "Oatmeal, £1 10s. per ton (as at present):"

MR. SCOTT said this was an article that couldn't be produced in the colony, and it certainly was a most wholesome article of diet, though perhaps not so highly appreciated here as it ought to be by the poorer classes. He moved that the duty be reduced to £1, being the same as flour.

MR. PARKER said if he thought for a moment it would be of the slightest advantage to the poor man he would support the proposed reduction, but his experience had shown him that it was the importer and not the consumer who generally benefited by these reduced rates.

MR. SHOLL said they heard a great deal about the poor man but nothing about the poor woman. They were all poor in this colony, comparatively speaking. He thought all this cry about the "poor man" was more for effect than anything else.

The motion to reduce the duty was negatived.

Item: "Onions, £1 per ton (instead of 10s.):"

MR. RICHARDSON said this seemed an awfully heavy duty to be placed on onions. He knew of no reason why they shouldn't be grown in any quantity in the colony; and those who could, but wouldn't grow such products deserved no encouragement. He moved that the item be reduced to 10s.

MR. LAYMAN opposed the reduction. It was not altogether because our local growers would not compete at a fair price with the imported article that they didn't grow potatoes in large quantities. It was simply because of the enormous quantities of speculative shipments, which glutted the market, and brought

down prices for the time being to such a low level that it was impossible for our own growers to get rid of their produce.

The motion to reduce the duty was vetoed.

Item: "Potatoes, £1 per ton (instead of 10s.):"

MR. RICHARDSON opposed the increase, and moved that the duty remain as it is, which was quite high enough.

MR. E. R. BROCKMAN thought they might fairly afford this little extra encouragement to local producers. People here were altogether discouraged from growing potatoes by reason of the market being swamped with the imported article. He was sure that potatoes grown in the colony were well worth £1 a ton more than the bulk of those shipped here from the other side. At the present moment first rate potatoes grown in this colony did not realise more than £5 a ton, owing to the market being glutted with rubbish from other places; and this was the reason why our local growers were so disheartened, and did not care to grow.

MR. RICHARDSON said that potatoes just now might be down to £5, this being the season for the chief crop, which made them plentiful; but, taking the average price for years past, it had not been less than £6 a ton, and often considerably more. It was said that growers here could produce them at profitable rates if they liked. Why didn't they do so, and shut out these foreign importations? Why should 40,000 people be taxed to protect a score or two of potato-growers? At £3 or £3 10s. per ton potatoes paid the Warrnambool growers well; yet our own Southern districts people would tell you that they have soil as good as Warrnambool. He thought it was a most iniquitous piece of legislation to impose a duty of £1 a ton on an article of such general consumption as potatoes.

MR. VENN said the Agricultural Commission had it in evidence that potatoes could be produced in this colony at £4 a ton, and leave a profit to the grower. As one of the witnesses naively said, "it paid better at £5 a ton if they could get it." But what these local producers had to look at was the chance of selling at all. A Bunbury grower

might send his potatoes to the local market and find that his agent had probably received a telegram from Melbourne or Adelaide stating that there were 2,000 or 3,000 tons coming round by steamer. The local grower would probably find himself with his crop of potatoes left on his hands. But, given a cheap, direct, and swift means of transit—or, in other words, a railway—between Perth and the Southern Districts, and they could take off their duty on potatoes entirely. He would promise them that.

Mr. MARMION said, as to what had fallen from the hon. member for Roebourne—why thirty or forty growers should be protected at the expense of 40,000 consumers—the object in view for raising the duty was not merely for the sake of these thirty or forty growers, but in order to induce thirty or forty more to follow suit. He noticed that 1,133 tons of potatoes were imported into the colony last year, which, at the average market price, meant a circulation of about £7,000, which had gone into the pockets of growers in the other colonies.

Mr. RICHARDSON pointed out that, at a low estimate, 3,000 tons of potatoes would be the product of about 300 acres of land. This 300 acres divided between thirty growers would give them ten acres each. Was the whole colony to be taxed for the sake of these thirty 10-acre proprietors?

The motion to reduce the item was negatived, upon a division, the numbers being—

Ayes ... ..	7
Noes ... ..	15
Majority against ...	8

AYES.  
Mr. Congdon  
Mr. Hensman  
Mr. Keane  
Mr. MacRae  
Mr. Scott  
Mr. Sholl  
Mr. Richardson (Teller.)

NOES.  
Mr. E. R. Brockman  
Mr. A. Forrest  
Hon. Sir M. Fraser  
Mr. James  
Mr. Layman  
Mr. Marmion  
Mr. Morrison  
Mr. Parker  
Mr. Pearse  
Mr. Randell  
Mr. Shenton  
Hon. J. G. Lee-Steere  
Mr. Venn  
Hon. C. N. Warton  
Hon. J. A. Wright  
(Teller.)

Item: "Powder, Blasting, 1d."

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) moved

that the duty be reduced to ½d. Blasting powder was largely used in connection with the mining industry, which he thought was an industry that should be fostered and encouraged as much as possible.

Mr. SHOLL said that in the other colonies the duty was 1d. He did not think that this colony could afford to be more liberal than its much more wealthy neighbors, with their extensive mining districts.

The motion to reduce the item was negatived.

Item: "Solder, 2s. 6d. per cwt. (now on the *ad valorem* list):"

Mr. RANDELL said this was an article that could be manufactured in the colony, in any quantity, and he would move that the duty be increased to 10s. per cwt.

Agreed to, *nem. con.*

Item: "Wine, Sparkling, 6s. per gallon (as at present):"

Mr. A. FORREST said sparkling wine was certainly an article of luxury. Champagne was a liquor which only those in very good circumstances could afford to drink. In the other colonies, if you called for a bottle of champagne, they charged you 15s. or £1 for it; whereas here you could get it for 8s. or 10s. [An hon. member: Poison.] Poison or not, he would move that the duty be increased to 10s. a gallon.

Mr. KEANE said he would certainly support the amendment. If it had the result of keeping out champagne altogether, it would be no great loss, for it certainly would be difficult to find worse liquor than the stuff now introduced into the colony under that high sounding name.

Mr. SCOTT could hardly conceive a more legitimate article for the imposition of a heavy duty than champagne. They would then probably have something introduced that was fit for drinking, and, what was of greater importance, for medicinal purposes.

Mr. MARMION said that it was a curious argument, to suppose that by increasing the duty you would get a superior article. The very reverse would be the case. Importers would find they could only get a certain price for their wines, and they would have to introduce

a cheap and inferior article in order to make up the increased duty.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said the total amount of duty received from imported sparkling wines last year was only £477.

MR. HENSMAN opposed the proposed increase. He thought they ought to aim at getting good food and pure drink at as low a price to the consumer as possible; and he considered good wine a necessity, to those who could afford it. A duty of 10s. might, and probably would, have the effect of keeping out some of the excellent wines now introduced from the other colonies.

MR. A. FORREST said he had heard a great deal that evening about taxing the "poor man." Here was an article that came home to hon. members themselves,—for they were the people who drank champagne. When it came to taxing anything which they used themselves, they cried out at once that it was already taxed high enough.

The motion was pressed to a division, with the result that it was adopted, the numbers being—

Ayes	...	...	...	12
Noes	...	...	...	10
Majority for				2

ATERS.  
Mr. E. R. Brockman  
Mr. James  
Mr. Keane  
Mr. Layman  
Mr. McRae  
Mr. Morrison  
Mr. Randell  
Mr. Richardson  
Mr. Venn  
Hon. C. N. Warton  
Hon. J. A. Wright  
Mr. A. Forrest (Teller.)

NOES.  
Mr. Congdon  
Hon. Sir M. Fraser  
Mr. Hensman  
Mr. Marmion  
Mr. Pearse  
Mr. Scott  
Mr. Shenton  
Mr. Sholl  
Hon. J. G. Lee-Steele  
Mr. Parker (Teller.)

Item: "Wine (other than sparkling), 5s. per gallon."

MR. HENSMAN said he understood the present duty was 4s., and he thought it ought not to be raised, unless they discriminated between the wines imported from Europe and the wholesome light wines introduced from the other colonies.

MR. A. FORREST said it had been his intention to have moved that this item, too, should be raised to 10s. They could produce very good colonial wine in the colony, much more wholesome than the vile stuff that was imported under the name of sherry, which, if you took one glass of it, you would feel the effect

of it for two days. He once wrote to his London agent to send him out some really good wine, and the answer he received was that only rubbish was sent to Australia.

MR. VENN said that from evidence which he had before him, the cultivation of the vine in this colony was being largely extended, and they would soon feel the value of this protective duty, he hoped, in the development of what ought to be an important local industry.

MR. SHENTON did not think that an extra 1s. a gallon would have much effect in stimulating the colonial wine industry, and he would move that the duty should be allowed to remain as it is (4s.).

The motion was negatived, and the increased rate adopted.

Item: "Wool bales, 3d. each (now 4d.):"

MR. MARMION saw no reason why there should be a reduction made in this item.

MR. A. FORREST said that wool growing was one of the most important industries in the colony, and it was not so profitable as many people imagined. The wool bales were of no value whatever to the grower, for he was allowed nothing for them by the broker.

MR. RICHARDSON thought the difference of a penny per bale was scarcely worth arguing. On a hundred bales, which represented a very good clip for this colony, worth some thousands of pounds, it would only be a difference of 8s. 4d. He did not think that was likely to have any appreciable effect upon an important industry.

The item was then put and passed.

The remaining articles on the schedule of specific duties were passed as recommended by the Commission.

Progress was then reported.

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