

*The Premier* : You could have given it to a messenger of the House and he would have brought it down.

Mr. BATH: Twice I was informed that the Premier was engaged, and the third time that he had left for the House. I should like to be exonerated from any action of neglect, or trying to take the Premier unawares. I sought to acquaint him of the fact at the earliest possible moment.

The House adjourned at 5.43 o'clock, until the next day.

## Legislative Council,

Thursday, 10th October, 1907.

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

Prayers.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

*By the Colonial Secretary*: Papers in connection with Timber Tests made by officers of the Railway Department, moved for in the previous session by the Hon. M. L. Moss.

### QUESTION—RAILWAY ENGINEER'S VISIT.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER (for Hon. J. W. Wright) asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, At whose instigation did Mr. C. E. Norman, of the Victorian Railway Department, come to Perth early in this year? 2, What was the particular business in connection with the West Aus-

tralian Railways that Mr. Norman was engaged on? 3, How long was Mr. Norman in Perth in connection with this particular business, and what was the total amount paid by the Government for his services? 4, Was Mr. Norman's report (if any) acted upon, or was it considered of little value for the purposes required? 5, If Mr. Norman made a report, will the Colonial Secretary place all papers in connection with same on the table of the House?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, The Government. 2, To decide upon the relative merits of proposals submitted in connection with Railway requirements at Fremantle and access to Victoria Quay. 3, Mr. Norman was in Western Australia for about 17 days, and was paid an honorarium of 50 guineas for professional services, and travelling allowance during the period he was absent from Melbourne. 4, The report was of value in that it endorsed the arrangement which had already been made at Fremantle, and set at rest a question upon which there were great differences of opinion. 5, The Government will have no objection to placing the papers on the table of the House.

### BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Police Force (consolidation); 2, Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages Act Amendment; introduced by the Colonial Secretary.

### DEBATE—ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Third day, Conclusion.*

Resumed from the previous day.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER (North): I desire to make some observations in connection with the constitutional attitude of this Chamber immediately prior to the last prorogation. It will be within the recollection of members that the Land Tax Assessment Bill, as then presented to this Chamber, did not meet with the approval of the majority of this House. Immediately after that, the Bill being rejected, a public pronouncement was uttered in another place by the Pre-

mier; and in that pronouncement there were allegations of fact that were not strictly accurate, and there were expressions of opinion as regards the constitutional powers of "another place" which I venture to say were totally at variance with the constitutional law on the subject. The particular part of that pronouncement to which I take exception I shall briefly refer to. The Premier said:—

"It is hardly necessary for me to dwell on the gravity of the constitutional aspect raised by the action taken in interfering with the provisions proposed to be made for the purpose of providing funds for the Government's developmental policy."

Now that expression of opinion shows that the hon. gentleman thought this Chamber had no right whatever to interfere with the governmental policy of another place. I can quite understand there may have been perhaps a confusion of thought in the hon. member's mind as to the difference which exists between the action of this Chamber in respect to a Supply Bill or an Appropriation Bill, and the action of this Chamber with reference to fiscal policy. They are distinctly marked, and there is no doubt whatever that, so far as this Chamber is concerned, in matters connected with the supply and appropriation of the annual funds of the year, this Chamber will never—it may do so but it will be unconstitutional to do so—take upon itself the responsibility of rejecting any measure sent down by the Government. But it is different with matters of policy peculiarly affecting the constituents of this Chamber. It must be borne in mind that the land tax was aimed at the constituents of this Chamber, and is it not the duty of every member of this Chamber to protect, as far as he reasonably can, his constituents against what they think unfair class taxation? In the exercise of that right this Chamber thought fit to reject that Bill; and I venture to say that as an exercise of its power the action taken cannot be questioned, or, if questioned, the opposition cannot be successfully sustained against the attitude of this Chamber. We have the right. The other question and the subservient one is, "Was this Cham-

ber right in exercising its discretion in rejecting the measure?" The Premier takes it at the start that practically we had no right whatever to reject the measure; not that any exercise of our discretion was wrong, but that we had no right to reject the measure. I venture to say any member of this Chamber who understands the constitution of this House will fully understand that this Chamber has the right to reject anything, no matter what it is. The next part of the pronouncement uttered on that occasion was a statement which had reference to a resolution that was passed in the House of Commons in 1678, by which the House of Commons then announced publicly that—

"All aids and supplies, and aids to His Majesty in Parliament, are the sole gift of the Commons, and all Bills for the granting of any such aids ought to begin with the Commons; and that it is the undoubted and sole right of the Commons to direct, limit, and appoint in such Bills the ends, purposes, considerations, conditions, limitations, and qualifications of such grants, which ought not to be changed or altered by the House of Lords."

That statement of the law of course is constitutionally correct, but it is a statement of the law that does not apply to the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly is not the counterpart of the House of Commons, nor is this Chamber the counterpart of the House of Lords. Our Constitution is not like the Constitution of the Imperial Parliament, based on usages hoary with antiquity. Our Constitution is a paper Constitution, conferred on us by an Act of the Imperial Parliament. Our powers are there stated distinctly and clearly. We cannot give to ourselves greater powers than are contained in the Constitution. In the statutes conferring on this State the right of responsible government, there are only two sections that I am aware of that affect the powers of this Chamber in dealing with money Bills. The first is the sixty-sixth section of the Constitution Act which in a few words states this:—

"All Bills for appropriating any part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, or

for imposing, altering, or repealing any rate, tax, duty, or impost, shall originate in the Legislative Assembly."

That of course is the undoubted law on the subject; no one can question it. The Bill came here from the Legislative Assembly. In what respect have we transgressed the law in doing what we have done? In a section of an amending Act of the Constitution, Section 46, it is expressly pointed out what powers this House has in reference to money Bills. It says:—

"In the case of a proposed Bill, which according to law must have originated in the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Council may at any stage return it to the Legislative Assembly with a message requesting the omission or amendment of any items or provisions therein; and the Legislative Assembly may, if it thinks fit, make such omissions or amendments, or any of them, with or without modifications."

This Chamber has an absolutely greater power in respect to money Bills than the House of Lords, because the House of Lords can neither suggest nor amend; but here is an express power given to this Chamber to return a Bill with suggestions or amendments. And in regard to the position we are in, this Chamber, as it might have done, could have returned the Bill with a suggestion. But in the plenitude of its wisdom and with the responsibility attached to it, this House thought fit to reject the Bill, and in doing so I cannot for one moment understand how the action of this Chamber can be attempted to be held up to public obloquy by any public man who knows anything of the subject, and what I regret, by any newspaper that seeks to wield any public opinion in the community. Not satisfied with that flourish of trumpets which was expressed in this quaint old language, the hon. gentleman proceeded to state this. He was not satisfied with stating the question boldly, but he went on to accentuate it and to dress it up in language that means action, that means trouble, if the great powers are to be invoked:—

"The Government in this instance have asked for nothing unreasonable,

and resent the unwarrantable stand taken by another place, which is tantamount to a refusal of supplies."

Is there anything whatever to justify that statement? How can it be said that our refusal to pass the Bill was tantamount to a refusal of supplies? Is there anything truthful in that statement? Let me point out, and every member knows it, that every Act of Parliament that is passed is passed by whom? By the King, but with the advice and consent of both Chambers. And if the advice and consent of both Chambers is necessary before a Bill is passed, it means without doubt the rejection by either Chamber. Then the hon. member admits practically that this is a question of fiscal policy, and not a question of supply. He says:—

"I wish to emphatically place the responsibility on the shoulders of those members of another place who have rejected the fiscal policy of the Government, and the expressed desire of the people's House."

He might say that with reference to any measure he might bring forward in another place. Is this Chamber to swallow without consideration measures sent to this Chamber? What is our chief function? It is deliberation; and how can we be said to deliberate freely if we are enjoined to pass a Bill whether we like it or not? The hon. member went on to say—is it not piling on the agony with a vengeance?—that the mere rejection by this Chamber of a Bill reverses the relationship of the two Chambers? In what respect does it do so? No one can tell me, because the Bill was sent here—for what purpose? For our consideration and our approval if necessary. How can it be said that we reverse the relationship of both Chambers when we exercise the functions which we have a right to carry out? The hon. member proceeded to say:—

"At the same time, it is impossible that we can tamely submit to an act which reverses the relationships of the two Houses, revolutionises the Constitution, and places the Assembly and the Ministers of its approval at the mercy of the Second Chamber, whose

functions should rather be that of a House of review than that of a Chamber where the fiscal policy of a Government may be dictated. It is impossible to consider the vote of last night as anything but a rebuff to this Chamber."

*Hon. J. T. Glowrey*: I would like to ask whether the hon. member is in order?

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member is in order, as considerable latitude is always allowed in speaking on the Address-in-Reply.

Interjection by the *Hon. J. W. Hackett*.

*Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER*: When my learned friend makes that observation, I join in his expression of opinion. This is a fitting occasion when this Chamber ought to put itself right with the public. We do not get much assistance from some of the Press of the country. I understand the solicitude of some gentlemen who want to save the situation; but this is the only occasion when it is open to any member to discuss the matter. The latitude is great, and I am not abusing the latitude, but am referring to a matter that vitally concerns the Chamber and every member of it. That expression of opinion, that public pronouncement which indicated that the conduct of this Chamber would be resented, how has it been acted on? How has the feeling of indignation, in the language which I have read out, been appeased? Has this Chamber done anything since to alter the condition of affairs? Nothing of the kind; but the Government have. Some people call it a backdown. Well, they are entitled to their opinion, but I venture to say that if it is a backdown it is a very peculiar one. In other words, when the measure was objected to and rejected, that measure is again sent up with another little taxation proposal tacked on. How can that be said to alter the position of affairs, except instead of having to swallow one pill we have now to swallow two? There is no doubt, and it is far from me or any member to make here any observation that would in the least militate against that harmonious feeling that ought to exist between this Chamber and another place,

the attack does not come from our side. We have certainly rejected the Bill, but the man who strikes the first blow is not necessarily the aggressor. The person who renders the first blow necessary is the aggressor. We are standing up for our rights, and I object to tamely submit to have our rights challenged in such a speech without publicly resenting it. We know what it is leading to silently and slowly. There have been several amendments of this Chamber from time to time attempted to be made. Some have succeeded. They are keeping on with an idea to popularise and to disturb the Chamber, in the language of democratic opinion. We must view that with suspicion because the same voice tells you the object of the modification of the Chamber is its final extinction. I have not had much experience in this House, but I hope while I am in it I shall endeavour, and I hope other members will do so too, wherever the privileges of this Chamber are attacked, to resent it. In conclusion on this subject I venture to say the pronouncement I have read was entirely uncalled for. It did not effect its purpose. It might tend—I hope it will not—to strained feelings between ourselves and another place. I desire to say a couple of words with reference to the question of the taxation proposal at the present time. We have not the Bill before us, and until the Bill arrives it would not be fitting for any person to attempt to express his judgment or to make up his mind until he sees the measure. With that object in view I shall reserve to myself to act in any manner I think best in the interests of the House and of my constituents. There are some matters on this occasion which I must refer to even if I have to weary the House for a few moments. They are matters concerning the North-West. Let me tell you, Mr. President and members of the House, that the feelings in the North-West are gradually reaching the boiling point of indignation. They have been promised public works frequently, but those promises have been broken.

*The Colonial Secretary*: There is no money.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER : There is plenty of money for other works ; £60,000 is not going to do everything. There are the agricultural spur lines ; but the people of the North-West have never got anything. No later than to-day I was called upon by some people from Roebourne, who pointed out to me that the Point Sampson Jetty, constructed there some years ago, has absolutely no connection with the mainland. They cannot use the jetty which has cost a large sum of money, and it is left high and dry from one year's end to the other and never used. It cost something like £31,000. For the want of a connection between that jetty and the town, the people of Roebourne and the whole of the district are suffering the greatest hardships. To my own knowledge they have had stacked up there some 6,000 bags of copper ore for over three or four months, when copper was valued at more than £90 per ton. By the time they were able to get portion of it away the value had fallen below £70. [*Hon. J. W. Hackett* : What would the connection cost?] I believe about £8,000 or £10,000. But the copper shows are developing remarkably well throughout the whole district, and the gold prospects, too, are very good. I was told and I believe that there are nearly 400 to 500 people who came to that district within the last 18 months, and now they are gradually but nearly as quickly going away again. Copper, of course, has unfortunately fallen in value ; but the people have not secured the facilities they expected. They will not stay there much longer, and the place will again be deserted. On one occasion when I waited on the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) he said he would recommend the making of this connection, and that the Government had determined on it. But when the Government determine on a project, the Treasurer has usually something to say, and the work has perhaps for that reason been delayed. But it is a great pity there should be no attempt to allay this dissatisfaction by carrying out some of the promises made to the people of the North-West. The mayor of Broome has sent me a long communication which I

will not read, because it will form the subject of a motion of which I have just given notice for the next sitting of the House. But I must speak on the question of the Broome water supply. The municipality of Broome, rightly I think, under the powers conveyed in an Act of Parliament, claim to have the superintendence of the water supply of their town. I am told they have managed most admirably their municipal affairs, and Broome is one of the most successfully-managed municipalities in the State. They have asked to be allowed to regulate their own water supply, and to assume the whole responsibility for its control. That request has been made to the Minister for Works (Hon. J. Price) ; I interviewed him personally, but could not get any satisfaction. He thought the waterworks should not be handed over to the municipality. However, these people have set their hearts on getting control of their water supply ; and as it is a cardinal principle that such works should be administered by the local authority, the request should certainly be granted. Local control helps to relieve the work of the department in remote centres, and there is no objection to the proposal but that the Government are squeezing a little revenue out of the scheme, which revenue would be lost if the works were handed over. And as a member points out, in most other places the water supply is under the control of the municipalities. I have some other small requests from Derby, but I hope I shall succeed in getting an early answer from the Minister. One is with reference to schools, the complaint being the lack of school accommodation at Derby, concerning which I myself wrote about a couple of months ago to the Minister ; but I shall not detain the House with any farther remarks on the Address.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan) I much regret the necessity for another Governor's Speech. We have no sooner disposed of one than we are here again considering another. Had the Government accepted the defeat of their taxation measures last session, and carried on for a little while, endeavouring by farther

retrenchment and better management to improve the position of the State, they could have done without additional taxation, and could have allowed the whole question to go before the electors, a course which would have been far more satisfactory. Mr. Langsford, speaking yesterday, referred to the land and income tax measure as a gilded pill. I look upon it as containing two very unpleasant doses of medicine. Taxes are always unpleasant; but the more one travels about the country the more one realises how unpleasant these proposals are to the people. During the last few weeks I have travelled extensively in the country, more particularly in the South-Western district, represented by Dr. Hackett, who is in favour of the land tax, and by Mr. McLarty, who opposed it last session. Throughout that province so far as I could learn, the people are much opposed to the tax itself, not considering it at all necessary. I can assure Dr. Hackett that his constituents are very anxious to have an early opportunity of voting on this question. However, I am afraid they will not get one. Throughout the country, so far as I could see, the feeling is greatly in favour of a reference to the electors, who are of opinion that extra taxation is not needed. It has been stated by the Premier and other Ministers, and by members representing the country constituencies, that the land tax will fall most heavily not on the country but on the city and the towns. As a metropolitan member I recognise that it will fall very heavily on the people who sent me here. I am almost fresh from my electors; the question was brought prominently before them last May twelvemonth—not very long ago; and the pronouncement was very strong against any extra taxation.

*The Colonial Secretary:* Where was the feeling expressed?

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I mentioned the matter every time I spoke; and my opponent, who was strongly in favour of the tax, is still out of Parliament. Such results speak for themselves. However, leaving that altogether out of the question, prominent public men have stated throughout the land that the country

people will pay a very small proportion of the tax; that practically two-thirds of it will fall on the city and the towns. So far as Perth and suburbs are concerned, we have only to look around to find that the property-owners are suffering enough from taxation. They have municipal taxes, they are faced with extra expenses for sewerage, and in addition they find it exceedingly difficult to get tenants or to dispose of properties; and the proposed tax will not improve matters. The income tax and the land tax both affect my constituents particularly; and I for one should have been glad had the Government taken the hint, and endeavoured by better administration to avoid the necessity for these taxes. There is no doubt once we have a tax imposed it is very rarely got rid of. Even in Victoria, only a few months ago, with prosperous times, the Government have proposed only a reduction and not the abolition of the income tax. Notwithstanding their surplus they have not got rid of the tax. Certainly, if taxation is necessary, then the proposals of our Government are fair enough. Than an income tax there can be nothing fairer; because, if a man has an income he can afford to pay the tax, and if he has not he is not asked to pay.

*Hon. W. Kingsmill:* The land tax is not fair.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: If it is taken in conjunction with an income tax, I have not so much to say against it; but an income tax in itself would be far preferable to a land and income tax combined. I contend that the people as a whole are against these taxes, believing them to be unnecessary; and seeing that the life of this Parliament is drawing to a close, the Government would have done well to allow this matter to come before the electors in the ordinary way. To impose the taxes is not fair to the electors; the question has never been before them; and I venture to say that many members, if they went back to their constituents, would find the feeling against the proposal. It has been said that the present Acting Commissioner of Railways, who I am glad to see is getting a fair chance of proving himself as a railway manager,

expects to save some £170,000 on the railways this year. [*Hon. J. W. Hackett: How much next year?*] Well, if we read what has appeared in the Press as to railway management in Queensland, we may hope for even better things than. We are a very small community of about 260,000 people, and I contend that we have been living in luxurious fashion in respect of our public services. We have been getting better public services than the population warrants; and when I say that, I should like members to recollect the condition of affairs in the small State of Victoria, which as is well known is enjoying a very prosperous time. Victoria is a small and thickly-settled country, with land at a high value. I have now in mind a country district within a hundred miles of Melbourne, one in which the land is particularly rich, ranging in value from £10 to £20 per acre, the holdings averaging 200 acres each. In that Gippsland country is a spur line some 12 or 13 miles long and within some 90 miles of Melbourne. We have a similar line almost equally distant from Perth—some 60 to 80 miles away. I refer to the Newcastle spur line, about 13 miles in length. In Victoria, where the land is highly valuable, the holdings small and business good, the spur line is served by two trains a week. On the Newcastle line, where the holdings average perhaps 1,000 acres each and the land is not worth one-quarter or one-fifth of the Victorian land, the spur line is served by two trains a day. That sort of thing is going on throughout the State: the people living in such districts have been too well served in the past. We do not like giving up privileges we already possess; but we have no right to those privileges. We cannot afford such expensive services; and the people should realise that with proper management these services would be reduced considerably, and the percentage of earnings gradually increased by the reduction. The same goes on pretty well in every department of the State, and I am particularly anxious when I think of the new departments that will be established if the land and income tax is imposed. There will be numerous officers required for collecting the land

tax, and a big department for the income tax. It is perhaps difficult to realise what will be the cost of collecting the latter tax, but I do think one will be fairly safe in estimating it at about 25 per cent. The unfortunate people will have to pay through the nose for an army of civil servants, when the people can ill afford the money. It is very difficult to collect any tax without incurring great expense. I venture to say that the severe criticism of the Railway Department by Mr. Chinn has led the public to take a considerable interest in the matter, and the reductions which have been forced on the Government by his criticisms have resulted in a saving of £170,000. If the same fierce light were turned upon other departments of the State, I venture to say almost as great a saving, or a proportionate saving, could be made. I shall not quote any figures, but will take the Public Works Department. I will come presently to the Lands. Latterly we have had very little money to spend, very few new public buildings to erect; yet I venture to say that the staff in the Works Department has not been reduced to anything like the proportion it should assume. Take the Architectural Branch of the Public Works Department as an instance. I have been told on fairly good authority that the amount of work carried out by that branch during the last few years has cost the Government for supervision about 20 per cent. of the cost of the buildings. This may or may not be true; I think it is. When we come to think that the same work if given to private individuals would not cost more than 5 per cent.—and many competent architects would be only too glad to get the work—it will be realised what a terrible waste of money has been incurred by this department. It is evident that we pay in this direction a great deal of revenue which we want for other purposes and which might well be saved. As an instance of the cost incurred by this department in carrying out works I was told to-day that the plans for the construction of a boat shed on the foreshore at Barrack Street were altered so many times that it took nine

months for them to be completed. The whole work cost only about £1,000, and I suppose that the total amount of the salaries alone of officers engaged on the work during the past nine months would amount to a similar sum. Then as to the cost of running the Lands Department; I would be almost afraid to say what percentage of revenue is spent for administration there. I believe it is 60 or 65 per cent. In distinction to this the Midland Railway lands, which are conducted on business lines by practical men, do not cost for administration more than about 6 per cent. As far as I am concerned I do not think any taxation is necessary. I shall oppose any taxation until I am thoroughly satisfied that farther reasonable retrenchment cannot be made, and that it is necessary to have taxation in order to make ends meet. I am satisfied that in taking this course I am expressing the desire of my constituents. People are averse to more taxation. As an instance of the feelings of the owners of property in Perth I will state the case of the poll which was taken by the City Council recently with the object of endeavouring to secure the consent of the ratepayers to the borrowing of £25,000. A good deal of this money was intended to be spent on works which were not really needed, and the result of the poll was that there was a four to one majority against the proposed loan. Things have come to such a pass that we should retrench where we can, and not increase the burden on the people at a time like this; we should endeavour to decrease it. I will reserve farther remarks until the measures come before us, but I will say that I regret the Government did not place the measures before the people for their endorsement before bringing them before Parliament.

Hon. R. F. SHOLL (North): I can only express regret that the Government have found it necessary again to bring forward the land tax which is quite an old friend, or enemy, as the case may be. We have already discussed this question over and over again, but on this occasion it is garbed in a different costume. My great objection to the land tax on pre-

vious occasions was that it was of a class nature. It was a question of taxing a certain section of the community for the benefit of another section, and while I am in this House I shall never agree to any legislation which is of a class nature in any shape or form. I understand that the Government propose to bring in a twin measure to raise revenue by a land and income tax. The two together may overcome some of my objections because, with the income tax added to the land tax, the burden of taxation is more far-reaching than if only a land tax is adopted. However, I will reserve my final determination on the question, because there may be details in the Bill which would make me object to either the land tax, the income tax, or to both measures. I am inclined to agree with members who say that we might wait a while before passing the land or income tax, so that an endeavour could be made by the Government to exercise economies. Numerous extravagances were recently brought to light in various Government departments, and I think it would be well if we waited to see where some economy might be exercised in their administration. The hon. member who represents Katanning in another place, when addressing his constituents a short time ago, said that the Government were going to save £100,000 from economies in the Railway Department, and that this sum was going to be spent in making concessions in the shape of railway freights etcetera to agriculturists. Before I support any farther taxation I must obtain from the responsible Minister a denial that such is the case. If we are to economise by discharging hundreds of men from the Railway department and hand the money thus saved over to those who send their produce to market in the shape of flour, or grain, or chaff, as the case may be, then I for one strongly protest, and until I am assured that such is not the case I shall oppose any suggestion for farther taxation. If, as suggested, this money is to go towards the reduction of freights, it will be only the miller and people who deal in large quantities who will benefit; the small farmer



will not benefit at all. It is men like the member for Katanning himself, or those dealing largely in agricultural products, who alone will benefit. The member for Katanning also said on that occasion, when speaking in favour of the tax, or at any rate in supporting the tax—one hardly knows when he is supporting a measure and when he is against it, for he generally speaks one way and votes another—that all the district of Katanning would have to pay by the land tax would be £500. If that is so it only shows how low the people in that prosperous roads board district rate themselves. I notice that there is no difficulty whatever shown by the Government in finding money for the Katanning district, or for any place in the southern part of the State, and that although enormous sums of money are required there, these amounts are found; but when it comes to a question of the northern part of the State it is found impossible even to provide small sums. There is great necessity for the construction of a railway between Point Sampson and Roebourne to assist in developing the very valuable mining properties there. When approached with the object of obtaining money for the construction of this line, the reply is always received from the Government that there is no money, and the consequence is that the mining industry there, which promised to be a valuable one, is becoming crippled, for owners of mines cannot get their ore to the ships. Things are in consequence in a rather bad way. Money for this work should be obtained at almost any cost. Even if the Government have to overrun the constable slightly to construct this line the amount is so small that no very great harm would be done; it would not be a cost of £40,000 or £50,000, but one of only about £15,000. Reverting for a moment once more to the taxation proposals of the Government I think they might have been satisfied to let the measure drop for the time and see what could be done in the way of economies. If, after everything possible was done in the way of economising in administration, it was found that the revenue was insufficient for the necessities of the State and that direct tax-

tion was essential, then I for one would not oppose it. Every effort should be made by the Government to exercise economy before trying to push forward these taxation proposals. We have heard lately that in one department about 900 men have been discharged; that may be going too far and the Government in this respect may be going to the other extreme, but, as the Hon. Mr. Sommers said, there are other departments in which economy might also be exercised. He mentioned the Works Department, but I think that in the Lands Department there is plenty of room, if not for economy, at all events for more efficient service. The department is one from which it is almost impossible to get a reply to a letter, and they evidently do not think it necessary even to acknowledge the receipt of communications. This happened to myself about 12 months ago. I wrote to the department and, after waiting several months without getting any reply, I again wrote drawing attention to the fact that I had communicated with them on a certain date and that it was unbusinesslike, in addition to being discourteous, not to acknowledge the receipt of letters. I waited another six weeks and, still receiving no reply, wrote to the Minister, and three or four days afterwards I obtained a reply. If that is the system adopted in the Lands Department in carrying out their work the sooner some of the heads responsible for this very unsatisfactory state of affairs are shaken up the better for the country and the less aggravating for those dealing with the department. I do not know that there is anything I wish to say farther on the Address-in-Reply. We cannot always be talking on Addresses-in-Reply. I was not here at the opening, nor at the prorogation, for life is too short to be attending meetings of Parliament and prorogations every fortnight. It appears to me that the present Government, whatever credit they may deserve by their honest desire to work in the interests of the country, have been playing the fool with politics; it is a case of continual adjournments and threats of what they will do, and we find as a result that they do not carry out the

threats. This is making politics a farce and ridiculous.

[A pause ensued.]

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) : I do not desire to speak at length to this motion, for the reason that there is not much that is new in his Excellency's Speech. Most of the legislation foreshadowed has been previously before this Chamber; indeed some of it had already been passed by this House when the prorogation took place. Members generally have been kind in their criticisms of the speech delivered by his Excellency; but there are one or two remarks by members to which I should like briefly to reply. Mr. Thompson referred to the Government's immigration policy; but, judging by his remarks, I am afraid he is not well informed in regard to that policy. He stated we were encouraging to come to this State people who are not suitable as settlers on our lands; and farther that many of those who had come here did afterwards go away to New Zealand or elsewhere, because they were not well treated here after landing. The immigration policy, as he properly stated, is controlled by the Colonial Secretary's Department, but that department is only responsible up to the landing of immigrants; for when immigrants have landed and desire to take up land, they are handed over to the Lands Department, the officers of which see to the distribution of immigrants on the land. It is incorrect to say we have encouraged to come here any class of people other than farmers or farm labourers. It was distinctly laid down when this Government took office that we would assist to come here only farmers and farm labourers.

*Hon. W. Kingsmill* : That policy was laid down long before this Government came into power.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I cannot of course answer for what may have been done by previous Governments. But that policy was laid down by the present Government, and has been strictly adhered to, because we recognise that while there is ample room in this State for thousands of immigrants of the right class, we have not much room for mechan-

ics, clerks, and persons of that description. And we have adhered strictly to the policy of encouraging only farmers and farm labourers. The hon. member may have come across some immigrants here who are not of this class; but probably those people were refused assisted passages by the Agent General, and paid their own passages out here. Only to-day there arrived by the Orient boat over 50 persons in this State. Of these some 20 or 25 were nominated immigrants, that is to say they were nominated by some persons here who are responsible for them; perhaps 20 were assisted immigrants, persons of the right class whom the Agent General found were in possession of £100 each; and a dozen or so were fully-paid passengers. These latter cannot be classed as immigrants in the true sense; they simply came here on their own account.

*Hon. J. A. Thomson* : We have been assisting others than farmers.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : We have not assisted the class of people to which the hon. member referred. Among the many who have been assisted to come here, there were bound to be a few failures, and some who would leave the State again; but, on the other hand, we have had frequent complaints from the New South Wales Government that we have been intercepting at our immigration office in Fremantle a number of immigrants who were *en route* to New South Wales. I admit that has happened in some cases. Our immigration officer has got into conversation with immigrants for the East, after which they have decided that this is a better country to come to than New South Wales. That has happened with quite a number; and in this connection I give our immigration officer credit for being a smart young fellow who understands his business, and who, when there are among new arrivals some desirable immigrants, is quick to recognise the fact and to get into touch with them. To prove this is the case I may mention that we have entered into an agreement with the Premiers of other States, particularly with the Premier of New South Wales, by which we have given an undertaking that if im-

migrants intended for another State settle here, we will refund the amount paid by the Government of the State in assisting such immigrants to come to Australia ; and the Governments of the other States will do the same by us in respect of immigrants whom we assist and who emigrate to other States within eighteen months of their arrival here. The complaint of the Eastern Premiers was—and I feel there is something in the complaint—that after their Governments had gone to a considerable expense to secure immigrants, we having first port of call in Australia secured many of them. In regard to the question of taxation, the main question in the Governor's Speech, I do not think it desirable, nor do I think hon. members expect it of me, to deal with that measure before it comes down to us. I am pleased indeed at the open minds with which a majority of members if not the whole, are prepared to discuss the question. They have not said they will reject the measure or anything of that kind, and have intimated that they are at least quite open-minded on the subject and willing to give it fair consideration. One or two points have been made in connection with the measure to which perhaps I had better refer, although the Bill is not yet before the House. It has been said by some members that the Government have shifted their ground and brought down a different measure. I do not admit that if a land tax is brought down with an income tax attached to it, the Government are departing from a land tax. Mr. Langsford remarked that the Bill would provide for double-barrelled taxation, that people would have to pay both on land and on incomes.

*Hon. J. W. Langsford* : I did not say it was so. I simply asked the question.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Then I may inform the hon. member that it is not in the sense he inferred a double-barrelled tax. [*Hon. G. Randell* : It is not a "gilded pill" either, is it?] I do not think, by any stretch of imagination, a taxation proposal can be called a "gilded pill." I am safe in saying that this is not a double-barrelled tax, that is to say a person paying tax on land will

not be required to pay tax on his income derived from that land—[*Member* : Or on incomes from dividends? ]—nor will a person be required to pay the tax on incomes derived from dividends on which dividend duty has already been paid. I do not propose to go into the constitutional aspect mentioned by Mr. Pennefather. I am as keen as any member of the House in my desire to assert the rights and privileges of this House. I recognise the importance to the country of this Chamber, and I am first of all a member of this House. But I will not admit that there is anything in the speech delivered by the Premier in another place, and quoted by the hon. member, that can be taken as in any way reflecting on the privileges of this House. It was a statement of facts.

*Hon. W. Kingsmill* : It has since been withdrawn, in any case, so does not matter.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Who withdrew it ?

*Hon. W. Kingsmill* : By the Premier's later remarks.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I think the hon. member must have had dreams. I do not admit that the speech contained any reflection on this Chamber. Doubtless the hon. member is correct when he reads the letter of the Constitution ; but as Leader of this House I would ask, is it always wise to adhere strictly to the letter of the Constitution in such matters ? Is it not sometimes wiser and in the best interests of the Houses not to adhere strictly to the letter of the Constitution in everything ?

*Hon. R. W. Pennefather* : We merely exercised our discretion, which the Premier said we had no right to exercise at all.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I do not think the Premier said this House had not the right. However, I do not think we shall gain anything by labouring the constitutional aspect, which may well be left until the taxation proposals come before us. Several members have said that they must be satisfied that we need this taxation, before imposing it. I think I justified the need when asking for the imposition of this taxation pre-

viously, and when I showed that extra revenue was required by the state of the finances ; and I shall have no difficulty in showing that again when the taxation proposals are brought down. It was said that a sufficient saving could be made in the administration of the railways. On the former occasion I went through the railway figures and showed that all the savings that could be made were being made ; and I then pointed out that in any calculations based on railway savings, the fact must not be lost sight of that the railway revenue is falling, so that the saving effected in that department is not all profit. In regard to the reference by Mr. Sholl to the remarks made by a private member at Katanning, surely the Government cannot be held responsible for the utterances of a private member.

*Hon. R. F. Sholl* : He is generally in the confidence of the Government—it has never been denied.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** : I deny that the member for Katanning is more in the confidence of the Government than is any other member of this House or of another place ; and surely the Government cannot be asked to be responsible for the utterances of private members. In regard to the complaint made by Mr. Pennefather that nothing is being done for the development of the North-West, while that may be the hon. member's opinion, I maintain that no Government ever in power in this State has recognised the wants of the North-West more than the present Government have done in their short reign.

*Hon. R. W. Pennefather* : They have made a lot of promises.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** : More than promises. For instance, the construction of a railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar, passed during last session, was talked of for many years before I entered Parliament, but never eventuated until the present Government took office. In addition we have opened a stock route from the North-West to the Eastern Goldfields, which means much to the pastoralists of the Kimberleys. We are prepared to assist in the establishment of freezing works with the object

of helping the small pastoralists in the North-West ; and other matters I could mention.

*Hon. R. W. Pennefather* : You have been good at promises, but nothing has been done actually.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** : I do not know that the hon. member can reasonably say that, when a stock-route has been opened up, when a Bill has been passed for the construction of a railway, and when the Government are even now arranging the details of the proposal to assist the establishment of freezing works with the object of helping the small pastoralist. The hon. member referred to the delay that has occurred in the matter of the Roebourne and Point Sampson Jetty. That is now under consideration.

*Hon. R. W. Pennefather* : That has been the reply for the last six months.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** : It is all very well for an hon. member, simply because the work happens to be in his constituency, to object that a work involving £20,000 should not be under consideration for six months, particularly when the required work is at a place so far removed from the seat of administration ; but I venture to think that were a work of that magnitude hurriedly put in hand in some other part of the State, the hon. member would object that it should not be rushed through until due inquiry had been made into its necessity.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett* : What did his (the Forrest) Government do for the North-West while they were in office ?

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** : I do not think there are any other points I desire to touch on, but I desire to thank hon. members for the reception they have given to the Speech, and I trust that when the Government proposals come down they will receive fair consideration at the hands of hon. members.

Question put and passed, the Address adopted.

**BILL—PUBLIC HEALTH (Consolidation).**

*Second Reading.*

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly)** in moving the second

reading said: In regard to this Bill I wish to make a statement rather than a second-reading speech. This Bill was before the House last session for some time. It passed the second reading and was referred to a select committee consisting of five members of this House. That committee sat for some days and heard a number of witnesses, and had almost completed its labours when Parliament was prorogued. The Bill now introduced is word for word with the Bill introduced last session. I am simply going to ask members to formally pass the second reading, and then I will move to send it to a select committee with the same members as we had last session. Thus we will be able to utilise the services of those hon. members, and I will move that the committee have authority to utilise the evidence taken last session.

Question passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### Select Committee.

On motion by *the Colonial Secretary*, the Bill was referred to a select committee consisting of Mr. Kingsmill, Mr. Langsford, Mr. Randell, Mr. Wright, and the mover, with the usual powers, to report on the 22nd October. The committee was also given power to utilise the evidence taken the previous session as if such evidence were taken by the committee now appointed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 5.50 o'clock until Tuesday, the 22nd October.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 10th October, 1907.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

#### QUESTION—ASYLUM FOR INSANE, LIGHTING.

Mr. HARDWICK (for Mr. H. Brown) asked the Minister for Works: 1, What is the estimated cost of the electric light installation at the Claremont Asylum? 2, The cost to date? 3, The cost when completed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, £14,242, which not only covers the cost of the electric light installation, but also the generation of current for power purposes. 2, No expenditure to date. 3, £14,500.

#### BILL—RESERVE REDEDICATION.

Introduced by *the Premier*, and read a first time.

#### BILL—FREMANTLE DOCK.

The PREMIER, having by leave introduced a Bill, was proceeding to move that it be read a first time.

Mr. WALKER rose to a point of order. Had not the Premier accepted as a vote of censure the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition on the Address-in-Reply? If so, no new business could be introduced till that question had been disposed of.

The PREMIER: This was purely formal business, taken because it happened to be on the Notice Paper. There was