

he would refrain from moving an amendment.

THE PREMIER: Let the hon. member state a case privately.

MR. H. BROWN: The same clauses would be found in the Roads Act. This was one of the necessary clauses in the Bill. The hon. member (Mr. Holman) was advocating the cause of the landowner. The Premier would be wrong in promising to amend this clause.

MR. FREBBER: It was necessary to provide that where lands were subdivided, roads already surveyed should be carried through the new subdivision. In and around Perth private estates were so awkwardly subdivided that occupiers of land in divisions previously made had no access to neighbouring roads. The council should have power to prevent this. The section in the existing Act seemed to give that power, but the court had otherwise decided.

THE PREMIER: Latitude must be given in a matter of this kind. If we insisted on the prolongation of existing streets, there might be a case where the boundary of the lot being subdivided was directly opposite the existing street, so that to prolong the existing street would mean that there would be such a narrow strip between the street thus formed and the boundary of the lot, that it would be absolutely useless. Therefore discrimination must be left to the local body. If the hon. member and the member for Perth would consult him in regard to the difficulties, he would endeavour to meet their wishes.

MR. HOLMAN: Instead of our towns and cities being properly laid out, they were more like Chinese houses. The goldfields towns were better laid out than the cities. The streets in the large coastal towns were a disgrace to the State in regard to the way they were laid out, yet we proposed to continue the system. We should not do so. We should prevent a repetition of the mistakes of the past. The time would come in Perth and Fremantle when it would be necessary to take over many of the streets and re-form them so as to give a better appearance to the towns.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 487 to end—agreed to.

Schedules (29), Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 12:30 o'clock (midnight), until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 23rd October, 1906.

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THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, Report of the Surveyor General for the year 1905. 2, The Explosives Act 1895, Regulations for storage of explosives at Woodman's Point Reserve.

QUESTION—LAND DIVISIONS, HOW ALTERED.

SIR. E. H. WITTENOOM asked the Colonial Secretary (without notice): Will he have some plans or maps exhibited in the Chamber showing the amended boundaries of the different divisions under Clause 26 of the Bill to farther amend the Land Act of 1898?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Yes; I will have plans placed in the Chamber showing the amended divisions.

QUESTION—COOLGARDIE WATER SCHEME, PARTICULARS.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What was the amount paid by the Railway Department for water used from the Coolgardie Water Scheme for the 12 months ending 31st June, 1905? 2, What was the amount paid for water consumed by the Railway Department for that section between Northam and the Eastern Goldfields for the 12 months previous to the opening of the Coolgardie Water Scheme to Southern Cross? 3, What was the amount paid for water consumed by the Railway Department for that section between Northam and the Eastern Goldfields for the 12 months previous to the opening of the Coolgardie Water Scheme to Cunderdin?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, £20,263 3s. 9d. 2 (a.) Water purchased, £25,012 6s. 9d.; (b.) Water obtained from dams, cost of pumping (wages, stores, and fuel) and caretaker's wages, £2,062 13s. 6d.—£27,075 0s. 3d. 3 (a.) Water purchased, £32,333 12s. 8d.; (b.) Water obtained from dams, £2,633 14s. 3d.—£34,967 6s. 11d. The section referred to in Nos. 2 and 3 is Northam to Kalgoorlie inclusive.

MOTION—RAILWAY TICKETS TO GOLDFIELDS.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE moved for a Return showing the number of tickets issued daily at Perth and Fremantle to stations beyond Parker's Road, on the Eastern Goldfields line, for the month of September; and also a Return showing the cost of running a train to Cunderdin. The object was to obtain some information regarding the number of travellers who left Perth on Saturday evenings. He felt sure the return would show that the Saturday train so far as the goldfields were concerned was very little used. The return would not be expensive, as all tickets issued were, he believed, entered in a day-book at the railway station.

Question passed.

BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and returned to the Legislative Assembly with amendments.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING MOVED.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. C. A. Piessé) in moving the second reading said: It falls to my lot to move the second reading of this Bill, and I need hardly remind members that the subject to deal with is one very interesting to me, and indeed one of great importance to this or any State. I do not purpose travelling over ground covered by the Premier when introducing this measure in another place; but I would like to draw attention to one or two facts in connection with land settlement throughout the Commonwealth, with the object of showing how necessary it is for us to make all our Bills dealing with land settlement as liberal as it is possible to have them, with a view to settling the huge area which I will show exists not only in the Commonwealth but in Western Australia and other States outside. I will mention at the outset that the total area of the Commonwealth is 1,889,695,390 acres, and the land alienated at the present time in the whole Commonwealth is 122,979,677 acres. These figures at first sight may not appear of much interest to members; but as I go on I trust I shall be able to show they contain a lot of information which is useful at any rate for comparison. The proportion of land alienated in the whole of the Commonwealth is one acre out of every 15, so that for every acre taken up there are at the present time 14 acres still available. Western Australia contains 624,588,000 acres. Of this quantity, there are alienated and in process of alienation 12,856,000 acres, the proportion being one acre alienated or in process of alienation out of every 49 acres, or 48 acres to one yet to be settled or alienated. Putting it another way, roughly we have a population in this country of one person to every four square miles. Treating the area still to be settled, in the Commonwealth we find there is 1,766,716,713 acres still to be settled, while Western Australia has 611,732,800 acres still to be disposed of. These are startling figures. I draw attention to them to show how necessary it is to have land legislation of the most liberal character, if we are to settle even a small proportion of this huge area. Dealing with the other States

of the Commonwealth to show how we stand comparatively in the way of settlement, we find they have settled one acre out of every $11\frac{1}{2}$ acres, but Western Australia has only one acre alienated or in process of alienation (or settled as we trust) out of every 49 acres. If I were arguing against Federation, I would use that as a good argument to show how much farther the other States have advanced in the matter of land settlement than we have. Although we speak of land alienated and in process of alienation, the actual area alienated in Western Australia is only 3,781,613 acres, leaving over 9,000,000 acres in process of alienation under conditions of improvement. Although it is in process of alienation it is covered or protected, so far as the State is concerned, by conditions of improvement that must be of immense benefit to the State when they are carried out. Certainly in this 9,000,000 acres some two million acres are held by the Midland Railway Company, on which the restrictions of compulsory improvement are removed, but we are safe in saying that all this area will ultimately be improved. These figures show that Western Australia can congratulate itself on having such a small area absolutely alienated that does not come under conditions of compulsory improvements. We must remember that a great proportion of the area absolutely alienated was acquired under conditions of improvement under the old land regulations, when I think we paid, if I remember rightly, one shilling an acre for ten years and with certain improvements the land became fee simple. I wish to draw attention to a fact that to me appears to be of great moment. From 1897 when we purchased the Great Southern Railway, that is nine years nine months ago, the State has disposed of under conditions of improvement 7,037,060 acres. This is a wonderful record, and more wonderful when we consider the fact that the bulk of the land, that is five million acres, has been disposed of within the last three years nine months. I have a table to show the form in which this land is passing from the State. Dealing with first-class lands, 4,257,799 acres have been disposed of under conditional purchase improvements and 1,426,377 acres under grazing

lease. There has been a feeling abroad that we have parted with too much of our land under grazing lease. That is the actual area for nine years nine months, and prior to that very little grazing land was taken up under these conditions. Under free farms we have given away 1,272,149 acres, and under poison lease 79,594 acres have been taken up. I am desirous of showing what a big contract these conditional purchase holders have undertaken. They have to pay to the State in connection with their blocks £2,128,889. Much of this has already been paid, but if hon. members recollect that the bulk of this land has been taken up within the last three years odd, they will realise the immense amount still to come in. The holders of grazing leases will pay to the State £356,594. Free farm holders pay nothing except the first pound they pay on application. The occupiers of poison leases will pay £3,979. The holders of these various areas have to comply with improvements. The conditional purchase holders have to effect improvements equal to the amount of purchase money, that is to say they must spend £2,128,889 in improvements. Grazing lease holders must expend £356,594 in improvements, and free farm holders must spend £636,074 in improvements, while poison lease holders must spend £19,898 in improvements, a total of £3,141,455. They have to spend this in actual improvements and they have to pay to the State in instalments £2,489,462. Anyone acquainted with farming knows that no one can stop at the improvements the Act enforces. The holder must spend at the very least a sum equal to the amount of his purchase money before his farm is a going concern. I wish to show the great contract these people have taken, and I wish sympathy to be extended to these settlers because they have taken on a bigger contract under the liberal conditions of our Land Act than most people imagine.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: Did you say "sympathy with the selector"?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: Yes.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: I must note that.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: Allowing that the settler has only to effect improvements to the amount of

10s. extra to the 10s. worth the Act enforces him to do—and living among farmers as I do, I know I am a long way under the actual figure, and that it is more like 15s. or £1 that the settler spends—if they spend 10s., they must spend on this huge area in improvements the sum of £6,282,910, and in addition to the expenditure of this sum, mostly on compulsory improvements, they will pay in instalments to the State £2,489,462, meaning a total expenditure of £8,722,372. That is the position of men who have gone on the land since 1897, when we purchased the Great Southern Railway. There is another fact to which I wish to draw attention. I wish to give the Lands Department credit where I can. Under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act the Department have disposed of 171,149 acres. That makes a total of 7,218,000 acres settled in nine years nine months, a wonderful record for Western Australia. I draw attention to what is perhaps a little outside the Bill, but it will help us to frame our opinions in regard to the amending measure before us. These settlers to-day owe to the State two millions of this purchase money, and before long I trust I will be in a position to urge that one million of this money at least be earmarked for the purpose of building agricultural railways.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: Is that a Government proposal or an individual proposal?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: It is an individual proposal. I trust before long I shall be in a position—

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: You must not give us individual proposals.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Is that amount of purchase money in arrear?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: There is nothing in arrear. It is an asset to this State. I draw special attention to it because when people say we have given away 13 million acres of our land they must not forget, if they are honest in their opinions, that the people still owe two millions on it, and I am only treating with settlement since 1897; the chances are that if the matter is gone into a little more fully it will be found that there is a greater sum owing.

HON. W. T. LOTON: How long do those payments extend over? If you earmark one million for railways you may

have to wait a long time before you get any railways.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: I am glad the hon. gentleman has called attention to that. There are some figures relating to the selection of conditional purchase blocks. In 1900 we only disposed of 165,599 acres; in 1904 the figures reached nearly three-quarters of a million; in 1905 the figures were over three-quarters of a million; and in 1906 for nine months already we have disposed of three-quarters of a million acres. Taking every class of land, conditional purchase holdings, grazing leases, homestead blocks, selections under the Land Purchase Act, and poison leases, the figures for 1903 run over the million—that was the first year we reached the million. There is a small acreage for working men's blocks, but it is not worth taking into consideration. In 1904 we disposed of 1,362,941 acres under conditions of improvement, in 1905 we disposed of 1,235,424 acres, and this year to June the figures were 911,948 acres. It all goes to show that the bulk of the money is still owing to the State, being due from people who have settled on the land for the last three years nine months. Over five million acres have been taken up during the last three years and nine months. That is a wonderful story to tell. It goes to show that in future, if we are speaking of the alienation of land and of the actual area alienated, it is our bounden duty to say that though it has gone it is held under contract by the settlers, and the money is still owing on about five million acres. That is the position to-day. As a matter of fact we have over the lowest estimate.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: Spread over 15 years?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: Twenty years.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Do you include the improved values?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: I am showing what a splendid acreage has been taken up during the last three years and nine months. I think I have said enough about that phase of the question. It is a good tale to tell, and I think the Lands Department are to be congratulated. We hear no talk about the settlers who have signed these contracts repudiating their rents. Only in a few

instances have forfeitures taken place, and where forfeiture has taken place there is good reason for it, a bad piece of land or something like that.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Can you give the arrears of rents?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: There are none. These lands are declared forfeited and thrown open again. In the totals I have given it, but it only amounts to a small acreage indeed.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You do not know the percentage?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: No. The lands become Crown lands again. The returns which I have given have been taken from the statistical return prepared for that time. I wish to deal with the matter of homestead blocks and to speak again of the huge area of land which we have given away in this State. I am now going to make a remark in spite of what Sir Edward Wittenoom said just now, that I should not give my personal opinion, being a Minister. We have given away 1,272,149 acres of land in nine years and nine months. I am now speaking personally, and I think we must make some arrangement in the future by which, if we give away land at all, we should give it in the way of ease in the first years of tenure; the first few years should be free of rent, if anything; but to give land away is an absolute folly. I shall take this opportunity of denouncing the system from this time forth. The time has gone by when we should give away our lands. I am not saying this as a Minister, but I am giving my personal opinion, because I happen to reside among these people in the district where most settlement has taken place, and I am able to form a better opinion perhaps than most members in the House. I want to point out one important feature: the huge area taken up under pastoral lease is roughly 157 million acres, and there is no telling to what great proportion this will reach, providing we have liberal regulations dealing with the matter. I think the same thing will apply to the pastoral leases as applied to our cereal lands. A short time back, all at once it was discovered that the poor class of land would grow wheat, and large areas were taken up. Fairly good crops were secured, in fact good crops were taken off land that at one time

it was thought was not worth cultivating. From what I hear from people who know something about it, the same thing is going to happen with regard to our pastoral leases. We have large areas to settle in this country, and eventually it will pan out that we have a much better quality of land than we thought we possessed. I should not close my remarks without mentioning this tremendous acreage; it is worth recording, showing the great advance made in this particular line. I do not know that I need dwell farther generally on land settlement, but I wish to draw attention to the principal features of the new Bill, and one of the new departures is a provision for the establishment of local land district boards. Then there is a provision for progressive improvements. The improvements will be made in two years instead of being, as at present, spread over ten years.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Give us the number of the clauses as you go along.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: Do you mind addressing yourself to Clause 4?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: That gives power to the Government to resume land from pastoral leases for agricultural settlement.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: It seems unintelligible to me.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: The Government have power to resume land from pastoral leases. I do not know if the member takes exception to the retrospective clause.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: Do not refer to me personally. I want the explanation of the Government.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: If the member will look through the Bill he will find that the provisions of Sections 55, 56, and 57 have been extended to the whole of the State. These provisions enable a person to acquire land under conditional purchase.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: Anywhere?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: Anywhere in the State.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: Is that not repudiation?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: The clause gives the Government power to settle people on these leases. The Government already possess the power in that respect, but it is not clear. I under-

stand that this clause is to make the provisions more clear, and to enable the Government to extend the provisions of Sections 55, 56, and 57 to other districts than the South-Western District. Originally these provisions only applied to the South-West; now they will apply to the whole of the State. This clause has been found necessary: a great deal of trouble was caused in connection with some resumptions which took place some years ago in the Northampton District.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: We would like a thorough explanation of this clause. It is a very important provision, giving power to resume land for agricultural settlement from pastoral leases, and I want the clause made clear to us.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: I think it is fairly clear. It enables the Government to take the land.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: And resume?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: To encourage settlement. We know that the northern portion of the State is suitable for tropical products. There is no telling to what length we can extend in that direction; probably sugar can be grown, and I am told that cotton will also grow there. The object of the clause is to give the Government power to go on to the pastoral leases; the same power as is possessed in regard to pastoral leases in the South-Western Division.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: And do not interfere with existing contracts?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: There is a clause that does interfere with existing contracts.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What clause is that?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: It is Subclause 3 of Clause 4. That is a matter that can be threshed out in Committee. I hope members will give the Bill a chance, because it does not deal altogether with pastoral matters. It is important that many of the clauses should be embodied in the Bill. I do not know if members understand the position, but Clause 4 gives the Government power to enter on pastoral leases and take the land subject to certain conditions. It is of a retrospective nature. Clause 5 provides for certain officers signing documents; but I think I had better deal with only the important provisions. I wish to speak first now about the local land

district boards. This is considered a very necessary step, and when the matter is before the Committee I shall explain the conditions of a step of this kind. As to the question of progressive improvements, members will agree with me it is necessary we should have improvements of a progressive nature of conditional purchase holdings. The conditions are not made more harsh. The expenditure is the same, but instead of permitting a conditional purchaser to carry out all the improvements in the ninth and tenth years, he has to carry out one-fifth of the improvements every two years. This will not mean so much inspection, and if any unforeseen difficulty arises the settler has the second year in which to carry out the improvements. As to the limitation of areas contained in Clause 24, we purpose providing that anyone can take up 2,000 acres of what is called cultivable land, that is land that can be cultivated; or up to 5,000 acres of another class of land under the ordinary grazing conditions. The clause really explains itself, and members will find it is possible for a married man to take up an additional 1,000 acres. A married man can take up 3,000 acres of first-class land, or 7,500 acres of poor land, of which we have such a large area in the interior. I think this is a wise departure. There should be some limitation of the powers of selection, because in the past huge areas have been acquired; men have taken up 10,000 acres and over, but the time has arrived when we should limit selection to a reasonable extent. This provision divides the land into two classes, and it seems to be an important feature, and one which the House should endorse. We shall have only two classes of land, namely cultivable and grazing. A man may select of the first class 2,000 acres, and of the second class 5,000 acres, with half as much in addition for his wife. The amendment of the boundaries of the districts is very important. Certain members have asked for a map showing the alterations, and I trust to be able to provide, if not a map for each member, a map for every two or three members. The alteration of these boundaries has been found necessary so as to include land towards Eucla, for instance, or towards Esperance, that has been found

suitable for agricultural occupation. The Government contemplate raising the rents of pastoral leases in certain areas; but so far as I know this provision is not retrospective. It is considered that the rents now being received are not sufficiently high. The Bill will strike out those sections of the Act dealing with the sale of poison lands; and I am glad to take part in the abolition of those sections. Such lands were given away for a mere song, as it were, though fortunately for the State the holders did not do anything with them, otherwise we should have had large areas acquired for about 6d. or at most 8d. an acre. The sale of poison land will not be any longer permitted. Provision has been made for permitting the holders of goldfields residence areas to convert them into working men's blocks. This seems to be a good provision; and believing as I do that every man should possess a piece of land to live upon if he so desires, I think it will meet with the approval of the House. I shall do my best to explain any particular clause which may be mentioned. I do not think I can add much more. This is a big subject, and one to which I may not have done justice; but I trust that when the Bill is in Committee I shall be able to explain the why and wherefore of every one of its clauses.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: Will you explain Clause 31?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: The clause amends Section 59 of the principal Act, for the purpose of increasing the facilities for the selection of lands outside the South-West Division.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: Will it not interfere with existing contracts?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: We shall be able to discuss it in Committee. Members are aware that there is now but little provision for selecting lands outside that division.

HON. C. SOMMERS: What is the object of Clause 30 amending Section 57?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: Subsection 5 will be amended by striking out "5s." and inserting "10s." to make purchasers under that section effect 10s. worth of improvements instead of 5s. worth as at present. I think it only fair to put such purchasers on all-fours with the conditional purchase holder.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: What is the meaning of Clause 32?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: It will allow of the selection of garden areas up to 50 acres in any part of the State.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: Does it interfere with existing contracts?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: To a very limited extent, I should think. The same provision has always been in force throughout the South-West Division.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: What is the meaning of Clause 35?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: It repeals Section 63 of the principal Act, which limits the manner in which lands may be disposed of in divisions outside the South-West.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: Will it take effect from the coming into operation of the Act, or does it affect any land already taken up?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: The memorandum I have made is that it will allow the development of the northern portion of the State. Under the principal Act the northern areas cannot be dealt with unless they have first been declared and surveyed as agricultural areas.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: Repealing Section 63 would amount to repudiation.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: The clause will certainly repeal the section.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: Do you think that is fair, in view of existing contracts?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: If we are to have settlement in those areas we must certainly make some such provision. After all, what is the area affected? It is very small. I think the repeal will be rather advantageous.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: The areas are not small.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: I am quite aware that the new departure in this Bill, attempting to extend conditional purchase provisions to other divisions of this State, will lead to much discussion; and I trust that members will fairly thresh out the matter in Committee, and then we shall see whether there is any just reason for the clause. To my mind the provisions in question seem absolutely necessary even for the present holders.

HON. C. SOMMERS: What about Clause 50?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: It will amend Section 96 by striking out "10s." and inserting "£1." this being an increase in the rents for pastoral leases.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: I cannot clearly understand Clause 29. What is the meaning of "fifty per centum additional expenditure"?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: The expenditure required in lieu of residence will thus be made lighter than it is now. The object is to encourage people to go on the land. Hitherto such men have had to do improvements twice as valuable as this Bill will require.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: But you have not excised from the section the existing provision for improvements.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member had better deal with this in Committee.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM (in explanation): I wish to explain that the section in the principal Act provides for double expenditure on improvements in lieu of residence; whereas the amending clause reads, "in lieu of residence, fifty per centum of additional expenditure."

THE HONORARY MINISTER: If the man spends 10s. when he resides on the ground, he must spend 15s. when he does not reside on the ground. Under the present Act he must spend £1. I think the provision in the Bill is more liberal. Personally I am desirous of seeing the money go on the land, because if we can get the money on the land, the people will follow it.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: Will the hon. member explain Clause 58, which provides that the Government have the right to resume after six months' notice, whereas at present it is 12 months' notice? The alteration is unfair. Does it apply to existing rights?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: I do not know.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: It is a repudiation.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: The clause says it applies to leases granted before or after the passing of this Act.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: That is as it appears. I do not know much about pastoral leases; but I shall get all the information required before we go into Committee. I appeal to hon. mem-

bers to let the second reading go through. There is no objection to the measure that I know of in regard to lands held for growing cereals and under conditions of improvement. I am a little at sea in regard to pastoral leases, but there are no clauses in this Bill but can be amended in Committee if necessary. I trust the Bill will receive the usual kindly consideration from hon. members.

On motion by **SIR E. H. WITTENOOM**, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND TAX ASSESSMENT.

MACHINERY MEASURE.

IN COMMITTEE.

Resumed from the 18th October.

Postponed Clause 2—Interpretation:

HON. M. L. MOSS had moved an amendment that the following be added to paragraph (c) of the definition of "unimproved value"—

Provided that the last-named mode of assessment shall remain in force for twelve months after the Act comes into operation.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was neither necessary nor desirable to add these words. The Government would have a valuation of the pastoral leases made as quickly as possible, because the leases were known to be worth more than the rent paid to the Crown. It was provided that pastoral leases should be assessed on twenty times the difference between the true annual value and the rent paid to the Crown; but until a valuation was made, the unimproved value would be assessed at twenty times the annual rent paid to the Crown. It would take a considerable time to make a valuation of these pastoral leases, probably more than a year; and it would create unnecessary expense if the amendment were carried and the valuations had to be completed within 12 months.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: Unfortunately, having opposed the exemptions, he must oppose this amendment; but it was most unfair that pastoral leases should be taxed, because they were Government property, and the Government already received a rent from them. This was a subterfuge to get additional rent.

HON. M. L. MOSS was not anxious to see the amendment carried.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause as previously amended put and passed.

Postponed Clause 5—*Gazette* notice sufficient:

HON. J. W. LANGSFORD had moved an amendment that the following be added to the Bill:—

Provided, however, that such officer when assessing any land shall, if so required by the owner or his agent, produce the certificate of his appointment.

HON. G. RANDELL: The amendment was moved at his request, but he was not particularly anxious to have it passed, though it would be useful if passed. Cases had occurred in which persons represented themselves to be what they were not. The Government would probably issue to each officer something more than the notice in the *Government Gazette*, which would be seen by not more than one person in a hundred; and if any property-holder requested the officer to show his authority, the officer could do so.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was no necessity for the amendment. This was a clause usually found in municipal Bills and measures of that kind. Naturally any person appointed would receive some certificate of his appointment. Presumably the clause was provided to save quibbles, as it were.

HON. G. RANDELL: It was desirable to have the appointment announced in a newspaper circulating in the particular districts.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY would rather accept the amendment than adopt that suggestion.

HON. G. RANDELL: Could this amendment be withdrawn with a view of making an amendment in a previous part of the clause.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not do that.

HON. G. RANDELL: It could be amended on recommitment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Postponed Clause 8—agreed to.

[This completed the clauses.]

HON. M. L. MOSS: We had cut out certain exemptions in Clause 11. He

thought at the time that while we included the timber leases there was no mode in the Bill of assessing them, and he then said he believed there would have to be some machinery clause. He would like to know whether the Leader of the House had conferred with his colleagues as to such addition.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Government believed there was sufficient machinery in the Bill to assess timber leases. There would not have been, if the mining tenements had been struck out.

HON. M. L. MOSS: The object in drawing attention to the matter was to prevent interminable litigation as to what these things should be assessed at.

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY resolved—That the Chairman report that the Committee recommend that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Assembly requesting them to make the amendments agreed on by the Committee, and that the Committee have leave to sit again on receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly.

Resolution reported.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY farther moved—

That the report be adopted.

HON. M. L. MOSS (West): I stated during the Committee stage of the Bill that I intended to submit the Bill to another vote of the House. I have given the matter the most careful and due consideration since I made that remark, and it is necessary for me to explain the position I intend to take up now, so that it cannot be said I have misled any member. I do not intend, as far as I am personally concerned, to carry out the promise I made during the Committee stage of the Bill. Of course that will not preclude any other member from doing it, and I do not say what action I shall be prepared to take if some other member does so. But the position is this. The Government say they want money, and I believe this is a very bad way of getting it; but this House, on the second reading of the Bill thought it was a proper way to raise additional revenue, and after all it is a very large responsibility for any

private member to assume the attitude of dictating to the Government in what particular direction they are to get supplies.

THE PRESIDENT: Is this a personal explanation?

HON. M. L. MOSS: No. It is on the motion that this report be adopted. It was at this stage I otherwise intended to make a speech and induce members to vote against this motion. I think, therefore, that I am perfectly in order; however, I have practically said all I desire to say. It is now open to any other member sitting on these benches to adopt the course I suggested I would take; but in view of all the circumstances I do not think that I will be justified in doing it. I certainly should be open to the suggestion of unduly hampering the Government, and of course I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that to a certain extent, although this Chamber has a perfect right to do as it chooses in regard to any taxation measure, there is an unwritten rule which, if broken in these circumstances or on any other similar occasion, may be somewhat detrimental to this House. I am prepared, however, to give the opportunity to any other member sitting on these benches—

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: What is the difference between moving it and trying to get someone else to move it?

HON. M. L. MOSS: I am not inviting any other member to do it at all. Perhaps the Leader of the House misunderstands me.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am afraid I do.

HON. M. L. MOSS: I am very sorry, but the position remains that I made a certain promise during the Committee stage of this Bill, and I wish to explain that I am not inviting any other member to do what I spoke of, but I want to give the opportunity to any other member. Mr. Sommers said he wanted an opportunity of voting against this Bill on the report stage, as I understand. I do not ask him to do it, or any other member. I am only saying that the position, so far as I can see, is such that I am not justified in doing taking that course.

Question put and passed.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER rose to speak (too late).

BILL—WINES, BEER, AND SPIRIT SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

NO NEW LICENSES.

SECOND READING.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): It is with some considerable satisfaction I rise to propose the second reading of this Bill, as I feel myself in perfect harmony with its provisions, except one little matter. The object of the Bill, as members can see, is to provide that until Parliament can deal with the larger question of local option, no new licenses shall be issued for 12 months. That may be considered a reasonable proposition under the circumstances. We have seen recently a sort of raid upon licensing benches, a sort of epidemic of persons seeking for licenses for hotels or public-houses. I am one of those who believe that the scattering of these institutions over the land is not conducive to the best interests of the country, and I think a great many will think with me in that respect. The supply in this case creates the demand? Very often we find the argument is that the demand creates the supply; but in this particular instance the converse holds good. The Bill is limited in its operation to one year, and cannot do any harm to any individual at all. On the contrary, it will do a considerable amount of good. It will do good in this way: it will prevent a great waste of time, of money, and of attention, on the part of those who are opposed to many of the applications which come forward from time to time for provisional certificates or for licenses for houses. It will also save, to a very considerable extent, the time of the bench from being wasted, frittered away I may say, by applications which have no possible chance, in many cases, of being granted. There are a number of members, I think, in this House who know something of what has taken place in this part of the State during the last few months, and it seems to me a number of people are extremely anxious to erect houses for the sale of liquor, and to obtain a living, or whatever it may be. I am certain that the existence of public-houses to a larger extent than at present is not in the best interests of the State. An estimate has been formed, I believe, that there is one licensed house to every

370 people in the State, and a calculation has been made that a fair and reasonable average to make would be one for 750 people; so that, taking these figures to be correct, members will see that we have two licensed houses where we ought to have only one, according to the population of the State. There are some very fair and reasonable provisions in the Bill, one being that if a district should suddenly arise, as sometimes is the case, especially in the mining districts, the circumstances can be taken into consideration and a license granted if necessary. But in that case it will no doubt be to some extent on the voice of the people, and I think most members believe in the principle of local option. This obtains now very largely in different parts of the world, including the other States of Australia, and it is bound to come here. I understand that there are 40 members of the Legislative Assembly who are pledged to local option, and that is a fact which should make the Bill acceptable to the representatives, as it will place the decision in the hands of the people to a much larger extent than at the present moment. I do not think it can be said for a moment that there is any attempt to go behind the licensing boards which have been established. I am of opinion, having served on one of those boards myself, that the provision will be very acceptable to them, and that it will release them from what is sometimes a very difficult and very irksome duty.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: How can you stop the whole machine unless you know what is going to take its place?

HON. G. RANDELL: I think every provision is made in this Bill to prevent any consequences arising which would be injurious to any person. My own opinion is that it will be for the good of the country entirely. It is provided in the Bill that provisional certificates already granted shall not be affected.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: It makes them more valuable.

HON. G. RANDELL: I do not know that it will under the present circumstances of the State, where to a considerable extent development is arrested. I do not think it will affect in any appreciable degree the houses already in

existence. Twelve months is a short space of time, and I think in some cases not very far back, more than 12 months have elapsed before the issue of a new license—that is in the coastal districts. I am not familiar with the conditions on the Eastern Goldfields. However, recently there has been a strong desire on the part of some people to have these premises built.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Because the districts are expanding.

HON. G. RANDELL: I think it is a bad sign of the times. I do not think one can argue for a moment that it is but a heavy waste of money, time, and energy for people to spend their money to such a large extent as they are doing now in the purchase of that which will not benefit them in the slightest degree. That money may be diverted to more profitable channels; I am quite sure of that. I would like to give a few figures about the expenditure that takes place. I have already stated that there is one licensed house in the State for every 370 persons. I think there should be, according to statistics given, no more than one to 750 persons. The expenditure on drink in Victoria is given as £4 2s. per head of the whole population, and in Tasmania £2 7s. 7d.; but in Western Australia it is £7 1s. 5d. for the whole population of the State, and we spent last year nearly a million and a-half in liquor.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Privately and publicly?

HON. G. RANDELL: I do not profess to be responsible for these statistics, but they have been given in public and I have no reason to question their proof. The figures were something like £1,460,000. It seems an awful expenditure for a small population such as we have in this State—though, of course, we have a larger proportion of adult males than will be found in any other State of the Commonwealth. But when members realise the magnitude of these figures they will say that the expenditure is more than reasonable and right, and that it cannot be in the best interests of the country. I think there will be no objection on the part of holders of licenses at the present moment to this Bill.

HON. M. L. MOSS: I should not think there would.

HON. G. RANDELL: I do not see that the Bill can create a monopoly in any sense of the word. Neither does it enhance the value of their property to any extent. I do not think that members, when they calmly consider the question, will realise that this Bill being in operation for 12 months and the suspension of power for granting licenses in that time, can make any appreciable addition to the value of licensed houses of the State. This is a short measure, and I hope members will give it their sympathetic consideration. Looking at it on all sides of the question, there is no intent to interfere with existing interests in any shape or form, and it certainly seems to me to be a wise provision to make during the time that will elapse to enable the Government to introduce a Bill they have promised, embodying local option. I need not delay the House. The measure is so simple and so effective in its operation, and it guards every interest so well and so reasonably, and it is so reasonable in its application, that I hope members who have the interests of the community at heart will say that, as it has passed another place and come down to us—whatever recommendation that may be, though in most cases we consider it to be a considerable recommendation—they can agree to the second reading, and to the passing of the measure into law. I need not add anything more, because to labour the Bill would not be wise at the present moment. I hope I have said what can be said in its favour, and I hope with some effect on the minds of hon. members present. I trust the measure will receive their cordial and considerate attention, and that it will pass into law.

HON. J. W. LANGSFORD (Metropolitan-Suburban): If there will be one object achieved by the passing of this Bill—though I do not know that it is the object those promoting the Bill have in view—it is that the whole question of liquor reform must engage the attention of the Legislature during the next 12 months.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That is the objection to the Bill, that it commits us to an extent.

HON. J. W. LANGSFORD: I rather think it is one of the advantages of the Bill, because it will act as a spur to the Government to introduce legislation so that we may consider it in this House. Unless they have something of a spur, the Government may be inclined to overlook legislation of this kind. At most elections fought and won of late, the question of local option has engaged great attention, and I think the majority of members of both Houses returned have been in favour of some measure of local option. It is evidently the wish of the people; I think we are justified in saying that; and that being so, we should give the people the earliest opportunity of expressing that wish. All members know the nuisance one is put to in opposing licenses, more especially if there is an application for a license opposite your door or on the next block. If the application is for a spot a mile or two away one does not take much interest in it; but if it happens to be close at hand one has to be continually fighting against licenses.

HON. M. L. MOSS: That has to be done under any conceivable licensing law.

HON. J. W. LANGSFORD: I do not think so. Under an up-to-date licensing law they could be fought every three years, not every 12 months as now. It used to be every three months; but it is not so often now. We would have to fight, but would put the battles off: they would be less frequent than they are at present. As things are, applications are renewed time after time. It has been said that if this Bill is passed the value of existing licenses will be increased. I cannot quite follow that. It will come about no more by this Bill than it comes about by the rejection of any applications by the present licensing benches. I think no reflection is intended on the licensing benches of our State by this Bill. We do not say that they have not dealt fairly with the applications that come before them any more than we would do in passing any measure in the future embodying local option which the Premier has promised he will introduce early next session. I think this Bill will encourage the Government in doing so. Mr. Randell has said that no one will argue that we have not enough hotels in the State, and that provision is made in the Bill for

any new district being supplied with a hotel if the Governor thinks fit. Public-houses are said to exist in the interest of the public welfare; but the sooner we give the public the benefit of saying whether they want many or few, the better. That opportunity should be afforded. I hope the second reading of this Bill will be passed so that in Committee any improvements may be effected.

HON. M. L. MOSS (West): There is no doubt that if any branch of our law needs consolidating and bringing up to date, it is the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act passed in 1880, and amended a number of times. There is no doubt that, according to up-to-date opinions of licensing law, our legislation is very much behind the times; and I should be very sorry to lend assistance to a piece of patchwork in regard to that law. I recognise fully that by the third clause of this Bill it is only intended to keep the Bill in force, if it is passed into law, for 12 months; and if I could do it, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to give my vote to Mr. Randell on this occasion; but I cannot see that it is the correct thing for me to do. While I am making a very brief speech indeed, I wish to give my reasons for the vote I am going to give. Under the Act I have referred to, it says in Section 24:—

It shall be the right and privilege of any ratepayer in the district to the licensing magistrates for which district any application for a license is made, or of any other applicant for a license, or of any person already licensed in such district, or of any member of the police force in charge of such district, or the owner or lessor of the premises or vessel proposed to be licensed, to object at any licensing meeting or adjournment thereof to the granting, renewal, removal, transfer, or transmission of a license; and the objections that may be taken at the time of hearing of such application may be one or more of the following: That the applicant is of bad fame and character or of drunken habits, or has within six months previously been deprived of a license, or that the premises in question have not the accommodation required by the seventeenth and eighteenth sections of this Act, or reasonable accommodation if the said premises be not subject to the said statutory requirements, or that the licensing thereof is not required in the neighbourhood, or that the premises are in the immediate vicinity of a place of public worship, hospital, or school, or that the quiet of the place in which such

premises are situate will be disturbed if a license be granted, or any other objection (whether or not of the same kind as any of the preceding objections) which appears to the licensing magistrates to be sufficient.

The last thing I desire to do, and the last thing Mr. Randell desires to do, is to pass in Parliament a vote of want of confidence in the licensing courts throughout the State. Here is a statutory provision calling upon these licensing courts in case any of these objections is upheld, to refuse to grant the application for a license. There is superadded to all I have said, in this Act, the right of the ratepayers of a district residing in the immediate vicinity of the house to petition against the granting of a license, which gives the licensing magistrate no discretion whatever, because if a majority petition is presented the magistrates' hands are stayed and we have local option, not the local option which Mr. Langsford is aiming at, but local option of a kind which has been resorted to most effectually in the past. It is contended that this law is defective, that too many facilities are afforded for getting licenses. But if the licensing benches do their duty they have no right to grant additional licenses except in localities where licenses are required. Superadded to that we have the opportunity for people living in a district to petition the bench against the granting of a license. I will not vote for the measure, because first it is an undue interference with one of the tribunals administering justice in the State, and secondly it is a piece of patchwork, attempting to patch up for 12 months a certain law which has got out of date to a certain extent, and in my opinion Section 24 safeguards the public. I believe if we take Perth, Fremantle, and Kalgoorlie the probability is, if we were to pass the Bill into law, it would be a really good thing. Personally I do not know the licensing benches in these localities, but I think it would be a wrong thing for any licensing bench in these three centres to grant farther licenses. Because I hold that opinion, and other members may agree with me, I do not think that is a reason why we should patch up legislation in this way, although only for twelve months. I would not like it to be assumed in the House or out of it that I am opposed in any way to a

proper system of local option. I think it a very great scandal that a proper system of local option has not been brought in long ago. I am afraid if we pass this measure lasting twelve months only, instead of having a comprehensive measure brought down, the Government will say, "This has worked very well for 12 months; let us continue it for another 12 months." I do not want to give the Government an opportunity of putting off the bringing forward of a comprehensive measure. I think that an urgent and pressing necessity exists for a comprehensive measure, and that the Government should be called on to give early attention to the matter, which no doubt they will do. That is the way we should deal with the matter and not allow an opportunity to any Government to say, "Let us continue this measure for another 12 months and postpone the complete Bill." The Labour Government had a very excellent Bill prepared dealing with this question; but difficulties arose as to loss of power, and the other Government coming in could not treat with it in the first session. I do not blame the present Government for not dealing with the matter this session, but I hope we shall not pass a Bill of this kind, putting on the statute-book a precedent enabling the Government to say, "Let us extend this Bill for another 12 months." Every member is striving to obtain local option as popularly understood—the New Zealand example presents itself to my mind—and I do not think that the object will be achieved by interfering with the discretion which the licensing law gives to-day to the licensing benches.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): I, with Mr. Moss, do not like the Bill because it establishes a very bad precedent indeed. I think it is a wrong principle that we should have a law in force and that we should bring in a Bill to suspend that law for 12 months, and that is what the Bill means. It is not a question of whether we believe in local option or whether there are too many hotels in this country, but I say without any hesitation, in my opinion there are too many hotels and drinking houses in Western Australia.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: In certain districts.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think we may take Western Australia as a whole. That fact was brought forcibly to my attention when a little while ago I went through America. You may go through city after city, and unless you particularly look for hotels you will not see any public-houses or drinking shops. I regret to say drinking shops prevail to a great extent in Australia. In America they have hotels which give good accommodation and where a person can get a drink if it is desired; but there is no encouragement to drink. We shall have to do something to check the drinking habit in some way, perhaps by local option. The matter is solely in the hands of the people, for if a majority of the people in any district say they do not want a license granted the bench has no say. That has been proved by a case which occurred some years ago in Kalgoolie, where a petition was presented to the licensing bench against the granting of a license, and in the face of that majority petition the bench granted a provisional certificate. The petitioners appealed to the Supreme Court, and the appeal was upheld. That proved that the Act is as we thought it was. If a majority of the people residing in a district petition against a certain license being granted it cannot be granted, and seeing we have this provision the Bill is somewhat unnecessary. The point I take is that the measure establishes an exceedingly dangerous and bad precedent. It is a very fine thing for the existing licensees; it gives them a monopoly for 12 months. That I think in itself is very objectionable, but the most objectionable part is that we suspend the existing law for 12 months. We may as well bring in a Bill to suspend the Police Act or the operation of any Act for 12 months. If the law is wrong, or we do not believe it is altogether right, it should be amended. But while the law is in force we must not interfere with it in this way. For that reason I cannot see my way to support the Bill.

HON. G. RANDELL (in reply): I am glad to have heard the expressions of opinion that it is desirable something should be done to arrest that which is

hurrying on to a very bad state of affairs in Australia. I met a lady the other day just out from England, and amongst other things she expressed astonishment at the number of drunken men she saw about the streets of Perth. She had come from a watering-place, Bournemouth, where there is a considerable population, but she says there is nothing of that kind to be seen at that place. Some steps are necessary in this country. On my first visit to the city of Melbourne I was particularly struck by the absence of men going about the streets in a state of intoxication. I only remember seeing one man, and he was dressed in very respectable clothes; I should have thought he belonged to respectable society. I thought what a contrast was the city of Melbourne to that of Perth many years ago. That was the first time I visited Melbourne. Anything that any of us can do to promote habits of temperance and self-restraint dealing with many qualities in human nature we should do. Mr. Moss has spoken of the present local option clause; but members know how difficult of application is that provision. In the first place the magistrates have to define an area. For a long time the licensing magistrates hesitated to do that, but I believe they have done so now.

HON. M. L. MOSS: They fixed a half-mile radius.

HON. G. RANDELL: That is a peculiar method, for half-a-mile in one place might be no comparison to half-a-mile radius in another place. It will not work out equitably. I do not think there is anything in the argument that we are likely to hinder early legislation in regard to the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act if we pass this Bill. I believe the Government are pledged to an amendment, and there is no reason to think that they will not bring it in at the earliest opportunity. At the same time this little measure will be acceptable to a number of people in the country, and it will show that Parliament agrees with those people in their desire to curb the excessive drinking that takes place in this country.

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

Aves	...	...	5
Noes	...	...	20
			—
Majority against	...	...	15

Aves.
 Hon. J. W. Langsford
 Hon. W. Patrick
 Hon. C. A. Piesse
 Hon. G. Randell
 Hon. C. E. Dempster
 (Teller).

Noes.
 Hon. T. F. O. Brinage
 Hon. E. M. Clarke
 Hon. J. D. Connolly
 Hon. F. Connor
 Hon. J. M. Drew
 Hon. J. W. Hackett
 Hon. V. Hamersley
 Hon. S. J. Haynes
 Hon. W. Kingsmill
 Hon. Z. Lane
 Hon. R. Laurie
 Hon. W. T. Loton
 Hon. R. D. McKenzie
 Hon. W. Maley
 Hon. E. McLarty
 Hon. M. L. Moss
 Hon. R. F. Sholl
 Hon. C. Sommers
 Hon. J. W. Wright
 Hon. W. Oats
 (Teller).

Question thus negatived, Bill rejected.

At 6-30, the PRESIDENT left the Chair.
 At 7-30, Chair resumed.

BILL—PERTH TOWN HALL (SITE).

SECOND READING MOVED.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) in moving the second reading said: I do not think it necessary to say much, as the Bill explains itself. For some considerable time the want of a proper town hall in the capital city of Western Australia has been much in evidence. The Bill simply provides that a referendum of the ratepayers of Perth be taken to see whether they are agreeable to the transfer to the Government of the present town hall site and the site of the old police quarters with the buildings thereon, promised to the City Council by the James Government, and finally granted by the Rason Government. The Bill provides that the Government be empowered, first, to grant to the City Council a block of land in Irwin Street, valued by the Government valuer, Mr. Stronach, at £20,000, together with £22,000, in exchange for the present town hall site and the old police court site. The present town hall has been valued by Mr. Stronach at £31,200, and the old police court, including buildings, at £22,300. The Government propose to take these in exchange for the block bounded by St. George's Terrace, Irwin Street, and Hay Street, plus £22,000. The present town hall site is conveniently situated for an extension of the Treasury buildings and other Government offices, when more room is needed by the departments. If the Bill passes, the Perth

Council will take a referendum of the ratepayers, and if they decide in the affirmative the exchange will be effected. If on the contrary a majority of the ratepayers votes against this exchange, the Bill will be null and void. Certain words have been added to the Bill which in Committee I propose to ask members to strike out: "or any other land approved by referendum of the ratepayers of the municipality of Perth." When these are struck out, the Bill will refer only to the exchange of the present town hall site for the Irwin Street site and £22,000.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: What is Part II. in the first schedule?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That refers to the police court site held by the City Council.

HON. R. F. SHOLL (North): I have no intention to oppose the Bill, but at the referendum I will as a citizen vote against the exchange. I think the ratepayers would be very unwise to exchange the present valuable site for a site which is really outside the business portion of the city. After one passes Pier Street going eastward one is practically out of the business quarter and in the region of private houses. The city cannot possibly extend in an easterly direction, for it is blocked by the river. I hope the citizens of Perth will reject the proposal. The present town hall site is very valuable; and I do not think the council are getting a *quid pro quo*.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The present site is not big enough for a town hall.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: I know; but we can do without showy buildings. At any rate, the council should get a site more suitable than the Irwin Street block. I should have opposed the Bill if it had included the provision for referring to the ratepayers any other buildings or other sites; for then the referendum could not possibly have been conclusive. Probably the most suitable site would not have been selected. If the Colonial Secretary will make the amendment he has indicated, so as to make a referendum on one particular site, I shall not in any way oppose the Bill.

HON. W. T. LOTON (East): No doubt the proposal in its present form

should be considered by the ratepayers of Perth, and I do not intend to oppose the Bill; but I desire to express the opinion that the representatives of the ratepayers, that is to say the mayor and councillors who have carried on these negotiations and brought them to this stage, have not shown much business capacity or ability. Personally I consider, if this transaction is carried to a conclusion, the Government will get the best of the bargain by a considerable sum of money.

HON. G. RANDELL: There is no doubt of that.

HON. W. T. LOTON: There is no doubt in my mind that if the exchange takes place the council, instead of receiving £22,000 should receive at least £35,000. That would be nearer a fair exchange. Apart from that, although it is perhaps difficult to name a better site, I do not think the Irwin Street block is suitable for the purposes of a town hall. As for the Government Offices, I think the present accommodation ought to suffice not only for the civil servants in Perth but for all in the State; but I do say, if extra accommodation is wanted by the Government departments, the Government could have no better site than the block in Irwin Street, which is removed from centres of noise and disturbance, and yet is not far away. That site is ample for a suite of Government offices. Looking at it from that point of view, I think the Government are making a mistake in making an exchange.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It would keep all the public offices together and would complete the block.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Would you have enough then?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not know; I cannot answer that.

MR. W. T. LOTON: Personally I am opposed to this exchange. If there is no room on the present town hall site, let us do with the town hall we have for the present, and let the Government save this £20,000 and apply the money to better purposes. I do not intend to discuss the merits of the Bill farther than that. I shall not oppose the Bill, but like the hon. member who spoke before me I shall exercise my vote, if I am here at the time, and shall endeavour to influence anyone I know to vote

against the exchange for the reasons I have stated.

HON. M. L. MOSS: More room is required for offices.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Then let the Government take the Irwin Street site.

HON. M. L. MOSS: In the Titles Office they have not room to do the work.

HON. W. T. LOTON: The Irwin Street site is an excellent position for Government offices. There is one other point in regard to this proposed exchange: If the Government desire to help the citizens of Perth and if the present town hall site with the old police court site is not sufficient, let the Government add or sell the land occupied by the old Legislative Assembly building rather than otherwise: but keep the town hall where it is. The town hall is the key of the whole of Perth. All the tramlines run past the town hall from all districts.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is said to be the objection, the site is too noisy.

HON. W. T. LOTON: What is a town hall used for? Mainly for public meetings and entertainments. All the trams run to the spot from the outside suburbs, Subiaco, Leederville, North Perth, Victoria Park. No other place gives the key to the suburbs like the present town hall. I shall not oppose the Bill, but I hope that when the matter comes before the people they will reject it.

HON. W. PATRICK (Central): I should like to know from the Colonial Secretary when the transfer of the police court site to the City Council was made. I remember the Colonial Secretary opposing that transfer, and I was told a few minutes ago by a member of the Labour Government that his Government had refused to transfer this land. I should like to know when it was transferred. If it has been transferred, there has already been £20,000 given to the city of Perth.

HON. W. T. LOTON (in explanation): I think I can explain that, if I may be allowed. I think there is a condition attached to that transfer, that the council have to expend a sum of not less than £30,000 in connection with a town hall. I do not know whether it appears on the title deed or not.

HON. W. PATRICK: That does not alter the fact that the land has been given away as a present.

HON. W. MALEY (South-East): Like Mr. Loton, I am of opinion that the Irwin Street site is most admirable for public offices. If the present site of the town hall is too noisy for a town hall, how much more so must it be for people engaged in clerical work during the long hours of the day? It is true that the citizens of Perth have some little doubt as to the strict legality of their title, but I do not think there is any necessity for the citizens to alarm themselves as to who holds the certificate. As long as they hold the town hall, no Government will turn them out by force. As I have said before in this Chamber, we must look to the future when a large pile of offices will be required much larger than we have at present; and to make provision for that, the Government should be careful to reserve a suitable site convenient to the main business portion of the city. If the Government part with the Irwin Street site, it will be a very serious move to make, and a great loss eventually to the State. I think for the next five years at least matters should go on as they are, the Government reserving the Irwin Street site, which year by year they will find more valuable and more suitable for their requirements.

HON. G. RANDELL: The value has gone down by half since that block was bought.

HON. W. MALEY: To be more correct, the value paid for that block has proved itself to be inflated, and now the true value is known. It is idle to say that the land in that position will continue to recede in value. In my opinion land in that locality will always be at least at its present value for Government offices. The more traffic brought about the present block of buildings, the less suitable will it become for the purpose for which it is used. I think the sum of £20,000 is, at the present moment, a great consideration. We were in a great hurry building these Houses of Parliament. I myself thought the matter could have waited many years. I shall be sorry if this Bill passes this Chamber; but if it be passed, I hope the intelligence of the citizens will be such that they will

refuse to have anything to do with the transfer of their present site for the Irwin Street block.

HON. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): I think it would be a mistake if the town hall were built on the present site. I do not think it is at all suitable. I think it is altogether too noisy, especially for an up-to-date town hall, which would include a lecture hall and a concert room, and so on, because it is absolutely necessary to have as little noise as possible, so as not to interfere with entertainments. My opinion is that the post office and not the town hall should occupy the central place in a city, and I think it would be a good idea to put the post office on the present town hall site and to put the town hall on the present post office site; but I think a much better exchange would be for the Government to keep the Irwin Street block and to transfer to the council the land now occupied by the Agricultural Department, the site of the old Legislative Council building. The probability is that when the term of the present Governor is ended, some arrangement may be made whereby the magnificent ballroom at Government House can be utilised so that the citizens may take advantage of it. If the town hall were built on the old Legislative Council site, that ballroom could be attached and made use of. The time is not far distant, I suppose, when we will do away with the State Governor altogether. We may have a Governor like the present Lieutenant Governor occupying the position.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: Then I should secede from the Empire.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Because he would do all the work for nothing.

HON. C. SOMMERS: Not altogether that; but we will return to the ballroom. We cannot pay the Governor sufficient to use it, and it appears that no one else can use it.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Anyone can use it.

HON. C. SOMMERS: They do not seem to be able to get it.

HON. J. W. HACKETT (in explanation): The hon. member should not make that statement; it reflects on the illustrious gentleman who is Governor. I may be allowed to explain. This matter was ventilated some time back.

The Governor says that the ballroom is at the disposal of any charitable, public, and undenominational organisation.

HON. C. SOMMERS: I am very glad to hear it, but it does not alter the site. To my mind the town hall should be removed as far as possible, within reason, from any existing tramline, because the noise of the passing trams is a consideration. St. George's Terrace is the best site we have, and the architectural beauty possessed by the new building would be displayed to every visitor to the city. It would do away with the necessity of parting with the Irwin Street site, which could be used to much advantage by the Government. I support the Bill before the House.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): If I carried out the wishes of my mind, I would reject the Bill altogether for the reason stated by Mr. Loton, that the city councillors and the mayor are making a very, very bad bargain. I hold strong opinion that the present site is the only proper place, and that the town hall should not be removed. I hold that the mayor and councillors have sufficient space and all they require to satisfy their highest ambitions. To remove the town hall from its present site will have, to a certain extent, a detrimental effect upon the city at large as well as on the particular spot on which it now stands. I can well understand the Government being extremely anxious to make the arrangement, because clearly it is in the interests of the Government to do so, and it is well known that the motive behind is the acquisition of the present site for Government offices.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; it was a demand made by the mayor and councillors.

HON. G. RANDELL: Of course I do not know the inwardness, as they call it sometimes, of these proceedings, but I know there was a considerable amount of fuss made in Perth with reference to the action of the mayor and portion of the council in taking the step they did. I understand from the correspondence that took place at the time that it was partly without the consent of the whole of the council. However, that is not a matter we need dwell on just now. That is my first objection. The next

objection is that we are confined to one site, and that is the Irwin Street block. It is a step in the wrong direction entirely, taking the heart of the city in a direction in which it should not go. Then I understand the council are not satisfied with the size of the piece of ground to be obtained from the Government, which has been the subject of inflated values in times gone by and is not worth anything like the money for which it was purchased. I understand they have to buy a portion of land adjoining to get sufficient area. I understand they have to cut off about 25 or 30 feet to make Irwin Street a street. It is not a street at present, I believe. Therefore there will be an additional cost cast on the ratepayers. I understood that some little time ago arrangements were entered into by which the council could purchase additional land on the deal between the councillors and the Government coming off. Objection was raised that a strip of land would have to be given to widen Irwin Street, which makes it necessary to secure the other piece of land to maintain the original width. If they could not acquire that additional piece of land they would be in the same difficulty as now, except that they would have two frontages, one to Hay Street and one to St. George's Terrace. I presume they would build the town hall in Hay Street.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think not. I believe they are to build offices in Hay Street, and the town hall in St. George's Terrace.

HON. G. RANDELL: There may be differences of opinion in regard to that. On the score of architectural beauty it would probably be better to build the town hall on St. George's Terrace; but on the score of convenience it would most probably be better to build on Hay Street. I am entirely opposed to shifting from the present site; but if they do shift, there are other sites much more suitable for the purpose of a town hall than the Irwin Street site, which, as has been observed, is getting among private residences, schools, fire brigade premises, the hospital, churches, and one thing and another; and the town can never be a business town that way, as far as I can see, because the whole tendency of business is west and north.

There are other sites. The best site, to my mind, that could be obtained is Sir John Forrest's property. I do not know whether it can be obtained, or whether it is for sale, or whether he would ask a price that would be prohibitive; but that is the best site at the present moment for the erection of a town hall for all conveniences. I am not very much in favour of the High School site, which has been suggested; it is too far away; but my ideal site, which I very nearly secured—but for the little tricks of some of the councillors of the city of Perth it would have been obtained—is where the Queen's Hall now stands. A very large block could have been obtained, but there were certain manœuvres on the part of councillors at that time which prevented that scheme from coming to fruition. However, it is not worth while talking about that. I am not at all inclined to go over the railway line, although there is a large population there. Go westward in any case, and I know of no other site so suitable as Sir John Forrest's property. The next best site would be at the corner of Government Gardens in Barrack Street. I do not think any injury would be done to the city by taking a portion of that ground. I have considered the matter very carefully and have come to the conclusion that it is the best possible site barring the land owned by Sir John Forrest. I am in favour of retaining the present site, where I believe a structure could be erected at a moderate cost which would answer the purposes of the city for a hundred years to come. Another objection I have is that at the present time there are certain public works which the City Council must take in hand, involving the expenditure of a very considerable amount of money, and which are of vastly greater importance to them than a splendid town hall. In my opinion all the business which the City Council have to transact can be transacted by them in the place they have at the present moment, and if the town hall is not large enough for a big meeting, we have a very good hall, the Queen's Hall, which is always accessible for such purpose. If they are going to erect premises which come into competition with private enterprise, I have very strong objection to it. I believe the council are to build shops for the purpose of getting

rents as a return for some of the expenditure upon a building. What would be the use of erecting shops in Irwin Street or in Hay Street, at that distance from the present business portion of the city? I do not think there is any possible hope of inducing business to go in that direction. If they build a hall there and erect shops, they are coming into competition with private enterprise, which I think the City Council have no more right to do than the Government. At the present time we have plenty of shop and office accommodation in the city of Perth, and a lot of it is lying idle, on which large sums of money have been expended. Altogether I think the time inopportune for this proposal. I am astonished at men of business entering into an arrangement of this description. I do not suppose we can say anything against a referendum. It seems a right and proper thing to let the people decide, and perhaps if we got one particular site we should be able to obtain a better opinion than we should if we had three or four sites in view, when naturally there would be a great difference of opinion, and we might not get a satisfactory majority in favour of any particular site. Unless we can get something like a good majority, I think the whole thing will to a large extent be a fiasco. I take it that the money is altogether out of proportion to the value of the land at that corner, and I agree with Mr. Loton that £35,000 at any rate should be the value of it, considering the price paid for the opposite corner, which I think is not very much larger. There is no doubt it would make an excellent post office, and the post office buildings could be handed over to the Government for other offices. There is no necessity to have all the Government offices together in one particular place. I believe they are not so in Melbourne, and I know they are not so in Adelaide; I do not know about Sydney. [MEMBER: More scattered than any.] Seeing the telephones and messengers that can be employed, I cannot see that there is any great difficulty if the offices are a little spread about. Irwin Street might do for some portion of the Government offices; that portion, perhaps, of the public service which is not so much in request by the public as some other departments. Perhaps we could shift

the Colonial Secretary down there without any great disadvantage to the public service. The hon. gentleman is here, and perhaps he will take the hint. My feeling is certainly against the passing of the Bill at all, except that perhaps it would be ungracious to refuse the citizens of Perth the opportunity of a referendum; but I hope wise counsels will prevail and that people will not be led away by any side issues in regard to it and do what would be an irremediable injury to the city of Perth. An opinion has been expressed that the hall was put in the wrong place; but I disagree with that view. Governor Hampton, who was a man of good sound judgment, great practical knowledge, and experience, selected that site. Perhaps the only exception taken to it was that he did not provide an area quite large enough, but of course he could not see that we were going to discover gold in Western Australia, and that we were going to develop at the rate we have done. I am afraid that if we continue Federation we shall not progress in the future as we have done in the past. Every indication of that is to be found on all hands. If Governor Hampton had provided a larger piece of ground at that time there would not have been this cry of having the town hall in another position. I desire to reiterate that I think the City Council have other and more important business to do than to bother about this town hall business just at the present time. It is not desirable that I should weary members by giving them instances of what is required in the city of Perth at present, but one cannot drive or go in any direction without seeing there are symptoms of neglect or carelessness or some other sin against the citizens of Perth rampant in our city; but this is not the time or place to refer to them. I think, however, that if the councillors of the city of Perth were to look a little more after the comfort and convenience of the citizens with regard to the roads, footpaths, and such like matters, it would be a good thing; and now at last they have taken in hand the surface drainage they will have plenty of outlet for their energy and enterprise for some considerable time to come, and plenty of opportunity for spending the money they will borrow. They are heaping up debt upon debt.

Already they have driven many people out into the suburbs, and they will drive more out. There are a large number of business places empty, also a large number of empty houses, and it behoves the council of the city of Perth to go very slowly.

HON. J. W. LANGSFORD (Metropolitan-Suburban): The question occurs to me whether we should not protect the ratepayers of Perth against the expense which would be incurred for this referendum. [Interjection.] This Bill provides for a referendum.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: They can vote against the site.

HON. J. W. LANGSFORD: But I doubt whether we should not save them the initial expense of the referendum. The matter has not been thought out with the care which we generally expect from our mayors and councillors, although I would like to voice my appreciation of the good work our mayors and councillors do from time to time without a very great amount of acknowledgment being paid to them. But on this occasion I do not think they have brought to bear that business acumen which we might reasonably expect of them. As Mr. Loton pointed out, this sum ought to have included another £12,000 or £15,000 to make the change equitable, and the only chance of the Irwin Street site being successful would be by lumping it together with other sites in Clause 4. If the other sites are deleted as the Colonial Secretary proposes, I do not think the Irwin Street site will have a ghost of a chance of being passed. Knowing that, we ought not to put the ratepayers to the expense even of a referendum by passing the second reading of this Bill. The matter has not had that care and foresight expended upon it which we might reasonably expect from the mayor and councillors of Perth.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT (Metropolitan): I look upon this Bill purely as a referendum to the people of Perth to say whether they will have the Irwin Street site. I agree with Mr. Randell that a better site would be at the corner of the Government Gardens. There is no doubt about that. At the same time this £22,000 mentioned in Clause 3 should, I

think, be £30,000. I think the Government put the value of the Irwin Street site down at £17,000. [MEMBER: They gave £16,000.] At the outside the value is about £10,000. We know that land has been sold within a few yards of that site in the course of the last 12 months at under £10 a foot. [MEMBER: Where.] In Hay Street, immediately behind the property lately occupied by the late J. C. H. James, formerly Commissioner of Titles. That is not very far away. I think this £22,000 should be £30,000 to make up for the difference in price of the land. There is no doubt that they bought the site at an inflated value. The price could be amended with justice to the people of Perth. In my opinion if you place more than one site before them, they will, as Mr. Sholl says, never agree. I would rather see this Bill provide for giving the citizens power to sell the present property to any private individual or any other people and to use the money to get the site they like. I do not see why the Government should bind them to any one place. If the City Council want the land in Irwin Street and the Government are willing to sell, let the Government put a price on it and dispose of it; or if the Government like to bind the council down, let them give the council the first offer or an option. I think the best price that can be got for the town hall site would considerably exceed what the council are getting for it, at any rate by £10,000 or £12,000. [MEMBER: Nearer £30,000.] I think that the more concentrated the Government Offices are the better. If we can get them in one block it will be still better. For that reason if the Government can come to some arrangement with the council it will be preferable. I shall support the Bill.

HON. W. PATRICK: I move that the debate be adjourned.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. member has already spoken.

HON. W. PATRICK: I merely asked a question.

Motion negatived.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East): I have listened to the debate on this Bill with considerable interest, and I certainly feel that we should endeavour to save the council from an error into which they are

likely to fall if we can believe all the remarks we have heard this evening. I honestly think it is a matter requiring much more consideration. [HON. J. M. DREW: Hear, hear.] Personally I think I have heard quite sufficient to convince me that I would be acting in the interests of the city and country if I opposed the Bill.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Surely you will let the citizens decide.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY: It is not altogether a question that affects the citizens of Perth, because I am quite satisfied that if the Government hand over this £22,000 and acquire the town hall site, it will be an impetus to the Government to spend another £50,000 on that site, and it has been shown that the Government have no funds available. From all that I have heard from members this evening, it would be just as well to wait another year or two before we definitely decide to allow the citizens of Perth to force the Government into the position of at least spending £40,000 on the town hall site when they acquire it, and into handing over £22,000 to the City Council. I do not wish to deprive the citizens of Perth of the opportunity of taking a vote on the question, but it has been definitely laid down that the Government are getting the best of the deal.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That is questionable.

HON. W. PATRICK: I think it is the other way about. We are buying back our own land.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY: Many will appreciate that argument. No one has supported the Irwin Street site as the most suitable for the building of a new town hall. Therefore if it comes to a division I am prepared to oppose the Bill. I do not think it will come to a division, but that is the position I take after what has fallen from hon. members to-night.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (East): I have always refrained from taking a part in matters of this kind connected with the advancement of the city of Perth, because I have thought that I was not sufficiently competent to offer an opinion in opposition to those who have studied metropolitan matters more than I have,

and I have always been content to follow the leadership of those I thought were in a better position to support measures calculated to advance the city. At the same time I cannot help thinking that in the present instance, when the revenue of the State is in such a bad position, it is unnecessary that additional expenditure should be entered into. In the first place the Government are giving up a valuable site to the municipality.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is the other way about; the Government are getting it.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: The Government have already given that site, and now they are going to give £22,000 for it and another site. It should have been their own property for the erection of public offices without building another block. If this bargain is made and the town hall site is acquired by the Government to deal with as they think proper, an enormous expenditure will be at once entered into for the erection of offices and public buildings. It is an expenditure that might well be left over until the revenue of the State is in a better position. On the one hand we are asked to impose taxation which is unfair and unjust, and yet provision is to be made for large expenditure. I do not think that is fair. I shall vote against this measure.

HON. J. M. DREW: I move that the debate be adjourned. I wish to make some investigations.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Can the hon. member move the adjournment of the debate?

THE PRESIDENT: I think not. It is not fifteen minutes since the last motion to adjourn the debate was negatived.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (in reply): If no other member wishes to speak, I desire to say a few words in reply. I did not know until this evening that the Perth ratepayers had so many representatives in this House. It is the duty of members sent to this House to do what is best for the country. The ratepayers send councillors to the council to do the best for the ratepayers. I do not think any fault can be found because the Government are said to be getting a

good bargain. I think it should rather commend itself to the House, because we are here as representatives of the people of the State and not as representatives of the ratepayers or of the people of Perth. I would point out in answer to Mr. Randell, who said that the ratepayers of Perth were not quite justified in building a town hall, that this Bill will not prevent their building a town hall whether they get the Irwin Street site or not. They will have exactly the same powers as now in regard to building a town hall. Certainly the ratepayers can demand a poll, because the council must float a loan, and the ratepayers can demand that a poll be taken on any loan before it is given effect to. I would like also to make it clear that it was not the idea of the Government at all to secure this piece of land or to have this exchange; it was solely the idea of the City Council. They approached the Government on several occasions. They approached former Governments and they approached this Government. They said they had gone into the matter and had an architectural opinion on the present site, and they were fully convinced that the present site was not suitable, that it was too noisy and too small to build a town hall on. They also stated that if the present site had been bigger, possibly they might have been able to build a town hall by having offices around it and the hall inside; but the site was found to be altogether too small for that. I think the Government are making a fair bargain. The Government would not have entertained the proposal or brought it before Parliament if they were not convinced that they were getting a *quid pro quo*. We are satisfied we are getting a fair deal for the country in this exchange.

HON. G. RANDELL: And something more than that.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If we see that the taxpayers of this State are getting good value in this exchange, our duty ends there. I do not think the council were unanimous, but they were almost unanimous over this exchange. Something has been said that the Irwin Street site is too small. It is an area of one rood 26 perches, with 550 links frontage to Irwin Street and 206 links (136 feet) frontage to Hay Street and

St. George's Terrace. I think that is sufficient. They may have to take off a small portion to widen Irwin Street; but even with that, it leaves them a very fine strip of land. There was talk of buying a strip of land so as to maintain the original width. In answer to the question raised by Mr. Patrick, the transfer has been made to the City Council of the old police court site. I think that was made a little over 12 months ago, in Mr. Rason's time. The transfer is absolute, but it has been put in writing that it is to be used only for the purpose of building a town hall. Something has been said that the council were not to get the transfer until the town hall was built. That is wrong. The transfer has taken place, but it can only be used for the purpose of a town hall. Mr. Patrick said I was opposed to that. I certainly was. I maintain that the Government of the day had no right to transfer it; but I came in too late--the transfer had been made. All that is past and gone. The council have the transfer, and now we propose to get them to transfer this land back to us and to give them in exchange the Irwin Street block and £22,000. This is after all only a Bill asking the ratepayers of Perth if they will approve of it. It is entirely in their hands. If they are getting such a bad bargain, I do not suppose, being sensible business men, they are at all likely to agree to it. Members are certainly wrong if they follow the advice of Mr. Hamersley and do not agree to the Bill. It is certainly not for us as representatives of the people to say that the City Council are not getting good value, and that therefore we should not pass the Bill. We pass the Bill, but it is for the ratepayers of Perth to say whether they are satisfied or not. I take it that it is for them to say whether they are satisfied and not for the members of this House.

On motion by HON. J. T. GLOWREY debate adjourned.

MOTION—BUBONIC PLAGUE INQUIRY, GERALDTON.

TO ADOPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS.

Order read for resuming the debate from the 3rd of October, on the motion by the HON. J. M. DREW that the re-

commendations of the select committee be adopted.

Question put (without farther debate), and passed.

BILL—LAND TAX.

TO IMPOSE A TAX.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from the 2nd October (having been suspended until the machinery measure was first dealt with).

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (in reply): If no other member wishes to speak on the question, I may say a few words in reply. I take it to be the wish of the House that we should pass the second reading formally. As members know, the tax provided in the Bill before the House is to be 1½d in the pound for the first year. If members wish to move any amendment, they cannot do so on the second reading but in Committee; therefore I presume members have no objection to assent now to the second reading, and after that is passed I will move to adjourn the Committee stage until the Land Tax Assessment Bill comes back from the Assembly.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (East): Though I may stand alone in the opinions I intend to express on the Bill, I do so fearlessly, knowing I shall be doing that which will meet with the approval of my constituents and the agricultural settlers throughout the State, and I know they are looking forward with the greatest anxiety to the way in which the House will deal with this Bill. They think their interests will be protected by this House, and are looking with the greatest anxiety to this Bill being dealt with by the House in a way which I consider it ought to have been dealt with at the start. If the agricultural settlers had been supported by the whole of the members representing the interests of the different constituencies, the most important constituencies of the whole of the State, the agriculturists and farmers, I know what would have been the fate of the Bill. The Government have introduced a Bill which they know is unpopular. I know that throughout the

whole of the most important districts of the State meeting after meeting has been held expressive of the public opinion, condemning this land tax as being most undesirable in the interests of the people. The settlers consider it unnecessary and undesirable in the interests of the State, unfair to the whole of the landed proprietors, and unfair to the new selectors, because they know that persons have made their selections under a distinct understanding that there would be no tax.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: You voted to tax the selectors.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: That is a different matter altogether. These settlers came here and settled on the soil in the belief that there would be no land tax, that they would be exempt. What has been the result? No sooner have they settled here than they find themselves taxed by the roads boards, and then they find a land tax has been introduced which will be a very heavy burden for them to bear. The Government endeavoured to make the tax as light as possible to the new selectors for a period of five years, but it will come down severely on the descendants of the old settlers. An expression of opinion was made that the old settlers were the people that members wanted to get at. That was the dream of one person holding an important position in the country; it was the dream of his life that the large estates should be burst up and taxed in this way. I contend the tax is unjust and unfair, and this House is not right in entertaining a measure which cannot commend itself as being thoroughly right, just, and honest. In very few instances people hold larger blocks than they have a right to hold; but they have bought the land and paid for it, they have lived on it and improved it and made homesteads on it to the advantage of the whole of the State, but they seem to have been sighted with jealousy by persons who would like to see them taxed. I speak very strongly, for I know the feeling throughout the whole of the important districts in Western Australia, the large agricultural districts to which the State will have to look in the future for its advancement. I know what the general opinion is. I have resolutions before me which have been passed in

various parts of the most important districts of this State. We know resolutions were carried unanimously at Katauning in the first instance, then at Beverley, York, at Northam in two or three instances, at Jennapullen and Grass Valley, declaring against a land tax and strengthening the House to reject the measure, because the people considered the tax undesirable in the interests of the country, and unfair to themselves and the landholders. I appeal to the House at this juncture to reject the measure as undesirable. I have not taken any underhand part in this matter. I have endeavoured to act straightforwardly and in a manly way, and I think every member in the House who has any regard to the future welfare of the State will see that it is an undesirable measure. We know that we have had a number of splendid speeches made in this House by members who have carefully considered the matter in every possible way, and they have shown and exemplified to the House that the measure is undesirable, and that the amount of revenue which it is proposed to collect by the tax could have been saved in many different ways. In considering this matter I have run up a number of items on which saving could be effected. I do not hesitate to say that over £300,000 of revenue could be saved without any great effort on the part of the Government if there had been any determination to do so. I will name a few of the items on which a saving could be effected. First of all £80,000 could have been saved on the railways of the country. There is no gainsaying that. Why should such an enormous amount of money be expended on railway improvements at Fremantle, when those improvements are not necessary, and when the finances of the State will not justify the expenditure? Why should we subject the State to such an enormous loss on the Coolgardie Water Scheme, knowing that it was understood when the scheme was entered into, as has already been explained by many members, that it would be a reproductive work and that it was supposed to pay for its construction in the course of 20 years? I know that to be the case, and yet for the last three years there has been a loss of £80,000 a year on that scheme. Why should not the Government have taken a

proper view of the matter and made this one of the objects of their reduction? It has not shown the Government were wise and discreet. Notwithstanding the deficiency in the revenue and the necessity for more taxation, what do we find the Government doing? Only a few days ago we found them making a concession to the timber companies to reduce the freights on timber to such an extent that the State will lose £15,000. Was that wise administration? Then on the other hand the Government made a concession to the Southern Cross people by giving them a double supply of water, putting the State to a loss of another £15,000. This is the way that revenue is to be wasted by the present Government. Are they a desirable Government? I call them hybrid, neither one thing nor another. They resort to measures by which they can get the support of the Labour party to force the country into a position that is undesirable. I am here to speak, and I mean to be independent. I may not be long in a position to address the House, therefore I hope what I say now will meet with some consideration at the hands of members whom I have hitherto looked on as staunch friends of the country; but we have received no consideration at their hands, and I have very little faith in what they will do for the welfare of this country in the future. There is a very strong feeling of disinclination not to oppose the Government because they are the representatives of the people. Here is a measure which has not been called for by the people; there is no necessity for it; it is an unpopular measure; the whole of the country is against it. If you go through all the districts mostly affected, I unhesitatingly say the people will indicate that they do not want a land tax. We want to encourage population here, and the future interests of the State depend on the settlement of the soil. But we are passing a measure which will deter people from coming here; they will feel that they are living under a Government who are not fit to protect their interests but who introduce measures to increase the revenue, and which will be unjust and unfair. My contention is that this House should never entertain anything that would not be strictly admissible in private life. I think when

measures are introduced we should not pass them without due consideration. When a lease is granted of land and arrangements made for the disposal of land, whatever those arrangements may be they should be adhered to to the letter, just as persons would deal with them in private life. If the Government do not do that, I shall not consider it my duty to support measures of this kind. Feeling as I do in this matter and with a fervent desire to do that which I know is the wish everywhere throughout the State—although we have considered the first Bill, and as this is what may be considered the padlock of the whole concern—I move an amendment—

That the word "now" be struck out, and the words "this day six months" be added.

I hope members will support me in this amendment, and I can assure them that if they do they will be looked on as friends of the State.

HON. J. W. LANGSFORD (Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the debate be adjourned to this day week.

HON. S. J. HAYNES (South-East): I move—

That the debate be adjourned to this day fortnight.

In common with other country members, I should like to be present at the third-reading stage of this Bill. For some time past members have been going backward and forward between their homes and the House without a decision on this question. If a fortnight is allowed, another place will have time to deal with and return to us the amendments we have made here in the assessment measure.

THE PRESIDENT: I must remind the hon. member that a motion for adjournment must be proposed and seconded without discussion.

HON. W. T. LOTON (East): I second Mr. Haynes's amendment (a fortnight).

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. C. A. Piesse): I second Mr. Langsford's motion (a week).

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would ask members to think of this. The Government, before introducing their financial proposals, waited till this House

had agreed to the second reading of the Land Tax Assessment Bill, and were satisfied that the House would assent to the land tax. They brought down their proposals accordingly. This Bill is part and parcel of the Assessment Bill, which has passed its Committee stage here. To adjourn the debate for a fortnight would be altogether unfair to the Government. The Estimates are now before the Assembly; we shall probably receive the Assessment Bill back on this day week; and then it is but fair to the Government that we should know whether the tax is to be 1d., 1½d., or 2d. I cannot understand Mr. Haynes's reason for a fortnight's adjournment. If he cannot be here for a fortnight, after all he is only one member. I ask members to agree to an adjournment for a week, and then if a farther adjournment is necessary I shall not object.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there ought to be any discussion on this. The question is that the debate be adjourned till this day fortnight.

Motion (a fortnight) put and negatived.

Motion (that the debate be adjourned to this day week) put and negatived.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT (Metropolitan): I second Mr. Dempster's amendment (six months).

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM (North): On this Bill I can only reiterate the arguments I have used so frequently and almost *ad nauseam*. The Government have thought fit to bring down the Land Tax Assessment Bill, and to state they require a certain sum of money to carry on the country, and they are prepared to economise to the extent of some £200,000. If they can economise to that extent they deserve some support from the House in their proposal to raise the extra £60,000. It has been a moot question among many whether an income tax would not have been better than a land tax. That has been explained by the Colonial Secretary, who shows clearly that were an income tax imposed, something like £137,000 a year already raised by the dividend tax would have to be sacrificed. Therefore, after giving the matter every consideration, the Government found it in the best

interests of the State to propose a land tax. The Assessment Bill was not introduced with a view to breaking up large estates or harassing land-owners, but purely as a financial tax, as a method of raising money. In these circumstances I do not feel inclined to take the responsibility of throwing out the Government proposals. I must reiterate the assertion that those who are prepared to throw out the financial proposals of the Government should show something better to take their place. Hitherto no one has shown anything better; therefore I regret I cannot see my way to support Mr. Dempster's amendment.

HON. F. CONNOR (North): The remarks made on the Assessment Bill were I think sufficient to show that in my opinion the present Bill should not be before the country. If, as I think the House has determined, the taxation proposal is to be mutilated or cut in two, if the Government are to receive £30,000 instead of the £60,000 they originally anticipated, the passing of the Bill will be a bad advertisement for the country. I feel almost inclined to pledge myself to vote against any cutting down. But we know what will happen. That is a very strong reason why the second reading of the Bill should not be passed. There is no need for obstruction. This proposal is the worst advertisement that the country can have; and for reasons that I gave when speaking on the Assessment Bill, I will vote for Mr. Dempster's amendment.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): Some of the objections I had to the Assessment Bill have disappeared with the exemption clauses. I believe that Bill is now fairer to the country than it was when first introduced; and therefore I cannot see my way to vote with Mr. Dempster. I do not know that I should like to express all I think of the matter; but I consider it unwise, having definitely accepted the Assessment Bill and sent it back with amendments to another place, to throw out the Tax Bill which is now before us. I think we should have a considerable adjournment, so that we may have an opportunity of getting back the Assessment Bill, and perhaps

of discussing with the Assembly the amendments we have made. We do not know how that Bill will be dealt with by the other House. A week's adjournment will bring us to the period of the Royal Agricultural Show, when meetings of the House will be sparsely attended.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I will agree to a fortnight's adjournment.

HON. G. RANDELL: I wish to have a House as full as possible, so that we may ascertain the opinions of members. The improvements made here to the Assessment Bill will make it more acceptable to country members than it was when introduced. I at first did my best by speaking and voting to throw out the Bill, and for doing so I was willing to take the responsibility. But it seems to me to throw out this Bill at the present moment would be highly inadvisable. As a member of the Legislative Council I will not allow my feelings to run away with my judgment. I think we should by so doing place ourselves in a wrong position with the country, and certainly with the Government and with a large majority in another place. I quite understand Mr. Dempster's feeling in the matter; but I think it would be unwise to take at the present moment the step he proposes. If this Bill is now thrown out, all our labours on the Assessment Bill will be valueless, as without this Bill there will be no means of levying the tax. I should like to support the hon. member, especially after his earnest appeal to members to have the interests of the country at heart. I am sure the hon. member will acquit me of treating those interests with levity and unconcern, as I think he will acquit every member in this House, and that he will believe them to be animated with every desire to act in the interests of the country.

HON. W. MALEY (South-East): I hope there will not be a long discussion on this motion, and I hope there will be a division to-night. So far as the consideration of this Bill is concerned, and so far as any consideration of the Government is concerned, the Government must have been seized of all the responsibility when they put the measure before the House to-night. Excuses may be given as to why we should not vote against the

Bill on this or any other occasion; but on every occasion it is my intention to vote against this iniquitous measure. I was not surprised at what took place in connection with the particular division. There is always a hitch; but if members are sincere and desire their convictions to find exposition and permanent record in *Hansard*, they should act according to their speeches, and vote in the direction in which their convictions run. I would be slow to cast any reflection on any member or individual. We are all influenced by circumstances or reason, or we would not be on our legs endeavouring to convince each other that our opinions are correct. I think there has been so much evasion of the main issue for some time past, that I trust no motion for adjournment will be passed, but that a division will be taken to-night. Then, whether I be in a majority or not, I will have an opportunity of placing my views before my constituents and showing that I am here to vote as I speak.

HON. W. PATRICK (Central): As members are aware, I strongly opposed the second reading of the Land Tax Assessment Bill, but after full debate the second reading of that measure was passed; and after taking so much time over that measure and leading the country to believe that it would be carried through, my opinion is that we would stultify ourselves by rejecting this Bill, which is really a portion of the Land Tax Assessment Bill. I do not think it necessary to talk at any length on the subject. I simply say that so far as I am concerned, seeing that the measure was fully discussed and carried by a majority of this House, I consider it my duty—while I sympathise with my friend Mr. Dempster and with those who consider it their duty to oppose the Bill—after the Land Tax Assessment Bill has been so well discussed and carried by a majority of this House, to support the second reading of this measure, and to oppose any amendment.

HON. M. L. MOSS (West): I have already given my reasons with regard to the machinery measure. I have only two sentences to say in regard to this Bill. We sent the machinery measure to another place, and this Bill is a

corollary to it. I am quite prepared to vote for the second reading, because I understand that a large number of members in this House are pledged, according to their second-reading speeches, to make the tax 1d. instead of 1½d.; and I vote for the second reading on the clear understanding that in Committee we reduce the tax from 1½d. to 1d., and on the understanding that the whole of the exemptions we cut out of the machinery Bill are accepted by another place. If they are not, and the tax is thus not made as fair as it should be made, then I will assist Mr. Dempster or any other member in preventing the measure becoming law. I hope the Committee stage of this Bill will be taken at once, so that we may know that the tax is to be fixed at 1d. instead of 1½d.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I move that the debate be adjourned for a fortnight.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. member cannot move the same motion twice in the same debate.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If it is the desire of hon. members, I move that the debate be adjourned for a fortnight.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	16
Noes	...	...	...	7
Majority for ...				9

Ayes.	Noes.
Hon. G. Bellingham	Hon. E. M. Clarke
Hon. J. D. Connolly	Hon. F. Connor
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. Kingsmill
Hon. J. T. Glowrey	Hon. M. L. Moss
Hon. J. W. Hackett	Hon. R. F. Sholl
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. W. Wright
Hon. S. J. Haynes	Hon. W. Maley
Hon. J. W. Langford	(Teller).
Hon. W. T. Loton	
Hon. R. D. McKenzie	
Hon. E. McLarty	
Hon. W. Patrick	
Hon. C. A. Piessé	
Hon. G. Randell	
Hon. C. Summers	
Hon. C. E. Dempster	
(Teller).	

Motion thus passed, the debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past 9 o'clock, until the next day.