

Surveyor General, order that such piece of land shall be deemed to have been included in the grant.

New clause, 8—Right-of-way on subdivision to be easement appurtenant:

On motion by the PREMIER, new clause added as follows:—

Every right-of-way shown and marked as such upon any map or plan deposited with the Registrar, under the provisions of Part Eight of the principal Act, on the subdivision of any land shall, unless the contrary is stated, be deemed an easement appurtenant to the land comprised in such map or plan and abutting upon such right-of-way, and not a public way or thoroughfare.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10 minutes past 10 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 24th September, 1902.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

EXPLORATORY TRIP, MR. HILL.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (HON. H. Gregory), in presenting certain papers connected with the exploratory trip of Mr. Hill, moved for by the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas), informed the House that these papers did not include the original papers submitted by Mr.

Hill to the Mines Department. In consequence of the absence of those original papers, but little opportunity was afforded to members for determining whether or not the Mines Department had acted properly in the matter.

MR. THOMAS, as a personal explanation, said that in the debate on the motion for these papers the Minister for Mines had stated he would like the original documents submitted by Mr. Hill to the department to be laid on the table. Thereupon he (Mr. Thomas) stated he was not Mr. Hill's keeper, that he was in no way connected with Mr. Hill, who had merely been an employee of his two and a half years ago, and that therefore he could not guarantee that Mr. Hill's original papers should be included among the documents laid on the table. At the same time, he promised that he would do his best to obtain the papers, so that they might be available for the inspection of members. He did endeavour to obtain the originals, but had not succeeded. He wished it to be most emphatically understood that he had no connection whatever with Mr. Hill. From various statements made in the debate, hon. members might have derived an impression that Mr. Hill and himself were working in concert in this matter; therefore to such inference he wished to give the most emphatic and unqualified denial.

OTHER PAPERS.

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS: 1, Papers relating to Giles's Patent Axle Box and Drawing, No. 156 (ordered 10th September). 2, Copy of Alteration to Railway Classification and Rate Book relating to ores, wharfage rates on pitch, and carriage of gas liquors.

Ordered: To lie on the table.

PAPERS—G.M. LEASE (KALGOORLIE), TRANSFER.

MR. J. RESIDE (Hannans) moved:—

That all papers in connection with the land (near Boulder City) held by the Kalgoorlie Electric Light and Power Company be laid upon the table of the House.

The company owned a good portion of land near Boulder, part of which was under lease, and portion was a gold-mining lease. It was understood that negotiations were proceeding between the company and the Government for the

alteration of the title to the land, and it was desired to get the papers to find out what was the present title of the company to the land, and what was the object of the negotiations going on. He moved the motion at the request of a number of his constituents living in the vicinity of the company's land. He wished to make public what the terms were under which the company held the land at the present time, and what was the object of the alteration of title—whether it was desired to get a fee simple or an extension of lease.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory), while recognising the importance of having the papers on the table, and sympathising with the object of the mover, explained that it was the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill relating to this question of title, and it would be necessary to some extent to have ready access to the papers. After the papers had been laid on the table and perused by members, could they be returned to the departments to which they belonged?

THE SPEAKER: The Standing Orders gave permission to the Speaker to allow papers to be removed from the table.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: In that case there was no objection to laying the papers on the table.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—LICENSES (LIQUOR, ETC.), RESTRICTION ON ALIENS.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle) moved:—

That this House is of opinion that it is expedient that Bills should be introduced providing,—(a.) That no license under the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act be issued or renewed to any person who is not a British or naturalised British subject. (b.) That no license of any kind be issued or renewed in future to other than British or naturalised British subjects.

He said: It has become evident lately to all members of the House that some alteration in the licensing law is required. At present the licensing benches under the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act take no notice whatever whether an applicant is a naturalised British subject or a foreigner; and I think matters have arrived at such a stage in Western Australia that it is quite time something was done. Wine and beer licenses

seem to have been issued without any great exercise of discretion on the part of the licensing bench, and the result is, at any rate at Fremantle, a seaport town, that we have a number of wine and beer saloons which I am sorry—and I am not exaggerating—to say are a disgrace to any civilised community. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan) was in my company this morning when we accidentally happened to witness a scene outside one of these dens in Fremantle, which I venture to say would even shame the worst inhabitants of King Street, which I understand to be a very bad locality in Perth. These saloons, the licenses of which are held principally by foreigners, and mostly by Italians—I hardly like to say it—are really not only low drinking shops, but houses of assignation of the worst degree. A case which has occupied the attention of our courts lately, and of the people of this country to a large extent, shows to what a length this evil has gone in Western Australia. We had mention made during a late trial in the Supreme Court of a certain place at Coolgardie, which very probably comes under the strictures which I have been making on this sort of establishment. I think, notwithstanding our boast of freedom in the British Empire, it is quite time, at least in Western Australia, that some restriction was placed on the indiscriminate issue of licenses to people of this objectionable nature. I yield to no one in my admiration for the grand Italian nation; but unfortunately in this State we are getting the scum of the Mediterranean seaports, absolutely the worst class of people it would be possible to admit to our shores. I am fortified in this statement by the fact that the people in northern Italy look down with far greater contempt upon the people we are getting here than we do. The northern Italians, the Italians of the rural districts, and the Italians of many of the artistic cities in Italy, look down with contempt upon the class of people we are getting into this country. I do not want to make too much use of the case which figured prominently before the people of this State lately, but the question is: are we to allow our licensing benches to give licenses to these people, who after all only come here to make a few hundred pounds and go back to their

own country? They do not bring their women-folk; or if they do, I am sorry to say they bring them under circumstances which are not only disgraceful and degrading to themselves, but degrading to the people of this State.

MR. THOMAS: To whom are you referring?

MR. DIAMOND: I think I have made myself perfectly clear. Are we to continue to allow this class of people to go into our licensing courts and to obtain licenses to sell intoxicating liquors with perfect freedom, while they have not even the recommendation of being subjects of the British Crown? They treat us with contempt. They will not even take the trouble to become naturalised. This is a crying evil and shame, and it is quite time for the Parliament and people of Western Australia to take some steps to put a stop to it. I am referring now to that portion of the motion relating to liquor licenses. An evil has also cropped up which, although not so degrading, is at the same time a public nuisance. It would be some justification for the issue of fishing licenses or fish-boat licenses to this class of people if even the price of fish—an absolutely necessary article of diet—had been reduced to the people of this State; but as a resident of Fremantle and a fish-eater, if I may be allowed the expression, I may say that since their advent the price of fish has gradually been increasing to the consumer. There appears to be a ring—I know there is a ring—because a European fish-dealer or shop-keeper going to the wharf at Fremantle where fishing boats come in, cannot buy a few baskets of fish. These Italians do not understand English when an English, Scotch, or Irish person comes along to purchase fish for sale.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Are there not some Greeks?

MR. DIAMOND: There may be. I am not such an expert in nationalities as to distinguish among these aliens, whom I will describe generally as objectionable people from the shores of the Mediterranean. These people do not understand English when asked to sell fish to a British shopkeeper. I think this is most objectionable. These people are not naturalised British subjects, and make no attempt to become so: they never will

unless we force them. If we stop them from having licenses unless they become naturalised British subjects, they will not come here and remain twelve months in the State. I believe the Attorney General will agree with me that a man has to be 12 months here before he can be naturalised. I think that if what I advocate were adopted, they could not come here and do the damage they now accomplish. Without passing any stringent legislation to exclude them, we can to a large extent keep them out by passing a measure similar to that I have referred to. I will say farther, for fear there should be any doubt in the minds of members about the price of this necessary article of food to the people being increased by the coming of these objectionable people, that I can assure members of the House that these people actually dog our own fishermen from one part of the coast to the other. They have sentries down the coast. I am stating literal truth and fact.

MR. THOMAS: Of what nationality?

MR. DIAMOND: Italians and Greeks. They have the coast actually picketed. Some of our old fishermen families, who have resided in this State all their lives, and the fathers of some of whom also lived here, fish for a certain time and go away again, prospecting the same as miners. Do any of these Italian and Greek fellows go out prospecting to find new fields? They wait till the Britisher goes out and finds new fields, and then they reap the advantage. It is precisely the same with fishermen. For two generations fishermen in Western Australia have adopted the system of leaving fishing banks alone for a year or two and allowing the supply to be renewed, then going back again. At the present time, if they go on to a bank, within 24 hours they are surrounded by ten or a dozen Greeks or Italians, who simply clean out the banks, and fishing is ruined. As an angler I used to make sure of going out on the Swan River and getting a basket of fish, but I cannot do so now. I have to go to Mandurah, and even at Mandurah these people are clearing out the fish at Safety Bay. They have also gone as far as Geraldton. They are destroying the fish along this coast. These people who come here have no money, no capital, they live like dogs, and they

pay no rents, rates, or taxes, and very little in the shape of customs duty. It is quite time this House should step in and try to preserve the industry for our own law-abiding British subjects.

MR. THOMAS: Do you include Afghans among British subjects?

MR. DIAMOND: When the time comes to discuss the Bill which I suggest shall be introduced, I shall be prepared to go into all details.

MR. THOMAS: Do you include Afghans?

MR. DIAMOND: An Afghan is not a British subject. I presume it will be in the province of this House, if my motion be carried, to define, when the Bill comes before us, who shall be regarded as a British subject or a naturalised British subject; and I will farther say that I will welcome, when the time comes, any amendment that will exclude coloured men altogether.

MR. THOMAS: If they are naturalised British subjects?

MR. DIAMOND: There has been such a lot of trouble over that question between the Commonwealth Government and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain—and it appears the Government are no nearer a settlement of the question than they were twelve months ago—that I do not think the hon. member can expect me to define the outlines exactly.

MR. THOMAS: But you are introducing the motion.

MR. DIAMOND: Suffice it to say that when the time comes I shall welcome any Bill which will exclude these Asiatics, whether or not it meet the views of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. I ask hon. members, in justice to themselves and to this State, to pass the motion.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie): I second the motion.

MR. W. M. PURKISS (Perth): On the face of this motion, it is obviously altogether too wide and sweeping. It seeks, by the aid of a Bill to be introduced here, to prevent a license of any kind under the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act being issued to a person who is not a British or a naturalised British subject. The mover's remarks have been confined to one or two particular nationalities, especially to one; but the motion refers to all nationalities, to men of every clime who are not naturalised British subjects. On the face of it, this would

not only work a manifest injustice, but would be altogether absurd. Here we are encouraging Germans to trade with us; we encourage them to send us their ships; the German line of steamers was the pioneer line to Fremantle from the other side of the globe, and we find persons in every station of life only too freely patronising that line. We encourage the French to trade with us. [MR. DIAMOND: They are not licensed.] All classes of society patronise their steamers. Yet we are now asked to debar, by virtue of a Bill, any Americans, Germans, French, and other foreigners from seeking a home in this State—[MR. DIAMOND: Nonsense!]—and from applying for licenses under the liquor law. The thing is manifestly absurd. The objects sought to be attained by the hon. member are all embraced in the Federal Act relating to the prohibition of undesirable immigrants. That Act, which has been criticised as one of the most drastic measures ever brought before any legislature of the world, seeks to do what the hon. member would do by his proposed Bill. The burden of his remarks seems to be that unnaturalised persons who are otherwise undesirable should be prevented from landing and from carrying on business in this country.

MR. DIAMOND: No; there is not a word about landing.

MR. PURKISS: He has referred to the undesirable class, the scum, who should not hold any license of any kind whatever, and whose landing here and carrying on business should be prevented. I quite agree that we should exclude scum, no matter what their nationality; and that is what is sought by the Undesirable Immigrants Act. [MR. DIAMOND: No.] The question, however, is one of administration. But when the hon. member refers to licenses under the Wines, Beer, etc., Act having been granted to a very undesirable class of low Italians, he is reflecting on the administration of that Act at the hands of Mr. Fairbairn, the Hon. Mr. Briggs and Mr. Lilly, who compose the Fremantle licensing bench. The present Act gives that bench ample power to preclude the issue of a license to anyone who is not respectable; and those magistrates have an absolutely uncontrolled discretion to grant or to refuse licenses. The Act

confers upon men of position, men of respectability, and men of the world, the power to prevent undesirable, untrustworthy, and disreputable persons, no matter whence they come, from obtaining liquor licenses; so that if any undesirable practice has grown up, it has been caused by the faulty administration of the licensing bench. What more power is required? We have nominated by the Government three men of substance, and men of the world. The chief magistrate is the chairman. In Fremantle, the gentlemen I have named are the licensing bench, and in Perth there is a similar bench, composed of men of integrity, clothed with power to prevent the issue of licenses to any undesirable persons. What more can we do? If a Bill be introduced in the terms of this motion, we shall place in the hands of somebody its administration. If he administer it properly, well and good; if not, the same abuses as those complained of will crop up. We place in the hands of a good bench the administration of the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act. If licenses have been issued to unsuitable persons, the fault lies with the bench. Its members are assisted by the police, who make inquiries; and if undesirable licenses have unwittingly been issued, the bench has power to cancel them on good cause shown. The hon. member has referred to the notorious case which a few weeks ago occupied the attention of the Criminal Court in Perth; and I understand the burden of his remarks to mean that the prisoners held a license. Nothing of the kind.

MR. DIAMOND: I was speaking of Armanesco.

MR. PURKISS: I understood he spoke of the notorious case in the Criminal Court; and I challenge the hon. member to say that Cozzi and Guidotti held a license.

MR. DIAMOND: Everybody understood to whom I referred.

MR. PURKISS: However, that is beside the question. But I think it would be deplorable to pass a motion to the effect that no one except a British subject shall be licensed. After encouraging, as we do, many people of various nationalities to come here and make this country their home, it would be deplorable to say that they shall not exercise the

rights possessed by other people. I am not now speaking of the undesirable class. I say we have the right to legislate, and many colonies have legislated, against undesirable immigrants, even of our nationality. In New Zealand, the law prevents the landing of persons, even from England and English-born, if they are affected by contagious diseases of any kind. It was even sought to legislate, and I think with success, against consumptives. That is all right. Undesirable immigrants, people who will sow the seeds of contention, sedition, or disease—let us legislate against them. The Federal Government have, so far as they can, so legislated; and if that legislation has not attained the true object for which it was introduced, the fault lies simply with the administration. The Act of Parliament is in its wording perfect; but the administration is faulty. And we have in this Parliament, year after year, passed splendid Acts; but they are dead letters for want of pure and perfect administration. I think hon. members will agree that the motion is, on the face of it, too sweeping; and that while it might cure a few existing evils, it would most likely work a manifest injustice in many other directions.

MR. F. WALLACE (Mt. Magnet): While I recognise the good intentions of the mover, I must to some extent agree with the last speaker, that the whole of the mover's remarks were directed against the holders of wine and beer licenses and of fishermen's licenses; and I think that fact is to a large extent a reflection on the gentlemen who, by the authority of Parliament, administer the Acts now in force.

MR. TAYLOR: Is it a crime to reflect on the licensing bench?

MR. WALLACE: The gentlemen comprising the licensing bench must have some discretionary power; and I think it safe for us to leave power in their hands to discriminate between desirable and undesirable applicants for licenses.

MR. JOHNSON: They have failed in the past.

MR. TAYLOR: Had they done their duty, there would have been no reason for this motion.

MR. WALLACE: I for one am prepared to leave that phase of the question

to the licensing bench; but what really brought me to my feet was that portion of the motion which deals with naturalised subjects. It is well known that so far the naturalisation of an alien in Australia does not hold good throughout the Commonwealth. People naturalised in another State are not thereby naturalised here; and we cannot say that persons naturalised in the Eastern States, and who come here, are undesirable, while we have known them in the Eastern States to be really good citizens. Moreover, I should like to hear the Attorney General on the question: what right have we to pass legislation of this sort when Section 51 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act gives the Federal Parliament power, amongst other things, to make laws for the naturalisation of aliens? If we pass this motion, a Bill will be introduced dealing with naturalised subjects, when the Federal Parliament must sooner or later pass a Bill over-riding what we do here.

MR. HASTIE: No.

MR. THOMAS: Yes.

MR. WALLACE: I am now dealing with the question of naturalisation; not with the issue of wine and beer licenses.

MR. DIAMOND: I have not raised the question of the right of this State to naturalise people. I spoke only of the rights aliens would have after naturalisation.

MR. WALLACE: I wish to show the hon. member how far-reaching is his motion. With his object I agree. Let us consider the second part of the motion, "That no license of any kind be issued or renewed in future to other than British or naturalised subjects." The member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) seems to have a wide knowledge of the Commonwealth Constitution Act; but will that stop the issue of miners' rights and of mineral licenses to aliens on the goldfields?

MR. HASTIE: You say the Commonwealth Parliament proposes to abolish them.

MR. WALLACE: I am reminded of firewood licenses also.

MR. TAYLOR: To abolish their issue to aliens would be a good job.

MR. WALLACE: But there are many results of the proposed Bill with which I yet hardly agree.

MR. JOHNSON: Leave such questions to be settled when the Bill is brought in.

MR. WALLACE: Are we to pass this motion, and afterwards reject a Bill introduced on the strength of it? I fail to see the consistency of such course. Hon. members evidently think the motion has reference to a matter not altogether easy to deal with, and I utter these few words only in order that the subject may be duly considered. What is the use of passing a motion of this sort and encouraging the mover to bring in a Bill, and thereupon directly vetoing that Bill? Rather let us assist the hon. member to frame his motion in such a way that he can base on it a measure which will be acceptable to the House.

MR. JOHNSON: You are putting on the motion an interpretation which the Government will not put on it.

MR. WALLACE: Possibly. I cannot hope that every member will agree with what I say. I merely ask members to consider whether the second part of the motion will not deal with the issue of miners' rights and wood-cutting licenses.

MR. HASTIE: No. The same provision as the motion asks for exists on the goldfields already in respect of miners' rights.

MEMBER: It does not. Anybody can get licenses on the goldfields.

MR. TAYLOR: What about Chinamen?

THE SPEAKER: Order!

MR. WALLACE: Unnaturalised subjects get licenses every day in the week. I say that either unnaturalised foreigners or naturalised subjects can obtain licenses. My desire is to assist the mover to attain his end, which, however, I do not think this motion will reach. That is the point I want to emphasise. Although in sympathy with its object, I cannot support the motion as it stands.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): If I understand the mover aright, he desires to affirm, as a principle—[MR. DIAMOND: That is so]—that undesirable persons who are not British subjects but are foreigners unnaturalised, shall not have the privilege of obtaining licenses of certain kinds. I am strongly of opinion that this motion ought to pass, because the abuses growing up in this State by reason of the presence of certain undesirable immigrants who have been allowed to land are most

serious. As to the details, no doubt the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Wallace) and myself will agree on many points; but I do not consider this the time to discuss details relative to the component clauses of the measure contemplated. The principle which I understand the mover to affirm is, that it is desirable to pass legislation which will prevent any licensing bench from granting a license at all under the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act to an unnaturalised foreigner. If such a provision were on our statute-book at the present time, it would strike at a great many people who hold licenses and who certainly ought not to hold them, and the existence of whose businesses and the prevalence of whose practices are detrimental to the best interests of the State. I have no desire to reflect on the licensing bench; but we have to deal with the fact that certain undesirable persons have licenses. How they got those licenses is not the question to be discussed. That they ought not to hold licenses I think members generally will pretty well agree, if only they take the trouble to discover the facts. This is a subject in connection with which the House might well endeavour to impress on the Government the desirability of introducing a Bill. The subsidiary question of the fishing industry is an important one in its way, and I confirm all that the mover has said in regard to the mischief which has been done in this particular direction. I believe that a large quantity of valuable food is being destroyed daily in this State for no other purpose than that of increasing the price of the undestroyed remainder. I believe, also, that the system of fishing here adopted is in a high degree destructive to the fishing industry as an industry. The one simple problem sought to be solved, regardless of all else, by those pursuing the industry is how they can get the largest quantity of fish and how, having got it, they can obtain the highest price for it.

MR. JACOBY: Are the fishmongers the only people who do that?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If they are not the only people who do that, still it does not necessarily follow that we should encourage the practice.

MR. JACOBY: The same end is sought in all trades and businesses.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Still we might bear the evil with better grace if the resultant profit went to our own people, and not to foreigners who own no allegiance to our national life and who contribute nothing to the interests of the State. I hope the Government will see their way clear not only to support the motion but to bring in a measure. I quite recognise that many points will remain for discussion when the measure is brought in; but I consider, nevertheless, that the principle underlying both branches of the motion ought to be affirmed by the House.

MR. S. O. PIGOTT (West Kimberley): May I ask the Premier and Attorney General, through the Chair, whether the Government have not power under existing legislation to make regulations which would cover all the matter under debate, without the necessity for passing fresh legislation?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): I do not agree with the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond) on this motion. I see no reason at all why the licensing bench, who deal with licenses, should not have unfettered discretion to grant licenses to those persons whom they consider qualified to hold them. I have expressed on the public platform the opinion that some details in connection with the administration of our licensing law require alteration, and that there is at present a want of firmness, if I may say it, in the licensing bench. Grave complaints are raised that the licensing bodies are more inclined to grant licenses than to have regard to the interests of the State, or those of the community, and to decide on such considerations the question whether licenses applied for are or are not essential. I am aware that in connection with the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act it is constantly found—I do not say for one moment that this observation applies to every bench—that the most flimsy excuses are accepted as sufficient justification for the granting of licenses. People apply for a license on such a ground as that a tramway or a railway terminus will be opposite their front door; and because of such a fact licenses are granted to them! Why in the name of common-sense a tramway or railway terminus should be a site on which large numbers of thirsty people

should congregate, why in the interests of the State there ought to be licensed houses at such points is past comprehension. I think, also, that the licensing benches do not pay sufficient regard to the *personnel* of the applicant. Applications for the transfer of a license are taken too much as a matter of course. A person who applies for a license in the first instance applies, in nine cases out of ten, for merely a provisional license. A man does not erect an hotel until he has a provisional license. The bench are called on to consider merely the question whether a license shall or shall not be granted for the erection of an hotel. In such case the bench are not called on to inquire into an applicant's personal fitness or otherwise. The only question they have to consider is whether the particular site is one on which an hotel should be built. The license, in that instance, is granted without regard to the personal qualifications of the applicant. Members will easily see that the result is that when the hotel has been erected and the applicant thereupon applies to the licensing bench for a full license, the *personnel* of the applicant, although it should then be considered, is not considered, because the bench not unnaturally take it for granted that the person who built the hotel under a provisional license is himself personally qualified to hold the full license.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How do the members of the bench arrive at that conclusion?

THE PREMIER: I do not know how they arrive at it. Perhaps they do not arrive at it consciously: it is just the natural inference acting on the mind of the bench—an inference which, no doubt, would operate on most people unless a deliberate attempt was made to keep the mind open on the point as to personal fitness.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But if the bench do not consider personal fitness in the first instance, they ought to consider it in the second.

THE PREMIER: I say that, logically, there is no reason for drawing the inference in question; but the fact remains that the original or provisional license having been granted in the first instance at a time when the bench did not consider the question of the applicant's personal fitness, when that applicant

comes before the bench for his full license the justices are apt—indeed, all of us would be apt in the same circumstances, unless we made a deliberate effort to the contrary—to take it almost for granted that the person applying for a full license is personally fitted to hold it. The licensing bench may think themselves morally committed to the granting of the full license. I have said not once but twice or thrice that such an impression is correct neither logically nor according to the Act. I consider that attention should be paid by the licensing bench to personal qualifications of applicants. Moreover, when the approval of the bench for a transfer is sought, that approval is given almost as a matter of form. Again, renewals of licenses are granted time and again as a matter of course. There seems to be a want of personal interest in the bench. Members of licensing courts do not seem to realise that they occupy a position of very great importance to the State, and that as they control the licenses granted within their licensing authority they ought to take some personal interest in, and should endeavour to gain some personal knowledge of, the manner in which hotels are conducted.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The licensing benches should be made elective.

THE PREMIER: Members of a licensing bench might easily, without throwing themselves open to the accusation of being wine bibbers, merely by going about with their eyes even half shut, form a very good idea of the manner in which the various hotels within their district are conducted. Apparently, however, members of licensing benches do no such thing, but simply sit in court, and judge entirely from the evidence submitted to them. They are not, however, on the bench for that purpose. They have an absolute discretion which they are supposed to exercise. In England quite recently a question arose as to whether licensing justices were justified in acting on information which came to them from sources other than witnesses before the court. The licensing bench in question adopted an attitude which I think commendable. They showed a personal interest in the matter of licenses, and having inquired into the number of licenses existing in their district, expressed the opinion that there were too many and

that the number should be reduced. They did, in fact, reduce the number. The objection was raised that in doing so the licensing bench were wrong, because they were acting on facts which had not been brought to their notice by witnesses at the local court. It was held, however, that the bench were entitled to do as they did, having an absolute discretion in the matter. They could not make a general rule in this respect, a rule applying to every application; but they could apply the rule in particular instances. Except on the most clear and convincing evidence justices should, I think, be loth to take away from an hotel a license already granted to it; but justices ought certainly to insist that licensed houses shall be well conducted, that they shall be kept clean, that they shall observe the health laws, and that they shall not be notorious for excessive Sunday trading or excessive drinking bouts. On these points there is grave complaint, I think, to be urged against the licensing benches of this State. But are we not apt, when we realise the defects of our benches, instead of endeavouring to remove those defects, to adopt motions of this nature for the purpose of doing what? For the purpose of shutting out a certain class of people who we think ought not to have licenses, and to that extent interfering with the discretion of the licensing bench. But surely, if we have a bench on whom is cast so large and extensive a discretion as the Licensing Act casts, the bench ought to be able to see that licenses are not granted to undesirable persons.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The fact remains that the benches do not see to it.

THE PREMIER: Then improve the benches. When I refer to undesirable persons, I do not wish it to be understood that I consider a person undesirable simply because he is a foreigner. I do not think that line has yet been drawn, and I do not think it ought to be drawn. I am not aware that any State of the Commonwealth, or indeed any part of the British Empire, has made so wide a rule as that. There are courts held for licensing purposes in London as there are here, and there are a number of restaurants run by Italians in that city. [MEMBER: Naturalised?] I do not think all are naturalised. I would say, however, that I cannot understand what there is about

naturalisation that makes a bad foreigner, when naturalised, a good British subject.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He has to live here some years and must have a good character.

THE PREMIER: If the desire is to pass a motion the effect of which will be to prescribe a residential qualification of three to five years, would it not be wiser to pass a qualification for all persons?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You cannot do everything.

THE PREMIER: I want to point out the absurdity of the argument. Licensing magistrates have discretion, and are well able to exercise it.

MR. TAYLOR: They have not, so far.

THE PREMIER: I admit they have not exercised the discretion in every case as I should like.

MR. JOHNSON: Then why not rectify it?

THE PREMIER: You ought not to pass a law that because a man is not naturalised he should not have a license. If men are allowed to come here they ought to be allowed to trade the same as we are allowed. I cannot understand, and I repeat it, how a bad foreigner can become a good British subject because he is naturalised.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He could not get naturalisation if he had not a good character.

THE PREMIER: Men do get naturalised because we cannot go into their characters minutely. The member for Cue knows that his observation will apply to the licensing applications. Men get certificates signed by five householders that the applicant is of good name and character, and in such a case those who sign must be British subjects or naturalised British subjects.

MR. PURKISS: And are supposed to be leading men.

THE PREMIER: They are supposed to be leading men. But the applicant is very often of bad character and most undesirable. I do not think this restriction should be placed in a statute. There is ample discretion in the licensing authority, and if it is thought that the licensing authority is too lax, some amendment as to the *personnel* of that body could be brought in. We should not go to the extent of saying that persons should not be allowed to trade because they are not British subjects or

naturalised British subjects. The object of this motion, and of those who support the motion, is to aim at a class because they are not British subjects, not because they are men of bad character—not that they have not lived long enough in the State. The grounds of objection that apply to a man who is a foreigner, so far as licensing legislation is concerned, apply to British subjects. If we desire to act on broad grounds it is our duty not to single out non-British subjects, but to see that no license shall be granted to a man unless he has been a certain number of years in the State and proves himself to be of good character. If that were done the motion would be consistent; but to say that because a man is not a British subject, or is not naturalised, he must not carry on a recognised trade in Western Australia is going too far. And the argument is reduced to absurdity when we bear in mind that British subjects are of all colours and that it is so easy to become naturalised. Within the last few months fully 50 people have become naturalised in this State.

MR. TAYLOR: What is the cost of naturalisation?

THE PREMIER: How does the cost of naturalisation affect this question? These persons have been naturalised in the Eastern States, and are now obtaining their local naturalisation in view of objections taken by the electoral authority. It is comparatively a formal matter to become a naturalised subject. Here, as in the Eastern States I believe, if a man is respectable, so far as the test of respectability by evidence is obtainable, he is entitled to become a British subject.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Do you not always obtain a report?

THE PREMIER: We know what value there is in a report.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It ought to be of some value; it is from the Commissioner of Police. If it is not of value we ought to change the Commissioner.

THE PREMIER: It is impossible for the Minister issuing certificates to hold an inquisitorial examination into a man's character or the character of his antecedents. When we ask a man to become a British subject we do not ask if he belongs to this class or that class, whether he is a teetotaler or not, whether he has some crank or not; we ask him to be law-

abiding, and if he is law-abiding and satisfies the demands as to character, he is naturalised. It is submitted by the motion that as soon as a foreigner becomes naturalised he can get a license. What is the value of a motion like this when all it amounts to is that certain persons are bad and no licenses should be granted to them until they became naturalised. It would lay down the rule that there is a class to whom *prima facie* licenses should be granted. The objectionable class is the foreigner, and the approved class the British subject. There is Class A, the foreigner who is objectionable, and Class B, the British subject, the approved class; and by the same motion we provide a simple method by which a man can pass from the objectionable class of the foreigner, to the approved class of the naturalised British subject. This motion, if passed, would stamp the House as being actuated by the narrowest methods in legislation. Legislation such as that is not to be found on the statute books of the Eastern States, and why should we pass it here. There is no practical need for it if it is to be provided that a man can shed his disabilities by becoming a naturalised subject. This motion has been based on conditions which have arisen in connection with the fish trade or some other trade. I submit that has nothing to do with the broad question. If there has been a monopoly or a ring in connection with this trade, that is not the only trade in which there has been a monopoly or a ring, and we do not introduce legislation because of the existence of monopolies and rings in other trades. If the ring is doing harm it should be broken up, and I think there is power in the hands of the Perth City Council to break up this monopoly. The Perth Council can make by-laws and destroy the ring. By-laws can be framed so that the fish must be brought into a certain place and examined, and if that is done it will mean the breaking up of the ring, because all the fish will have to go to a spot where it will be purchased by those persons who hawk it about. Instead of bringing forward a motion of this kind there is power already if the Perth Council wish to use it.

MR. DIAMOND: This has nothing to do with the licenses to fishermen.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member, in introducing the motion, said that he brought it forward because of the existence of a ring, and because the Greeks and Italians sometimes dump the fish into the ocean rather than sell it at a low price.

MR. DIAMOND: I did not say that.

THE PREMIER: I hope members will realise how far-reaching this motion is. By the motion we propose to take away from those who are not British subjects rights which we are prepared to confer on Asiatics who are British subjects, while we provide a simple method by which those persons whom we desire to exclude can obtain licenses by becoming British subjects. Although too much consideration is given to these foreigners by the licensing bodies, this motion will not provide a check, but it will do a lot of harm by stamping the House as being somewhat narrow-minded. It will not attain the object sought to be achieved, therefore I hope the hon. member will withdraw his motion.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna): I wish to take this opportunity of complimenting the member for South Fremantle on having moved this motion. It is open to many objections in the same way as other motions which are brought before the House are open to objection. I quite agree with what several members have said. We are told by the Premier the motion is very far-reaching on the one hand, and on the other hand he tells us that the motion is practically of no use because there is already a method by which undesirable persons can get the licenses. I cannot pretend to interpret the words "far-reaching": it is something like the word "Mesopotamia," and some other big words which somehow or other have an effect on people who use them, if they have not on those who hear them. Curiously enough, the Premier did not explain how aliens can get naturalised. An alien requires to reside some time in Western Australia—I think, two years.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Five years.

THE PREMIER: Three years.

MR. HASTIE: A man has to reside here three years before he can become naturalised. A number of foreigners come here from Europe, and it is not convenient for them to wait three years

before they can get licenses to engage in the occupations which have been referred to. The fishing industry has been mentioned. People who come here specially to engage in the fishing industry will not wait for three years, so that the objection brought forward by the Premier is not a real one.

THE PREMIER: Then why not make a residential qualification applying to all persons who want a license?

MR. HASTIE: I should like that. I should like something better; I should like to introduce an educational test. [**MEMBER:** We have had enough of that already.] We have not had enough of the educational test, and when that educational test was applied to immigrants in this country, before that department was taken over by the Federal Government, a large number of people were excluded. Besides, the Government of this country were then in the position that they could use that educational test to exclude a very large number if not all of the undesirable people, and I wish we had the power to apply that to the internal affairs of this State. The member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Wallace), who at the time when the Attorney General was not in his place took it upon himself to speak as a legal authority, expounded the Commonwealth Act to read that the Commonwealth could override any Act affecting foreigners coming to this State. [**THE PREMIER:** On naturalisation.] On their entrance, but I do not believe the Commonwealth has such power after they are in. We must remember that the Government and Parliament of this State are responsible for the behaviour of the people of this State, and the Commonwealth has not the power to interfere with such matters as licenses. The question brought forward by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond) is a very important one, and its importance I believe is keenly felt in Perth and Fremantle, where the foreign element is doing the very best to monopolise many of the businesses. Very soon it will become a matter practically of self-preservation. We shall require to take means by which that will be prevented. I do not know whether this motion is the best thing, but it is opening the way, it is starting this discussion, and I believe it will have a very beneficial result. The

Premier, in discussing the motion, told us that we had at the present moment a licensing bench whose duty it was to regulate those matters. Then he went on to declare that the licensing bench did not carry out the ideas for which it was created; that practically the licensing bench did not consider the question of the character of the applicant, and from the number of "hear, hears" I heard all round the House, I hope the Premier will soon do his best to remedy that matter. It has been suggested by the members for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) and Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) and others that the best remedy for that is to introduce an elective licensing bench, and so far as I know that has been done by almost every, if not every, other country. And this at any rate can be said about it, that it is inconceivable that if we had licensing benches in this country the business could be conducted in a worse way than it is at the present moment. [MR. THOMAS: We have licensing benches here.] But every member in his speech has declared that they act in a very unsatisfactory way. The hon. member (Mr. Thomas) has not spoken yet, and before this discussion finishes we shall not be surprised to hear him, and hear him alone, as their champion. I hope the mover will press this question, or will keep it before the House until we obtain such expression of opinion as will strongly encourage the Government to bring forward measures that will put an end to this unsatisfactory state of affairs.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont): I am glad a motion of this general character has been brought up, because it gives one an opportunity of expressing an opinion with regard to the management of the houses licensed under the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act. I sympathise very much with the motion, and I listened also with great pleasure to what the Premier said in regard to the conduct of the licensing benches under that Act. From my experience, and the mover appears to agree with me, the conduct and management of these houses which are licensed is not satisfactory. The Premier gave certain reasons, and said the licensing bench did not appear to take sufficient care and trouble with regard to the management of these houses. My experience has been that a man

goes forward to the licensing bench and undertakes to spend perhaps two or three thousand pounds upon a building if he can get a license. In most cases he is prepared practically to spend anything as long as he can get the license, because he knows that obtaining the license means putting two or three, or perhaps five, thousand pounds into his pocket. In the end the license is granted. Unfortunately—I am talking of places like Perth, Fremantle, and Kalgoorlie—it is nobody's duty to see that these promises and undertakings given by the applicant are carried out. I know of one case in the State where the applicant—I am only mentioning this as an instance—offered to spend several thousands of pounds on the house. He also mentioned as an inducement, which had very great weight, that he would have a tennis ground, croquet ground, etc., provided around the house, so that people could stay at the house. He got the license, and members will not be surprised to hear that the tennis ground was never made. The reason was that it is nobody's duty to see that the conditions under which these licenses are granted are carried out.

MR. JACOBY: What are the police doing? They ought to look after that.

MR. FOULKES: I will ask the hon. member to be a little bit patient. The police have a great number of duties to perform, but in my experience the police do not appear to have devoted sufficient management and attention to the control of public-houses. The police have to attend to a great many matters which affect the general public, and perhaps they have so many that they are unable to deal with every particular thing we should like them to attend to. For instance, some few years ago it was found desirable to start a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals. The member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) might have said there was no necessity to start it, because we had the police to look after the question. It is no one's duty to see that these licensed houses are carried on properly. [MR. JACOBY: Bad administration.] A year and a half ago I was travelling to a district where there were three hotels, and during the one week I was there three of those publicans were convicted of selling adulterated liquor. It seems an

extraordinary thing that no notice was taken of this, no application made to the licensing bench, and no action taken by the licensing bench—although the bench knew of this—to cancel these licenses. I consider that the moment a publican is convicted of selling adulterated liquor, he is not a fit person to carry on a licensed house. As I said before, he can practically do as he likes. In England there have been scores of cases in which licenses have been indorsed when the publicans have been guilty of certain offences. For instance, if a publican permits gambling, or serves drunken men with liquor, or commits certain other offences, the license can, I think after two convictions, be taken away from him. Here, although licensing benches must know that such instances have happened, there has not been a single case so far as I know—I am certain there has not been one for ten years—in which a license has been taken away from the licensed victualler. We must all know there are a great number of publicans who ought not to have these licenses renewed. I sympathise with the motion of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Diamond), which is certainly an attempt to remedy these defects with regard to the management of these houses, but it does not go quite far enough, and that is why I say it is rather general. We are all anxious, I contend, to have an improvement in the management of these licensed houses, and doubtless pretty well every member of the House can forward suggestions likely to improve the legislation with regard to that particular subject. For instance, I could make a suggestion, and I hope some day or other an opportunity will be given me to do it, that the State should appoint an inspector to go round and see how houses in different places are managed. [MR. JACOBY: Dozens of them.] I never came across one, and I doubt very much really whether there are such people. At any rate the time has come, I think, when there should be inspectors appointed to see how these houses are managed. The member for South Fremantle said he saw some occurrence at Fremantle this morning. Very possibly if there had been inspectors whose work it was to look after the management of these places, an occurrence of the kind would not happen again. With regard

to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, there are inspectors appointed whose sole duty it is to see how animals are treated in this State. Although I have great sympathy with this motion, I deprecate very much going in for this patchwork kind of legislation. It is not the proper way in which to carry on the business of the House, but in a great measure the reason why a motion of this kind is brought forward is the unsatisfactory condition which exists regarding licenses. It is very important that licensed houses should be carried on properly. I know it is not the practice in England to allow foreigners to hold licenses of public-houses, and there is no reason why we should allow them to do so here. I hope the Government will not only deal with the particular suggestions brought forward by the member for South Fremantle with regard to the management of these houses, but that they will bring in legislation dealing with the control of these licensed houses throughout the State. It is the most important subject that you can have to deal with, the sale of alcoholic liquor in this State. I was glad to see, this morning, that the Premier suggested to the Labour party that the best work they could take up for the present was to devote their time and attention to this important subject. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) suggests that the Premier should do this; and I hope the Labour party will bring pressure to bear upon the Government. I am sure the Labour party are quite willing to do it.

MR. THOMAS: Who are the Labour party?

MR. FOULKES: I believe you are one. I am glad to see the hon. member has not denied my statement. I do not altogether agree with the second part of the motion; but I think the proposal is a step in the right direction, and that when a Bill is brought forward, as I hope it will be, we shall have an opportunity of passing good legislation which will improve the management of licensed houses.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas): In this motion there are some great principles at stake; and in order to allow members an opportunity of fully considering them, I move that the debate be adjourned for a fortnight.

MR. DIAMOND: I will second the adjournment for a week.

Motion put, and negatived on the voices.

MR. THOMAS: I presume I am in order in speaking to the motion.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member would be out of order. He has already spoken.

MR. THOMAS: I spoke to the adjournment; therefore I am not in order in speaking to the motion?

THE SPEAKER: No; the hon. member has already spoken.

MR. T. HAYWARD (Bunbury): One point has been overlooked regarding licenses to fishermen. That matter does not come within the jurisdiction of the licensing bench; and I think it desirable that members should know who does issue such licenses.

MR. DIAMOND: Is it not the Inspector of Fisheries?

MR. HAYWARD: At any rate, the licensing bench is not responsible for them.

MR. M. H. JACOBY (Swan): I am not prepared to support the motion, because I do not like these blank-cartridge proposals. The proper method of dealing with such matters is by a Bill; and I rise to impress on the Government the necessity for dealing with the licensing laws of this State. There is on the Notice Paper another motion, proposed by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish), which will take up considerable time, and this discussion also has been fairly long; yet both will lead to nothing, because the questions must be again debated when the Government bring in the necessary legislation. I think the time is now ripe for dealing, in a Bill, with the whole of the licensing laws. I much regret that though the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) speaks to every motion that at all affects the licensing laws, he did not take advantage of his opportunity, when he was recently a member of the Government, to deal with this matter. I should have listened with much more satisfaction to what he said about it if he had, by a Bill, given the House an opportunity to legislate.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The last Government promised to bring it in, and so do the present Government.

MR. JACOBY: Well, you did not get past the promising stage; and that is what I complain of.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We have not yet got much past anything.

MR. JACOBY: I trust the Government will bring in a Bill this session. I agree with the member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes) that many very unsatisfactory people hold licenses in this State. Some of them are not fit to keep pigsties, let alone to provide food and drink for the public. Adulterated liquor is sold all over the place, and not only are many hotel-keepers culpable in this respect, but some of the merchants in Fremantle sell whisky blends which would not bear the close scrutiny of an analyst. Power should be given to examine not only the liquor sold in hotels, but that kept by our wine and spirit merchants.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Inspectors have been appointed.

MR. JACOBY: Then their powers are not exercised.

DE. O'CONNOR: There is no such power.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Are such vendors naturalised?

MR. JACOBY: I expect they are. But the liquor they sell is of a very villainous description. I trust we shall to-night hear from the Government that it is their intention to deal during this session with the liquor laws.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I shall support the motion, although it does not go so far as I should like. Several members, the Premier especially, have pointed out its sweeping nature. I find from statistics that foreigners have, for the six months ended the 30th June of this year, been coming to this State in great numbers. Italians are arriving at the rate of practically 200 a month. The member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) spoke warmly in defence of the French and German people. Now we find that 527 Italians landed within six months, while of Germans there were 103, French 18, Russians 14, Greeks 16, Austrians 25, Spaniards 9, and of other foreign nationalities in some cases only one, while some are not represented. So, notwithstanding the restrictions created by Federal legislation, we are still troubled with those aliens; and I certainly think our Government should

do something to prevent the influx. It is pleasing to know that when these aliens compete with business people on the coast, someone has the courage to rise in this House and protest against it; but while we on the goldfields have to suffer from alien competition in the wood-chopping business, in mining, and in every other walk of life in which miners and other workers have to earn a living, we find that in this Chamber there is rarely a champion. Still, I think the Government should do something to restrict the licensing of undesirables and Asiatics generally; and this motion should be carried, unless the Government promise to bring in a Bill with that object. The Premier has pointed out that we have already a licensing bench. Now if there be any grounds for this motion, that bench has failed in fulfilling its duties. It is strange that it seems to be considered a crime for any member to find some objection to any of the powers that be. I am satisfied that the discretion placed in the hands of the licensing benches of this State has been abused; and as I have said, the motion does not go far enough. We have already a large number of undesirable foreigners coming to this country; and I think the Government should take some steps to stop their influx.

POINT OF ORDER.

MR. THOMAS: I rise to a point of order. A moment ago you, Mr. Speaker, ruled me out of order, giving as your decision that, after having moved the adjournment of the debate and spoken thereto, I should not be in order in addressing the House on this motion. I take the earliest opportunity of bringing up the matter. I immediately sent for the Standing Orders, and I find that Standing Order No. 155 states:—

In the event of a motion for the adjournment of the debate upon any question being negatived, the members moving and seconding the motion for such adjournment may address the House at any time during such debate.

I therefore ask, in the face of that Standing Order, whether I should be in order in addressing the House on this motion.

THE SPEAKER: Yes. The hon. member has quite correctly quoted our own

Standing Order; and under that Standing Order I think he would be in order in addressing the House. I had in my mind the rule as laid down in *May's Parliamentary Practice*; and I cannot tell why there should be any difference between our procedure and that of the House of Commons. *May* says:—

A member is not entitled to speak on the main question after having moved or seconded a motion for the adjournment of the debate.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear. It is the same in *Todd*.

THE SPEAKER: But of course our own Standing Orders take precedence of any other book on parliamentary practice; and therefore I must rule that the hon. member is in order if he wishes to address the House.

DEBATE.

MR. THOMAS: In regard to this motion I should like to say, in preface, that there is underlying it a certain principle with which I am in entire accord. But I do object to the crude form of the proposition. The member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) referred to the question of undesirable immigrants. There is no man more opposed than I to undesirable immigrants; but I take it most of us agree that when we refer to the undesirable immigrant we refer mostly to the Afghan, the Indian, and other coloured men.

MR. DIAMOND: I must rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Norseman is speaking about undesirable immigrants.

MR. THOMAS: I rise to a point of order. I am not the member for Norseman.

THE SPEAKER: Two hon. members cannot speak at the same time to different points of order.

MR. DIAMOND: I have not said a word about immigrants. My motion is confined to the issue of licenses in this State.

MR. JACOBY: It is a very wide motion.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member may resume his speech.

MR. THOMAS: I am waiting for your decision on the point of order.

THE SPEAKER: What point of order?

MR. THOMAS: I am referring, as I think I have a right to refer, to the question raised by the member for Cue

(Mr. Illingworth), who dealt with the subject of undesirable immigration to this State. We generally accept the term "undesirable immigrant" as referring to Afghans, Indians, or other coloured men; and I would point out that the motion proposes that "No license under the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act shall be issued or renewed to any person who is not a British or naturalised British subject." The people at whom we aim will not be excluded under this motion, for various persons who are regarded as undesirable immigrants would be entitled, notwithstanding a motion of this sort, to hold licenses in Western Australia. Therefore this motion is most crude, and on that account alone deserves to be laughed out of the House without a division. The mover stated that the scum of the population hold licenses in Western Australia.

MR. DIAMOND: I said the scum of the Mediterranean ports.

MR. THOMAS: Then more shame to our licensing benches, who are called on to protect our interests in the matter! It is not our fault, it is the fault of the licensing benches, if, as the mover has stated, the scum of the Mediterranean ports hold licenses in this State.

MR. DAGLISH: But we are responsible for our licensing benches, you know.

MR. THOMAS: I own that, certainly. As for the contention that no one should hold a license under the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act—or, as the second part of the motion puts it, "no license of any kind shall be issued or renewed in future to other than British or naturalised British subjects"—prudence demands that we should hesitate before committing ourselves to that proposition. We are not an independent State. We are a State of the Commonwealth of Australia, it is true; but we are a portion of the British Empire. Therefore, I say it is not for us to make laws, or even to affirm the desirability of introducing Bills, which may bring our mother country into conflict with what may at the present time be truthfully described as friendly nations. Although we may in theory be aiming at Afghans and coloured men in general, many of whom, as I have pointed out, are already British subjects, therefore cannot be

touched by the motion. In Europe there are French, Germans, and Russians; and we have in Australia many French immigrants, many Russian immigrants —

MR. DIAMOND: Very few French and Russian immigrants.

MR. THOMAS: And many German immigrants. The population of some of the agricultural districts of South Australia is composed almost wholly of Germans, who, I say unhesitatingly, are most desirable people to have on the soil.

MR. TAYLOR: Did you hear anybody in Australia raise objection to the Germans?

MR. THOMAS: I never heard objection raised to the settlement of Germans on Australian soil until I heard this motion moved by the member for South Fremantle to-day. The motion is directed against the Germans as against everybody else.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Did you ever know a German refused naturalisation?

MR. THOMAS: Yes; many a time. If necessary, I could give the names of Germans who have refused to forsake their nationality. I am a Britisher, and I am proud of being a Britisher. Did I settle in Germany or France, I should claim to enjoy in those countries the same rights as their inhabitants would be granted did they settle in England or in an English colony, and I should refuse —

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You cannot get a license in those countries.

MR. THOMAS: To sell my nationality at the bidding of anyone. Wherever I went I should refuse to forswear my nationality, my allegiance to the British Crown, for the sake of any other country; and what I refuse to do these other people, I claim, have an equal right to refuse to do. I say unhesitatingly that the history of Australia shows that the French, the Germans, and members of other nationalities have beyond controversy proved themselves most desirable colonists. They have shown that they came here to do their utmost to live alongside Englishmen and help to build up the country of their adoption.

MR. TAYLOR: They are almost invariably naturalised, though.

MR. THOMAS: They are not invariably naturalised, by any means. I

know of a large number of instances where foreigners have absolutely refused to forswear their allegiance to their mother country, as we Britishers would refuse if we went to live in a foreign country. I maintain that such a refusal does not make them less desirable immigrants for Australia. They have come here and, living alongside us, have proved themselves good citizens, have proved themselves men worthy to take a share in shaping the destinies of this country. Shame on us if, because those foreigners may feel inclined to continue their allegiance to their mother country, just as we Britishers would feel inclined, we seek to impose restrictions on them either in the matter of the granting of licenses or in any other respect whatsoever. We should not cast obstacles in their way to prevent them from carrying on their trades and businesses in this country just as we do ourselves.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Can unnaturalised foreigners get licenses in England?

MR. THOMAS: I am confusing myself to the question before the House, and I refuse to reply to any more interjections. The member for South Fremantle made what I consider a most objectionable reference to women being imported into the State of Western Australia. I simply refer to the matter to tell him that because a few degraded people of one nation may be guilty of conduct of the sort, it is not proper for us, as the national assembly of Western Australia, to pass a vote which would go forth to the world as expressing our belief that the nation in question is as a whole guilty of what those few miserable, paltry individuals are guilty of. As I stated at the outset, I believe the member for South Fremantle to be genuine in moving this motion. I believe that he aims at the eradication of an evil which we know to be existent in Western Australia to-day; but before I resume my seat I must earnestly ask him to remove from the Notice Paper a motion so crude in its wording as to be liable to such gross misinterpretation if the House ever dared to pass it. As I said before, the motion is undoubtedly aimed at people whom we consider to be most undesirable immigrants. I refer to the Afghans—[MR. DIAMOND: Absolutely untrue]—and I want no Afghans in this country. I

would do anything in my power to prevent any Afghan ever landing in Western Australia; and I go farther indeed, and say that I would do anything by my vote in this House to compel every Afghan now in Western Australia to get out of it at the earliest possible moment. I say this to show my feeling towards the Afghan; but, if the motion does not refer to the Afghan or to the coloured man in general, who in many instances is a naturalised British subject or even a British subject by birth, I ask to whom does it then refer?

MR. DIAMOND: I thought I had made that clear.

MR. THOMAS: If it refers to Italians or Greeks, then I say unreservedly that because a few Greeks or a few Italians of the lower classes of both countries come to Western Australia and endeavour to carry on business here, and in doing so prove themselves objectionable, we as a State Parliament are not to tell the Kingdom of Greece and the Kingdom of Italy that we shall refuse to allow any of their citizens to enter Western Australia or to hold licenses if they do enter this State—licenses of any sort, kind, or description.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: England has told them that already.

MR. THOMAS: Oh, no.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Oh, yes.

MR. THOMAS: If we pass the motion, we shall be saying that because two, three, or perhaps four Greeks or Italians, who may be of the lowest order in their own country, happen to come here and get licenses, we are to judge the whole of Italy or the whole of Greece by the few miserable samples coming under our observation, and who undoubtedly have caused the introduction of this motion. We must not forget, however, that there are in Europe other States besides Italy and Greece. I repeat that we are not a State standing absolutely independent in the world's politics: we are part and parcel of the Commonwealth of Australia. I claim that a matter of this sort belongs rather to Federal politics than to State politics. [MR. DIAMOND: Not at all.] I claim that we are now dealing with a matter of immigration—[SEVERAL MEMBERS: No]—or rather with the imposition of restrictions on foreigners when they have immigrated into this country.

Whether or not the matter be one of Federal politics, at any rate there is no gainsaying the fact that the question is one of Imperial politics. It ill becomes us as a State of Australia, as a portion of the Commonwealth, as a section of the Empire of Great Britain not possessed of complete independence, to lay down to the world a law as to what shall be done with a European if he enters this State and stands alongside us in the progress of this country and in the development of its resources.

MEMBER: Do we govern this country, or does the British Empire?

MR. THOMAS: We govern the country.

MEMBER: "We!"

MR. THOMAS: I say that those who govern the country of Western Australia are the 50 representatives of various constituencies in the Legislative Assembly, and 30 people elsewhere. As I am one of the 50 members of the Legislative Assembly, I have a right to use the word "we" and to say "we govern the country." I say that we govern this country, and it ill becomes us to let it go forth to the world that we will not allow a Frenchman, German, Russian, Italian, Spaniard, Greek, or member of any other European nationality to enter Western Australia and carry on a business alongside the British inhabitants of Western Australia in fair and open competition. It ill becomes us as members of the great British Empire, which has always been noted for freedom of thought and freedom of action, to send forth to the world any dictum of that kind.

MR. DAGLISH: Give us something about the British flag now.

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

Debate adjourned, according to Standing Orders.

RAILWAYS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

WIDOW OF LATE C. Y. O'CONNOR ANNUITY BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

MOTION—PUBLIC SERVANT DISMISSED, TO INQUIRE.

Debate resumed from the 3rd September, on the motion by Mr. Taylor "That a Select Committee of this House be appointed to inquire into and report upon the transfer from Coolgardie of Mr. J. E. Pombart, late Assistant Clerk of Courts there, his qualifications, his appointment at Perth at a lower salary, the confidential and other reports concerning him, and the action taken thereon, and also his removal from the service in consequence of certain charges made against him by the Chief Clerk of the Perth Local Court. Such Committee to have authority to send for papers and persons; call, hear, receive, and examine evidence, and, after fully hearing the whole case, report to this House."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. Walter James): In connection with this matter, one would like to place the facts of the case shortly before members, who could themselves judge whether, on the merits, a *prima facie* case had been made out to ask the House to take the exceptional course of appointing a committee to inquire into the reasons why a public servant had been removed from the service. This much must be obvious to members: that if they were prepared to introduce motions of this kind and to receive the support of the House, the position of the Government would become intolerable. If members lent their ears to all the tittle-tattle they heard in the street, if because a man believed he had a grievance and went to members and at once received their support, then the position of Minister became impossible. There never was a public servant who, when removed from the service, did not think he had been wrongfully dismissed; there never was a Government servant who, when retired, did not think he had been improperly retired. These complaints were always arising, and it was to be hoped that members would approach the question rather on the broad principle than on the particular merits of this case. Mr. Pombart was appointed assistant clerk of courts at Cue on the 20th April, 1898, and he remained there until October of the same year. He was then removed because an assistant was no longer required at Cue. He was transferred to Coolgardie. Shortly after he got there he sent in an account to

the department for rent paid by him for a private house he occupied at Cue. No authority had ever been given for the expenditure, and the account was repudiated. On the 23rd March, 1899, he applied for an allowance for having carried on for a short time the duties of the office, from the time the clerk of courts was suspended until the arrival of his successor. That was refused. On the 30th March, 1899, he applied for a month's leave of absence, which was granted. At the end of the period he got a farther two weeks' leave of absence. This officer joined the service in April, 1898, and had been less than a year in the service when he obtained this leave of absence. On the 21st August, 1898, a fight took place between the clerk, Mr. Jacobs, and the assistant clerk, Mr. Pombart, and it resulted in the then Attorney General removing both of them. Mr. Pombart was brought to Perth, and Mr. Jacobs was transferred to Cue. About the time this dispute was on, Mr. Pombart applied for another month's leave of absence, and got fourteen days' leave. On the 2nd August, 1901, he wrote to the Attorney General complaining of the way in which he had been treated, and applying for the position of clerk of courts at Bunbury. He (the Premier) did not suppose it struck Mr. Pombart for one moment that there were senior officers in the service who had for years occupied positions much subordinate to that of clerk of courts at Bunbury. He also complained that his salary had been reduced. That was a reduction which took place when he was transferred from Coolgardie; a reduction which the other clerk also shared. He stated that he had been promised the position at Bunbury both by Mr. Pennefather and Mr. Sayer in writing. He stated that he had letters, and he was asked to produce them. He produced one letter from Dr. Smith, the Parliamentary Draftsman, who stated that Mr. Sayer, then secretary to the Crown Law Department, had promised to see the Attorney General about the matter. He also produced a letter from Mr. F. Connor, M.L.A., who stated that Mr. Pennefather had promised to keep his name before him. These were the letters upon which he said he had the written promise of the Bunbury appointment. Mr. Pombart was

constantly bringing before the department complaints of the manner in which he had been treated. There were numerous letters, running into pages of foolscap, most voluminous. As the result of some correspondence the clerk of courts was asked to report officially on Mr. Pombart's ability and conduct. A report was made by the clerk, and as the result of that report it was thought desirable that Mr. Pombart should be transferred when any opportunity offered. He was not transferred, as there was no vacancy. On the 26th August, 1901, the clerk of courts reported that Mr. Pombart had been some days away from duty owing, he presumed, to ill-health, and on the same day Mr. Pombart asked for leave for one month, and enclosed a medical certificate. This was the third time during the short period of three years on which leave of absence had been applied for. If a man was constantly pleading illness he was not a man for the civil service. The application was granted. At the end of the month Mr. Pombart applied for a fortnight's extension of leave, and this was approved on a medical certificate. On the publication of the Estimates Mr. Pombart renewed his complaint. This complaint was for receiving no increase, and he said the clerk of courts had said that the secretary of the Crown Law Department had taken a dislike to him (Mr. Pombart). The clerk of courts denied having so informed Mr. Pombart. In view of these complaints the Attorney General decided to give Mr. Pombart an interview. The clerk of courts—that was Mr. Rushton -- and Mr. Pombart were both brought before the Attorney General, and then Mr. Pombart was given an opportunity to say whatever he wished, and the matter was dealt with by the Attorney General. On the 4th April, 1902, the clerk of courts reported that owing to carelessness on Mr. Pombart's part he was threatened with actions for damages. In one case a man had been actually imprisoned owing to a warrant having been made out when the debt had been paid into court; and in another case a warrant of execution was issued, and the bailiff actually seized, while the money was showing in the books of the court. In these two cases the parties wrongfully proceeded against were taking action, and

there were several other cases. By the Small Debts Act, if a clerk of court was guilty of neglect or misconduct, the court inquired into the case, and had power to enforce a fine. The matter of these complaints was therefore referred to the magistrate of the Local Court. The magistrate replied that such an inquiry would be useless, as Mr. Pombart had absolutely nothing. He was then asked to hold an inquiry, and report to the Attorney General. The inquiry was held, and the magistrate reported that according to Mr. Pombart's own admission he neglected his duties, and the magistrate found that many errors had been made by him, and a great deal of trouble had been caused. He was found unsuited to the work, and a transfer was recommended. That was the first inquiry, held by a resident magistrate of Perth. Although that resident magistrate found that Mr. Pombart neglected his duties and that many errors had been made, he did not suggest anything extreme, but simply that Mr. Pombart was not equal to his work, and had better be transferred. It was impossible to effect a transfer, because Mr. Pombart was drawing a salary of £180, and there was no vacancy unless he was taken on at a reduced salary. Personally, he (the Premier) thought that if a man was not competent to discharge the duties for which he was paid £180 he ought to be transferred to a reduced position. That action was not taken with regard to Mr. Pombart. Again consideration was shown. As no transfer could be effected, he was informed that he could offer his resignation, or, if he did not do that, the Attorney General would have to look into the matter. He was also informed that he could apply for three months' leave of absence while the matter was being considered. He refused to resign, and demanded an inquiry. He said no charges were brought against him when he went before Mr. Cowan. He got his inquiry. The clerk of courts was instructed to draw up the charge in the ordinary way. The charge was drawn up, and a copy of it sent to Mr. Pombart in the usual manner. When the charge was made he was suspended, and a board was appointed consisting of Mr. A. S. Roe, police magistrate, and Mr. Oct. Burt. Then the inquiry was held, and as the result of that inquiry the

board found him guilty of neglect of duty with respect to the first eight charges, rendering the department liable to action, and also of carelessness in his work, leading to inconvenience and trouble to his fellow clerks and others. With regard to the two remaining charges, the board found that he was frequently absent without leave, and that when spoken to by his superior officer with regard to his duties he had been contemptuous and insolent in his replies. He was then removed. There had been two inquiries. One was by Mr. James Cowan, resident magistrate of Perth, in accordance with the statute giving control over officers, and the report was adverse to Mr. Pombart. Then at his request there was another inquiry—of course the State paid the expense of these inquiries—this being held before Mr. Roe and Mr. Burt. This board was appointed for the purpose of dealing with certain specific charges of which Mr. Pombart had notice. Mr. Pombart stated he had not been allowed to call witnesses. Here was a verbatim shorthand report of the inquiry, which had last session been placed on the table of the House together with the other papers called for, though no action had been taken, while the present action had probably been taken without looking through the papers. The inquiry had been held before Mr. Roe, police magistrate, and Mr. Burt, the sheriff; and early in the report of the proceedings appeared this note:—

Mr. Pombart inquired if the board could inform him when his witnesses would be required.

Mr. Roe: Do you propose to call evidence which will deal with the matters set out in the formal charges?

Mr. Pombart: No. My witnesses are gentlemen who have known me for a long time; and I wish them to give evidence as to my capacity and diligence during the period they had knowledge of me.

Mr. Roe (after conferring with Mr. Burt): The board has decided that the inquiry shall be strictly limited to the matters which occurred in the Local Court offices, and to the specific charges mentioned in the document of the 6th May, 1902, signed by John Rushton.

Subsequently, when giving evidence, Mr. Rushton himself referred to matters not mentioned in the charge; and there again the board interfered, and said:—

Mr. Roe: I think we should confine ourselves strictly to what is before us.

Mr. Burt: That is my opinion.

Mr. Roe: We rule that we will deal with nothing outside that which is entered in the charges.

Therefore when Mr. Rushton, who made the charges, had attempted to go outside them, the board would not listen to him, nor would they listen to Pombart when he wished to bring witnesses, not to deal with the charges but to speak as to his general diligence and capacity. And evidently the court could not act otherwise; because all knew that evidence of that sort was absolutely valueless. With these papers was a full report of Mr. Pombart's evidence; and he (the Attorney General) found no protest from Mr. Pombart to the effect that the evidence of those excluded witnesses would have assisted him. On the contrary, Mr. Pombart in his evidence had dealt with the charges simply. And it was obvious that if he could have adduced any evidence on those charges, it would have been that of witnesses who knew the facts. In his evidence, he practically admitted very great carelessness; but whether or not that was admitted, he (the Attorney General) was satisfied to accept the finding of a board composed of men like Mr. Roe and Mr. Burt, two honest and conscientious men in whom the House could have every trust. He appealed to hon. members: was it not rather straining the temper of Parliament to introduce such a motion? Last session all these papers had been placed on the table for perusal; and any member who had thought this a question which *prima facie* called for inquiry could have had all information from the papers by going to the responsible Minister. Nothing of that sort was done. Simply because a man who had been retired from the public service wrote misleading letters to the Press and made misleading statements to members of Parliament, this motion, so objectionable in principle, was introduced. Parliament was asked to appoint a select committee to deal with an alleged injustice inflicted on a civil servant; yet there had been two inquiries into the matter, with results unsatisfactory to Mr. Pombart. On those facts, on the merits of the case, the House would surely declare Mr. Pombart had been generously treated. He had received every consideration while in the

department, and his present situation was due more to himself than to anybody else. He (the Attorney General) appealed to the House to check any practice by which it was sought to make the House or a select committee a tribunal of appeal from a board of inquiry or from a Minister, when the board recommended, and the Minister acted on the recommendation, the retirement of an officer from the public service. If Ministers could not be trusted to do that, they were unfit for office. He hoped the motion would be rejected.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): As a general principle, there was much force in what the Premier had just stated; but in this particular case there were apparently grounds sufficient to justify the holding of a farther inquiry by those members who were willing so to do. It did not follow that such an appeal inferred distrust of the two gentlemen who had previously inquired. The Premier might as well argue that Mr. Roe's decisions as a police magistrate should not be questioned by a Judge, or a Judge's decisions by the Full Court, or the Full Court's decisions by the Privy Council. In this fresh inquiry something not adduced at the previous hearing might possibly be elicited. He (Mr. Moran) believed some injustice had been done to Mr. Pombart which the board had probably been unable to investigate. It was dangerous for the House to be callous in such a matter, and little harm could result from a select committee. Mr. Pombart was a foreigner, and therefore lay under a certain disadvantage which would be felt by hon. members were they too in a foreign country; but his services here had been good. Moreover, he was well advanced in years, and had a family to keep. As leader of the House the Attorney General had been obliged to take up his present stand on the matter, jealously protesting against appeals to the House from every dismissed civil servant; but in this somewhat notorious case it would be just to grant an inquiry, which might be the means of reinstating a man with a long and honourable career in the service both here and in other States. If there were members willing to inquire, why not give them an opportunity? Appeals from one tribunal to another were a principle

of British justice, and no one considered them reflections on the court below. He would not vote for this motion were it a reflection on Mr. Roe and Mr. Burt, gentlemen who were incapable of doing anything unfair. At the same time, they were not perfect, and might have overlooked matters of grave importance to Mr. Pombart.

Mr. M. H. JACOBY (Swan) : While in the House, he would on principle vote against any such motion. If responsible Ministers could not be trusted to deal with civil servants, or if boards of inquiry constituted like the board referred to could not be trusted, things had come to a pretty pass. The merits of this case did not concern him. Probably Mr. Pombart was smarting under a sense of injury; but it appeared everything that ought to be done had been done to give him full opportunity of justifying himself. Civil servants should no longer be encouraged to utilise members of Parliament for the purpose of airing grievances in the House. Probably a private employer would have dismissed Mr. Pombart long before he was dismissed; but the Government moved more slowly. Full inquiry had been made, and the matter should now be dropped. He would oppose the motion.

Mr. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont) : On the contention of the Premier and the member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) that the Government should be trusted to deal with a matter of this kind, he joined issue, because this particular matter was not one dealt with by the Government, but one dealt with by a board with which Parliament had no concern. The board in question had made inquiry and given a decision, and no reason had been shown for upsetting that decision. The charges against this officer appeared rather serious. The first was :—

The preparation of a warrant of commitment in the matter of Wakeham v. Ross, No. 79/00; wherein the debtor was arrested, the money having been paid into the court, and appearing to his credit in the books of the court, and which it was part of Mr. Pombart's duties to have searched for.

Thus it appeared that owing to the negligence of this officer a man was wrongfully arrested. The next charge was :—

The preparation of a warrant of execution in the matter of the City Council v. Hayes; whereas the *præcipe* was made out in the

name of Mrs. Hayes, Mr. Pombart did make out the warrant in the name of John Hayes, which might have led to serious consequences, had not the bailiff refrained from seizing when so informed of the fact by the said Mr. Hayes. The warrant of execution had thus been issued against the wrong person. Supreme Court actions for illegal execution were of common occurrence. The third charge was :—

The preparation of a warrant of commitment in the matter of Tilley & Mugridge v. Minter (in which I am defending an action for illegal arrest), wherein the debtor was arrested, the money at the time lying to his credit in the books of the court, and it being part of Mr. Pombart's duty to search for such payments into court.

Here the result of this public officer's carelessness was that an action was brought against Mr. Rushton, as clerk of the court. The fourth charge was :—

The preparation of a warrant of execution in the matter of Ross v. McKenzie, wherein the debtor had his goods seized, the money lying to his credit in the books of the court, it being part of Mr. Pombart's duty to make search for such payment into court.

It did indeed appear that at this time it was useless for any debtor to pay money into court, because, notwithstanding such payment, he stood the risk of being arrested or of having a warrant of execution issued against him. The allegation that Mr. Pombart was not allowed to call witnesses was sufficiently disproved by the fact that a registered letter was sent to him desiring him to attend at a certain time and bring any witnesses he might wish to call. It had been stated that disagreements had occurred between Mr. Rushton and Mr. Pombart, but no disagreements were alleged as between Mr. Pombart and two other clerks who gave evidence. The board had reported as follows on the charges quoted, amongst others :—

That Mr. Pombart neglected his duty in not making careful search in the records of the court before issuing such important documents as warrants of execution and commitment, which has tended to lay the department open to actions for wrongful distress and imprisonment. He has, besides this, in our opinion shown carelessness in his work, which has led to inconvenience and trouble, both to his fellow clerks and others.

Both Mr. Roe and Mr. Burt were men of experience in inquiries of this kind; particularly the former gentleman, who was more often nominated than any other

private individual in Perth to act as umpire between parties. The tendency of civil servants was to give each other the benefit of the doubt; but here two civil servants who had inquired into the case found unanimously against their fellow civil servant. In the circumstances the member for Mount Margaret should be satisfied to withdraw the motion.

MR. TAYLOR : Not at all.

MR. F. WALLACE (Mt. Magnet) : Originally a feeling of sympathy for Mr. Pombart was aroused by the belief that this gentleman had not been permitted to call witnesses at the inquiry. The witnesses proposed to be called, however, had stated that their evidence would be merely of a general character and would have no bearing on the special charges laid against Mr. Pombart. The principle laid down by the Premier, by the member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby), and by the member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes), that members of Parliament should not lend an ear to aggrieved civil servants, was one he could not subscribe to. For his part, he would be glad to demand justice in this House for any civil servant who had not received justice at the hands of a board of inquiry. The charges in this instance were upheld. It was unfortunate that Mr. Pombart should have committed the errors alleged against him; but, still, these errors need not have been visited with such severe punishment, since they were detected in time to prevent loss to the department.

HON. F. H. PIESSE : What would be the hon. member's opinion if he himself had been arrested through an error of this officer ?

MR. WALLACE : Such cases had not occurred.

MR. FOULKES : Yes. One man had been arrested wrongfully.

MR. WALLACE : Quite so; but the State had not been involved in serious consequences.

MR. JACOBY : What about the consequences to the individual arrested ?

MR. WALLACE : Having expressed strong opinions on the case before knowing the whole of the facts, he felt himself in a somewhat awkward position. The extracts from the report of the board, however, forced one to the conclusion that all possible justice had been accorded to

Mr. Pombart. He felt compelled to oppose the motion.

MR. TAYLOR (in reply) : The regrettable feeling of the House towards this motion was, perhaps, due in some measure to the length of time which had elapsed since the matter was first raised. The Premier had pointed out that the papers relative to Mr. Pombart's case had been laid on the table of the House last year; but the hon. gentleman had forgotten to mention that a motion somewhat similar to this, placed on the Notice Paper by the member for Mount Burges (Mr. Reid), lapsed at the prorogation. The Premier had stated that Mr. Cowan, sitting as a board of inquiry, had found Mr. Pombart guilty of certain breaches of duty; but, according to Mr. Pombart, the brother officer who had brought the charges had also been condemned by Mr. Cowan. With reference to the second board, consisting of Mr. Roe and Mr. Burt, Mr. Pombart had stated that he had been refused permission to call witnesses. A statement signed by those witnesses, who included such respectable gentlemen as Mr. Villeneuve Smith, Mr. W. F. Foster, Hon. G. Bellingham, and Hon. A. G. Jenkins, read :—

We, the undersigned, do hereby declare that on the 21st May last we received a subpoena to attend the following day before a board of inquiry appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the suspension of Mr. J. E. Pombart from his official duties, and that we did voluntarily attend thereat with a desire to give evidence on behalf of Mr. Pombart, and were always ready and willing to give such evidence, but have not been called.

Mr. Pombart had also absolutely affirmed in a letter to the Press that Mr. Roe, the chairman of the board, had told him that he could not call witnesses, because the inquiry had to be finished in one day.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : The shorthand notes did not show that.

MR. TAYLOR : Not according to the Premier's reading of them. He (Mr. Taylor), having read these statements in the Press, had brought the matter forward from the purest motives, and without any feeling against the members of the board, to whom he imputed no unfair or dishonest conduct. He could not, however, regard the board in question as constituting the highest tribunal of this State. When a man did not get justice in the

lower court he went to the higher courts, and sometimes the decision of the lower court was reversed. It would not be a stricture on the board if the House appointed a committee. Mr. Pombart believed he could clear himself before a committee of the House. It might be a bad precedent to establish to appoint a committee of inquiry, but the House would be in order, considering the extenuating circumstances connected with the retirement of this officer, in giving him an opportunity of producing evidence before a committee. The Government would also be able to bring evidence to uphold the finding of the board. When the Government were so anxious not to have an inquiry held, there appeared to be something which the Government wished to keep from the light of day. The chief reason, according to the letters which Mr. Pombart had copied from the file, was that on confidential reports the dismissal was based. Mr. Pombart pointed out clearly that he could prove collusion and malice on the part of officers in the department from which he was removed; and when a man thought he could do that he should have an opportunity of either exonerating himself or of allowing the charges to be sheeted home to him. Mr. Pombart farther pointed out that the board had not time to go fully into the case, for it had to be finished in one day, because Mr. Burt had to go to Wyndham. One was not going to hold Mr. Pombart blameless, but that gentleman should have an opportunity of clearing himself. He had a decided objection to officers being dismissed or dealt with on confidential reports. If a report or charge was made, the officer concerned should have an opportunity of disproving the charge. As long as confidential reports were made against officers, so long would there be dissatisfaction in the departments. He believed in giving every man a fair show, and while not being a champion for the civil servants, at the same time any officer, from the highest to the lowest, should have a fair trial. If Mr. Pombart failed to establish his case before a committee of inquiry, the position of the officers of the department would be strengthened. If there was a particle of truth in what he had read of this case Mr. Pombart had been unjustly treated.

Question put and negatived.

MOTION—FOOD DUTIES, TO ABOLISH.

Debate resumed from the 10th September, on the motion by Mr. Hastie "That all inter-State duties on butter, cheese, eggs, bacon, ham, potatoes, onions, and flour should be immediately abolished."

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Williams): In introducing this motion the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) opened up a subject of a very controversial character. For many years the question of the removal of duties has engaged the attention of the House, and I, with many others, had hoped when federation was an accomplished fact, and with the prospect before us of the removal of the duties within a stated period, we should hear no more of the question in this House. It seems that the member for Kanowna considers it his duty, in the interests of the country and of those whom he represents, to again bring the matter before the House, expressing the opinion that the duties should be removed from the articles enumerated in the motion. I hope to be able to deal as temperately in my remarks with the objections to the removal as the member for Kanowna dealt with the objections to their retention. We may look at this question from two stand-points; first, from the financial standpoint, as touched upon by the Treasurer in the House a few evenings ago. The Treasurer stated that so far as the Government were concerned, he was of opinion that at the present time it would not be a wise course to allow the duties to be removed, for the reason that the revenue which they produced is required by the country. On the other hand, I take up this line of argument, and one which I have taken up so frequently before in the House, that from the farmers' standpoint the duties are still useful for the purpose of protection. The duties have been of great assistance in the past, although we know that in the course of a few years they will be entirely removed as against the States that have entered into the Commonwealth. At the same time, I think while we can still enjoy the protection afforded to us, the farmers should be allowed to take advantage of it. The member for Kanowna stated that he considered the duty as a protection to farmers to be of little service to

them. I am still of the opinion, which I have expressed before, that the duties are of service, and anyone who looks into the subject will see that to remove the duties which are spoken of in the motion—and I specially refer to one or two items, more particularly in regard to wheat and flour, because we must take them together, seeing that flour is the product of wheat—will be a loss to the farmers. Anyone who has studied the subject will find that the price paid to the farmers in the country will be sixpence less per bushel immediately on the removal of the duty, because admitting what has been stated by some members, that the farmer may not get the whole of that duty, there will be the same difference in the price paid to the farmer when the duty is removed. If we take the duty off, the farmers will get sixpence a bushel less. We have also heard from the member for Kanowna that the duty which has been placed on the articles mentioned has not encouraged production to the extent it should have done, and he also expressed surprise that the articles enumerated had not been produced to any greater extent of late years. I have frequently pointed out that an increase in the production of many of the articles, for instance butter, bacon, and cheese, termed by-products by the hon. member, from the farm will depend upon the supply of wheat and flour exceeding the demand, as then will come in the question of the smaller products, the by-products. That is coming about because we are gradually gaining on the greater item. I think I can show to the House that there has been a decided improvement in regard to production, and a most encouraging one, and one that fully justifies the action the House has taken in the past in continuing to support the farmers in this direction. If we take the population of this country, we may date the increase from the commencement of responsible government, that is during the last 11 years; but there has been a still greater increase during the last six years, and an impetus has been given to farming during the last five years. Prior to that the people of the State were excited by the discovery of gold, and attention was not directed to the farming industry so much then as since. In addition to that a great deal has been said against the capabilities of the country,

its want of productiveness; but since that we have proved it is equally as productive as the Eastern States. Although some of our land is not as rich as some of the tracts of country in those States, still with our regular rainfall, with the areas which we know have been developed and which have produced large results, we find people have turned their attention to this State, and especially so during the last three years. The settlement upon the soil has been phenomenal. The results have been shown by the returns issued by the Lands Department from time to time. With regard to the acreage, in 1897—I will take a period which will embrace five years—the area under crop was 111,738; and in 1902 it had increased to 216,824, or an increase of 95,086 acres. Of those acres there were 31,489 in wheat in 1897, yielding 243,928 bushels. In 1902 there were 93,707 acres in wheat, yielding 933,101 bushels, or an increase in acreage of 51,218 acres and an increase in yield of 689,173 bushels—a very satisfactory increase. Now we come to another commodity produced, and which I am glad to say is very largely produced now as compared with previous years—oats. In 1897 the acreage was 1,753 acres, yielding 18,871 bushels. In 1902 the acreage was 9,641 acres, yielding 158,638 bushels, or an increase in acreage of 7,888 acres, and an increase in yield of 139,767 bushels. It may be said, "What has this to do with the question of duty?" It was pointed out that we are not gaining with regard to wheat, and that was given as a reason why the duty should be removed, as it was not encouraging production as it should do. The farmer is becoming wiser in his generation and is turning his attention to distributing his crops. He is not going into one product only, but is turning his attention to the production of several, and amongst them he is producing oats. As you will see, the yield in 1902 has been 158,638 bushels, as against 18,871 bushels five years ago. As I mentioned when speaking on this subject a few weeks since in my district, where we were only producing a few years ago a thousand bags of oats, last year the product was over 10,000 bags, thus showing that people are fast taking advantage of producing other crops than wheat. Then we come on to

maize. There again we see an advance. In 1897 there were 30 acres, yielding 507 bushels, and in 1902 530 acres, yielding 5,611 bushels, an increase in acreage of 500 acres, and an increase in yield of 5,104 bushels. Such a crop is a very satisfactory one in the Eastern States, and I think we can produce maize in any quantities in the south-western portion of this country. I am dealing with one specific thing, flour, and also other things which of course follow consequently upon the production of flour. Immediately we meet the demand of this country in flour we shall begin to satisfy the demands of the country in other directions, because as I have pointed out previously, it all follows upon the by-products of the mill. For instance, if you have cheap bran and cheap offal, you can produce bacon and butter and all those things which follow upon it, and every encouragement that can be given to the farmer to produce from the soil should be given. In one item, potatoes—that is a matter which has been mentioned by one hon. member (Mr. Purkiss)—in 1897 we had 720 acres planted, yielding 2,089 tons; in 1902, 1,829 acres, yielding 5,665 tons. There is a satisfactory increase, the increase in the acreage being 1,109 acres, and the increase in the yield 3,576 tons. And in onions, we had in 1897 59 acres, yielding 144 tons, and in 1902, 161 acres yielding 370 tons, or an increase in the acreage of 102 acres, and an increase in the yield of 226 tons. That shows there is a steady increase. The people find to-day it is more to their advantage to turn their attention to the production of cereals and chaff. These are the big commodities which are required and which can be produced easily; and in endeavouring to encourage agriculturists in the direction of producing these things, such as wheat and chaff, we are also causing them to turn their attention to points I mentioned just now. When the supply is equal to the demand they will turn their attention to other commodities mentioned in the motion.

MR. HASTIE: The duties will all be off then.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I am coming to that directly. I am putting it this way. The hon. member would lead the House and the country to infer that the farmers are not doing all they should in

the direction of production. Again, he mentioned that there is also a question as to the meat supply. With regard to the meat supply, what do we find? We find that there is a very substantial increase in stock. The number of cattle in 1896 was 199,793, and they had increased in 1901 to 394,580, or an increase of 194,789. You see that in cattle alone the increase is very considerable, and one which I think this country should be congratulated upon, proving as it does that the attention of the people has been turned to the production of its requirements. In pigs again, an item that affects bacon, which was one of the matters mentioned by the hon. member, we find a very substantial increase. In 1896 the number of pigs in the country was 31,154, and in 1901 the number was 61,026, or an increase of 29,862; so you see that there is a steady increase, no matter how you look at it; and it is an increase which, too, I think shows the people are evidently anxious to do all they can to supply the needs of this State. As I have often said, the only way in which we can succeed in producing what is required here is to encourage the people to do it. If we have to continue to import it there will be attendant expenses and deterioration, and other causes which will cause it to be dear. With regard to flour, if we turn to the import list we shall find that for the half-year ending the 30th June last the quantity of wheat imported was 49,593 bushels. If we take 50 bushels of wheat to produce a ton of flour, that will give us 991 tons of flour, or if we double that to give us the amount for the whole year we shall have 1,982 tons. The imports of flour for a similar period amounted to 2,543 tons, which doubled gives 5,086 tons, or a total of 7,068 tons. If we turn up the figures with regard to mill produce, we shall find the country has produced 12,700 tons of flour. That shows that the argument put forward by the hon. member that we are not supplying half the requirements of the people for flour is certainly erroneous on the face of it. Then, too, we must not forget, in giving credit for the whole of this importation of wheat which we have shown to produce 1,982 tons of flour, that a great portion of this wheat was required for seeding purposes, for fowl feed, and

other numberless things. Therefore we may take it that the amount may be reduced by a thousand tons, so that all the importation into the State, both wheat and flour, has been 6,000 tons as against 12,600 tons milled here.

MR. HASTIE: Do those figures not show that the amount imported is increasing?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: They do not. The quantity imported is decreasing, and we are gradually gaining by producing that which we require here. I would like to point out to the House that there is one fact which we must take into consideration. Last year we had the lowest wheat crop per acre that we have had for the past seven years, the yield being something like 9.96 bushels per acre, whereas you will find that taking the average it has been about $10\frac{1}{2}$ bushels per acre, so that accounts for a shortage in the production last year. We have only to look at the immense areas which have been brought into cultivation, the great influx of people who have come to this State, and the large quantity of land that has been taken up, to form an opinion as to how long it will take to produce the difference between the quantity of flour now produced and the total amount required—6,000 tons. It will mean that we shall overtake the demand possibly in one year, if we have a good season, and we shall find ourselves in the position we have been looking forward to, although from a farmer's standpoint it is not such a good prospect that is the time when we shall fully supply the demands of this State. If we take the duties which have been mentioned by the hon. member, we find that for the half-year, taking the items which are imported, we have paid £45,438. If we take the amount for the whole year, and divide it amongst the 212,000 people in this State, we find that it amounts to 8s. 7d. per head of the population; or for a family of five, 42s. 11d. per year, or 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per family per week. Allowing for reduction after the 8th October, the amount will be reduced to about 8d. per week for an average family. After all, that is the price of two or three tram-fares, or on the goldfields the price of a drink; nothing more per week; and it is really infinitesimal, and does not come into the calculations of people who are

working upon the goldfields or in the towns here. If you were to put the question to this State and say, "Would you prefer to have a reduction in your wages"—that is the working people of this State—"of even 6d. per day, or have these duties removed?" they would say, "By all means let us retain the wages and keep the duties on." It is well to keep the promise made to the farmers, and it is also well to keep that compact which was made with the country, that being that these duties shall continue for a period of five years, reduced as they will be by a fifth per annum. I think I have shown that we have produced in some of these lines, potatoes especially, more than half the requirements; in flour we have produced 60 per cent. of the requirements; and in regard to cattle, that is the meat requirements of this State, we are producing about 80 per cent. of the needs of Western Australia. So I think it goes to show that in a short time we shall have overtaken the requirements of the State in other directions. The member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) quoted from *Hansard* the following remarks of my friend the member for Northam (Hon. G. Throssell), speaking on the Address-in-reply:—

I am quite willing to concede the contention of the member for West Perth, when he says a portion of the revenue derived from this source (food duties) is not protective revenue. I am quite willing, if we can afford it, to give up the huge butter duty, cheese duty, tinned milk duty, and various other duties that are of no positive help to the farmer.

That is a good sentiment for an hon. member to express, living in what is entirely a wheat and chaff district. In time to come that district will doubtless supply dairy produce as well. But if any encouragement be given, let it be general. I am not prepared to be selfish and to say I should like to see the duties taken off butter, cheese, or any other products of the South-West district, and retained on those articles which my district produces. I think we should look at the problem from a national standpoint, remembering that it means protection to all these industries, and not singling out any one industry. No doubt the hon. member felt he was speaking for some of the people who were producing, and that they might have no objection to the

removal; but he was not speaking for all. The member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) said he thought the farmers themselves would offer no objection to the removal. He has not travelled amongst the farmers, or he would know that they do not express any such opinion. On the contrary, they are only too anxious to see the retention of the duties, which mean to them not only money, but encouragement; and while the duties can be retained the House should certainly support their retention, and not agree to the motion. Another matter mentioned by the hon. member was the prices paid for goods consumed in this State. Comparisons have been made by the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) also in this matter, and he the other night gave us instances of the charges in Melbourne and those in this city, the difference being, of course, in favour of Melbourne. But, as I then pointed out, the higher price charged here is not wholly attributable to the duty. The difference is really a question of the profits as between Melbourne and Perth; and it is sometimes difficult to arrive at any understanding as to the basis on which the profits are estimated, because it is really a question of trade, and we shall sometimes find that goods are sold as cheaply here, notwithstanding the duty, as in the East. I admit that is not often the case; but the higher price here cannot be altogether attributable to the duty, and we have only to look up the trade circulars and the retail price lists of the Eastern States to-day, and we shall find that the figures very nearly correspond with our retail prices. In fact, I had in my hand to-night a letter written only some eight or nine days ago from a friend of mine in New South Wales, pointing out that in a place about 200 miles from Sydney, connected by rail with that capital, and with a daily train service, where foodstuffs have always been fairly cheap, meat is now 1s. and butter 2s. Therefore the prices are high in the East. Unfortunately for us, prices here run high at a time when we should prefer to see them ruling lower; and then we should have heard nothing of this motion, and probably the reduction of the duties would have been allowed to proceed in accordance with the understanding arrived at during the federal campaign.

MR. HOPKINS: Those high prices are permanent here, but not there.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: There is this about it. I think the people of this country are perfectly satisfied to allow the matter to stand in accordance with the arrangement arrived at when federation was decided on, the duties being reduced in a fixed proportion every year. And taking the reduction for this year, one-fifth, that after all is a considerable proportion of the duty, because it is 20 per cent., and therefore it is a very reasonable reduction; and when we consider the fact that after the next four years the duties will entirely disappear, then, after all, we shall doubtless admit it is well to leave matters as we expected to find them, not causing the producers of the country, who are doing their best, to complain that faith has been broken with them.

MR. DAGLISH: What about the people who take up land four years hence?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: People who take up land four years hence will, no doubt, come in under the altered conditions; but what we have been trying for years to do—and there is no one knows more of it than I and others who are acquainted with the people on the land—is to get the people on the soil. There has been a hard struggle to get them on the land at all; and it is only because of the encouragement afforded by the duties, and of the help given in other ways, that they have been led to take up and develop the country. Take that country stretching away some 300 miles towards Albany, and about 50 miles in breadth, and consider how it has been improved. We find that farms of 600 to 700 acres are not now uncommon; and that has all come about during the last four years. And is it not better to see this state of things, which will encourage and even tempt others to come; is it not cheering to think that this slight advantage afforded in the early stages of agricultural development will doubtless mean farther settlement?

MR. HOPKINS: What about the increased revenue under the Commonwealth tariff?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Yes; there has been an increase from abroad; but we are dealing with the question as between ourselves and the Eastern States—a special tariff.

MR. HOPKINS: We were dealing with the question whether the country can afford the sliding scale.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: And I say the people can afford it, and that the consumers, if they were asked whether they would prefer a reduction in wages or a reduction of the duties, would plump in favour of the sliding scale.

MR. HOPKINS: That is beside the question.

MR. DAGLISH: You cannot bluff them in that way.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: There is no need for bluff. The member for Kanowna touched on a point to which I did not think it necessary to refer at the time, when he said the farmers were, as a class, well fed, well clothed, and well housed—[MR. HASTIE: Is not that true?—and they did not work anything like 14 hours a day, as farmers did in older communities. I say, if it were not for the farmer, who goes on the land and has to work for many years before he gets a substantial return, we should not be able to enjoy the good things of this world. Give every credit to the gold-miner, who has done so much to develop the country, and has given a great impetus to farming, and caused people to turn their attention to production; but do not forget that there are not in farming the allurements we find in gold-mining. In farming, progress is slow. [MR. DAGLISH: But more certain.] It is tedious work; it involves an isolated life; and the many vicissitudes in connection with farming prevent many farmers from succeeding. And after all, I think the hon. member's remarks were certainly not applicable to the generality of the farmers of Western Australia; and I say the only time the hon. member has seen our farmers was—[MEMBER: At Katanning Show]—yes; on the few convivial occasions when they have an opportunity of appearing in their "Sunday best." He has seen them also when hon. members recently visited Goomalling; and there the agriculturists no doubt appeared a thriving body of people. I hope they are thriving, and I am sure we all wish it. At the same time, let the hon. member go on their farms when they are at work, and let him then come here and repeat, if he can, what he said a few nights ago, that these

people are well housed. The habitations in which they live for some years after they take up farming are, I think, more modest than those of any other people of this State.

MR. HOPKINS: What about the people on the leases?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: As to working 14 hours a day, every farmer works from daylight to dark if he wishes to succeed. [MR. HOPKINS: We all do that.] Hon. members may do so; in fact, if we have many motions like this tabled from time to time, I am afraid we shall work not only till dark, but till the next daylight. After all, giving the mover every credit for being reasonable and temperate in his arguments, and for having every desire to do what he considers his duty to the country, we must give the farmers of this community credit for trying to develop resources which would not be developed unless we had the particular class of people who take vigorously to that work. There is not about that work the fascination that there is in gold-mining. There certainly may be more regular profits, but the profits are not so great; and as I said long ago, the two industries run so well together that we must encourage both, for it is to them we look for the permanent welfare of the State. Let the hon. member be as moderate in his ideas as he was in introducing this motion, and think whether this benefit which he attempts to give the State would be appreciated, whether it would be of any great advantage to the people; and let him bear in mind also the fact that there was a promise made that the food duties should not be removed.

MR. HASTIE: By whom?

MR. HOPKINS: On whose authority?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: And take into consideration the unusual conditions of this country in regard to its development, the great extent of country over which the population is spread; showing that we require a very much larger income to develop our resources than we should perhaps need if our conditions were similar to those of other States. [MR. HOPKINS: Have we not that income?] Therefore, let us not rob the Treasury of these duties, at any rate for some time to come. [MR. HOPKINS: Do not let us rob the people.] Let the

duties be reduced as proposed. I am ready, on behalf of the farmers, to go thus far. I do not see that, if the revenue could be spared, it would be unfair to remove the whole of these duties two years hence. I do not believe the small duties then remaining under the sliding scale will be of very material help. But even setting that aside, there are grave reasons for the retention of the duties on the score of protection, owing to the help they give. They are not, in the strict sense of the term, protective duties; for if we take the item flour in the Commonwealth tariff, we shall find the duty is 2s. 6d. per cental—a very much higher rate. The duty on flour is in the Commonwealth tariff £2 5s., as against our £1 10s.; and the Victorian duty in the early days was £5 a ton. Here we have only moderate protection, and that protection has been of advantage to the farming people. And after all, we who are so interested in this State must feel satisfied and encouraged, too, to think that this State, which at one time was looked on as a country which would not produce, is now on the highway towards producing all the foodstuffs required for the people's consumption. Consider the present drought in the East. Presuming that the whole of the crops fail in those States, as they may fail, and presuming that Western Australia, with the rainfall we have and our other advantages of climate, is able to produce all that is required for our people, then if we were not producing we should have to import from beyond the Commonwealth, and to pay a higher rate for our foodstuffs than we are ever likely to pay while we ourselves produce all we require. [MR. HOPKINS: We may have a drought here.] We shall not have a drought. I have known this country for as long as I can remember, and there has never been a failure of the harvest. If people farm in a systematic manner, there are no failures. [MR. MORAN: And that, you know, is a big protection.] It is; but let us get a start. We have heard the people of the Eastern States say this country will not produce; but we are proving that it will; and therefore I say that the encouragement afforded in the past has been the means to the end and has shown that the land is capable of producing. I maintain that for the farther short period during which

these duties will remain in force the House should ask the people, and the people themselves should be willing, to bear the slight taxation involved and so continue to encourage those who are prepared to develop the country's resources and to provide the requirements of its people. In that way only can food be cheapened; for it is a well-known axiom that in order to insure cheap supplies the people themselves must produce. When the stage has been reached that the demand is overtaken by the supply, and the exporting era begins, internal competition must set in, with the result that the price of foodstuffs will fall. I do not place strong reliance on the financial argument, because that is really a matter for the Treasurer to consider from the aspect of the country's requirements. If the additional revenue be not required, then of course the duties can go by the board. I do, however, put forward as a strong argument in favour of the continuance of the duties for a short period—a period, in any event, not exceeding four years—that this most controversial subject which has occupied so much of the attention of the House, which has given rise to stirring and even acrimonious debates, will soon disappear altogether, and that we shall never have tabled again a motion relating to these duties. At the end of the period I have mentioned, the matter will be one to be dealt with by the Commonwealth Parliament. [MR. MORAN: Worse luck.] I say, let us as a State Parliament get away from this subject; let us keep faith with the people of this State first of all in the matter of finance, and secondly in the matter of protection. I think I have proved an advance, decidedly establishing the fact that the people of this State are turning their attention to production from the soil, which must constitute our staple industry. In this respect I do not yield the first place even to gold-mining, for the gold will be exhausted; once taken out of the soil, it will never be replaced; whereas the experience of those who have studied the subject in the old world goes to prove that by farming the same piece of land can be rendered productive for a thousand years, or even five thousand years.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I do not intend to say much on this motion,

because it has been fully discussed in the country as well as in this House during last session. I listened with considerable interest to the remarks of the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piessé), especially to the figures he gave in regard to the increase of production from the soil. I am sure it is gratifying to all of us to have such figures brought to our attention from time to time. I listened in vain, however, for the hon. member to establish a connection between the increase of production and the existence of the food duties. The weak point of the hon. member's speech was that he failed to establish any connection whatever between the increased farm production and the existence of the duties. Indeed, I am prepared to argue that the facts are all against him, and that as the food duties begin to disappear so increase of settlement and of production becomes absolutely more marked. During the past twelve months, for instance, settlement has been proceeding more vigorously than ever before; and yet the new settlers know they are absolutely doomed to lose the food duties at comparatively an early date. And not only that, but we find that the new settlers who will not enjoy the supposed advantage of the food duties at all—because those duties will probably have ceased long before the land now being taken up comes into bearing—are forced to take up land inferior to that which is held by the old farmers, which those old farmers are now cultivating, and of which they are enjoying the benefits.

MR. HARPER: Question?

MR. DAGLISH: The first-comers in any district naturally pick the eyes out of that district, so far as their judgment enables them to do so.

MR. HARPER: But the first-comers do not always know what is best.

MR. DAGLISH: The first-comers do not always happen to choose rightly; but, nevertheless, we find that nowadays land which the old settlers passed by as useless years ago is being taken up. Throughout the agricultural districts, areas which have been passed by year after year are now being selected. Present-day selectors have to take up land rejected, rightly or wrongly, by the old settlers; and those who are now taking what is left, good, bad, or indifferent, will derive no benefit

whatever from the existence of the food duties, but will have to farm under the difficulties which we are told will face the farmers so soon as those duties disappear.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I do not say the removal of the duties will ruin the farmer, but I do say their existence is an encouragement to him.

MR. DAGLISH: The food duties, it is strongly urged, are in the nature of an encouragement to farmers in the Eastern States to come to Western Australia and enter on farming here. It is urged, farther, that those duties constitute an inducement to persons engaged in mining and other occupations in our own State to abandon those occupations and to settle on the land. The food duties are now vanishing, and will have entirely disappeared in four years at the very outside. They cannot at the present day act as an inducement to new settlers. Nevertheless, settlement is proceeding more rapidly than ever before. I contend—as the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) indicated by way of interjection—that the very fact of our climate being so reliable affords the strongest possible protection which the farmers can have. In addition, however, they have the protection of distance, which surely is to be accounted something. In view of the protection afforded by regularity of climate, the great distance from other producing countries—in the absence of the Esperance railway, of course—the remarkable fertility and productiveness of the soil, surely the farmers should not require any special measure of fiscal protection. I should certainly be willing to afford every protection which I consider necessary. I do not agree that either the farming, or the mining, or any other industrial class should be granted special advantages. I do not think that exceptional treatment should be accorded to any industry. I agree with the member for the Williams that we should look at this question from the national point of view. My contention, however, is that the hon. member fails to do so, and looks at the question solely from the farmer's point of view. I am inclined to think that, after all, the farmer's point of view is a mistaken one. I may contend that the farmer's point of view is really the middleman's point of view, for it is, in fact, the middleman's voice which is most

often heard in support of the retention of the duties. That the farmer himself enjoys any of the advantages which the existence of the food duties is supposed to bestow on him, is extremely doubtful. If the existence of those duties is really essential, then surely all land settlement in this State must cease so soon as our five-years term of the sliding-scale expires. But does any hon. member believe that settlement is likely to cease? Does any hon. member believe that we shall not continue to add to the number of persons engaged in our farming industry when the sliding-scale vanishes?

MR. HARPER: It depends on the price of labour.

MR. DAGLISH: Exactly. It depends on the price of labour, and not on the retention of the food duties. I am pleased for once to find the hon. member introducing the price of labour into the argument. The member for the Williams tells us that the price of labour depends on the existence of the food duties. Therefore, according to the member for the Williams, if the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) wishes to get cheap labour his only course is to abolish the food duties right away. I have no doubt that if the member for the Williams has convinced his neighbour (Mr. Harper), we shall see the member for Beverley voting for this motion. I am satisfied that on this division we shall get a clear indication of whether the member for the Williams has proved convincing or not. As for the price of food determining the rate of wages, it seems to me that the statements on the point made in the course of this debate are strangely at variance with the arguments usually advanced when an endeavour is made by legislation to interfere with the rates of wages. Then the argument is that wages are regulated solely by the law of supply and demand.

MR. MORAN: Do you think that wages are regulated by supply and demand?

MR. DAGLISH: I think rates of wages can be modified in either direction very materially by legislation. The peculiar feature, however, is—

MR. MORAN: It would be a bad look-out for the working man if that were true, just now.

MR. DAGLISH: The peculiar thing is that those who, when one matter is

before the House, argue that wages must depend entirely on the law of supply and demand, are those who, when some other question is before the House, argue for their own purposes that rates of wages really turn on that particular question.

MR. HARPER: That is what we have learned from you.

MR. DAGLISH: I have never taken up either one position or the other. I have always taken up the reasonable position that this House can modify rates of wages very materially by certain legislation.

MR. MORAN: Minimum-wage legislation.

MR. DAGLISH: Yes; certainly. I have always maintained that position. The member for the Williams, however, now proposes to interfere with the law of supply and demand by retaining the food duties. We have been told to-night that the people of the State have expressed no desire for the removal of the food duties. My answer to that argument is that if we had a Legislative Assembly elected on a population basis, undoubtedly the food duties would be abolished. Hon. members generally know this perfectly well. The people, whenever they have had a chance to speak, have spoken in opposition to the retention of the food duties.

HON. F. H. PRIESSE: People always object to taxation, you know.

MR. DAGLISH: I shall come to that in a minute. I may remark in passing, however, that it is a reasonable thing to object to taxation on the necessities of life, especially as ours, like any other community, always contains a certain number of people who are unemployed, as well as a certain number who experience great difficulty in making both ends meet. Therefore, in taxing the necessities of life we make the burdens and difficulties of existence greater for those least able to withstand the strain. Such is one effect of the food duties. We have heard a good deal to-night about the necessity for keeping the compact made with the farmers at the time of federation.

MR. THOMAS: The farmers all voted against federation.

MR. DAGLISH: I have not yet been able to discover what the compact is, or who made it, or what authority anyone

had to make a compact with the farmers. So far as I understand the position, the Premier and the Treasurer seemed to be largely the guilty parties; but I deny the right of those gentlemen, either collectively or individually, to speak or to make any promises on behalf of the people of this State. I am coming now to what the Treasurer said in the course of this very debate. The hon. gentleman told us that the people of Western Australia accepted federation on the understanding that the whole Bill would be adhered to.

THE TREASURER: "The whole Bill and nothing but the Bill."

MR. DAGLISH: Now, the Bill itself provides the right of this State Assembly to abolish or reduce the sliding-scale at any time. Absolutely within the corners of the Bill we find that provision; and the whole Bill is what the people of this State accepted. Our people accepted five years' fiscal freedom, five years' control of their tariff so far as it affected the sister States.

MR. MORAN: Freedom to come down, but not to go up.

MR. DAGLISH: We are now asking merely for the exercise of the right granted by the Bill. The member for the Williams and the Treasurer at this point join issue and demand that we shall recognise some compact entered into by two parties. I deny the compact, and I am quite satisfied the people of this State never regarded these gentlemen as having any right on the one side or the other to enter into any arrangement that should bind the State as a whole. I deny it as one of those who voted against federation, and some of my friends will deny it as having voted for federation. It was entirely a compact in which one side, the farmers, were to have all the advantages, and the other side all the disadvantages. The farmers were to give nothing and take everything. I may say that the farmer, on this occasion, showed very commendable shrewdness, and the other side showed what it will not be parliamentary for me to mention. I deny this arrangement between a few individuals. The member for the Williams says "If you give us the food duties for another two years we will allow you to get off the compact." He really has the power to settle the whole position. He

has the power to release those who have made the compact on the other side; and if we go to him perhaps "with bended knee and bated breath" we may induce him to curtail the period another year; and, presently, the member may admit our right to demand a release from this obligation this session and even from this sitting.

THE PREMIER: Try a pathetic appeal now.

MR. DAGLISH: I would shed tears if I had them. Then there is the position taken up by the Treasurer, who wants to protect his revenue and who wants to increase his revenue. A Treasurer, undoubtedly, will always be in that position, but our position is to keep the revenue as low as is compatible with efficiency in meeting the requirements of the State.

MR. MORAN: Who says the Treasurer always will keep up his revenue?

MR. DAGLISH: The Treasurer said it was his duty to keep up the revenue. The Treasurer's position is this: so long as we find the money necessary for State purposes, he has nothing else left to ask for. The manner in which the money is found need not worry him. We are raising the money in the most disadvantageous manner to the public. The Treasurer is asking the public to raise £200,000 or £300,000 in order that the Treasury may get £100,000. It is an axiom with regard to customs taxation that a State must consent to raise three times as much revenue as will reach the Treasurer. My argument is this: if the Treasurer requires this £100,000, there are better and cheaper ways of getting it, and if it does not come out of the pockets of the public in food duties, it will be available in the pockets of the public to be paid in other ways of taxation. The difference will be, there will not be this increased capital used by traders and merchants, and there will not be profit on the £100,000 to be used by the wholesale and retail dealers.

MR. HÆFER: Still you cannot collect taxation without expenditure.

MR. DAGLISH: You can always collect a tax at a far less expenditure than the amount involved in merchants' and retailer's profits; and when the hon. member says that is my theory, it is not absolutely fair to me because I

deny it is a theory at all. I challenge the member, if he will use a little common sense in the matter, to deny my statement that in proportion to the capital invested by any merchant in business must be his profit, and in the same way with the retail dealer. The hon. member as a business man knows that while customs charges mean the outlay of net cash, because no credit is given by the customs department, profits are higher than when a certain amount of credit is obtainable. I am surprised at my argument as to customs taxation being queried at all. Apart from the question of this compact being broken or not, we are told wages will come down if we reduce the food duties. The member for the Williams showed this reduction of duties would be a trifling saving, and he implied that wages would come down sixpence a day all round if this trifling saving were made; but he did not establish the connection between the two points. He did not show how the Conciliation and Arbitration Act would be affected, and the bulk of the employees on the Eastern Goldfields now come under the ruling recently given by the Arbitration Court.

MR. MORAN: What is the biggest factor of the court in coming to a decision on this matter?

MR. DAGLISH: The question of the rate that has ruled generally in a district for the past term of say a year or two.

MR. MORAN: The question of the cost of living is the greatest factor; in fact it is the only factor.

MR. DAGLISH: That is another factor.

MR. MORAN: A living wage: what does that mean?

MR. DAGLISH: A living wage means about £1 or so below what a man can reasonably live upon on the goldfields at the present time.

MR. THOMAS: You deny us the railway.

MR. DAGLISH: I was under the impression at that time that the farmers would abolish the food duties; but they seem in that matter, as well as in the federal compact, to be trying to get everything and giving away nothing at all. I ask the representative of the farmers to bear this in mind: the Esperance railway has been refused, and many of

those who voted against the Esperance railway did so in the interests of the farmers amongst other national grounds. I say the representatives of the farmers should consider the wants of the goldfields, and be prepared to sympathise a little in the way of compensation to the fields after having their wish respected in regard to the Esperance railway matter. I shall have very much pleasure in voting for the motion of the member for Kanowna, and I trust the House in its wisdom will carry it to-night.

HON. G. THROSSELL (Northam): I see very little use in delaying this question farther. Every person admits that a remission of a portion of the duties will make an important difference to the housekeeper generally, as the cost of living is too high. If the motion applied to butter, cheese, hams and bacon it would have my strong support. As a representative of an agricultural centre, I say plainly I should find it impossible to retain the duties from a producer's standpoint. It will be a long time before we shall see the day when the State will produce 2,000,000 lbs. of cheese or bacon or ham. Seeing the duty on those articles is considerable, it must be admitted plainly that it would be a very important concession to make. In regard to the duty on flour, potatoes, and onions, which articles are also embodied in the motion, it is easy to defend these duties and show clearly they would be of little value to the consumer generally. The duty of 30s. per ton on flour in round numbers comes to about three-sixteenths of a penny per lb., while the duty on potatoes and onions comes to about one-eighth of a penny per lb. If the duties on these articles were removed there would be a considerable gain to the tradesmen, but it would be absolutely no gain whatever to the man who seeks to benefit by the removal of the duties—the consumer. The member for Kanowna, who has moved the motion with great tact and a spirit of fairness, if he acts in the same spirit in dealing with my observations and the observations of those who have gone before me, will see that to consent to the omission of the articles flour, potatoes, and onions from his motion would be a wise act on his part. I have no fear that this motion will be carried, but I would say, even if we had the power—

and I am sure the Government would be willing to remove the duties—it would be a bad time for Western Australia and the producers if the duty on the lines I have named, flour, potatoes, and onions, were removed. I see very clearly the time is at hand when we shall not only produce sufficient but far and away more than the country can consume; but having highly-developed States to compete with when the duties are removed, we shall be choked full with speculative consignments hurled into our market, irrespective of the requirements of the State. That is the time when our farmers will have to go very softly indeed. It is a matter of surprise to me, as one who has taken an interest in the Labour party, to find that when we hear of the other States being starved with their four and six-hushel averages of wheat, and the only market in the wide world to those people having reached a stage of production at 3s. 6d. per bushel, which means starvation to the unfortunates placed on the land under such conditions, that the member for Kanowna would yet level down his brother West Australian producer to the starved-out rates of the farmers of the Eastern States! One of the greatest reasons I had for opposing federation was that we clipped our wings to such an extent that we could not protect the man who is building up the State and has paid his cash into the State Treasury for his land, in stimulating the villages and hamlets in our country. I trust I have said enough to show that the retention of the duties on the three lines named will be a very important help indeed to the producer, while the remission of the duty would be of no benefit whatever to the consumer. If we take that fact and grasp it, the other lines will become comparatively easy. To the baker with a trade of 10 tons a week, the remission of the flour duty would mean £15 per week extra profit to him, but I defy any member or anyone outside the House to show that it would make one iota of difference to the man who pays for his loaf. It is a very important matter for the producer for the reasons I have named; not for the purpose of increasing the price of flour by 30s. per ton, but to prevent him from being utterly swamped, as I said just now, by speculative consignments being hurled

into this market from the surplus of the Eastern States, independent of the requirements of this State. There is another view: I would gladly support the motion so far as the duty on the first-named articles, butter, cheese, hams, and bacon, is concerned, and I would go farther and include vegetables in every form and tinned milk and other lines. But there are other good reasons why the time is altogether inopportune and unwise; for those who feel a sense of responsibility as to the future of this State must recognise surely that no Government can at the eleventh hour so cavalierly throw aside £100,000 a year. I have it on good authority that independently of the remission we are now talking of, the Treasurer of the State will under the sliding-scale have to face an all-round loss of £100,000 a year. If to that be added the sum named by my friend the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie), how is any Government to carry on? It is all very well for irresponsible members to speak so lightly of revenue, but I am altogether at one with the Government in the action they have taken, and I am certain, if I understand rightly, that were the Government not so trammelled with the consciousness of what they have to do for the benefit of this State, they would only too gladly side with the member for Kanowna in remitting the whole of these duties. I have said enough. I said just now I saw no necessity for labouring the question. The Treasurer will come down with his Estimates in the course of a few days, and to ask him to take such an action as is proposed this evening is thoroughly impossible. I say to the hon. member and those acting with him, let it stand over for twelve months. The Federal tariff is now settled. We shall watch with very great eagerness the effect upon this country, and we shall be better able to judge at the end of another year whether we can remit these duties named, always excepting the lines I have mentioned. My friend the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) gave figures to show conclusively that this State will be a large producing centre. When we find that land is being settled at a great rate and subject to conditions of improvement, there is good reason for believing that

we shall speedily take up manufacturing. I do not wish to see the day when the only outlet for the produce of the Western Australian farmer will be the London market at 3s. 6d. per bushel. I have a strong belief in the law of compensation, and although I say the Treasurer may have to face a possible loss of £100,000 by losing one-fifth of the inter-State duties through the sliding-scale, that may be exaggerated. We know that our fears with regard to federation were exaggerated to some extent. We may be in danger of exaggerating the result of this loss, because the law of compensation comes in, and with the largely increased population—unfortunately we cannot regard it as a permanent one—we may find that the loss will be minimised to a very great extent. But we cannot tell how far we shall be disorganised; therefore it will be wise in the interests of the country and of the government of the people generally to hold our hands with regard to this concession. Let it stand over for one twelvemonth. Let us see what the effect of the increased population will do for us, and how far the troubles of disorganisation will be minimised. Let us see the effect of the Federal tariff upon our revenue. Then the Government of the day will have had some experience to guide them. There may no longer be a desire to force the hands of the Government on this matter, but the Government may say they are prepared, after the experience they have gained during the first year, to propose the remission of certain duties. If they do that, they will have my support for it, always exempting the lines I have mentioned. There are gentlemen in this House, notably from the South, who will be able to tell you better than myself that the three particular lines referred to are the main support of agriculturists at the present time, and that the remission of the duties would be striking a blow at the prosperity of the producer without giving the consumer one iota of benefit. I regret I cannot support the motion even in part, but I distinctly wish it to be understood that I find it impossible to defend the duties mentioned in the first portion of the motion marked (a). That is from the producer's standpoint, but from the Government standpoint I stand

with the Government and defend the sliding-scale.

MR. T. HAYWARD (Bunbury): I do not wish to prolong this debate, but I should like to add a few figures or some information with regard to different crops for the present year. The member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) has given us estimates up to the end of the last year, I presume. I would like to give information I have gathered with respect more especially to the growing of crops of potatoes. I have had reliable information at the present time that on the Harvey and Collie rivers alone there are 250 acres of potatoes now growing. That represents at least 1,000 tons. I think four tons per acre is a very low estimate. That is only a very small portion of the district, and I estimate that in November next there will be a supply of potatoes sufficient for the consumption of the State for the next six months. After that will come the swamp crop. That will not be anything like the same amount, but still it will be a considerable quantity; and I may also say I hope to see next year the Stirling estate thrown open, and there will be at least 1,000 tons produced there. I would point out to members that I do not think any one of the States produce potatoes all the year round, but for a portion of the year they are dependent upon the New Zealand crop. That applies here, and we all know that we shall be obliged to pay a duty on those potatoes from New Zealand, in any case. During the next year we shall, on account of the drought, be dependent largely on the other States for supplies of cheese, butter, hams, and bacon, and on New Zealand also; if so, we shall have to pay a higher duty than we shall have to pay on such things from the other States. Taking all these facts into consideration, I think that if we pass the motion—I do not believe we shall—it will not benefit the consumers to anything like the extent pointed out by the member for Kanowna.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas): I would like to say in preface that I am entirely delighted with some of the remarks which my friend the member for Northam (Hon. G. Throssell) has seen fit to make. I am glad at any rate the representatives of the goldfields have

been so far successful in the campaign which they have carried on upon the floor of this House as to get one convert, if it is only for the reduction or the removal of duties on half of the articles in relation to which we are asking. With regard to this matter, I would point out again we are doing the same thing as we have been doing for some considerable time past, and that is putting the cost of running the country on the people, who are getting very near the time when they will be unable to bear it. I refer again to the goldfields of Western Australia. I have spoken in this House until I am sick and tired of speaking, and I will continue to speak, I do not care how sick and tired the House may be of listening to me. I will continue to try and drill into the heads of the people in this House that they cannot go on much longer in Western Australia piling tax after tax on the mining industry. I believe that the end is coming, and coming quickly, and for that reason I continually warn this House as to what it is doing, and I will continue to do so as long as I am permitted to retain my seat. I speak now not only as a mining man from the Eastern Goldfields and acquainted with the Eastern Goldfields, but I speak also on behalf of a large section of my constituents who are farmers and pastoralists the same as other farmers and pastoralists in this House. Those farmers and pastoralists in my constituency do not want a continuation of these duties. [Interjection by Hon. F. H. Piesse.] You would be surprised if I gave you the figures. I shall refrain from doing so. I do not wish to detain the House unnecessarily. The other day we had the Premier speaking at Goomalling. Every goldfields member with the exception of two are supporting him tooth and nail in anything he proposes to this House. It must therefore be correct that he is the true friend of the goldfields, that he is the one man in this country who is going to do everything he can to benefit the Eastern Goldfields. We find him speaking at the opening of the Goomalling railway and telling the people there he is opposed to the removal of the food duties. He said, "If the goldfields would only consider it for one moment, if they only could see they would be

benefiting the farmers, I am sure they would be prepared to throw in their lot with the agriculturist in Western Australia, and would bear his burden." I say unhesitatingly that the mining industry of this State has been carrying too many burdens in the past, and we do not want any more burdens to be put upon us. I will say this also unhesitatingly, that did I for one moment believe that the retention of the food duties would do one atom of good to the farmers of Western Australia, I would cast my vote against the motion moved by the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie). Last session we had many lengthy sittings of a select committee of this House to deal with the best means of improving the food supply. In their report they recommended the removal of the import duty on poultry, the prompt removal of all import duties on dairy produce, the removal of all import duties on pork and bacon, and so on. We examined witnesses from every side; we collected all evidence available. I do not wish to weary members by quoting at any length from the evidence adduced at the meetings of that committee, except to quote two or three things from the evidence of the late Mr. Lindley Cowan, an expert in agriculture whom we examined before that committee. The question was asked by the chairman:—

Could you tell the committee, or give the committee any reason, why we are importing such large quantities of farm and dairy produce at the present time?—Answer: Because it pays the farmers better to follow the line of least resistance; in other words, they can make more profit with less labour out of lines that are not imported. It pays to import. Take one line, butter, for instance. The average farmer here who would go into butter-making under the present conditions of the labour market would be nothing more nor less than an ass, in my opinion.

By the Chairman: Under these circumstances, do you think those particular industries are worth encouraging?

I would ask the House to mark this answer:—

All industries that are productive are worth encouraging, but it is a question whether any sound encouragement can be given at the present time to develop those industries. I think it is more desirable to follow the natural course of events. It was only necessity that drove Victoria to develop the dairying industry. The country was in a state of insolvency when the dairying industry was

started; it was only that necessity which drove them to milking cows. I was there at the time. I was one of the first to promote the dairying industry. It is a fact that the tendency of the agriculturist, so far as my experience of him in the United States and here goes, follows the line of least resistance. As long as he can make a fair living with little exertion—the less exertion the better, and the less risk (and there is generally more risk in dairying), he is content. He will follow the line of least resistance; and it is only necessity will drive him into other directions. I do not think he is to be blamed.

Question: You think, while wheat and hay remain at their present price, dairying will not be developed to any considerable extent? To-day the price of hay is considerably higher than it was when this answer was given:—

Answer: I do not think so. I do not think dairying can be encouraged in any other way by the State. I think, possibly, dairying and such pursuits may be given mild encouragement in the form of dissemination of information, and perhaps mild financial assistance, and largely by practical example. I do not think, however, that you can force people into these lines, and I do not think it is desirable to attempt to do so.

Question: Under the circumstances, do you think that in the interests of the consumer it would be advisable to remove the duties at present operating against the introduction of these products?—Answer: I do not think it would make any difference; not the slightest.

Later, I asked the same witness:—

You have been telling us that at the present time the farmers are naturally following the pursuit which pays them best (hay-growing or wheat-growing as the case may be), and that while they can get a better profit from wheat and hay they will not go in for butter and eggs. It would not do the farmer any hardship then, under these conditions, if the duties on dairy produce were removed? If the removal of the duties would benefit the consumer, of course we have your opinion that it would not, it appears to me it would not hurt the producer?—Answer: I was always of the opinion that freight and charges are quite sufficient for the protection of the producer. I have always been of that opinion. I reckon that the export charges, freight, loss in transit, landing charges, and commissions on all those products which we are producing here, or are likely to produce with one exception, afford ample protection.

Yet we were told in the course of this debate that the farmer of Western Australia requires protection on these articles! I claim that he does not require protection; and for that reason, although as a representative of farmers and pastoralists I shall do my utmost to protect their

interests, I say we, as farmers and pastoralists, do not wish this protection continued; and I shall therefore support the member for Kanowna. We have had the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) giving us some figures, and telling us that the production of Western Australia is rapidly overtaking the importations. On the other hand, I also should like to give the House a few figures. Flour was the product which the hon. member particularly mentioned. In 1899 we imported to this State 12,506 tons of flour; in 1900 the quantity went down slightly, the amount in that year being 11,584 tons; while in 1901 we imported 17,748 tons.

MR. HOPKINS: That is their indication of progress!

MR. THOMAS: I may tell the House that every figure I am now reading is taken from a report by the Registrar General of Western Australia, dated the 2nd instant. I do not think I can get much later figures, and I think I am right in assuming their correctness. Of onions, we imported in 1898, 1,695 tons; in 1899, 1,954 tons; and in 1900, 2,067 tons. In 1901 there was a slight decrease, the total being 1,966 tons.

MR. DIAMOND: With an enormously increased population.

MR. THOMAS: I have already given the figures for the population. I think our population is at present about 212,000.

MR. DIAMOND: Compare the increase of population with the imports.

MR. THOMAS: As to butter, in 1897 we imported 3,877,428 pounds; in 1898, 4,102,000 odd pounds; in 1899, 4,425,000 odd pounds; in 1900, 4,834,000 odd pounds; and in 1901, over 5,000,000 pounds. Of cheese, in 1899 we imported 929,000 pounds; and in 1901, 1,083,657 pounds. The importation of eggs shows an increase from 1897, when we imported 941,000 dozen, to 1901 when our imports were 1,302,000 dozen. Of bacon and hams we imported in 1897, 2,681,000 pounds, gradually increasing year by year until in 1901 we show a total importation of 3,325,248 pounds. Of potatoes, there were, in 1898, 8,476 tons imported, gradually increasing until in 1901 we imported 10,625 tons. In every instance, of all the items on which the member for Kanowna has asked for a reduction in

the duty, the importation, notwithstanding what the member for the Williams and other farming representatives have said, has shown a rapid increase. Now let us see what the production has been during those years. It is said our local production is rapidly overtaking the demand and the importations to the State. In 1901 the production of butter was considerably less than that of 1899; and the local production of this for last year was less than one-half of the production for 1898.

THE TREASURER: Victoria imported butter last year.

MR. THOMAS: We have heard the member for Bunbury (Mr. Hayward) tell us what a glorious potato crop we shall have this year. In 1901 the total production of potatoes was 5,665 tons, while the importation was 10,625 tons—two tons imported to one ton grown locally. Of flour we produced in 1901 18,662 tons; and in 1899, 19,321 tons. Our consumption has been going up. I have shown by the figures quoted, compiled by the Registrar General, that the importations have been going up; and I have shown also by the same figures that in the majority of instances the production of Western Australia has been going down. Then why, I ask, should we go ahead with the policy which has been advocated to-night by the members for the Williams and for Northam—the same policy as advocated last session—"Let us wait awhile; let us wait another twelve months, and see what will happen." We were asked to do that last year; we have waited for twelve months; and these hon. members come again to-night and ask us to continue that wait-awhile policy and see what will develop in the next twelve months. I say the country does not need this taxation; the goldfields cannot stand this taxation. We saw the other day a case cited before the Arbitration Court at Kalgoorlie, where the men asked for an increase of wages, and the case was defended by the mine managers. It was conclusively proved there that the miners could not keep their wives and families on the goldfields on the wages paid by the mines, and, on the other hand, that the mines could not afford any increase in the wages—that the two competing parties were forced to battle in this country against the exorbitant

taxation thrown on their shoulders, a taxation which the mining industry is unable to sustain. It has been conclusively proved by that evidence that the miner is not able to keep his family on the wages paid, and that the mines cannot pay any more, and can hardly afford the wages paid to-day.

MR. HIGHAM: How much of that is due to the sliding-scale?

MR. THOMAS: The sliding-scale produces somewhere about £200,000 a year.

MR. HOPKINS: About £3 per head of the mining population.

MR. THOMAS: And on the goldfields, we have a population of about 70,000.

MR. HIGHAM: About 72,000.

MR. THOMAS: For over one-third of the population of this State everything they eat, or drink, or put on has to be sent over 387 or more miles of railway. The bulk of what they consume of eatables and drinkables is imported to the State. Those are the people who are paying that £200,000, or £3 per head. I have a right to claim that the goldfields are paying to-day for these food duties. A member says something of differential rates. If I were to go into the matter of differential rates and railway overcharges, I am afraid I should detain hon. members all night in adducing facts and figures from which they could not possibly get away. I have given these facts and figures before, and I intend to bring them out at every possible opportunity, to drill into members that the mining industry of this State is worth protecting, and that if we continue the policy we have hitherto adopted, before we are much older we shall have a much smaller mining industry to protect than we have to-day. I speak in all seriousness. We had the Treasurer expressing his views the other night on this subject. I mention him to show how a man's—I was about to say geographical position, and it is a geographical position in a way—affects his opinions. He has changed his seat from the cross-benches to the Treasury bench; and his changing his seat has varied his opinions very considerably. He told us the other night that he was not speaking on the food duties as a private member, but as a Treasurer, whose duty it is to protect

his Treasury and see that he has as big a revenue as possible. When this matter was before the House on the 18th February last, Mr. J. Gardiner, the member for Albany, that is to say our present Treasurer, spoke as follows:—

He had said then [during the federation campaign], as he said now, that the food duties were little or no protection to the local producer. That view was indorsed this evening by the Treasurer and by the leader of the Opposition.

The member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) and the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) are respectively referred to.

These duties were merely maintained as revenue duties, being easily collectable. The benefit from these duties had not been great as affecting the producers in this country; for instead of decreasing importations in the principal lines of produce, we found a large increase in importations of the necessary articles of daily consumption.

The language of the present Treasurer is very different from that of the late Mr. Gardiner.

If the revenue continued to increase as it had done, he (Mr. Gardiner) would be one to support, next year, the reduction of the food duties, and would rather that the money now derived from them should remain in the pockets of the people than that the Treasurer should have the power of expending it. Frequently the money obtained by taxation from the people had not been spent wisely in this State—

[THE TREASURER: At that time I didn't know I should have to provide £150,000 for the Coolgardie Water Scheme during this year.]

And it did not return so much benefit to the State as it would if left in the possession of individuals. [MR. GEORGE: Not this Treasurer, surely!] The remark was made with regard to all Treasurers, who spent in a lordly manner when they got the opportunity. As to the large amount derived from revenue, we never heard a suggestion showing that it would be easy, by wise and just economy, to relieve the people from heavy taxation.

At this point I wish to remark that, seeing we had then a much smaller revenue than we now have, the attitude adopted by the present Treasurer becomes more inexplicable than ever.

He believed that £180,000 now derived from the food duties could easily be saved, and nobody be much hurt. Although not willing to support the motion at the present time, he held to himself the right to be relieved next session from the promise he made during the federation campaign, when he contended that the food duties were not protective but merely

revenue duties; and his constituents were almost to a man in favour of the reduction of the food duties. In trying to adhere to his own pledges given to the electors, he asked, what did the other side do? They said the revenue would commence to drop from the day we got federation. They would not admit the contention of the federalists, that these were merely revenue duties. Those persons said they were protective duties. His contention was that wherever it could be shown that these duties were protective and a benefit to industries in this State, he would support them through the whole period of the sliding scale.

THE TREASURER: I am glad to find I spoke so sensibly.

MR. THOMAS: Such were the utterances of the present Treasurer on this question at the close of last session.

THE TREASURER: But I have to provide for the requirements of Dundas, you know.

MR. THOMAS: The supporters of this motion have a right, I think, to claim the vote of the Treasurer, because he deliberately stated last session that if the revenue continued to increase he would support the reduction of the food duties. True, this session he claims to be relieved from that pledge by an imaginary pledge given by himself to himself, and to nobody else, in the course of the federation campaign. I went through that federation campaign, in which I took a great deal of interest; I travelled from one end of the fields to the other, and in all my travels I did not hear a single word relating to any compact with the farming community for the retention of the sliding scale. If such a compact was entered into it was, as the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) has said, a most absurd compact; because we know full well from the figures quoted by the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) in the course of this debate that the farmers voted against federation almost to a man. However, if every vote the farming industry of Western Australia could possibly poll had been cast against federation, the result would have been the same. I claim, therefore, that any compact entered into by a few self-designated leaders of the federation movement, any pledges given by those leaders to themselves and to no one else, given without any authority whatever, are not binding on members of this House, and are not binding on the people of Western Aus-

tralia. We have to consider a more serious matter than any pledges given by self-constituted leaders at that time; and that more serious matter is the condition of the vast number of people in this State who have to depend on imported foodstuffs for their livelihood. Recently the Minister for Works and Railways told the House that the cost of living had not increased on the goldfields. I maintain, however, that in point of fact the cost of living has gone up enormously by reason of the increase in railway rates and also by reason of the imposition of the Federal Tariff—has gone up to such an extent that, instead of more families going to the goldfields to live, families which have been resident there have been compelled to leave. I say it behoves the House to do everything possible to cheapen the cost of living on the goldfields. It has been conclusively shown that this country had last year a surplus of a quarter of a million. True, that surplus resolved itself into only £211 cash; but, still, we took credit for a quarter of a million. This year we are, apparently, to have a considerably larger surplus still. Then why continue to drag this increased taxation from the people, who are unable to pay it? I certainly think the House, in its wisdom, should carry the motion without going into the division lobby. I heartily support the motion, and I sincerely ask other members to do the same.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): From the tone adopted by the mover, one would think that if the motion were not carried the whole fabric of goldfields civilisation would fall to the ground. Again, the tone adopted by the last speaker, who had an abundance of tears in his voice, would lead one to believe that only the adoption of this motion can save the gold-mining industry. I cannot refrain from pointing out that there is a hollowness in this tone. When the leader of the Labour party, who represents goldfields labour, tells us that the goldfields people are almost at the last stage of financial exhaustion, and that if the taxation represented by these duties remains something serious will happen, we still must bear in mind that, in the face of such contentions, these very people spend an enormous sum in liquor. [MR. HOPKINS: Not all of them.] I am

speaking of the community, which is probably the heaviest-drinking community in the British dominions. The goldfields people are quite willing to pay double the ordinary rate for their drinks.

MR. HOPKINS: But they do not all drink.

MR. HARPER: I do not say whether or not they all drink, but those who do not drink must save much money, because those who do drink take such an immense amount of liquor. Moreover, the mines still exist.

MR. HOPKINS: The drinking is all for the benefit of the Treasury.

MR. HARPER: That may be. I wish to point out, farthermore, to the hon. member interjecting, who I think is one of the leading lights in that "sport of kings," horseracing—

MR. HOPKINS: Not a bad sport, either.

MR. HARPER: Not a bad sport for the bookmakers, I believe—I wish to point out, however, that the goldfields community spends more than any other Australasian community in gaming. Bearing in mind those two phases of the question, and allowing them their true value, we realise the hollowness of the cry for the abolition of the food duties. Really, the cry simply amounts to this: "We want more money to spend in drink and in gaming: let us get it out of the farmer if we can."

MR. HOPKINS: Not much danger of getting money out of the farmer through this House!

MR. HARPER: On the question of farming, I wish hon. members to bear in mind that there remains in the hands of this State a larger area of farming land than remains vested in any other State in Australia, and that the value of that farming land depends, not on the liquor drunk on the goldfields, but on the attractions which the State offers people to settle on its lands. The history of Victoria tells just the same tale. In the earlier stages of Victorian gold-mining, miners would not look at the land; but by and by they became the very best settlers of that State; and such, I have always contended, will be the case here, provided reasonable scope be given for the development of the farming industry. This State is capable of carrying tens and tens of thousands of people on land now in a condition

of nature. The only thing necessary is that the attention of the people should be drawn to those lands when they find that opportunities of making fortunes in a hurry are not available. It should be the interest of the leader of the Labour party to do what he can to keep open that avenue of employment for men who by and by will perhaps not have the present opportunities of living on the goldfields.

MR. HASTIE: Will the retention of the food duties encourage those men to go on the land?

MR. HARPER: Certainly the retention of those duties encourages the development of the land. I must say it always appears to me that there is an immense amount of prejudice exhibited by those who work in the mines against the farmer in this State. I do not know why it should be so, but I cannot help realising that it is so and has been so all along. The prejudice is, perhaps, not against the farmer and the farming industry alone, but against anything connected with this State. That prejudice is expressed even in the price which the goldfields resident pays for his flour. I believe that so long as a bag of flour bears a Victorian or a South Australian brand, the goldfields resident will pay more for it than he will for the local product.

MR. HOPKINS: I think you show prejudice in making that statement.

MEMBER: Of course a better quality will secure a higher price.

MR. HARPER: The question of quality does not apply. Less is paid for the flour of this State on the goldfields than on the coast, and that fact has a very important bearing on the whole question of farming, since it shows the feeling prevailing on the goldfields. The goldfields trader, it is stated, sometimes gets over the difficulty by just shooting the flour from the local bag into the imported bag and charging the higher price. That may or may not be smart trade; but it proves that any predilection exhibited on the goldfields springs not so much from the character as from the name of the article.

MR. HOPKINS: The importation of bags must be getting heavy.

MR. HARPER: There is no doubt a great deal of prejudice. I wish to urge

on the House that the duty on wheat and flour is one that tends to develop the State's resources, which the goldfields people are just as much interested in as the people who live on the coast. And the removal of these duties will have no practical effect whatever on the price of bread. Therefore I say, viewing the enormous sum they are prepared to spend in luxuries—

MR. HOPKINS: Not all of them.

MR. HARPER: I am speaking of the community, and not of the individual. I say these two vices, I call them the vice of drinking and the vice of gambling, are carried to such an excess among the wage-earning class of the State that it is really a scandal on our civilisation.

MR. HOPKINS: They have not a Swan River or a King's Park, up there.

MR. HARPER: The hon. member may find excuses, but that only makes the matter worse from his point of view, for the more money you give them, the more they will spend. I think the hon. member will tell us the success of race meetings depends very largely on the amount that goes through the totalisator.

MR. HOPKINS: You have "totes" down here.

MR. HARPER: I do not say there are not. I am speaking of the wage-earner of the State. This motion proceeds from the leader of the Labour party, who wishes us to believe that the people on the goldfields are impoverished through the food duties. I say there is evidence that he is wrong in his facts; that the wage-earners spend large sums, perhaps a larger total than is spent in any other State in the British dominions, on the two vices I have named.

MR. HOLMAN: They cannot keep their families up there, and they must spend the money somehow.

MR. HARPER: Excellent! If a man has money he must spend it, and he must get more out of the farmers to spend. I really think if the leaders of the wage-earners, instead of remaining silent on these two grievous vices, used their best endeavours to prevent the evils continuing, they would be doing more good to those they represent than by moving such a motion as the one before the House.

MR. MORAN: Where will the Government get the extra revenue from? A land tax?

MR. HARPER: People will have more to spend in harmless luxuries, and the State will not lose. I would like to see the working man save his money, instead of building up monopolies. The labour people clamour constantly about the great fortunes that are made. They clamour against monopolies, yet they do all they can to build them up. Why is it that the Swan Brewery Company pays a better interest than probably any other registered company in Australasia? [LABOUR MEMBER: Because they brew good beer.] Who make most money in this State? Owners of hotel property, those who own brewery shares, and spirit merchants. Those are the men who are making the vast fortunes. [MR. HASTIE: Why?] Because the hon. member's friends spend the money which he says they have not got. I say there is a hollowness in this accusation. I think, speaking from a State point of view, not from a farmer's point of view, the desire underlying this motion is to extract money from the farmers, if possible, to spend more or less on vices; and until we see some reduction in the drink bill of this State, the agitation for a reduction of customs duty on the products of the State is very largely hollow.

On motion by MR. MORAN, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:25 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 25th September, 1902.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—FEDERAL BUDGET SPEECH.

MR. PIGOTT (without notice) asked the Treasurer: Will he obtain copies of the *Hansard* report of the Federal Treasurer's Budget speech, and have them distributed amongst members?

THE TREASURER replied: I shall have the greatest pleasure in procuring copies of the speech.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS: 1, Papers relating to the Composition and Cost of Atlas Boiler Fluid (as ordered). 2, Copy of alteration to Railway Classification and Rate Book relating to Freight on Scrap Iron, and Discharge of Ballast at Bunbury Jetty.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES: Papers relating to land held by the Kalgoorlie Electric Light and Power Company. Return to Order of the House dated 24th September, 1902.

By the TREASURER: Report of the Department of Agriculture for year ended 30th June, 1902.

Ordered: To lie on the table.

QUESTION—RAILWAY ENGINES, BALDWIN.

MR. McDONALD asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the total cost to date for alterations and repairs to the Baldwin compound engines. 2, What alterations have been made, and what alterations are at the present time being effected. 3, Why these alterations are necessary. 4, Whether it is correct that all the piston valves in these engines are