

"In reply, His Excellency has the honor to inform Your Honorable House that he has already given effect to the wishes of Your Honorable Body in respect to some of the foregoing Addresses, and that he will have much pleasure in complying with the prayer of the remainder.

"Government House, Perth, 19th September, 1879."

MESSAGE (NO. 16): ASSENTING TO BILLS.

MR. SPEAKER informed the House that he had received another Message from His Excellency the Governor as follows:—

"The Governor has the honor to inform Your Honorable House that he has assented, in Her Majesty's name, to the undermentioned Acts passed by the Legislature during the present Session:—

"18. *An Act to amend 'The Branding Consolidation Ordinance, 1864.'*"

"19. *An Act to consolidate and amend the Law for preventing Frauds upon Creditors by Secret Bills of Sale of Personal Chattels.*"

"20. *An Act to amend 'The Auctioneers Act, 1873.'*"

"Government House, Perth, 19th September, 1879."

RIGHTS OF WAY TO GRANTS SEVERED BY EASTERN RAILWAY.

MR. HARDEY, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary by what means the Government—the Eastern Railway having severed the greater portion of the grants along the line—intended to give the proprietors of the grants so severed, a right of way between one portion and the other, and on what conditions?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) replied as follows:—No general rule can be laid down; each case being considered by itself when the amount to be paid for land taken is under consideration, and the owner informed by the Commissioner of Railways what is intended to be done in respect to right-of-way, when making offer of compensation.

STAMP DUTY BILL.

A Bill intituled an Act to impose certain Stamp Duties, was read a first time, on the motion of the Colonial Secretary (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy).

THIRD READING.

The Masters of Vessels Act, Repeal Bill, 1879, was read a third time and passed.

The House adjourned at half-past seven o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Monday, 22nd September, 1879.

Assistant to Superintendent of Roads—Conveyance of Inland Mails by the Police and extension of the Money Order System: Report of Select Committee—Point of Order—Absconding Debtors Act, Amendment Bill: in committee—Message (No. 14): Subsidy of Duplicate Cable between Singapore and Port Darwin: considered in committee—Privileges granted to Pastoral Leaseholders: Report of Select Committee—Stamp Duty Bill: second reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 7 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

ASSISTANT TO SUPERINTENDENT OF ROADS.

MR. MONGER, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary, if the Superintendent of Roads is accompanied by a Draftsman, Assistant, or other officer connected with the Works Department when travelling on duty; and, if so, what salary and allowances are paid to this second officer.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) replied as follows:—Mr. Birch, the Draftsman in the Public Works Department, has been sent with Mr. Higman on his inspection of the Albany Road work. Mr. Higman has not been accompanied on any other occasion by a Draftsman, Assistant, or

any other officer connected with the Works Department. Mr. Birch's salary is £100 per annum, and whilst with Mr. Higman he receives his actual expenses paid.

CONVEYANCE OF INLAND MAILS BY THE POLICE AND EXTENSION OF THE MONEY ORDER SYSTEM.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) moved the adoption of the report of the Select Committee appointed on the 10th September to take into consideration and report upon the memorandum prepared by the Superintendent of Police, giving the estimated cost of conveying the inland mails by the police, and also to take into consideration and report on the question of the extension of the money order system. The whole force and the gist of the report, the hon. gentleman said, would be found in the fourth paragraph, showing the cost of the mail services from the estimates for the proposed new system, comparatively with the cost of the same in the past. From the figures there given, hon. members would see that there were reasonable grounds for presuming that the double mail service between Perth and Albany (overland), with more efficient equipments and better time tables than heretofore—as well on that line as on the Eastern Districts and the Southern Districts lines—might be provided for at a sum which only exceeded that of past years by an annual charge of £275. Hon. members would observe that the Committee in their zeal for the economical working and management of the mail services, had, after carefully reviewing the report and the estimates of the Superintendent of Police, added twenty per cent. to the cost of equipment, etc., for wear and tear, and to provide for interest. This brought the gross annual cost of the Perth and Albany service up to £2,128 13s. 4d., from which however it was expected that a sum of £434 (according to the Superintendent of Police's estimate) might be deducted for receipts from passengers and parcels, thus reducing the annual cost of the service to £1,694 13s. 4d. With regard to the Perth and Eastern Districts mails (York, Northam, and Newcastle twice a week), the Committee estimated the gross

annual cost under the new system at £1,459. This sum, however, it was calculated would be reduced as follows:—deducting for passengers from Perth to York and Newcastle, three at 15s. each trip, £963 a year; between York and Newcastle at £1 a week, £52 per annum; and £25 for parcels—making the total estimated receipts £1,013, and the probable net annual cost of the service, £446. The Committee estimated the gross yearly cost of the Southern Districts service (including a horse mail between Bunbury and Parkfield, £25) at £1,389; and were of opinion that the receipts calculated by the Superintendent of Police on this line were under-estimated, the Committee calculating the receipts as follows: eight passengers each week at £2, equal to £832 a year, and an additional £100 per annum for the conveyance of parcels. Deducting these receipts from the gross annual cost brought the amount down to £475, being £343 less than the cost of the present service. Hon. members would observe from the report that the Committee recommended the use of vehicles of the description known in the other Colonies as "Cobb's," which would ensure greater comfort for passengers and prove very advantageous in the transport of the mails and parcels. This style of vehicle had been adopted in all the Eastern Colonies, and on inland mail lines, where there were no railways, "Cobb" and the "mail" were synonymous terms. With regard to the extension of the money order system, the Committee found, on consulting with the Postmaster General, that arrangements were now pending for carrying out the desire of the hon. member for Vasse that the money order system should be extended to all the principal District Post Offices throughout the Colony. As hon. members had already had an opportunity of perusing the Committee's report, he need trespass no longer on the time of the House, and would therefore, without further comment, formally move its adoption.

MR. S. H. PARKER regretted to find that the Select Committee had fallen into an error as to the cost of the present Royal Mail Service between Perth and Albany. Every effort had been made by the House, on more than one occasion,

to ascertain the real cost of this service—popularly known as the “red and yellow van” service; and it was not until the Select Committee on the Over-Expenditure Bill (which Committee was still sitting) had gone into the matter that the actual cost of the service had been discovered. Hon. members would recollect that among the financial returns which he had moved for at an earlier part of the Session, and which were laid on the Table of the House by the Government, was one purporting to show the whole cost and expense of the working of the Overland Royal Mail Service from its commencement in November, 1878, until the 31st May last, to be £889 2s. 2d. The Select Committee on the Over-Expenditure Bill had discovered that the gross cost was £1,127 16s. 9d. and the net cost £1,038 9s. 7d.

POINT OF ORDER.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy), interposing, asked if it was competent for the hon. member to go into this question at the present time? The House had gone into Committee to consider the report of the Select Committee on the reorganisation of the Inland Mail Service.

MR. S. H. PARKER regretted to find that the hon. gentleman wished to force the House to accept the Committee's report without enquiring whether their figures were correct or incorrect.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) (addressing the Chairman of Committees): I would ask you, Sir, to rule whether the hon. member is in order or not in referring to the report of another Select Committee?

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: I am not aware where the hon. member obtained his figures. If it is from the report of the Select Committee on the Excess Bill, I am informed by Mr. Speaker that it is not competent for a Committee of the whole House to deal with a report of a Select Committee until its adoption has been moved in Committee of the whole. Therefore I shall have to rule that the hon. member cannot refer to the report of the Select Committee on the Confirmation of Expenditure Bill as that report has not yet been brought up.

MR. S. H. PARKER said that, “from information he had received”—the expression was not an inappropriate one in connection with the police—it appeared that the figures furnished to the House in the return marked “D” (showing the whole cost of the Government Overland Mail Service from its commencement until 31st May last) were incorrect, and that the return in question did not give the whole cost of the maintenance of the service referred to, but simply the amount that had been paid up to that date by the Colonial Treasurer on account of the service. The return furnished to the House showed the total expenditure up to the 31st May as £889 2s. 2d., but from a paper which he now held in his hand, and which had been furnished by the Superintendent of Police, the gross actual expenditure up to that date was in reality £1,127 16s. 9d.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy): Am I in order in asking the hon. member whether the paper which he holds in his hand has been removed from the Table where the Select Committee on the Over-Expenditure Bill hold their sittings?

MR. S. H. PARKER: It is not my province to answer questions; when I occupy a seat on the other side I shall be prepared to do so.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: Is it a paper that was before the Select Committee, and not yet brought before the House?

MR. PARKER: I believe it is. My simple object is that the House, before dealing with the report now under discussion, should be placed in possession of the real facts connected with the cost of this overland mail service. The Government apparently always seem to wish to burk this question, and, while desirous of forcing upon us the expediency of adopting these police arrangements, appear to be anxious to withhold from the House the actual cost of the service. I do not mind the mails being carried by the police, nor do I intend to oppose the adoption of the Select Committee's report. I believe the Committee worked well, and gathered all the information they could. My only reason in bringing forward this paper is simply in order that the House may be placed in possession of the actual cost of the

overland mail service already established, before proceeding to the adoption of the report of the Select Committee which proposes to extend the present system of conveying the mails by the police.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser): With a meanness of imagination worthy of him, the hon. member for Perth has endeavored to fling a little mud at this Committee. [MR. PARKER: Hear, hear.] He has brought forward a paper which he has taken surreptitiously—

MR. PARKER: I beg to call the hon. gentleman to order.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: I think the hon. gentleman is certainly out of order in making use of that expression.

MR. PARKER: Not only is he out of order, but I must ask you, Sir, to require him to withdraw the expression.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: The hon. gentleman must withdraw it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser): I withdraw it, Sir, without the slightest hesitation. But I must say I think it would have been in far better taste had the hon. member moved to report Progress so as to afford the Select Committee whose report is now under consideration an opportunity of correcting their figures if they are incorrect, and not endeavour to fling mud at us, and at the Government benches, and myself in particular. I protest against it. For myself, I shall prefer not going on with the consideration of this report until we have access to the papers which have been brought up before the House in this way to-night.

DEBATE RESUMED.

MR. BROWN: I am perfectly satisfied with the tone of the remarks of the hon. member for Perth, who I have no doubt would have no objection whatever to Progress being reported, so that further information may be afforded the Committee. I exceedingly regret to find that the hon. member has met with the opposition he has met from the Government benches, for I think it was perfectly well known to the hon. the Colonial Secretary that these figures which the hon. member for Perth has challenged were

incorrect, and that the figures now given as the actual net cost of the overland mail service up to the 31st May last (£1038 9s. 7d.) were correct. If it is true that the Colonial Secretary knew this, I think the Government benches might have conceded a point, although the hon. member was not altogether in order in referring to the report of another Select Committee, and had obtained his information in a somewhat informal manner. The hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands finds fault with the hon. member for Perth, and accuses him of throwing mud at the Select Committee who prepared the report now under discussion. Well; 'many men many minds,' and, for myself, I can only say I can place no such interpretation upon the hon. member's remarks. I think he was merely performing his duty—though perhaps he was somewhat out of order—his main point being to show the House that the figures before us do not give us the actual expenditure in connection with one branch of the mail service. Surely it must be conceded that the hon. member was only doing his duty in doing that. If the Government are not prepared to accept this sum of £1038 9s. 7d. as the actual net cost of working the overland service for the six months ended 31st May, then all I can say is, I shall do my best to have Progress reported so that the hon. member may have an opportunity of proving the correctness of these figures in due form. I thought the Government members were perfectly well aware that the figures referred to represented the true state of affairs.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) said he was not prepared to accept them as the right amount, simply for this reason—that the papers were not before him, and he did not carry these figures in his head. The hon. member for Geraldton, in defence of the hon. member for Perth, had taken exception to the way in which the latter had been treated by the Government benches. No hon. gentleman in that House was a greater stickler for the strict observance of the usages of parliament than the hon. member for Geraldton, and when he (the Colonial Secretary) interposed when the hon. member for

Perth was referring to a report which was not before the House, he merely rose to a Point of Order. When the hon. member was asked where he had obtained the paper he was quoting from, he—to use an expression which he did not like—“burked” the question. [MR. PARKER: I deny it, sir.] And it was only after he was pressed that he admitted having been out of order in making use of a paper which had not yet been before the House. He (the Colonial Secretary) was not going to accept the correctness of figures of which he knew nothing, beyond the hon. member's own admission that they had been extracted from among the papers of another Select Committee.

MR. BROWN: The hon. gentleman states he is not prepared to accept these figures as the actual cost of the service. That is sufficient. And I presume the House will accept the hon. gentleman's statement that he does not know whether the figures are correct or not. I therefore trust that the House will agree to report Progress. All we desire is that the figures we are dealing with are correct figures. The hon. gentleman said the hon. member for Perth had “burked” the question as to the source whence he received these papers. It was I who put them in his hand, and he could not very well have answered the question whether they came from the Select Committee's Table or not. I, in my innocence, gave them to him, thinking that the Government would be delighted to have the state of affairs explained; and when the hon. member was challenged to state where he obtained them I suppose he did not like to say, it was me who gave them to him. I think the House will acquit me of having done so with the knowledge that it was in any way irregular. If it is so, I regret it, and I hope the susceptibilities, if I may so say, of the House will be satisfied when the papers are brought before it in due form on Wednesday evening.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES said that making public the proceedings of a Select Committee, before the Committee had terminated their labors and reported to the House, was not only out of order, but a breach of privilege.

MR. BROWN exceedingly regretted that so far as he was individually concerned he was not aware that the papers had been given to the Select Committee for their special and exclusive information, and he certainly had no idea that such a value was attached to them. He should be very sorry indeed to be guilty of a breach of privilege, for he believed very serious pains and penalties attached to that offence against parliamentary morals.

The motion for reporting Progress was then put and carried, leave being given to sit again on Wednesday.

ABSCONDING DEBTORS ACT, AMENDMENT BILL.

This Bill was further considered in Committee, when the preamble and title were agreed to, without discussion. The Bill was then reported as having passed through Committee without amendment.

MESSAGE (No. 14): SUBSIDY OF DUPLICATE CABLE BETWEEN PORT DARWIN AND SINGAPORE.

IN COMMITTEE.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS moved that the Message from His Excellency the Governor relating to this Colony contributing towards the subsidy of a duplicate telegraph cable between Singapore and Port Darwin (*vide* p. 183, *ante*) be taken into consideration. Hon. members, he said, were aware that hitherto this Colony had refused to have anything to do in contributing towards subsidising this second cable, in the hope and expectation that we would be able to have the duplicate line brought to some part of our own coast. The Governments of New South Wales and Victoria—as hon. members would see from the papers accompanying His Excellency's Message—had strongly urged us to reconsider the question, and submitted, with some show of reason, that the whole of the Australasian Colonies being now in telegraphic communication with each other, it was of secondary consideration at what point the submarine cable which enabled them to communicate with the rest of the world connected with the line of the Australian coast. Remonstrance on our part having proved futile, and

there being no prospect of any cable being laid westward from these shores,—whilst at the same time we were obliged to continue using the existing line—the question remained whether it would be politic on our part to hold aloof from the other colonies any longer, or whether it would not be better—without abandoning the opinions previously expressed on the subject—to reconsider the question and to join in what New South Wales and Victoria jointly and politely asked us. By thus relinquishing our own direct interest in the matter—in the same gracious and courteous spirit which had induced those Governments to ask us to reconsider our former decision—might it not be possible the Eastern colonies, at a future day, would be led to support us in what we desire? The sum of £367 a year (our quota of the subsidy) was not a large one, and some saving would be effected by Government and press telegrams being sent at a smaller cost, which was one of the articles of agreement entered into with the duplicate cable company. He would therefore move—that this House approves of the contribution requested from Western Australia, as its quota towards the subsidy to the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, for duplication of cable from Port Darwin to Singapore, and prays His Excellency the Governor to make the necessary provision for the payment of such, now estimated at £367 a year.

The resolution was adopted, *nem. con.*

PRIVILEGES GRANTED TO PASTORAL LEASEHOLDERS—REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. CAREY moved the adoption of the following report of the Select Committee appointed to consider the advisability of extending the privileges now granted to pastoral leaseholders, to take up land on deferred payments of 5s. per acre and improvements to *bonâ fide* cultivators of land, to the extent of 100 acres for each head of a family; and also extending the privileges now granted to pastoral leaseholders to cut such timber as may be required for the construction of buildings, fences, or other improve-

ments on the land to *bonâ fide* cultivators:—

“In reporting to Your Honorable House, Your Committee submit as follows:—

“Having given their careful attention to the questions which they were directed by your Honorable Body to consider, a majority of Your Committee is of opinion—

“1st.—That the privileges granted to Pastoral Leaseholders under Clause 62 of the Land Regulations should not be extended to Landholders of another type; a majority of Your Committee considering that the present Regulations for Special Occupation are sufficiently liberal for Agriculturists.

“2nd.—Your Committee, at the same time, is forced to arrive at the conclusion, that the 62nd Clause of the Land Regulations has not attained the object for which it was introduced; and that this clause is taken advantage of by Leaseholders, chiefly for the purpose of obtaining fee-simple land at a cheap rate; and also in order to keep out those who might otherwise take up land on their runs under the Special Occupation clauses for the purposes of *bonâ fide* settlement.

“Your Committee would therefore recommend that His Excellency the Governor be respectfully requested to take into consideration the advisability of expunging the 62nd Clause from the Land Regulations of Western Australia.

“3rd.—With regard to the privileges granted to Leaseholders to cut such timber as they may require for the construction of fences, and for general improvements, Your Committee find that such privileges may be extended to any other tenants of the Crown, upon application being made to the Commissioner of Lands, and the endorsement of a Permit on their Licenses. Your Committee consider that this fact should be notified by Circular to the

"Resident Magistrates of the various districts, and that such Circular should be published in the *Government Gazette*."

MR. CAREY said it would be seen from the report that the majority of the Select Committee (of which he had the honor of being chairman) were opposed to his views on the matter, and were of opinion that the privileges granted to pastoral leaseholders in respect of taking up land on deferred payments should *not* be extended to landholders of another type, as they considered that the present regulations were sufficiently liberal for agriculturists. The Committee at the same time were forced to the conclusion that the clause giving the pastoral leaseholders these privileges had not attained the object for which it was introduced, but that it was taken advantage of chiefly for the purpose of obtaining fee-simple land at a cheap rate, and also to keep out those who might otherwise take up the land on their runs for the purpose of *bonâ fide* settlement. The Committee, therefore, recommended that the clause in question be expunged from the Land Regulations. With regard to the privileges granted to leaseholders to cut such timber as they required for fencing and general improvements, the Committee found that such privileges may be extended to any other tenants of the Crown upon application being made to the Commissioner of Lands, and the endorsement of a permit on their licenses.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL, in seconding the motion for the adoption of the report, said the clause granting to pastoral leaseholders the right to take up land on deferred payments had been introduced for a special purpose. Previous to its introduction no holder of a lease, unless he purchased the land, was enabled to break up any ground for agricultural or even garden purposes; and the clause in question was adopted with a view to relieve them from this disability. But instead of the clause having had the desired effect, it had operated quite the other way, and he thought the House would agree with him that it was frequently availed of by leaseholders to keep out those who might otherwise take up land on their runs for the purposes of agriculture, and that therefore the clause operated as a check

upon *bonâ fide* settlement. He knew of many cases in which this had been done, in which the squatter had taken up land, not with any intention of using the land himself, but merely to keep out the agriculturist and to pick out the eyes of the land for himself. In this way the revenue suffered to a considerable extent. The privilege granted to the pastoralist was not used as intended; it had established a grievance, and gave a handle to those who raised the cry that our land laws favored the squatter rather than the agriculturist. The grievance might be a sentimental one, but he thought it was undesirable it should obtain at all. He was quite aware that the squatting interest in this Colony was far away the most important, and though agriculturists were a very desirable class still they did not do much good to the Colony. At the same time he saw no reason why the clause giving the pastoral leaseholders privileges which were abused should not be expunged. He did not agree with the hon. member for Vasse that it was expedient to extend those privileges to the agriculturist, but believed it would be better that the pastoral leaseholders should be deprived of them.

MR. BROWN said he fully agreed with the hon. member for Albany as to the expediency of extending the provisions of the 62nd clause to the agriculturist, with whom the clause as it stood at present constituted a grievance, as it caused the farmer to regard the squatter with envy. He well remembered the discussion that took place when this very clause was added to the regulations; it was introduced, in fact, specially in the interests of the "poor man"—a cry which was very popular then, as now, with some people. Although he regarded the grievance as sentimental rather than real, yet, being desirous as far as possible of removing any cause for grievance with respect to our land regulations, he would support the motion for the adoption of the report.

The report was then adopted.

STAMP DUTIES BILL.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) moved the second reading of a Bill to impose cer-

tain stamp duties in aid of the public expenses of the Colony. A Bill to impose stamp duties was a novelty to the ears of Western Australians, but it was no novelty to those who had been in the Mother Country, or who had an opportunity of perusing the various enactments of other Colonies. So far back as the reign of William III, stamps had been a very fertile source of revenue, and from that time to this it had proved as little onerous an impost as it was possible for a tax to be. Not only were customs, excise, and stamp duties the chief sources of revenue in the Mother Country but they were the chief indications of the prosperity of the country, and in their incidence were the most equitable. In England stamps were divided into two classes—stamps impressed on paper, and adhesive stamps. Here it was only proposed to use the latter sort, which would be issued by the Colonial Treasurer, just as postage stamps were now issued by postmasters. Having described in detail the various instruments upon which it was proposed to impose a stamp duty, the hon. gentleman said it was roughly estimated that the revenue which would be derived from this source was about £2,500 a year. The House at present, in agreeing to the second reading of the Bill, was merely asked to affirm the principle of the Bill; its details would hereafter form the subject of discussion in Committee, when he felt sure that a great deal of misapprehension which existed with regard to the measure would be dispelled.

Mr. S. H. PARKER moved, as an amendment upon the original motion, that the Bill be read a second time that day six months. He did not rise to oppose the Bill in the belief that there was no necessity for extra taxation of some kind or other, for they were all agreed on that point; but because the proposed mode of raising taxes would be a most vexatious one. People here had been used to have their receipts, their deeds, their leases, and other documents prepared without any trouble or bother, and, if the present Bill became law it would produce much irritation and inconvenience. It was very different here to the old country, where, for legal instruments, stamps were for the most part used by lawyers; but here a great

many documents were prepared by laymen and by settlers in the country, who would not know what stamps to use and who would render themselves liable to all sorts of penalties. The proposed duties would also prove very burdensome in many cases: mortgages, for instance, and bills of sale would be liable to a considerable amount of duty, and it would come very hard on a mortgagor to pay it, in addition to the usual rate of interest. The Government estimated that the duties imposed under this Bill would realise about £2,500, but he thought fully £500 might be deducted from that amount for the duty which was already charged on the transfer of conveyances, and which appeared here in the shape of a stamp duty.

Mr. SHENTON seconded the amendment, that the Bill be read that day six months. He did so mainly for the very reasons given by the mover of the amendment, and further because it would necessitate the making of a new appointment to carry out the provisions of the Bill, which would still further reduce the actual revenue derivable from it. He thought there were other and more desirable means for raising increased taxation than that proposed here. Whatever means were resorted to, to meet the existing deficiency, he certainly would not be in favor of the necessary amount being raised at once, but thought it should be extended over two or three years, which would lessen the weight of the burden. He noticed in the schedule that it was proposed to tax the various Customs forms, at a rate that would raise the present duties paid on goods about one per cent.; and, as pointed out by the hon. member for Perth, the duties proposed to be placed on leases, bills of sale, mortgages, transfers, etc., would operate very harshly and cause a great deal of annoyance.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) thought the Bill applied mainly to the property classes, and he was somewhat surprised to see it opposed by hon. members who set themselves up as the friends of the "working man." The necessity for increased taxation of some kind or other was admitted on all hands, and the question was—in what direction was it most judicious to force this increase?

He thought it would be, to obtain it from those who could best afford it, and this measure, to his mind, did that. It did not affect the man who had no property, but it very considerably affected the propertied classes. With regard to the disposition of the various duties embraced in the schedule, that was a matter they had nothing to do with at present; they were now only asked to affirm the principle of the Bill. To his own knowledge these stamp duties had been a fertile source of revenue in New Zealand, and he believed they would prove so here in the future. Allusion had been made to the fact that if the Bill became law it would necessitate the creation of a fresh office to carry out its provisions. That would not be the case, for arrangements had been made to have the stamps issued by the officers connected with the Treasury. He maintained, if our imppecuniosity was such as to necessitate an augmentation of the revenue to meet deficiencies which were now liabilities, he thought the means here proposed to that end were as good as any they could get, and he felt sure that those hon. members who were anxious to distinguish themselves as the "poor man's friend," and to pose in the favorite character of the champions of the "working man," would feel that in supporting the present Bill they would be doing their protégés a good turn.

MR. MARMION said it was his intention to support the amendment. He did so principally for the reasons already given, namely, that the game was not worth the candle. Such a Bill, especially in country districts, would operate most vexatiously, without resulting in any corresponding practical benefit as a source of revenue. As to the probable relative effect of the kind of taxation here proposed in its operation upon the propertied classes and upon the working classes, he thought it would be found to operate as injuriously in the case of the latter class as of the former. Many of the poorer classes, especially in country districts, would be ignorant of the provisions of the Bill, and render themselves liable to heavy penalties for using a wrong stamp. He thought there were other means of raising revenue, far less vexatious and productive of more revenue, than that here proposed. He noticed by

the schedule that no less than one-half per cent. increase was, by a mere side wind, proposed to be added to the *ad valorem* duties, through stamps on Customs forms, and this would probably yield about £1,000 out of the estimated £2,500 which the Government expected the Bill would realise. If necessary to increase the *ad valorem* duties, why not do it through the ordinary process, and make those duties 10½ instead of 10 per cent. The amount which would be realised from the stamp duties on Customs forms would, with the £500 referred to by the hon. member for Perth, reduce the estimated revenue derivable under the Bill to £1,000. Was it worth while, for the sake of this small amount, to commit the country to a system of taxation which to say the least of it was objectionable, vexatious, and inconvenient? He did not think it was, and he would be far better pleased to see the deficiency met in some other way, that would not bear with undue harshness upon any particular class or any particular interest, and which could be accomplished with the aid of existing machinery without incurring any additional expense.

MR. BROWN said that no matter what fresh scheme of local taxation were brought forward, it would be regarded as burdensome and vexatious, however novel or however old-fashioned. It had been said that stamp duties would prove a novelty to Western Australians, and that was true; but it was also true that in countries where such duties were no novelty they had not proved so very burdensome, but on the contrary were a popular means of taxation, simple and easy of application, and productive of a considerable amount of revenue. The Commissioner of Crown Lands said the Bill would press rather hard upon the propertied classes, and the hon. gentleman advocated it on that ground; on the other hand another hon. member conceived that the measure would operate very harshly in the case of the ignorant poor man. No doubt, as he had already said, whatever system of fresh taxation would be introduced it would be regarded as vexatious both by the propertied classes and the humbler classes; but what the House had to consider was what would best bear taxation. Another

hon. member opposed the Bill because he thought it would lead to a fresh appointment. Fresh appointments were very unpopular; but it should be borne in mind that hon. members held the public purse strings, and no salary could be provided for any fresh appointment without a vote from that House. But, in the present instance, it appeared there would be no necessity whatever for any fresh appointment. That argument was therefore of no weight. It was his intention to vote for the second reading of the Bill, on the ground that he conceived the duties it proposed to impose would be a most proper and legitimate source of revenue,—a tax that had worked well in every other part of the world, and he saw no reason why it should not do so here.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) replying to the remarks that had fallen in the course of the debate, said one hon. member shook the bogie of the lawyer at them, and another hon. member shook the bogie of the poor man—the ignorant poor man—at them. Of these two bogies, he really did not know which was the more harmless. It was said that, especially in sequestered country places, the poor man's bogie could not always secure the services of the other bogie—the lawyer: God forbid that he should! But as to any hardships likely to arise consequent upon any instrument being, through inadvertence or ignorance, improperly stamped, provision was made in the Bill for the relaxation of any severities, provided there was no intention to evade payment of the proper stamp duty. He remembered how this bogie of the ignorant poor man was conjured up when postage stamps were first introduced, but he was not aware that any great hardships had accrued from the introduction of those stamps, nor did he anticipate that any greater difficulty would attach to the introduction of those stamps which the present Bill sought to legalise. He perfectly agreed with hon. members that the new tax would be a vexatious one, but it would be so simply because it was a novelty, and because it was the innocent means of increasing the burden of taxation. It would not be vexatious when in its operation it was found to be productive of

additional revenue, and that in its incidence it was neither unequal nor unjust.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) said those who most strongly objected to the present Bill were those who were connected with the mercantile and shipping interests, who were evidently alarmed on looking at the schedule and seeing what it was proposed to do in the way of imposing duties upon customs forms, bills of lading, charter parties, policies of insurance upon vessels, and such like instruments. But he thought those hon. gentlemen, before opposing the Bill, should bear in mind that something must be done—recourse must be had to some new duties—to meet the deficit acknowledged on all hands to exist, and it was just a question whether the scheme here proposed would not be quite as acceptable to the public as any other scheme of fresh taxation, being, as it undoubtedly was, a most fair and equitable tax, which would press equally upon all sections of the community. Hon. members seemed frightened [Mr. PARKER: Nonsense]—they were apprehensive that the Bill would prove a cumbrous and unworkable piece of machinery; but it was not so elsewhere, where similar measures had been introduced.

MR. PEARSE was altogether of a different opinion from the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, that these stamp duties would be a popular system of taxation. Most decidedly it would not be a popular tax, but a very vexatious and harassing one.

MR. CAREY moved, as an amendment upon the amendment, that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee, consisting of the Attorney General, Mr. Brown, Mr. Marmion, Mr. Shenton, and the mover. He thought the matter was of too great importance to be decided that evening. Hon. members had only had the Bill before them two or three days, and to agree to its second reading would virtually be to endorse the principle of the Bill, and to commit the House to accept it. He did not think such a measure was in operation in South Australia, or Victoria; he believed Queensland was the only Australian Colony where stamp duties were in force.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) failed to see what was to be gained by referring the Bill to a Select Committee.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake): Here we have a number of common-place, common sense people, who surely can deal with a simple question like this without going to a back room, and stupefying themselves with pen and ink and paper. The Bill can be far better discussed in a full House. What, in the name of fortune, does the hon. member want, to refer a question like this to a Select Committee?

MR. BROCKMAN failed to see any reason for adopting such a course. But he must object to what had fallen from the hon. the Colonial Secretary—that the strongest objection to the Bill came from those connected with the mercantile and shipping interest. His (Mr. Brockman's) objection to the measure was as strong as theirs. He thought it would be a most unpopular Bill, and that the amount of revenue it would produce would be quite disproportionate with the amount of trouble and vexation it would cause. He would oppose any Bill to impose additional taxation, until the Estimates for the ensuing year were before the House.

MR. BURGES opposed the motion to refer the Bill to a Select Committee, which would only be a further waste of time, and to no purpose. He thought they had wasted quite enough time already this Session. They had now been at it for two months, but precious little had been done. If they adjourned the debate for a week, or for a month, there would be the same difference of opinion as to the Bill. Let them settle the question at once.

MR. GLYDE endorsed what had just fallen from the hon. member, Mr. Burges, and saw no necessity for postponing the consideration of this matter. He had been opposed to the Bill from the very first, and believed taxation from other sources, much less harassing and vexatious, could be obtained.

MR. CAREY withdrew his amendment to refer the Bill to a Select Committee.

The question was then put—That the Bill be read a second time this day six

months; whereupon the House divided, with the following result:—

Ayes	10
Noes	8
Majority for	...		2

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Brockman	The Hon. R. T. Golds-
Mr. Carey	worthy
Mr. Glyde	The Hon. G. W. Leake
Mr. Hardey	The Hon. M. Fraser
Mr. Marmion	Mr. Burges
Mr. Monger	Sir T. C. Campbell
Mr. S. S. Parker	Mr. Hamersley
Mr. Pearse	Mr. Harper
Mr. Shenton	Mr. Brown (Teller.)
Mr. S. H. Parker (Teller.)	

The motion for the second reading of the Bill was therefore negatived.

The House adjourned at ten o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 24th September, 1879.

Importation of Diseased Stock Bill: first reading—Busselton Jetty—Courts of General Sessions, Amendment Bill, 1879: second reading—Inland Mails and Money Order System: further consideration of the report of Select Committee—Absconding Debtors Act, Amendment Bill: third reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 7 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

IMPORTATION OF DISEASED STOCK BILL.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) moved the first reading of a Bill intituled "An Act for the prevention of the importation of Diseased Stock."

Motion agreed to, and Bill read a first time.