

"2. The several Bills which have been passed, many of them of pressing urgency, cannot fail to be of much value to the community.

"3. In regard to the Bill to amend the Constitution Act, and the Homesteads Bill, which have not become law, my Ministers hope and believe that, on further consideration, these important measures will meet with the approval and support of both Houses of the Legislature.

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"4. I thank you for the liberal Supplies you have granted for the use of the Public Service, including, as they do, provision for many works of much importance to the colony.

"MR. PRESIDENT AND HONORABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,—

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"5. The resolutions you have agreed to in regard to the Midland Railway should ensure its speedy completion, and I hope no further difficulties will arise in connection with this important work.

"6. I now prorogue Parliament till Wednesday, the 26th April next."

The session then closed.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 13th January, 1893.

Missing Paper—Resignation of Messrs. Bush and Darlôt as Justices of the Peace—Introduction of an Electoral Act Amendment Bill—Appropriation Bill, 1893: second reading; in committee; third reading—Renewal of Hawk's Licenses—Message from Legislative Council: concurrence in Appropriation Bill—Temporary Prevention of Sandalwood Cutting—Message from Legislative Council: concurrence in Midland Railway Loan Bill—Message from Legislative Council: concurrence in Loan Estimates—Commission to inquire into the working of the Tariff Act—Opening of Refreshment Rooms during the Recess—Prorogation.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 11 a.m.

PRAYERS.

MISSING PAPER.

THE SPEAKER: I should just like to mention to members that one of the papers laid on the table by order of the House has been taken away—the paper relating to the amounts paid to the newspapers by the Government. If any hon. member has it, I should be glad if he would place it on the table again.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It was on the table the other day. I saw it myself yesterday morning.

THE SPEAKER: There are two returns.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I had both of them yesterday morning, and replaced them on the table.

RESIGNATION OF MESSRS. BUSH AND DARLÔT.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, in accordance with notice, asked the Attorney General whether Messrs. R. E. Bush and L. H. Darlôt, formerly justices of the peace of the colony, resigned their positions as justices at the suggestion of the Government, or whether they did so of their own free will?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) replied that the gentlemen in question had resigned entirely of their own free will.

INTRODUCTION OF AN ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. SOLOMON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether it was the intention of the Government, during the recess, to prepare an Electoral Act Amendment Bill, to facilitate the registration of voters, etc.?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government could not make any promise, but that the matter would be carefully considered.

APPROPRIATION BILL, 1893.

This Bill was read a second time, and passed through committee without discussion; and, the Standing Orders having been suspended, the Bill was read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

HAWKERS' LICENSES—RENEWAL OF.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, moved, "That in the opinion of

this House all hawkers who held a license up to the 31st day of December last shall, on application therefor (but subject to all just exception), be entitled to and receive a renewal of such license until the 31st December next; provided nevertheless that no licenses be issued to any persons other than those who held licenses as aforesaid; and that the Government do take immediate steps to give effect to this resolution." The hon. member said: Last year a resolution was passed by this House that certain hawkers, natives of India, should be excluded from having licenses issued to them; but, in some way or the other, all hawkers were so excluded. I have found since then that this is a very serious hardship, and a grievance to many people, real white men, who have carried on this trade, and gained their living by hawking—good men, respectable men, who have been spoken of highly; and it does seem hard that these people should be deprived entirely of their living. We were told that these men ought to be compelled to work for their living, like other laborers. You may as well tell me to do so. They are not strong enough. Yet they have wives, and they have children to support; and all I ask by this motion is that we should allow these people to live. The terms of my motion expressly prohibits the issue of any further licenses, and it only asks that those who now hold licenses (or who held a license up to the end of last year) shall be entitled to a renewal of the same for another twelve months, so that the matter may be considered in the meantime, and proper and matured legislation introduced on the subject, and not allow these people to wander about the colony without any means of subsistence, which must be the case if hawking is prohibited. I think that, unconsciously, we have committed a very gross wrong upon people who really are harmless. There may be one or two instances in which hawkers have done wrong; but why punish a whole class because one or two men amongst them may have misbehaved themselves? If you carried that principle into general practice, you would have to do away with doctors, and do away with lawyers, and do away with every trade and every profession, for there are black sheep in every flock. The remedy lies, after all, in the hands of the magistrates who grant these

licenses; they can always refuse them if the conduct of the applicant has not been satisfactory.

MR. CANNING: I should be wanting in consistency if I failed to give my support to this motion. Last session I opposed the Bill imposing these disabilities upon hawkers when it was before the House, and therefore I cordially support this proposal to restore these people their rights, although it is only intended to temporarily alleviate the effects of the Bill passed last session. Hawking is an occupation that has been followed in all times and all countries. I do not know of an age when hawking or peddling was an illegal occupation, nor a country but this.

MR. LEFROY: I am sorry I cannot follow the hon. member for Albany on this, the last occasion of a motion coming before the House this session. I am afraid the motion is on a par, to a certain extent, with that brought forward by the hon. member for Toodyay last evening. These people have imposed upon the good nature of my hon. friend. These hawkers are really not required. I do not myself know of one single white man who obtains his living by hawking; they are nearly all foreigners, and men who will not work, so long as they can carry on a trade of this sort. I think hawking, too, interferes with legitimate trade, and all that these colored hawkers are doing is to take the hard-earned money out of the pockets of people in the country, and take it out of the colony. These men have had twelve months' notice of what was going to take place, and, if they are not prepared to go to work, the sooner they are out of the colony the better.

MR. HASSELL: I also oppose the motion. I represent a large country district, and these fellows are not wanted. They are a perfect nuisance, and the sooner they are got rid of the better. They go about the country visiting the settlers' houses and intimidating the women folk to purchase their wares; and you cannot get them punished because the women are afraid to tell their husbands.

MR. THROSSELL: I see no objection to the motion. I have had some experience of these hawkers in the country, and they seem to be a very useful class of people, nearly as much so as commercial travellers. They earn an

honest living, and I think we have no right to deprive them of it. But I think they ought to be confined to places outside the boundaries of Municipalities. With that proviso, I think we might venture upon a policy of free trade in this matter of hawking. I think the law passed last session has imposed great hardship upon many deserving men.

MR. CLARKSON: It does seem rather hard, at first sight, to stop these men from making a living by hawking, when they have their carts and horses and all the paraphernalia necessary for carrying on the business. But, speaking as a country member, I can assure the House that these hawkers are very much disliked in the country. I would much sooner see them confined to the towns, rather than outside the towns, as suggested by the hon. member for Northam. I have heard lots of complaints against these foreign hawkers. If they happen to call at a settler's house when the husband is away, they walk in whether the women like it or not, and become masters of the situation. I cannot support the motion.

MR. A. FORREST: I shall support the motion, for this reason: this is a free country, and a man has as much right to go and sell his wares by carrying them about the country as he has to sell them behind the counter. Why should we prohibit these men from selling their wares when we allow a greater nuisance to be carried on with impunity, and that is the man who goes about selling books, and who won't be choked off? I opposed the Bill last session which prohibited hawking, and I am opposed to it still. I think this House has no right to legislate against any man earning an honest living. It is said that these colored men intimidate the women; I do not know whether that is a fact or not, but, so far as I have seen them, they are very civil and very obliging.

MR. TRAYLEN: I do not know of what practical use this resolution is, when we have an Act on the Statute Book prohibiting hawking. At the same time my sympathy is with it. Surely these men have the same right to sell their wares as we have. Their trade is as legitimate a trade as that of any of ourselves. But, as I have said, I do not see that the resolution can be of any practical value.

MR. PIESSE: When a motion dealing with this subject was brought before the House last session by the hon. member for Beverley, it was stated at the time that it was these colored hawkers who were the men who caused all the trouble; but the Attorney General told us it was difficult to deal with these men (they being British subjects) without dealing with the whole class of hawkers, and prohibiting hawking altogether. As to the necessity for these men, I think it only exists in very few places, in these days of railway communication. In the Murray district, I believe, there have been some complaints against prohibiting these hawkers, but I think that, on the whole, the country people are very well satisfied with the measure passed last session, as it relieved them of a very great nuisance. No doubt it seems a hardship to prohibit anyone from carrying on a trade; still, with the "book fiend" and others of that class, it is very desirable to restrict them when they become a nuisance.

MR. A. FORREST: But we don't prohibit the "book fiend," the very man we ought to prohibit.

MR. PIESSE: After all, it is only a hardship upon a very few, and they are men of an alien race, who have nothing in common with our own people, and who never intend to settle in the colony. As soon as they make a little money, away they go; but no sooner does one clear out than another comes to take his place. There are other occupations for these men to follow besides hawking. As to their not being physically able to do other work, I think that as a rule they are very able-bodied men, and if they refuse to work, it is because they are too indolent.

MR. MONGER: The motion will have my support. It simply asks for a renewal of their licenses to those who have already possessed a license, and it in no way refers to new arrivals; therefore, as to what the hon. member for the Williams said about one going away and another coming to take his place, this will prevent any new-comer obtaining a license. As to these hawkers injuring legitimate trade, I fail to see that they compete with the legitimate trader at all. These men obtain their wares from the legitimate trader, and distribute them about the country. I do not know that they are of very great use, but they do no

harm. As to intimidating women, it must be exceptionally rare, and possibly the same charge might be made against some white men as well as these colored men.

MR. SOLOMON: I also intend to support the motion. I think the present law is a hardship on men who have been here a considerable time, and who have been earning an honest living by hawking. There are others besides these Indians who carry on that trade, and they ease the storekeepers of a great deal of merchandise that would remain on their shelves from year to year, and they convey their wares to the very doors of the settlers in the outside districts. I do not advocate the issue of any new licenses, but I think those who have already had a license should have their licenses renewed, for another year at all events.

MR. PATERSON: I think it is an insult to country people to say that they are satisfied with any rubbish which, but for these hawkers, would remain on the storekeepers' shelves for years. There is a strong feeling against these men in my own district. They are a perfect pest to the settlers. They think nothing of crossing your paddocks to reach the settlers' houses, and, if you remonstrate with them, they become quite insolent. I do not think it would be any loss to the country if no more licenses were issued to these men, who, as I have said, are a regular nuisance in country places.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I shall certainly support the motion. When the question came before the House last session I was indifferent to it, but, since then, I have read several letters in the papers from country districts stating that these men are a great convenience to people residing in remote places. These colored hawkers, after all, are British subjects, and I do not see why we should legislate against their hawking any more than we should legislate against their keeping a store. It is the only means of subsistence open to them, and why should we deprive them of it? My experience of them is that they are very civil and honest,—quite as much so as many white people are. They travel even as far as the North-West districts, and I never heard of their being a nuisance there, on the settlers' stations.

MR. PEARSE: I know that the action of the House last session has pressed

very hardly upon individuals in my own town,—not Afghans, but very respectable white men. In one case a subscription was got up to fit up the man as a hawker, as the only means of subsistence open to him; but now this man's occupation is gone, and his living taken from him. I shall certainly support the motion.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I could understand this resolution as a matter of principle, but it is only a milk-and-water resolution, practically worth nothing at all, as the hon. member who brought it forward well knows. He proposes to renew these licenses; but we could not possibly do that in the present state of the law. And he only proposes to do it for another year, which does not seem to me to be in accord with some members' idea, that hawking is a legitimate trade. It is a very odd thing that members who reside in the country say that hawking is not desirable, while members who reside in town (who really know nothing about it) say these men should not be interfered with. For many years hawking was prohibited in this colony, as it was found that the hawker was nothing but a sly-grog seller in disguise; and I have yet to learn that he is anything else,—that is, the white hawker. Of late years there has been very little of it, the white hawker having been supplanted by the black hawker, who is a nuisance, not only in the country but also in the town. They are most cheeky rascals. I have had to turn them neck and crop out of my own place. The hon. member does not ask us to repeal the Bill, but to do an impossibility, and that is to renew these licenses, which he knows very well cannot be done. The Act has only been in force a few days, and we do not know yet how it will work. These men have had nine months to prepare themselves and get rid of their wares; and I believe, myself, they have prepared for this contingency, and, if you were to renew their licenses, they would have to turn round and renew their stock. The House ought to decide once for all whether hawking shall be prohibited or not, as in fact it did last session. You cannot have one law for the black hawker and another for the white hawker. Personally I shall support strongly the retention of this Act on the Statute Book, for I fail to see what earthly good hawking

is, in these days of railway communication. Merchants in town may like to get rid of their rubbish and shoot it upon settlers in the country, through these hawkers; but I hope the settlers in the country will not have it.

MR. HARPER: I can only describe this resolution as a bit of what I may call cheap sentiment. There are two parties interested in this question, namely, the hawker and those who support him—that is, the country people. Anyone who knows the feeling of the country settlers on the subject knows that they regard these men as a nuisance and a pest. They not only live on the settlers but they feed on the settlers, and, by intimidation, compel the settlers' women folk to deal with them. Members representing town constituencies, who support this motion, are not subjected to this nuisance, like the country people are. If these men happened to be Chinamen competing with mechanics in the towns, we should hear a great deal about it from those members who are supporting this resolution. I am certain, if we took the opinions of the people who reside in the country districts on this question, we should find nine people out of ten strongly opposed to the hawkers; and I am afraid that this motion is supported by town members to further their political ends, rather than from any feeling that there is any real necessity for these hawkers.

MR. MOLLOY: As a town member, I may say I am not in support of it. I voted for the Bill last session, and I fail to see that it is necessary for us to repeal it. As pointed out by the Attorney General, even if we were willing to do what the hon. member for Albany asks us to do, we could not do it under the law as it stands at present. We do not want this country to be flooded with an alien class of people who are unable to work and to contribute to the wealth and progress of the colony. The legitimate storekeeper is handicapped by high rents and the expense of providing assistants, and he ought to be protected. His goods are well advertised, and country people know where they can get better served than by these disreputable fellows, who make profit out of our settlers and then clear out of the country. These hulking vagabonds, when in town, congregate in some den or other, living in filth; and their sole object

is to amass money, not to invest in the colony but to take it where they came from. There may be one or two exceptions in the case of white hawkers, who are a respectable class of dealer, but even these simply come into competition with legitimate traders.

MR. DEHAMEL: I certainly was surprised to hear the arguments of three of the speakers who spoke in opposition to this motion. The hon. member for Perth calls these Oriental hawkers "hulking vagabonds, living in filth." I deny it. I say they are not hulking vagabonds, neither do they live in filth. The hon. member for the Murray's great argument was that these men were a nuisance because they crossed people's paddocks. I never heard such an argument placed before a responsible House in my life. We are to get rid of hawkers because they are not a desirable class to those who have paddocks! I am afraid the hon. member will find that these words will be used very strongly against him when he comes before his constituents. Then we come to the Attorney General. He tells us some strange things. He says that everybody lives in terror of the colored hawker, and that he is a "cheeky rascal," who ought to be turned out of people's houses neck and crop. I have made inquiries as to these men in various parts of the colony, and I have been told that a more civil and obliging set of men than hawkers, whether white or black, do not exist in Western Australia. Then we have another charge: that they are sly grog sellers. I have inquired into that too, in various parts of the colony, from Geraldton down to the Vasse. Although there may be one or two isolated instances of sly grog selling, yet, taken as a whole, the charge is a gross slander upon an honest set of men. We are also told that this is a milk-and-water-resolution, and that it means nothing. It means this: that it asks this House to allow these unfortunate people who have licenses to exercise their right until this House meets again, when we can deal with the whole question in a calm and deliberate manner, and not rush it through as we did last session.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Not at all. Look at the Minutes.

MR. DEHAMEL: I say the Bill went rapidly through, many members not hav-

ing even read it. The only other argument I have heard is that the Act has only been in force a few days. But are we to wait until these poor people starve, before we come to their assistance? Now is the time to come to their assistance, or never.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You ought to have brought in a Bill if you really wanted to assist them. Why didn't you do that?

Question—put, and, a division being called for, the numbers were:—

Ayes	...	...	9
Noes	...	...	17

Majority against ... 8

AYES.
Mr. Canning
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Monger
Mr. Pearce
Mr. R. F. Sholl
Mr. Solomon
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Traylen
Mr. DeHamel (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Burt
Mr. Darlöt
Sir John Forrest
Mr. Harper
Mr. Hassell
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Loton
Mr. Marmion
Mr. Molloy
Mr. Paterson
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. H. W. Sholl
Mr. Simpson
Mr. Venn
Mr. Clarkson (Teller).

The resolution was therefore negatived.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL: APPROPRIATION BILL, 1893.

The following Message was received from the Legislative Council:—

Mr. Speaker,

"The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has agreed to the undermentioned Bill, without amendment:—A Bill intituled 'An Act to apply a sum out of the Consolidated Revenue to the service of the six months ending the last day of June, 1893, and to appropriate the Supplies granted in this session of Parliament.'

"The Bill is herewith returned.

"GEO. SHENTON,

"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber, Perth, "January 13th, 1893."

TEMPORARY PREVENTION OF SANDALWOOD CUTTING.

The House went into committee for the consideration of the following Message (No. 17) from the Legislative Council:—

"The Legislative Council informs the Legislative Assembly that it has this

"day passed the following resolution:—
"That in the opinion of this House it is
"advisable that the Government should
"prevent the further cutting of any sandalwood in any portion of the colony for
"a period of three years from the expiration of present licenses; and that, in the
"meantime, the Resident Magistrates of
"the various districts of the colony be instructed not to issue further licenses for
"the cutting of the said sandalwood,' and
"presents the same to the Legislative
"Assembly for its concurrence therewith."

MR. SOLOMON: I beg to move that the resolution of the Legislative Council be agreed to. This is a matter of great importance to the colony—a matter that affects one of the staple products of the colony, and an industry which some years ago was one of the chief mainstays of the colony. Years since, vessels used to come here which would never have come here had it not been for the freight offered by sandalwood, which in those days was largely exported, and a source of profit both to the cutter and the exporter. But, I regret to say that for some considerable time past there has been a great falling off in this trade. At the present time the consumption of sandalwood in China, and the demand for it from Western Australia—which is the only country they now get it from—is something like 5,000 tons per annum, and at the present moment they have a stock in hand of something like 30,000 tons; and we know that in this colony, along one line of railway, there is something like 20,000 tons of wood, and amongst it is some of very inferior quality,—I have been told about 40 or 50 per cent. of it. That probably may be attributed to a very great extent to the falling off in the consumption. Years ago the wood was sent to market in a fit condition: clean, nicely dressed, and of good dimensions, but at present every description of wood is sent in, and a great deal of it sent in in small logs, with the sap in it, which, going into the heart of the wood, gives it a very deceitful appearance. Large logs have a small coating of sap, and small ones a thick coating, and it may be that it is in order to evade the Act, against cutting immature wood, that so much wood is sent in in the way it is. I have seen wood come to Fremantle recently which I would never think of sending away some years ago.

At any rate, I think something further should be done to prevent the cutting of immature wood. An Act was passed in 1881 for that purpose, but in that Act there is nothing to define what immature wood meant, nor is there any penalty provided. The Act only consists of one clause, to the effect that sandalwood shall not be cut within certain defined areas. There is no reference whatever to the maturity or immaturity of the wood itself. I do not see how such an Act can be carried out, because it absolutely means nothing, and it has remained a dead letter. Considering the large stock of sandalwood now in the colony, and also in China, and that the present rate of consumption in China is only 4,000 or 5,000 tons a year, it must be obvious to everybody that we should do something to protect this important industry, which ought to be of great value to the colony, and which we may yet be glad to fall back upon hereafter, in the event of other industries failing,—the gold-mining industry for instance—so as to enable us to tide over a period of depression. If this industry were in full swing it would also induce vessels to come here for cargo, and in this way help to make our harbor works reproductive. It has been suggested that licenses to cut this wood should be withheld for a period of three years from the expiration of the present licenses; but I am not at all wedded to the resolution which has been passed in another place, and if any other suggestion can be made to attain the same object, that is, to prevent the cutting of immature wood and to prevent the market being glutted with it, I should be quite willing to consider it. But I do think that something should be done to protect this important industry, and to prevent the killing of the goose that lays this golden egg. It has been suggested as another remedy that any wood found in the possession of any carter or merchant, with the sap on, should be condemned. These and other remedies may commend themselves to members, but the main object is to prevent a valuable industry being ruined, as there is reason to fear it will be, unless something is done to prohibit not only the indiscriminate cutting of the wood but also the indiscriminate exportation of the wood, in the present glutted state of the market. While on this subject I may

be allowed to read a short extract from a letter recently written by a firm of Hong Kong merchants to a leading firm in this colony. The letter is dated the 13th December ultimo, and the writer says: "We are certainly astonished at the long period during which they have not bought a picul, and we must confess that we have never seen such a total stagnancy in the sandalwood market. This seems to indicate that the 'ring' formed here is a comparatively strong one, and, doubtless, they will make a stand against us as long as they possibly can do it. Shanghai reports likewise a very quiet tendency of the market; and, whilst, stocks at that place amount to 16,000 piculs, we have about 30,000 piculs unsold here, with the 'Churchstow' near at hand." Members will therefore see the necessity of doing something in the matter, to prevent a valuable industry being destroyed, and a valuable asset ruined.

MR. TRAYLEN: I think we should do a very wrong thing to agree to the recommendation of the other House in this matter. I have listened attentively to the arguments adduced in favor of it, and they seem to me to point out this: that the proper remedy is in the hands of the buyers here. I thought the hon. member for South Fremantle struck the right note when he said that, some years ago, he would never have thought of sending away the class of wood he had recently seen arrive at Fremantle for shipment. In those days those interested in the sandalwood trade were wise enough to know their own business. I think the present proposal is a considerable reflection upon the present buyers of sandalwood—those holders of thousands of tons that we have heard of. It appears to me most unreasonable that a number of persons should be thrown out of employment merely because some buyers here have overstepped the bounds of wisdom and prudence.

MR. QUINLAN: I am in accord, in a great measure, with the hon. member for Greenough that merchants themselves are to blame for the present state of things. There is not the least doubt that they encourage the sandalwood cutter to cut this immature wood by purchasing it from him, and, in my opinion, we should not protect these merchants simply because they have over-specified in this

article. I look upon this proposal simply as a direct aid to our sandalwood merchants. They have simply stored a lot of wood up in the hope that it would increase in value in China, and, if they have made a mistake, if they have made a bad "spec.," they ought to put up with the results. No doubt the present Act with regard to immature wood is very vague, but I think that a penalty upon merchants who ship wood of less than a certain size would meet the difficulty. The hon. member for South Fremantle referred to a "ring" in China. I have come to the conclusion that there is a "ring" here also, and for that reason I intend to vote against the proposal.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: We all very much regret that there is this stagnation in the sandalwood trade, but I am sorry to say this proposal will not receive my support. I think there is a great deal in the argument that it would throw many men out of employment for some years. In the district I have the honor of representing, several men have lately embarked to a large extent in this industry. Up at the North the wood is naturally of smaller dimensions than the wood down here, but it is very rich in oil, and, by prohibiting the cutting of all sandalwood within the colony, it would interfere with the livelihood of these men, and be a great hardship. If the object of this resolution were simply to prevent the cutting of immature sandalwood, it would receive my support; but it is very difficult to define what is immature wood. Certainly it would not do to define it as wood of a certain diameter, because, as I have already said, the wood in the Northern Districts of the colony is naturally very small wood. If there was a penalty against buyers as well as against the cutters of immature wood, it might go some way to meet the difficulty. I would also confiscate any immature wood found in the possession of a buyer. But any regulation as to the size or diameter of the wood should only apply South of a certain latitude, as it would be most unfair to apply the same regulation to the Northern latitudes, where, as I have said, the wood is by nature small, though very rich in oil.

MR. LOTON: This motion, although it does not directly refer to the large stocks of wood on hand, or to the depre-

ciation in value of the article in the foreign market, evidently aims at remedying these things. We have been told as much by the hon. member for South Fremantle, who virtually said that was the reason why this resolution has been introduced. This state of things is nothing new in the history of the sandalwood trade in this colony. I have had some little experience in this connection myself, and on several occasions, at various intervals, the markets in China have suddenly gone down, and the demand for sandalwood almost ceased. I may say, in reference to the firm with which I was connected for some years, that we have had to hold stocks of from 2,000 to 4,000 tons for one or two years; and the result would be we would cease buying altogether. It seems to me that the present holders are placed somewhat in the same position. If they want to realise to advantage they must wait until the market recovers itself, and cease their operations at this end. Reference has been made to "rings." We live in an age of rings, and combinations, and monopolies; but sometimes those who form these rings lose sight of the fact that it is quite possible that combinations may also be formed in the opposite direction to operate against them. If there has been a sandalwood ring formed here, it is pretty evident there has been something of the same kind going on at the other end; and that is about the present position of affairs. We all admit it is not in the interest of the colony to destroy a valuable product of the soil, or to dispose of it at an unremunerative price; but the question is, how are we to prevent this. It has been suggested that the remedy lies in preventing the cutting of immature wood, and in penalties and confiscation. But it is a very difficult matter to deal with. In the Northern Districts the wood never grows to a large size. So far as the sandalwood tree is concerned, the farther South you go the larger, as a rule, is the tree, and the farther you go North the smaller the tree; and the farther it is grown South the poorer it is in the sandalwood oil of commerce, and the farther you go North the richer it is in that oil. Then again, when you come to deal with the question of immature wood, you must remember that these trees have branches, and in the

case even of mature trees the branches are small. The whole business is surrounded, so far as legislation goes, with a number of difficulties; and if you face the question straight, as a matter of business between buyer and seller and the exporter and the customer at the other end, the trump card after all is in the hands of the purchaser here and the exporter, and not the cutter. If the cutters are told by the buyers, "We are not going to buy any more of your wood," they will soon drop it, and turn their attention to something else. I should be glad to support some resolution to assist to get rid of the present large stocks, and to do something to regulate the supply and demand; but, to do that, it seems to me, would be to deprive a considerable number of other people of their living, or of half their living, which would be a great hardship, especially when the fault is not so much their own, and the object in view being to benefit a combination of people who have been hoarding up stocks and getting all the wood they can into their own hands, with the view of ruling the market of Western Australia against outside buyers. That has been the object, and quite a legitimate one, but if the result has not been as they anticipated, they are simply beaten with their own weapons. There is another combination at the other end who decline to buy, and it is just a question of who will be able to hold out the longest.

MR. CLARKSON: I think it is a waste of time discussing this proposal, for I am sure it will not be generally approved of. It seems to me a curious thing that this subject should have been brought in in another place at the same time as a similar motion was put forward in this House. It seems to my mind as if someone was behind, pulling the string. It is one of the most preposterous proposals to my mind ever made. I might just as well ask the House to agree to a resolution to prohibit the breeding of sheep for three or four years, because the wool market or the mutton market is depressed. Or the farmers might as well ask the Legislature to stop the production of wheat for a few years, because corn is at a very low price. Apart from the difficulty of distinguishing between mature and immature wood, the passing of this resolution would be a

gross hardship upon hundreds of men in this colony, many of whom, of late years—I know it is so in my own district—have purchased horses and wagons to make a living out of this sandalwood trade. This would simply prevent these men from obtaining an honest living for the next three years. Buyers of sandalwood have the whole thing in their own hands. If they refuse to buy a certain class of wood, there will be none cut. I really look upon the resolution as a joke more than anything else. To bring such a motion before any body of sensible men and expect it to pass, seems to me ridiculous in the extreme.

MR. LEFROY: If this had been a Bill that was before the House I should be inclined to move that it be read this day six months, and I think this resolution should be treated in the same way. It is a question of interfering with the legitimate calling of a large number of people in the country, and of rushing the question through the House when the business of the session is all but concluded, and we are awaiting our dismissal. The object of the motion, on the face of it, would appear to be to stop the cutting of immature wood, which is quite a legitimate object; but we have been told that the main object is to protect the holders of large stocks, which is another question altogether. The matter is one that requires very careful consideration, and at present I cannot see a way out of it, without stopping the cutting of all sandalwood throughout the colony. The subject is one that should not be rushed through the House at this stage of the session; it is one that should receive our most mature consideration before we attempt to legislate on it.

MR. THROSSELL: We are asked by this resolution to prevent the cutting of all sandalwood, for the term of three years, irrespective of size or quality, and we are told, as a reason for doing so, that there are immense stocks on hand. Would it not be well, before we are called upon to deal with this question, to find out the exact quantity of wood ready for shipment, and who are the owners of that wood? Whether there are three, or five, or a hundred owners, we are asked at one swoop to disorganise the whole trade of the colony and to bring a whole army of

workmen to a standstill, and what for? So that no sandalwood shall be cut for the next three years, until the present three, five, or ten holders shall have an opportunity of exporting their stocks, and be free to begin again. The remedy to my mind is a very simple one. We have been told in another place that the line from York to Albany is lined with immature sandalwood; and I believe it is the case. But how comes that wood there? Had there been no buyers there would have been no cutters, and the very people who now seek the benefit of this motion are the ones who are responsible for there being so much immature wood cut and lying on their hands. The price offered is so many logs to the ton, and in this way the scale of charges is regulated, and it rests entirely with the buyers to say what is the maximum number of logs to the ton they are prepared to purchase. I think this is a commercial question that should have been threshed out by the Chamber of Commerce, and that before this House should be asked to deal with it we should have proper representations made and the fullest information given as to the cause of the present state of things in connection with this sandalwood industry. I think we should have then seen that those connected with the trade, those who are now asking this House to come to their assistance, have for some years past been offering a premium for cutting immature trees. We hear nothing of the large amounts made some few years ago by these large dealers in sandalwood. As much as £10,000, £17,000, and £20,000 have been made in a few brief months. And what was the result? These men sent out agents scouring the whole country, buying up all they came across, and bidding all sorts of prices for this sandalwood, and the consequence is they have now huge stacks of immature wood scattered all over the country, and particularly along the railway line between York and Albany. Yet these men now come to this House and ask us to afford them this measure of relief, to stop any further cutting of sandalwood until they have an opportunity of getting rid of their present stocks at fair prices. Are we to give the same measure of relief to the man who overstocks himself with wheat or any other commodity? If not, why should we do so in the case of those

who, in their eagerness for gain, have overstocked themselves with sandalwood? What would be said if the farmers, finding the price of wheat low, and a glutted market, came to this House and asked us to prohibit the growing of wheat for the next three years? If those who deal in sandalwood or any other article of commerce act contrary to sound commercial principles, they must put up with it. What is the remedy? Let merchants combine together, and agree that for three or five years—or for all time, if you like—they will purchase no wood that runs more than 40 logs to the ton, instead of buying wood that runs as much as 180 logs and up to 300 logs to the ton. They will probably say: "If we do that, there will be the small men, who will ignore the 'rule.'" I say, let the Government take proper steps to protect the trade. When the wood reaches the buyer's yard, or merchant's yard, or the port of shipment, let the police be authorised to walk into anyone's yard, and seize any wood that is of smaller dimensions. Could that be done to-day, and confiscation follow, beginning at York—not Northam, fortunately—and going away to Albany, I venture to say that the majority of the wood now lying between these two places would be confiscated. If we pass this resolution we shall be inflicting a hardship upon scores of hardworking men; and, at the end of March, when the Chinese festivities are over, we shall probably find a rise in sandalwood, and we shall have these men who have large stocks available for shipment, making their thousands by their monopoly of this wood, while the legitimate traders of the colony were not allowed to touch it. I have received very strong representations on this subject from those who are engaged in this industry. Why should we prevent the cutting of sandalwood in such country as that along the Yilgarn line, and leave the valuable matured wood to the mercy of bush fires? Why should not the men who are living or working along that line be allowed to utilise their time in this way, as others have done, until the good time for this commodity sets in again, instead of playing into the hands of monopolists? I am very pleased to find the good sense of members opposed to this motion. I can only say that a more selfish

measure was never brought before this House.

MR. TRAYLEN: In order to crystallise the matter, and to have something before the House, I beg to move, "That this committee does not agree with the resolution of the Legislative Council contained in the Council's Message No. 17."

MR. MONGER: I was in hopes that there would be no necessity for me to speak upon this subject, for to a great extent I am personally interested in it; but when I find that other gentlemen, such as the hon. member for Northam, who also has an interest in the question, though perhaps on a somewhat smaller scale, availing himself of the privileges of this House to speak in opposition to the proposition before us, I consider that I am equally within the privilege allowed me when speaking in support of the motion. To me, the great point that appears to have escaped previous speakers is the fact that we have only an outside market for this wood to the extent of 6,000 tons annually, while it is an acknowledged fact that at the present moment we have stocks on hand, available for shipment at a moment's notice, amounting at the very lowest estimate to 20,000 tons.

MR. LOTON: Why accumulate a three years' supply when there is virtually no necessity for it?

MR. MONGER: The only answer to that is that the stuff poured in, and there was the necessity for someone to take it, to prevent a reduction in price, arising from continuous and indiscriminate shipping. If it had not been for the fact that some few firms in the colony combined together to ensure regular shipments of this article, I am safe in saying that, to-day, instead of seeing a market for sandalwood at from £11 to £12 we should have a market in China worth about £5. Only in August, 1890, the highest price obtainable for sandalwood in China was only £7 per ton, f.o.b. ship at Albany or Fremantle. With a price like that staring us in the face it was necessary that someone should take the matter in hand, and consequently some of our principal firms combined with the object of regulating shipments in the future. We have done so, and have only shipped such quantities to China as the market could consume. But, unfortunately, some

Chinamen at the other end have lately combined against us, and have come to the conclusion to try to starve us out. If it had not been in the interests of Western Australia for us to have adopted the course we did, we should find Chinamen in Hong Kong and Shanghai able to purchase the wood at £7 per ton, whereas by this combination among some of our own principal firms we were able at all events to command double that price. Taking this into consideration, I ask are not these people worthy of some consideration from the country? We are told that this House is not going to support a party of monopolists. We do not come here to ask the House or the Government to support any monopoly, nor do we come here to ask the Government to give us any aid, nor do we come here to ask the Government to make us any remission, nor do we come here to ask the Government to advance us any money; we come here to ask them to protect a national industry, in order that the colony may reap the full advantage of an article which for many years has been one of its most valuable exports. The hon. member for Northam dealt at some considerable length on this supposed monopoly and supposed "ring," but I can answer the hon. member by saying that he himself has been very glad to avail himself of the market which these supposed monopolists have created for his benefit and the benefit of a few others. This same gentleman, only a few months ago, was the holder of the enormous quantity of about 100 tons—100 tons out of a total stock of close upon 25,000 tons. He took a trip to Yilgarn, and, during his stay there, the mere fact of being possessed of this enormous stock so weighed upon his mind that he was not able to rest until he got the wires to work, and sought to dispose of this tremendous quantity of wood to one of those very firms whom he now accuses of forming a ring, and asking the Government to assist a monopoly. He succeeded in his endeavors and got rid of his wood, and, since then, he has perhaps accumulated a slightly larger quantity. When he comes before this House, and, in his virtuous indignation talks about this supposed monopoly and this request on the part of these monopolists for the Government to come to their assistance, I think the hon. member might

have bottled up his indignation, for I believe it must be acknowledged by most independent members of this House that this resolution is one which, at all events, should commend itself to some consideration at the hands of the Government of the colony. If the Government are unable to comply with this request in its entirety, it might, perhaps, suit them during the recess to inquire into the condition of this sandalwood trade, and when this House meets again, it may perhaps be within their power to introduce some short Bill which will give, at all events, better control over the export of this valuable commodity. There are other matters that have to be taken into consideration in connection with this sandalwood trade, and one of the most important is that of the silver question. This, no doubt, is a question that very few members have given any attention to; but I may tell them that the mere fact of a decline of 1d. an ounce in silver means a fall of 10s. a ton in sandalwood. Therefore it is not only the drawback of a low market in China that we have to contend with; we have also to contend with the depreciation in the value of silver. If the Government could only see their way to comply with this resolution, which has been agreed to in another place, it would have the effect of placing present holders of sandalwood—and I believe the hon. member for Northam is amongst that number—in such a position that they could command a corresponding increase in the price of the wood in China so as to make up for any depreciation in the value of silver that might take place. These, of course, are matters that must be left entirely to the Government. Possibly, after the expressions of opinion which have been elicited in the course of this debate, the Government may not see their way clear to assent to this proposal; in that case I only ask them to give the whole matter their careful consideration during the recess; and, if the Premier in his wisdom can introduce some measure to effectually deal with the exportation of this valuable product he will confer a boon upon the people of this colony. I must say I was somewhat surprised to hear the hon. member for Northam state that such a proposal as this would have the effect of throwing a number of people out of employment. It was only a few

months ago that we were informed that the district which he represents was noted mainly for its agriculture, and that the men in that locality paid particular attention to that industry, to the exclusion of everything else. But now, when this question of sandalwood cutting comes before the House, we are told that if this resolution is carried into effect it will ruin many of the poor unfortunate teamsters and farmers in and about Northam, who, it appears, are engaged not in agriculture, but in carting to the Yilgarn goldfields, and in carting back sandalwood. I should like to ask him if he could name one single instance in his district where a sandalwood carter has made any money, and whether it is not a fact that those who occupy respectable and decent positions in his town and district are those who have confined their operations entirely to agriculture? I should like to read, for the edification of the hon. member, an extract from a letter which I have received from a prominent resident in Northam referring to this question. The writer says: "I am of opinion that the farmers would be very much better off, in the long run, if they stayed at home and improved their farms. This sandalwood cutting and carting to the goldfields is bad. The farmers are led away with the idea of getting a little more ready money,—and mighty little of that they get. In the first place, they have, as a rule, to run into debt for fresh horses, and then there is the time wasted on the road, and in the town, where they must spend money; whereas, if they stayed at home, and improved their farms, little by little, and cleared more land, the extra crops they would get would put them in a very much better position than the few pounds they receive for sandalwood. When the land is once cleared it is always a source of income, and the farmer can go along, after a little, quite free of debt. Of course sandalwood is good for the storekeepers; they get a good profit both ways." That is the opinion of one of the prominent residents of Northam, yet the hon. member for the district comes here and tells us that if this resolution is carried it will be the ruin of many men, because it will put an end to this sandalwood carting. As to the estimated quantity of

sandalwood lying along the course of the Yilgarn Railway, and the employment it is giving to carters and others, I believe it is a fact that up to within the last two or three months there were a number of men engaged in destroying this valuable industry; but, owing to the low prices that have recently prevailed, these men found it almost impossible to eke out a miserable existence, and in nearly all cases they retired. I think it must be admitted by everyone that in so doing they conferred a greater boon upon the country, and more particularly upon that portion of the country in which they were engaged. These men who occupy their time in cutting and carting sandalwood are the sons of farmers, and I think all will admit it is in the interests of the country generally, that, as far as possible, these men should be getting their living from the soil, instead of applying their energies to the ruining of a valuable export. If the men who are engaged in cutting and carting sandalwood were no longer able to make a decent living out of it, they would be content to reside on their farms and cultivate their lands, and, by so doing, make a very comfortable living for themselves, besides doing a considerable amount of good to the colony. We have heard a great deal during the present session of the large amount of money sent out of the colony during the last 12 or 18 months for the purpose of bringing in chaff, flour, corn, and cereals of all kinds, which we all admit might well be grown and produced in the colony. During the present session, too, the Premier submitted to us his noted Homesteads Bill, which had for its object the settlement of the soil. I maintain that to prohibit the cutting and carting of sandalwood for a few years would do more towards increasing the cultivation of the soil than any other measure that could be introduced for the consideration of Parliament. We all know the argument used by the Premier when he introduced his Homesteads Bill; we all know the figures he placed before us when the question was being considered by this House, and how he pointed out to us that something like £200,000 per annum was going out of the colony for importing agricultural produce. I contend that if these men who are engaged in cutting and carting sandalwood

were all settled upon the soil and cultivating it, there would be no necessity for the Premier to bring forward any measure such as the Homesteads Bill, because the men who are at present engaged in this sandalwood business number as many as those which the Premier expected to introduce under the Bill which received so much consideration in this House. If I remember correctly, he only anticipated advancing something like £40,000 to carry out his scheme. That would only settle some couple of hundred men upon the soil, and it would be new soil that they would have to settle upon. I think we may, at the very lowest, estimate that there are more than 200 men engaged in this sandalwood business, and, if we could make these 200 men settle on their own farms, or even to take up fresh land, we would be carrying out the Premier's scheme, without putting the colony to the expense of advancing that large amount of money which the Premier wished to place at the disposal of new-comers to carry out his Homesteads Bill. We must also take into consideration that when this Yilgarn Railway is completed, it will be necessary to find some traffic to keep the line going, and to meet the expense of the upkeep of the permanent way, and the numerous other expenses which we shall find when once railway communication is established. So far as I can gather, and I think so far as any member can ascertain, the only traffic that the Yilgarn Railway will have to depend upon for its maintenance—with the exception of a few passengers to the gold-fields, and a few tons of machinery occasionally, and the small quantity of stores required to keep the miners engaged at Southern Cross alive—the only return traffic to be relied on is this sandalwood; and, if we are going to allow this sandalwood to be destroyed before the line is completed, what return are we to expect from this great and costly undertaking? We are going to spend something like a quarter of a million in constructing this line of railway, and, with the exception of sandalwood, the only thing to bring back will be perhaps a few bales of wool from the nearest settlers.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): And the gold.

MR. MONGER: It will not take many trains in the year to bring back all the

gold that will be found at Southern Cross, and if we depended upon the transport of gold alone to make this railway pay, I am afraid that the Commissioner of Railways would have to ask for a considerable amount of money every year to meet the deficiency in the working expenses. Apart from the fact that there may be a few passengers to be carried to and fro, and a little settlement on the line, we have absolutely nothing we can expect to contribute towards defraying these working expenses, except sandalwood. Therefore I consider it is in the interest of the country generally—and I have no doubt the Premier will see the desirability and the advisability of it—that this sandalwood should not now be destroyed, but kept in reserve, so as to provide some back traffic, to go towards the upkeep of this railway. We have also to look at the fact that we are about to spend a large amount of money upon a railway from Geraldton to Mullewa, and we are told that there is a fair quantity of sandalwood in that locality. Is it not to the advantage of the country generally that this should be preserved until that line is completed, so that it may be brought down by the railway? The cutter would receive a much higher price for his sandalwood at Mullewa than he would to-day at Geraldton. It appears to me, therefore, that it is not only to the interest of the Government to keep this product back to feed their new railways; it would also be to the interest of the settler, and of the cutter and the carter, and of all engaged in the industry, to have this temporary restriction upon the cutting of sandalwood carried into effect. In the course of two or three years' time, when the Crown Lands of the colony are again thrown open for the axeman to hew down sandalwood, he will be able to obtain a much higher price for his labor than he is able to obtain to-day; and, in the meantime, he can rely upon a very fair living from the land he already holds. As far as I can judge from the correspondence that has recently taken place in the leading newspapers of the colony, the only opposition that has been brought to bear against the arguments used by those papers in support of this proposal has emanated from Northam and Newcastle. The argument used by the writers in support of their opposi-

tion is simply to the effect that if such a measure were adopted it would mean the ruin of the few teamsters and carters employed in the trade. Before Yilgarn was started, the men engaged in getting sandalwood were content to go as far as 120 or 130 miles to bring it in, and to sell it at £5 or £6 a ton, and manage to make a little money. To-day, since the starting of the Yilgarn goldfield, the price for carting is as high as £24, and even £30, per ton; and I am perfectly safe in saying that none of those engaged in carting have made anything out of it. I do not know how it is; still the fact remains that the more money these unfortunate teamsters put into their teams and their horses the less money they appear to take out of them. It is not my wish to unnecessarily detain this committee, but I would again ask the Government, if they do not see their way clear to support this motion, to at all events promise that during the recess they will give the matter their serious consideration; and when next this House meets, I trust that the hon the Premier will have thought out some scheme which may not only assist those who at present hold large stocks but also others who are engaged in the industry, and who, if such a proposal as that now before the House were carried into effect, would have to depend entirely upon their farms for their future living. I commend the subject to the consideration of the Government. No doubt, when the Premier gives us his views on the question, he will do so from an entirely disinterested standpoint, and having only the best interests of the colony in view.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I see my friend the Attorney General has just come in. I intended that he should reply on behalf of the Government to the observations of the supporters of this proposal, but, as I have risen, I will say a few words. The Government are unable to agree to the Message sent down to us by the Legislative Council, and for this reason: it seems to us that as this sandalwood industry, which is an important one to the colony, is regulated, as regards the cutting of the wood, by the Land Regulations of the colony, there is no sufficient reason shown why the Government should interfere with persons who desire to embark upon the cutting of the wood, so

long as they are not doing any damage to the industry. I have not heard any arguments to-day used against the advisability of cutting matured wood. If there is matured sandalwood in the bush, I see no reason why it should not be cut down, and brought in, and placed ready for exportation when it is considered desirable or expedient to do so. As regards the immature wood, of course it is most undesirable it should be cut down at all; but there is an Act already in force dealing with this matter, though I do not think it is a very good one. It only provides that within certain declared areas the cutting of sandalwood shall be altogether prohibited. The Government have taken some action with regard to this matter. A very considerable area of country has been reserved and declared within which no sandalwood shall be cut. I am quite willing to believe, however—in fact, it is most probable—that a great deal of cutting goes on within that area, for various reasons. One reason, probably, is that the Government have not taken as active steps as they might have done to prohibit it; but another reason, no doubt, has been that there is always a great deal of personal interest and personal gain involved, as regards those who are engaged in the industry. But I am quite willing to promise this House that some more active measures than have been taken hitherto will be taken by the Government to see that no sandalwood at all shall be cut within the areas that are declared closed under the Act now in force. I think I may go further and say, if there are any parts of the colony which are denuded of sandalwood (with the exception of young timber), if proper representations are made to the Government as to the boundaries of those parts, we will be quite willing also to close those areas, so that no wood at all shall be cut upon them. I must say that I agree with a great deal that fell from the hon. member for Newcastle in dealing with this question. It appears to me that those who embark in this sandalwood industry are in no different position than those who are engaged in other industries. The remedy is in their own hands. If it does not suit the buyers to purchase, I do not see how the cutters are likely to go on cutting. It has been said that a great deal of immature wood is brought into the

market, and no doubt it is so. But there is a difficulty in deciding whether the wood is that of an immature tree or the branch of a matured tree. The dimensions of the wood afford no safe guide. The present Act dealing with the question is not at all a good one; it wants adding to and perfecting, and we are quite prepared to give our attention to it during the recess, and see how far we can preserve this valuable industry—for it has been a valuable industry, and I hope it may be so for many years to come. But I am not prepared at the present time—I regret it, for I can appreciate the position of these large holders—to altogether prohibit the cutting of sandalwood during the next three years, nor during another year, to enable these holders to get rid of their stocks. It seems to me that is not a line which any Government could act upon. If persons of enterprise like to accumulate large quantities of wood for shipment, I cannot see how the country suffers in any way, unless they force it upon the market at a price that will not pay,—which is not likely. I admit that the better price we get for our sandalwood the better for the colony, but I do not think the Government should interfere in the way it is here suggested. After all, I do not know that sandalwood deteriorates greatly by being kept for a few years, and, for that reason, I do not think it is reasonable to ask the Government to support this resolution, in the shape it is now before the House. No doubt it would be a good thing for the country to get a good price for its wood; on the other hand, why should we create a monopoly for the present holders? I do not feel that in the interests of the country we should be justified in doing that; therefore, I am sorry to say, if this question goes to a division, the Government will be bound to oppose the resolution.

MR. PIESSE: After the remarks of the Premier, it is unnecessary for me to say much, but I may say that I consider the present Act is certainly a very futile one. As far back as 1881 a proclamation was issued declaring certain areas closed against cutting sandalwood for three years, but, after the lapse of that period, cutting was allowed to go on just in the same way as before, and the consequence was that all the good effect of the closed period was destroyed. Young trees were

cut down in the most reckless way, and no doubt a great deal of the trouble now felt was brought about by this immature wood being sent to market. In 1882 another enactment was made making it penal to cut any live or growing sandalwood; but that law has been inoperative, owing to its never being enforced. We know there is an immense difficulty in carrying out laws of this kind in scattered districts without police supervision; in fact, it would take a whole army of policemen to ensure the strict observance of the law. I think the only practical remedy to protect this valuable wood would be to prohibit the issue of licenses at all within a declared area. If you allow men to take the large wood they will take the small wood as well, and clear the whole country. Something should certainly be done to stop the ruthless destruction of this very valuable timber, apart from the expediency of doing anything to assist the large holders of wood to get rid of their stocks at a fair price. That is not the question we have to consider in my opinion. We do not come here to assist people who choose to embark in such speculations in the hope of making large profits for themselves. Our object should be the protection of an industry which is one of the most valuable that the colony possesses. We talk about our goldfields and other industries as being among the most important of the colony's resources, but they sink into insignificance compared with this sandalwood industry. If we turn to our export returns we shall find that we have sent away over £90,000 worth of sandalwood in one year, and the average value of this export has been about £60,000 a year for many years. I hope the Government, during the recess, will consider the question of introducing some measure for the protection of this industry. No doubt if the Chamber of Commerce were approached on the subject, they might be induced to bring their experience to bear in assisting the Government in this direction, by suggesting the number of logs that should go to the ton to constitute matured wood, and that no other wood should be allowed to be brought into the market. Possibly if this were done, and the regulations as to cutting were strictly enforced, we might bring about the desired result. I also think it is necessary that the closed area

should be extended, which I believe would have a beneficial result; and, in order to bring the matter to a point, I now beg to move the following amendment: "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable, with a view to prevent the cutting of immature sandalwood, that immediate steps be taken by the Government to further extend the area within which no sandalwood shall be cut for a period of three years, such extension to be 40 miles East, and parallel to the present boundary of the prohibited area now declared; also, that no licenses for cutting sandalwood shall be issued for operation within such declared area."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I should like to point out that if this amendment is passed we should have to appoint a committee of this House to draw up our reasons for not agreeing with the resolution of the other House and passing another resolution. The other House would then have to consider this new resolution of ours, and possibly they might not concur in it, and the whole thing would lapse; or they might make some amendment in this resolution and ask our concurrence in it, and the thing might go on indefinitely. I would suggest that, after the debate that has now taken place, the same purpose would be served without asking the House to pass this amendment. It is merely an instruction to the Government during the recess to look into the subject. That will be done without the necessity of passing this resolution, and, under the circumstances, I would suggest that the hon. member should withdraw it, and let us send forward the resolution of the hon. member for the Greenough that we do not concur with the proposal of the other House. The Government will look into the matter, and most probably prepare a measure dealing with the subject.

MR. PIESSE: After the remarks of the Attorney General, and as the time is very limited, and the Government promising to deal with the subject, I have no objection to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question put—That the Committee does not concur with the Resolution of the Legislative Council.

Agreed to, on the voices.

Resolution reported to the House, and the report adopted.

Ordered — That a Message be transmitted to the Legislative Council, informing them that the Assembly does not concur with the resolution contained in their Message No. 17.

MIDLAND RAILWAY LOAN BILL:
MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The following Message was received from the Legislative Council:—

“Mr. Speaker,

“The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has agreed to the undermentioned Bill, without amendment:—A Bill intituled ‘An Act to authorise the Colonial Treasurer to guarantee the payment of a Loan to be raised by the Midland Railway Company of Western Australia, Limited, for the purpose of completing a line of Railway from Guildford to Walkaway, on the Greenough Flats.’

“GEO. SHENTON,

“President.

*“Legislative Council Chamber, Perth,
“13th January, 1893.”*

MESSAGE FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL: CONCURRENCE IN LOAN ESTIMATES.

The following Message was received from the Legislative Council:—

“Mr. Speaker,

“With reference to Message No. 29 of the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Council informs the Legislative Assembly that it has this day concurred in the expenditure of Loan Moneys as shown by the ‘Estimates of Expenditure of the Government of Western Australia from Loan Accounts for the six months ending 30th June, 1893.’

“GEO. SHENTON,

“President.

*“Legislative Council Chamber, Perth,
“13th January, 1893.”*

COMMISSION TO INQUIRE INTO THE WORKING OF THE TARIFF ACT.

On the Order of the Day for the consideration of the Petition for the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the working of the Tariff Act,

MR. SIMPSON said: I was requested by certain gentlemen interested in this

matter to present this petition to the House. I did so, and the House was good enough to order that it should be received. I have since learned that questions of this nature, affecting the tariff of the colony, are invariably initiated by the Government, and I am not sure whether the Government are likely to accede to the request of these petitioners. But I should like to point out what is a fairly current opinion—that there are numerous anomalies in the present tariff, many of them being very absurd, and many of them militating seriously against the success of some of our local industries. I do not think anyone can say that our present tariff is established on anything like a scientific basis. I am not speaking with reference to any particular fiscal policy, but with regard to the incidence of the existing tariff. I am informed on good authority that manufactured articles are admitted into the colony at less duty than the raw material of which they are made up. This is an injustice which is felt severely by manufacturers here, and I think I may say that there is a general feeling in favor of these matters being placed on a more satisfactory footing, and that some (if not all) of the most harmful anomalies of the present tariff should be removed. I think this is desirable both in the interests of the manufacturer and of the general public.

MR. SPEAKER: Then the hon. member does not make any motion?

MR. SIMPSON: I beg to move, “That a Commission be appointed to inquire into the working of the Tariff Act.”

MR. SOLOMON: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion. There is no doubt there are a great many anomalies in the present Tariff Act, and there can be no harm in appointing a Commission to revise it, and to report their conclusions and recommendations to this House. Of course the object in view is to encourage local industries, and a most laudable object it is. At present a large amount—I may say nearly the whole—of our money, both from current revenue and loan, is sent out of the colony as fast as it is collected. This money goes out of the laborer’s pocket into that of the merchant’s, and from the merchant it goes to Europe or the other colonies for supplies; whereas, if we had

manufacturing industries of our own, instead of our money taking the course I have indicated, it would be distributed among our own people, and kept circulating in the colony, from hand to hand. Although there is just now a large expenditure of loan moneys going on, it is an undoubted fact that commercial depression was never worse than it is at the present time; and I do not know what is the cause of it, unless it is that the whole of this loan money is going out of the country instead of circulating within it. I hope the Government will offer no objection to the appointment of this Commission.

MR. QUINLAN: I am entirely in accord with the motion before the House. I have had this question of the Tariff before my mind for a considerable time, and I think sufficient has been said to warrant the Government in taking some steps in the direction indicated. In the appointment of this Commission, I would suggest that persons representing the various trades and callings interested should be appointed on the Commission, and I feel sure the results would be beneficial in every respect. The colony would not suffer in revenue, because I take it that if the duties were reduced in some instances they would be increased in other directions.

MR. PEARSE: I also shall support the resolution. I think it is very desirable indeed that a Commission should be appointed for the purpose of revising the present Tariff, which is full of anomalies. No doubt, if a Commission were appointed during the recess, it would be able to do a great deal of good in pointing out how these anomalies might be remedied.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): In the absence of the Premier, I should like to say, in the first place, that I am not sure whether this House has the power to appoint a Commission; I think it is for the Government to do so, and that it is not within the province or the functions of Parliament to appoint a Commission.

THE SPEAKER: That is not the motion that has been made here. That is the prayer of the petition, but the motion before the House is that a Commission be appointed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Of course the House may ask the Government to appoint a Commission; but I would point out that if this Commission is appointed, and we put one of each trade upon it, as suggested by one hon. member, it will be a certain way of having no decision at all, for each trade will naturally want to protect itself. I submit, humbly, that this House should not suggest that the Government should place the Tariff in the hands of a Commission. The Tariff of the country must be dealt with by the Government of the country, on its own responsibility. It is a very serious responsibility and a very difficult question to deal with, and one that has put out of office more Governments than any other question. Possibly among the members of the Cabinet themselves there may be wide differences of opinion on this subject. I am a rank freetrader myself, and, so far as I am concerned, I am not going to protect what are called native industries in the way here proposed. Of course there are anomalies to be redressed, and the sooner they are redressed the better. I cannot make any promise on behalf of the Government beyond that the question will be considered, and that sooner or later we hope to be able to deal with it. But on what footing it is to be dealt with, whether on a Freetrade basis or on a Protection basis, is a question that has yet to be considered. Most probably, the attention of the Government having been called to the matter, it will consider it during the recess; but, at the present moment, the Government cannot agree to the appointment of a Commission for the purpose of dealing with the subject.

MR. SIMPSON: I do not think the petitioners had any idea of trying to override the Government in this matter; their desire was simply to draw attention to certain anomalies in the Tariff, and I may say absurdities. No doubt it is distinctly a matter for the Government to deal with, this question of the Tariff; but if a Commission were appointed, it would be able to collect evidence, which I should say could not fail to be of use to the Government in adjusting the present Tariff. As to what action should be taken upon the evidence collected, that of course would be for the Government to decide.

Question put—That a Commission be appointed—and, a division being called for, the numbers were:—

Ayes	...	...	14
Noes	...	...	10

Majority for ... 4

AYES.
 Mr. Canning
 Mr. DeHamel
 Mr. Lefroy
 Mr. Leton
 Mr. Molloy
 Mr. Monger
 Mr. Pearce
 Mr. Phillips
 Mr. Fiesse
 Mr. Quinlan
 Mr. Solomon
 Mr. Throssell
 Mr. Traylen
 Mr. Simpson (Teller).

NOES.
 Mr. Burt
 Mr. Darlôt
 Sir John Forrest
 Mr. A. Forrest
 Mr. Harper
 Mr. Paterson
 Mr. R. F. Sholl
 Mr. H. W. Sholl
 Mr. Venn
 Mr. Hassell (Teller).

Question—put and passed.

OPENING OF ASSEMBLY REFRESHMENT ROOMS DURING THE RECESS.

Mr. HARPER: I beg to move, with leave, without notice, "That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the Refreshment Rooms of this Assembly be kept open during the recess of Parliament." I think the motion will commend itself to all members, for I am sure it will be a great convenience to members, and especially to country members, if these Refreshment Rooms are kept open during the recess.

Motion—put and passed.

PROROGATION.

A Message having been delivered to Mr. Speaker by the Usher of the Legislative Council, stating that His Excellency the Governor desired the immediate attendance of the members of the Assembly in that Chamber, Mr. Speaker and hon. members proceeded there; when His Excellency, having given the Royal Assent

to a number of Bills, was pleased to make a Speech to both Houses of Parliament, as follows:—

"MR. PRESIDENT AND HONORABLE
 "GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE
 "COUNCIL,—

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
 "LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"The work of the session having been
 "completed, I have much pleasure in re-
 "leasing you from your arduous duties.

"2. The several Bills which have been
 "passed, many of them of pressing
 "urgency, cannot fail to be of much value
 "to the community.

"3. In regard to the Bill to amend the
 "Constitution Act, and the Homesteads
 "Bill, which have not become law, my
 "Ministers hope and believe that, on
 "further consideration, these important
 "measures will meet with the approval
 "and support of both Houses of the
 "Legislature.

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
 "LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"4. I thank you for the liberal Sup-
 "plies you have granted for the use of the
 "Public Service, including as they do,
 "provision for many works of much im-
 "portance to the colony.

"MR. PRESIDENT AND HONORABLE
 "GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE
 "COUNCIL,—

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
 "LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"5. The Resolutions you have agreed
 "to in regard to the Midland Railway
 "should ensure its speedy completion,
 "and I hope no further difficulties will
 "arise in connection with this important
 "work.

"I now prorogue Parliament till Wed-
 "nesday, the 26th April."

The session then closed.