

## Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 9th October, 1906.

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

## PRAYERS.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, The Land Act, 1898—(a.) Rockingham Common—Amendment of By-law No. 2; (b.) Regulation restricting cutting of timber on State forest at Majestic leases; (c.) Regulation prohibiting cutting of timber on State Forest at Geraldton. 2, The Land Act, 1898, and the Land Act Amendment Act, 1902—Timber Tramway Permit—No.  $\frac{3}{80\frac{1}{2}}$ —The Sons of Gwalia, Ltd.; No.  $\frac{2}{80\frac{1}{2}}$ —The Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Co., Ltd.; No.  $\frac{3}{80\frac{1}{2}}$ —The Westralia Timber and Firewood Co., Ltd. 3, The Cemeteries Act, 1897 and 1899—By-laws of Fremantle Cemetery and Collie Public Cemetery.

## FEDERATION DETRIMENTAL, THIS STATE TO WITHDRAW.

## ASSEMBLY'S RESOLUTION.

Debate resumed from the 4th October, on the motion by Mr. Connor to concur in the Assembly's resolution affirming that this State should withdraw from the Federal Union.

HON. W. MALEY (South-East): In speaking on the Assembly's resolution in which this House is asked to concur, I trust the House will be slow to concur in any such resolution. We should consider whence this movement has sprung. In Perth at least, whatever may have happened in some other parts of this great State, we have not seen waving in the streets banners bearing the word "secession," nor has the silence of night been broken by torchlight processions. We have seen no great public demonstration in favour of the secession of this State from Union under the Commonwealth. If we had seen any such expressions of public opinion, such outcries of displeasure, then

there would have been some excuse for using the halls of the Legislature of this State for the purpose either of repressing such a movement or of directing it into proper channels. I take it we have proper channels through which to communicate to the Commonwealth Government or the Commonwealth Legislature the views of the people of Western Australia.

HON. M. L. MOSS: We do not get a very sympathetic hearing from the Commonwealth.

HON. W. MALEY: If we do not get a sympathetic hearing, we have in the Commonwealth Parliament representatives who can, as representatives do in the State Parliament, continue to represent the views of their constituents until the representations are attended to. The systems of representation are much the same in the States and in the Commonwealth, with the difference that for the Commonwealth the franchise on which both Houses are elected is equal, and the views of the people of Australia are heard in both Houses. I take it the chief cause for complaint has been the failure of the Commonwealth Government, which has done its best, to pass through the Senate a Bill for the survey of a railway to connect the East with the West.

HON. G. RANDELL: That is only one grievance.

HON. W. MALEY: The Bill rejected was for the survey of that line.

HON. M. L. MOSS: That is a small part of the grievance.

HON. W. MALEY: Nothing else has transpired recently, if at any time, to induce such a movement as has taken place here, I think to the discredit of the Parliament of this State; and if the movement does not result from the rejection of the railway survey Bill, I wish to know what recent event has led to the taking of this unusual and scarcely constitutional step. As a matter of fact, the House of Representatives decided in favour of the survey of that railway; and the majority of the Senate favoured the survey. But one senator representing this State failed to be present when the division was taken, and so the motion was lost. We have it, too, on record that owing to the mistake or treachery of one senator in regard to pairing with Sir Josiah Symon, of South Australia, another vote was lost; so that we have

no ground for complaint against the Commonwealth Parliament for its treatment of Western Australia in the matter of the railway survey.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: I am not in sympathy with the railway movement.

HON. W. MALEY: There are large numbers of people in Western Australia who, like the hon. member interjecting, are not in sympathy with the agitation for the railway, believing that we have here a valuable territory which, if the railway were constructed, would be exploited by our Eastern neighbours. That belief may or may not be an evidence of a true federal spirit; but we all know that sentiment has in a large measure to give way to practical considerations, and not for the State only but for the individual this projected railway is largely a question of pounds, shillings, and pence.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: The objection is to guaranteeing South Australia against loss.

HON. W. MALEY: The action of the South Australian members in the Commonwealth Parliament has been decidedly in favour of the railway survey; and even if South Australia were opposed to that survey, or if she through her representatives were raising objections in the Commonwealth Parliament, that would not warrant the extreme step taken by some of our local legislators. I have come to the conclusion that this resolution of the Legislative Assembly has been moved for the purpose of diverting attention from our local troubles. Everything done has been done with a view to emphasise as a fact what is not a fact, that the revenue of this State has by its connection with the Commonwealth Government been depleted. In the volume of *Coghlan* which lies on the table of the House we find that New South Wales and Western Australia are the only States in the Commonwealth which through Federation have received a large accretion of revenue; that from 1900 to 1905 all the other States experienced a diminution of revenue; but that Western Australia and New South Wales, despite any statements to the contrary, have had their positions greatly improved and their revenues largely increased. One has to reflect on the conditions of commerce and trade and the conditions

of milling in Western Australia before we joined the Federation. The removal of the State duties has placed the merchant in just about as good a condition as the merchant in the Eastern States is.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: But not the consumers.

HON. W. MALEY: The consumers have £163,000 left in their pockets to-day from the customs and excise duties more than they had under Federation.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: It remains in the pocket of the merchants.

HON. W. MALEY: The sum of £163,000 remains in the pockets of the people, not collected under customs and excise, notwithstanding our population has been so largely increased during the past five years. I believe the people recognise this, and I believe that Federation being on its trial, if these facts were put before the people, the people would not listen to the cry of politicians in another place. The developments of this State have been marvellous, under the Commonwealth regime. The developments in the country and on the goldfields have been steadily increasing; whether this is due to Federation or not is not for me to say. But if we had stagnation in the city and the country like we had before we got Federation, and if that stagnation was due to Federation, and if members in another place could point to these facts as the result of Federation, then there would be some excuse for members giving serious consideration to the proposal to secede from or decry the advantages of Federation. I take it that when the Union was formed it was held to be indissoluble. We in Western Australia who gave our votes knew we were entering an indissoluble Union. There was no thought of turning back, nor do I think it is wise to turn back now.

HON. G. RANDELL: There should be a Federation, not a Union.

HON. W. MALEY: Nor do I think that the member who interjected would try to discriminate between a Union and a Federation; but he with others who were slow in accepting Federation—and I was one of them myself—is not prepared to turn back, but is prepared to go forward in the development of the machinery. It becomes necessary that Federation

shall be an accomplished fact, that the forces of Australia under the British flag should be united and determined in one particular direction; and we owe it to Great Britain that we should be true to the Federation we have entered on, and pursue what to my mind is largely an Imperial policy, the policy of Federation, which ultimately will eventuate in a greater federation, a federation of the British Empire as a whole. I am not an advocate for a little Australia, nor for a little Western Australia. I am looking for bigger things and greater things. And the secession movement or the disorganisation of the foundations of the Commonwealth will not tend to the advantage and magnifying of Australia or West Australia. I do not know that we can claim any sovereign remedy for the little trouble we happen to be in at the present time, a trouble largely created by the mismanagement of our own affairs. Will members allow it to be said that if the customs and post office had been retained by Western Australia, and run on the same lines as the Lands Department or the Railways, they would have been a success to the State, and that Western Australia would have been in as sound a position as regards revenue as it is to-day? We are steadily increasing, with a satisfactory revenue, far above what we had before we entered the Commonwealth, and our advance is superior to that of any of the other States of the Commonwealth, with the exception of one. I do not think this Federation bogey should be allowed to be pushed forward throughout the country, but that members should do their best, by placing facts and figures before the people, to disarm opposition to the Commonwealth, and establish the Commonwealth on as sound lines as are practicable, so far removed as we are from the Commonwealth Government. I have not gone into the question of taking over the State debts; but unless the State management is better than it has been in the past, we shall require either a Commonwealth or an Imperial Parliament to take over something in Western Australia. We have railways which Parliament itself has removed from its control, and if we see the Parliament of the Commonwealth placing the customs beyond parliamentary control, when

we see them disposing of their responsibility, then I say dreadful days will be in store for Australia, just as they are in store for Western Australia at present, notwithstanding the land tax which has been invented as a sovereign remedy for our trouble. On calm consideration, I am satisfied that not only the Parliament, but the people of the country will be satisfied that by turning back we have a great deal to lose, and that by going forward we are doing a great deal to prevent disintegration of the Empire, and to establish the Commonwealth, the State, and the old country on a more secure basis than the glorious heritage handed down to use in the past by those who held office before us. Certainly as members of Parliament we ought not to consider the motion seriously. We should refer the question, as it ought to be referred, to the people, not on a referendum, but allow them to move in the matter themselves. They should move. Public meetings should be the mode of expressing their views, and we should not allow Parliament to be used as a stalking-horse to scare the Eastern States. I am satisfied there is no danger of frightening the Commonwealth or the Eastern States into anything. We will have to face Coghlan's statistics, and we have no grounds for saying we have not prospered under the Commonwealth. We have no grounds for saying that secession is necessary or desirable.

On motion by the Hon. J. W. HACKETT, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT—ONE WEEK.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the House at its rising do adjourn till the next Tuesday. This was at the request of several country members who were at home and could not attend this week. It was not wise to go on with such a measure as the Land Tax Assessment Bill until we had a fairly full House.

Question passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at four minutes past 5 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.