

such regulations are made, the present regulations, where applicable, to remain in force"; but he had not considered where the words should be inserted.

HON. A. P. MATHESON said he was not altogether prepared to accept the amendment proposed by Mr. Whitcombe. There was a certain amount of force in what that hon. member said, but the amendment went too far, inasmuch as it would result in no regulations being available until they had been placed before Parliament. The fault of the clause was that no power was given to Parliament to revise the regulations when they had been gazetted, the usual words in such clauses having been omitted.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE asked leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

HON. A. P. MATHESON moved, as an amendment, that the words, "and shall continue in force unless repealed or altered as aforesaid, or disallowed by both Houses of Parliament" be inserted between "law" and "and" in line 6.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 55 and 56—agreed to.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, progress was reported and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.45 p.m. the House adjourned until the following day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 30th August, 1898.

Papers presented—Question: Storekeeper's Department, Hours of Labour—Fremantle Harbour Works, Particulars of Dredging, etc.—Question: Railway Rolling Stock, Particulars—Transfer of Land Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Workmen's Wages Bill, first reading—Duties of Customs and Excise: Revised Schedule, in Committee, further considered; Division on item, Frozen Meat—Health Bill, in Committee, clauses 190 to 241—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Postal Department Embezzlements, Particulars as ordered. Agricultural Department, Report for 1897-8.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION: STOREKEEPER'S BRANCH. HOURS OF LABOUR.

MR. HIGHAM asked the Premier—1, What were the hours of labour in the Stores Branch for the manual and clerical staffs, both permanent and temporary. 2, Whether it was proposed that these men, when removed to the new stores at North Fremantle, should work from 7.20 a.m. to 5 p.m., with one hour allowed for lunch. 3, Also whether it was correct that those on the temporary staff were expected to work overtime without extra remuneration.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied:—1 (a) For all labour in store, 7.20 to 5 p.m. daily, less one hour, 12 to 1, except Saturday, 7.20 to 12 only, equal to 48 hours per week. (b) For clerical, permanent, and temporary, in head office (which office is now of necessity a separate building from store), 9 to 4.15 daily, less one hour for luncheon. Saturday, 9 to 12 only. 2, It is proposed to maintain the existing hours at North Fremantle; but the better conditions and altered circumstances may necessitate a re-arrangement of the

hours. 3, Yes. Both permanent and temporary clerks work overtime without extra remuneration, as in other departments. Manual or store labourers receive overtime when they work.

QUESTION : FREMANTLE HARBOUR WORKS, PARTICULARS OF DREDGING, ETC.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Director of Public Works :—1, whether it was correct that Sir John Coode, in his report as to the feasibility of opening up the river at Fremantle, made the following statement:—"The cost of the works required to open up the entrance to the river, putting aside for the moment the practicability of maintenance of depth when so formed, may be put down at £530,000. This sum would cover the construction of two protection moles, internal training banks, the removal of the rock bar, and the formation of a channel below the bridge. The aim of these works would be to afford a navigable depth of 18 feet at low water, but as I have previously intimated, there is not the slightest prospect of such an entrance being kept open, or the depth maintained therein." 2, Of the sand dredging now being done, what proportion was due to sand drifting down the river. 3, What was the estimated cost per year of maintenance to secure a depth of 30ft. up to the Railway Bridge. 4, Whether in the original scheme of the department it was proposed to remove the present railway bridge to a site further up the river. 5, If so, what provision was made for this work in the estimates laid before Parliament. 6, Whether it was now proposed to let the railway bridge remain on its present site. 7, Whether there was any anxiety on the part of the responsible authorities as to the stability of the railway bridge, in consequence of the sand drift dredging, or any other cause. 8, If so, what steps it was proposed to take to prevent a collapse occurring, and to secure the safety of the travelling public.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) replied:—1, It is quite true that Sir John Coode made the statement alleged, but the inference which the hon. member, judging by the following

questions, has apparently drawn from it is not correct, as is fully evidenced by the portion of Sir John Coode's report immediately following the portion quoted, which is clearly to the effect that the difficulty which Sir John Coode apprehended of maintaining the depth of water was not due to anything he apprehended from sand travelling down the river, but to supposed sand travel along the coast from north to south, which he stated would be of large magnitude; and, in fact, as regards the river current, he implied that it would be better if there were more rather than less of that. We have the evidence, however, over a series of years, that there is practically no sand travel in the ocean from north to south, and, consequently, that there has been no accumulation of sand on the north side of north mole; so there is no reason to fear any ill results from sand travel along the coast, and the tendency of sand to come down the river can be very easily checked. 2, It is impossible to say how much sand has come down or is coming down the river, but the quantity as a whole cannot have been great, as the tendency has been to silt up rather than to scour out between the road and railway bridge. 3, It is not intended, at present at any rate, to meet the sand travel down the river by means of dredging. What is intended is, if necessary, to prevent it coming down by means of a weir of timber or rock placed in bottom of river a little below the railway bridge. 4, No. 5, None. 6, Yes. 7, There is no immediate anxiety, but the matter is being very carefully watched, surveys and soundings, with a view of knowing from time to time exactly how the matter stands, having been put in operation since May last, when the tendency to scour first displayed itself. 8, As already stated, in reply to question No. 3, it is intended, if necessary, to protect the bed of the river, a little below the railway bridge, from scour by piling or rock work.

QUESTION : RAILWAY ROLLING STOCK, PARTICULARS.

MR. HOLMES asked the Commissioner of Railways,—1, What was the estimated value and particulars of rolling-stock on order at the present time. 2, Whether

the department intended to issue any further orders during the current year. 3, If so, to what extent.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piessé) replied:—1, £141,797; namely, 6 class "B" engines, £13,600; 6, class "G" engines, £16,400; less paid, on account of two delivered £4,770; total, £11,630. 10 class "N" engines, £23,800; duplicate parts, £1,286; 12 class "R" engines, £29,352; duplicates, £6,009; wheels and axles, £615; 19 1st class lavatory cars, £24,056; 28 2nd class lavatory cars, £31,449; total, £141,797. 2, No. 3, See reply to No. 2.

TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by MR. A. FORREST, and read a first time.

WORKMEN'S WAGES BILL.

Introduced by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, and read a first time.

DUTIES OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE (REVISION).

IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration of second schedule (as proposed by the Premier) resumed.

Cheese—Two pence per pound:

[MR. LEAKE having moved, at the last sitting, that the words "two pence per pound" be struck out, and "free of duty" inserted in lieu thereof, the item was now further considered.]

MR. LEAKE: A great deal of cheese was imported into the colony, but inasmuch as this import did not affect any local industry, he did not see why we should have the duty, even as reduced in the schedule. The working classes consumed a large quantity of this article of diet; and although we heard a great deal about dairy factories in West Australia, we never heard that they had reached the high level of making cheese.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No one in this House was more desirous than he that every article of food should be free of duty, and that everyone should get all he required at as cheap a rate as possible; but we must, as practical men entrusted with the control of the country, look at the matter from a

practical point of view. We must have revenue somehow, and if not obtained from cheese, we must get it from something else. If we gave up revenue to the extent of £4,000 by reducing the duty on cheese, which ought to have the effect of lowering the price of the article by a penny per pound, people ought to be reasonable and to say, "An attempt has been made to reduce the price, and if necessities are less later on, you may depend on it that those who have reduced it to the extent of a penny per pound will be glad to make a still further reduction." This colony did not produce much cheese; therefore the tariff must be regarded, to a large extent, as one for producing revenue. Of course, there was a prospect and hope that by-and-by cheese would be produced here in quality as good as elsewhere. That this colony could produce cheese, no one would deny. A person who was an expert had offered to establish the industry here, and the Government said they would grant a bonus for the purpose; but owing to counter attractions at the time in other directions, the expert did not go on with the project. He was an experienced man, who had had practice in other parts of the world, and he asserted that good cheese could easily be produced here. Although it was not done in that instance, there was not the slightest reason why we should not produce cheese in West Australia in the southern parts. If hon. members removed the £12,000 of revenue derived from the duty on cheese, we should have to make up the amount in some other way. Though the general revenue at this time was not unsatisfactory, it was considerably less than last year: for when we totalled the receipts and compared them with what they were in August of last year, the deficiency this month would be £27,000. Some hon. members had not the slightest idea of responsibility. If they were in his position, they would not act in the airy way in which some of them talked. We were doing as much as anyone could expect in making the reductions proposed in the revised schedule. It was of no use to put duties on articles that were not necessary and would not produce revenue. We must put them on articles which were necessary and would pro-

duce revenue, or we must make a big allowance with regard to duties on articles that were not necessities. He hoped the Committee would reject the amendment.

MR. GEORGE: The reduction would be equal to ninepence per head per year; and that was a big lot to save.

MR. WILSON: The bulk of the working men of the colony partook of cheese very largely, especially in the middle of the day. Nine out of ten did so. The Premier had told us that, over and over again.

THE PREMIER: Nothing was said about it this time.

MR. GEORGE: The present duty represented 1s. 6d. per head per year.

MR. WILSON: One shilling and sixpence put on to another 1s. 6d. would make 3s., and that 3s. added to another three shillings would make 6s. By that process, taxation would become unbearable. He hoped the Committee would strike off the duty entirely. He did not think a pound of cheese was produced here.

A MEMBER: A good many pounds.

MR. WILSON: A bit of West Australian cheese was something which he had never yet been able to get.

THE PREMIER: A little cheese had always been produced in West Australia, and more could be produced.

MR. WILSON: As to responsibility, it should be borne in mind that hon. members on the Opposition side of the House had also their share of responsibility. A distinct pledge was made to the country last year that some duties should be reduced and others abolished.

MR. MONGER: The amendment brought forward was a matter for surprise, and there was also ground for surprise at the attempt of the Government to make any reduction whatever. If we were going to abolish the duty on cheese consumed by working men, let there be a very stiff increase of the duty on fancy brands, such as Gorgonzola and Limburger. Working men did not consume the particular brands he had named, and they would never be likely to do so, because their own good taste regarding cheese would prevent them from doing so.

MR. QUINLAN: As to the old argument about cheese being so much used

by working men, it was rather an article of luxury amongst them, and they seldom used it.

MR. WILSON: Thirty thousand pounds worth of cheese was imported in 1896.

THE PREMIER: Who ate it?

MR. QUINLAN: The revenue must be raised in some way, and no better means could be devised than a duty on cheese, which was not produced largely in the colony, though it might be, and he believed efforts were being made in that direction. He hoped the item would stand as printed.

MR. MORAN: If the reduction in the revenue indicated by the Premier this evening was to go on through the year, there would be a deficiency of £324,000 to face at the end of the year, unless some extraordinary development took place, which could not be reckoned upon with certainty. It would be absolutely criminal to make estimates on the chance of another great discovery of gold; for although it might happen, we could not safely anticipate it. Having been opposed to the reduction of revenue for this year, except on the one item of meat, which was the staple of life, he hoped to see all the reductions in this schedule rejected by the Committee. Since the Premier had made the announcement this evening that the revenue was falling, as compared with the two months of the previous year, he felt still more opposed to any reduction of the tariff; because if the loss was to go on in the proportion indicated by the Premier, and reductions were ordered to be made on this tariff, there would probably be a deficiency of £500,000 at the end of the year. The Premier had made a promise last year to reduce some duties and abolish others; but surely he was not the first Premier who had made promises of a kind which could not be carried out in the altered circumstances of a subsequent period. A verbal promise was not of so much importance as the maintenance of a sound financial position; and members of this House were less concerned about keeping the Premier's promise than they were about preserving a proper financial balance. The Premier deserved great credit, of course, for endeavouring to keep the promise he had made; but surely great

changes had come over the colony since then.

MR. LEAKE: Everybody saw them coming, except the Government.

MR. MORAN: The Premier had just said that the revenue showed a falling off equal to £27,000, as compared with the corresponding month of last year; therefore he (Mr. Moran) would consistently oppose every reduction in this schedule, and would use his efforts to throw out the Tariff Bill, if it were brought in. It was a mistake to pay off the deficiency in one year, when we knew the works which had been created through that expenditure were an asset of the colony available for the future, and were properly such works as might have been charged to loan. It was a rule of good finance that a Treasurer should rather have a deficit than a surplus; for it was considered to be bad financial management to take more money out of the pockets of the people than was necessary for the requirements of the country.

MR. A. FORREST: The schedule should be supported as it stood. The fact that the customs revenue showed a decrease was serious in itself; but as to the member for Albany professing to have seen, twelve months ago, that a depression was coming on, surely that could hardly be so from what he knew of the operations of the member for Albany during the past twelve months, because the hon. member would not have gone into such enterprises as he did, if he had seen the "slump" coming. After hearing the remarks of the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), it was gratifying to find that some members on the Government side were against any reduction in the revenue. The position of the colony was peculiar, for a month hence it might be booming, or it might be going back. The majority of its resources were in a flourishing condition, and that was an encouraging fact. Because the revenue showed a tendency to decrease during the first two months, that was no reason why we should cry out that there was going to be a deficit at the end of the year; nor was it sufficient reason to take alarm when financial institutions were found pulling in the reins, as some of them had been doing, without rhyme or reason. He was sorry

that some financial institutions had been calling up money at very short notice, when there was nothing to warrant them in assuming that this colony was going backward. If it was the wish of hon. members generally on the Opposition as well as the Government side, that this schedule of reductions should be withdrawn, he would join in appealing to the Government to withdraw it for the present year, with the object of bringing in a comprehensive measure for revising the whole tariff next year. After the remarks which had been made on both sides, he suggested to the Government that it would be well to take this course.

MR. KENNY: Poverty was said to make strange bedfellows, and it also appeared that a discussion for amending the tariff was responsible for some curious arguments. He could not regard the revised list of duties as being a revenue tariff, for he believed it would be possible to get £100,000 of additional revenue, while reducing every item in the food duties. With all due respect to the occupants of the Government benches, it was not credible that they came into the House with a serious intention of carrying out what they professed to desire. He would a thousand times rather have seen a thoroughly revised tariff for giving to the Treasurer the revenue required, and yet giving to the masses their food free of duty. That was what the country had asked for, but the ear of the Government had ever been shut to the cry of the country. This schedule was a sort of apology, and the Government, backed by their overwhelming majority, had now the audacity to ask Opposition members to join them in withdrawing it. The Premier, while directly responsible to his Government for promises made, did not realise the fact that he was also responsible to the country; but the Premier simply relied on his overwhelming majority. Yet we were now asked, by "the power behind the throne," to join the Government in withdrawing the schedule. No member on the Opposition side of the House had any desire to find himself in the high and responsible position of a catspaw to pull the nuts out of the fire for the Government.

MR. LOCKE: The question was whether there should be a reduction of

ld. per lb. on cheese. He would support the item as printed; but if the Government were prepared to withdraw the schedule, he would be all the better pleased. It was certain the Government had the power to do as they chose in the matter. Though the colony's position at the present was not very good, still there did not appear the slightest reason for fear. It did appear to him that, if the Government were to withdraw the schedule and promise to deal with the whole tariff next year in more favourable circumstances, they would be able then to reduce it somewhat to suit the requirements of the working classes. As far as his part of the country was concerned, the duty on cheese could not be considered as protective, but as purely a revenue duty; and if any item of food in the schedule could be dispensed with by the working classes, it was surely cheese. So long as the working men could get bread and meat cheaply, few of them would care for cheese.

MR. GEORGE: The few words he had uttered had brought about a very beneficial discussion, which might be summed up in the question, whether the Committee would decide to pass the schedule or withdraw it. If they were prepared to withdraw it, it meant, as he had said, that it would have been better had the Government seen their way to appoint a Committee, consisting of members of the House with representatives of the commercial community and of working men, to thoroughly go through the tariff. Had that been done, instead of the jumble now under consideration, there might have been evolved a tariff which, while bringing in the necessary revenue, would adjust the burden of taxation so as to fall equally upon all classes, and not press unduly on some sections of the community for the benefit of others. Whatever promise was made twelve months ago could, in the altered circumstances of the country, be fairly and justly reconsidered. It would hardly be fair to hurl a reproach against the Government even if they put the position before the country in this way: "Last year, our revenue being a full and ample one, we said we were prepared to bring about certain reductions of duty, but this year the prospects of the coun-

try are temporarily clouded, and we cannot see our way to reduce the revenue; therefore the fulfilment of our promise will have to stand over, although you still have our sympathy." Speaking individually, and doubtless most hon. members would agree with him, the country was quite good enough, and so were the things in it. True, no one was making boom profits, nor was it desirable that we should be; and this check from which we were suffering slightly now would do us good by bringing us to our bearings, and making us face the situation properly and like men. It would do good if it made us tone down our expenditure and our expectations to the level of our revenue. Some hon. members had spoken as if they were almost exulting at the possibility of the revenue not coming up to the mark. Such observations were decidedly unwarrantable and out of place. If the revenue did not come up to the mark, that was rather a matter for regret than for rejoicing. Hon. members should rather try to help the Government out of the mess, if they were in a mess, than to bark at and exult over them in their misfortunes if they were unfortunate. If the Government stuck to the schedule he would support them; or, if they withdrew it, he would support the withdrawal.

THE PREMIER: The Government hoped that no idea of withdrawing these revised items of the tariff would enter into the minds of hon. members. The Government had gone into the matter with considerable trouble, and did not suppose they would lose revenue by it. On the contrary, we expected that the items on which the duties were increased would counterbalance those reduced, and that we would be able to keep our pledges in regard to the abolition—though abolition applied only to one item—in regard to a reduction of duties upon food to the extent of £45,000. There was no real cause for anxiety, certainly not for great anxiety, so long as wise and moderate counsels prevailed. As he had said, the revenue would be £27,000 less for this month than for the corresponding month of last year; but it was still a very considerable revenue. It amounted to £220,000 for the current month of August, and that was very good indeed, when compared with what it was in July,

which was a short month, having five or six days less in it than the current month. The accounts having been made up to the 25th of the month, June was of course a long month and July a shorter one; still, he was satisfied with the revenue of this month. Taking all things into consideration, we might be well pleased, and there were evidences that the depression in respect of revenue would not be so great as some members seemed to anticipate. There could be no doubt that the customs revenue had suffered greatly during the months of July and August, in anticipation of these tariff proposals, because people had been holding back in every possible way; therefore, the sooner we came to a conclusion in regard to this matter, the sooner would business people proceed in the ordinary way in the importation of dutiable goods. The Committee had better go on with these items in the schedule. Taking them altogether, they appeared to be wisely conceived. Having had an opportunity of giving a great deal of attention to the matter, and of hearing what had been said by hon. members, he thought it much better to settle the question now than to postpone its consideration, and do in another year what we ought to do in this. No doubt his friends opposite would be glad if the Government consented to withdraw these proposals, for they would then have a handle, which he did not intend they should have if he could help it, for they could say the Government had broken their pledges and promises. That was what the Government did not intend to do. Still, he must say that promises made in one session could not be binding upon the Government next session, if the conditions were altered; all such promises being conditional. Hon. members complained sometimes that some item he had promised to place on the annual Estimates did not find a place there.

MR. GEORGE: There would be more complaints of that kind in the present year.

THE PREMIER: To such hon. members his reply would be that he had promised to put certain items on the Estimates, but there were not funds to enable him to do so, and that he would remember the point, and when the opportunity occurred he would fulfil what had

been a conditional promise. Hon. members could best serve the country and help the Government by allowing these tariff amendments to pass; or, if members succeeded in striking off any items, it would be his part to ask hon. members to impose other duties; therefore, such a course would only be robbing Peter to pay Paul. He would advise the Committee to pass the proposals of the Government, unless where it was necessary to make amendments, as substantially in accord with those proposals as it was possible for them to be.

MR. GREGORY: No doubt it would be suicidal for the Government to reduce the revenue this year. Still, it had been admitted that this duty on cheese was for revenue purposes, and was not a protectionist duty. That being so, and it having been shown that the present duty pressed heavily on the working classes, it could be shown how a larger revenue might be realised, and the duties at the same time taken off the absolute necessities of the people. Supposing that on the whole of our free list, which was an immense one, a 5 per cent. duty were placed? There were on that list all kinds of iron implements, printing paper for newspapers, printing machinery, block and other kinds of tin, and many other materials, upon which a 5 per cent. duty would more than realise the revenue required by the Premier, and would enable the duties on the necessities of the working classes to be reduced. If the Premier could have taken the duty off cheese and placed it on the other items he had mentioned, it would have been much better. He hoped the Government would reconsider the matter, because a 5 per cent. duty would not be felt by anybody. Screws, bolts and nuts, and items of that description ran into large sums. Great expense was incurred by the country in passing these items through the Customs, and it was not obvious why a small duty of 5 per cent. would not be a fair imposition on them.

Amendment (Mr. Leake's) put and negatived, and the item passed.

Clocks and watches—agreed to.

Coir rope, other Cordage—agreed to.

Twine, n.o.e., 5 per cent. *ad valorem*:

THE PREMIER moved that the item be struck out, the duty being the same as before.

MR. GEORGE: Why not increase it? Put and passed, and the item struck out.

Doors (wooden), according to thickness (three items)—agreed to.

Hemp and flax, unmanufactured—agreed to.

Iron, galvanised, corrugated, 20s. per ton:

MR. VOSPER moved, as an amendment, that the words "twenty shillings" be struck out, and "ten shillings" inserted in lieu thereof. It was desirable that some reduction should be made in this duty, which would be a heavy impost on the goldfields and other places, where nearly all the buildings were constructed of galvanised iron. Under the new railway tariff introduced the other day there was an increase in freight of 25s. per ton; and now it was proposed to impose this import duty of 20s. per ton.

THE PREMIER: Jarrah could be used and it was cheap.

MR. EWING: The duty proposed should be put on, and he was only sorry the Government had not seen their way to make it 40/- a ton. The timber industry was one which should be fostered; and the more we could adopt the principle of producing articles here and importing less from other places, the better it would be.

MR. HUBBLE: The duty should be adopted, and he did not understand why the impost which used to exist was taken off.

MR. MORAN: It was a mistake to suppose jarrah would be used instead of galvanised iron. It would be absolutely impossible to put as much jarrah as galvanised iron on to a camel's back and have it carried all over the goldfields. A sheet of galvanised iron was comparatively light, and this iron was used for nearly every kind of building, being the one concomitant of civilisation on the goldfields. Wherever we saw a man on the goldfields we might see a sheet of iron with him. He protested particularly against the increased railway charges.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Whilst desiring to see jarrah used throughout the country, he did not think it could be utilised for the same

purpose as galvanised iron. Jarrah was good for the frame of a house, but for the covering of the roof there was no better material than galvanised iron, especially on the goldfields. The duty on galvanised iron and the increased railway freight, would be only £2 5s. per ton: and as one ton would be sufficient to build an eight-roomed house, the impost would not really be heavy. A great quantity of galvanised iron was used on the goldfields, but quite two-thirds of the total quantity imported was utilised in the coastal towns; so that, after all, if the duty was going to be a burden, it would fall upon every portion of the people.

MR. VOSPER: If one travelled between here and Northam, he would find that workmen's cottages were built of iron, even the cottages at timber stations. He did not know whether the reason was that timber was unsuitable, or whether iron was cheaper. Government buildings all over the country were built of galvanised iron; and although only a small amount of galvanised iron was required for roofing, yet on the goldfields everything was built of iron, and people used it for side-walls and linings.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: That was to save labour.

MR. VOSPER: Also to save expense. Having already imposed the increased charge of 25s. a ton for railway freight, the Government might very well spare the consumers this additional duty.

MR. GEORGE: The duty was a reasonable one, and when formerly the duty was £2 a ton, it did not seem to hurt anyone. There was, however, certainly ground for complaint relative to the increased railway charges, which not only affected people living on the fields but also others.

MR. A. FORREST: A duty on galvanised iron was required for revenue purposes, and the small amount now proposed would not hurt anybody. The duty was formerly £2 per ton, but the people on the goldfields had then to pay £30 or £40 per ton for carting, and so the Government tried to relieve them by taking off the duty. Now it was proposed to charge £1 per ton, and this would not be felt seriously by the many persons who used galvanised iron for small or large buildings.

Amendment put and negatived, and the item passed.

Machinery of all kinds, and parts of, 5 per cent. *ad valorem* :

MR. EWING moved, as an amendment, that the words, "and parts of" be struck out. His desire in moving this amendment was that the Premier should be willing to insert the words again in a new item, in order to increase the amount of duty on parts of machinery to 10 per cent. The effect of such increase would be that those foundries in the colony which were in a position to make or repair parts of machinery, but were not equipped for making complete machines on a large scale, would be benefited by the increase. It would be better to give to our own people the opportunity of doing repairs to machinery, rather than encourage the importation of parts of machinery at a low rate of duty. He hoped the Premier would consent to do what he had suggested.

THE PREMIER : Being desirous of encouraging local industries in this colony, without unduly affecting other interests, he was in favour of doing so as far as practicable; and on that account some persons regarded him as a protectionist, although he did not believe in prohibition. He wanted this country to be self-supporting in its industries; but there were difficulties in the way of that policy, and this machinery question was one of them. A great quantity of machinery was necessary for the various industries in the colony; and while providing for its importation at a low rate of duty, we should also endeavour to build up the machinery industry within the colony by giving such protection as was reasonable. Some time ago the duty on machinery was abolished, and that was appreciated by persons engaged in the gold-mining industry and by agriculturists. He knew, at the same time, that the admission of machinery free of duty had operated adversely on struggling foundries, and if he could do anything to assist them he would be glad to do it. With that object he was prepared to meet the hon. member, by promising to move, later, that parts of machinery should be admitted at 10 per cent. duty; although this promise must depend upon assurance being given by practical members, like the

member for the Murray (Mr. George), that parts of machinery could be made here. He did not think the proposed increase on parts of machinery would be felt as a hardship. As for agricultural machinery, he found that the whole value imported last year amounted to only £2,000, so that the slight increase on parts of machinery would not be oppressive on agriculturists. The Government were trying, in this tariff, to help the agricultural community, by retaining all the duties on things which they produced; therefore the agriculturists should help a little in regard to other industries, by giving this assistance to the foundries in the colony. The effect would eventually be to cheapen the price of machinery, by encouraging its production in the colony.

MR. GEORGE : Having been appealed to by the Premier, he would say that with regard to the bulk of machinery imported, there was not sufficient of it made in the colony to supply the demand. Nearly every kind of machinery required, except agricultural implements, were made in the colony at the various foundries; and unless the foundry industry was to be assisted, by encouraging persons to make that which they could make, namely, the parts required for repairing batteries, engines, stone-crushers, and machines of that character, there would not be sufficient inducement for large foundries to grow up in the colony. Stamper batteries were made here at present, but not in large quantities. Every part of an engine could be made here, and had been for the last three years. Boilers were not made here, and would not be so long as they could be imported at a low rate; because the duty on the raw material for boilers was almost prohibitive, whereas the freight on the finished article was little more than that on the raw material. The result of increasing the duty to 10 per cent., as had been suggested, would not necessarily be to increase the price of articles to those who used them; because he knew of castings having been supplied in this colony in large quantities at a cheaper rate than they could be imported for, and this had been done during the last three years, as he could prove if necessary. So far as pulleys, shafting, and breakages were concerned, the little protection that was now

proposed would change a languishing industry into one that might soon be fairly prosperous. If the object were to make the duty protective, say up to 20 per cent., he would not vote for it; but the small amount of increase now suggested would be reasonable, and assist to keep the work within the colony.

MR. MORAN: It should be remembered that any protection given to the makers of machinery within the colony would have the effect of increasing the cost of machines to those who used them, and this would be a serious matter for mine-owners on the goldfields. The gold-mining community were prepared to make reasonable sacrifices for assisting agriculturists or others who sympathised with the mining industry, by giving reasonable assistance when it was wanted; but it was possible to go too far in this matter. The Premier had admitted that the first duty of members was to restore full confidence in the colony; and it would not be wise to impose an additional burden on the all-important mining industry, by increasing the cost of machinery. Seeing that machinery as a finished product could not be produced in large quantities in the colony, was it wise to increase the cost of it to those who used this machinery, at a time when the mining industry was suffering under what was rather a "slump?" The amount of revenue thus raised would not compensate for the bad impression caused by imposing such a duty at a time when the gold-mining industry required a little encouragement. Five per cent. on such an item meant an enormous total, for the value of the machinery in his constituency alone might amount to a million pounds, and it was impossible to deny that a large quantity of additional machinery might be imported. Was a company which had machinery under order to be mulcted in a duty on that machinery when landed? It was freely admitted that large machinery as a whole could not be manufactured here.

MR. GEORGE: But we must have revenue.

MR. MORAN: The amount of revenue so obtained would not compensate, at this critical moment, for the bad feeling that would be created. He was prepared to tax parts of machinery. He proposed, as

an amendment, to strike out the words "of all kinds, and," leaving the item to read: "Machinery, parts of, 5 per cent."

THE PREMIER: The item as it stood would produce a revenue of some £13,000 a year.

MR. MORAN: That was a considerable sum. Notwithstanding, he preferred to tax those parts of machinery which could be produced in the colony. If the Government wished to encourage local foundries, it would be better to do so by the bonus system.

MR. KENNY opposed the amendment. It was wonderful to see the interest taken in the welfare of large companies, without regard to what the men who were building up the country had to pay for the privilege of doing so. Last year, when debating the food duties, he found that out of 41 articles which the prospector or reefer must procure for his work, 31 paid 15 per cent. duty, 4 paid 20 per cent., and 6 paid 10 per cent. duty, these taxes being imposed on men who were the pioneers of the great gold industry, and men who were worthy of the first consideration, before any large capitalist or company. If the working prospector could afford to pay an average duty of almost 30 per cent. on his necessities, there could be nothing unfair in asking large companies to contribute 5 per cent. towards the revenue. Wherever there was gold, and it was admitted that we had plenty, the capitalist would come forward and develop it, and would hardly complain of paying 5 per cent. for the privilege of making the enormous profits some companies were making to-day. He would strongly support the duty of 5 per cent. on machinery.

MR. A. FORREST agreed with the hon. member that the capitalist could well afford to pay this imposition of 5 per cent.; and parts of machinery should bear the heavier duty of 10 per cent. Speaking as a northern member, he wanted also to help the factories of the colony, though they were of no benefit to his own constituency. In the report of the Collector of Customs, it would be found that the imports in 1895 amounted to £3,774,951, out of which goods to the value of £1,326,479 came to this country duty free; more than one-third

of the total imports of goods made in foreign countries, possibly by sweated labour, being admitted here without paying sixpence of duty. In 1896 we imported to the still greater value of £6,493,557, and out of that sum £2,400,990 came in free. In 1897 we imported £6,418,565, of which goods to the value of £2,320,863 came in free. It appeared as if the people of the colony did not care even if those goods were produced in China, so long as they got them here cheaply. Foundries in all parts of Australia required help; and, with few exceptions, foundries had been unsuccessful in the eastern colonies. A great firm came to Western Australia more than twelve months ago, and erected large buildings and plant, but they found it paid them better to make the machinery in Adelaide and send it to this colony, where it came in duty free. But were a duty imposed, such people would come here, and possibly employ a large amount of labour, thus benefiting everyone in the country. For these reasons he could not agree with the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) that the item be altered, except that parts of machinery should pay an extra duty up to 10 per cent.

MR. MITCHELL: While finding no fault with the imposition of 5 per cent. on machinery and 10 per cent. on parts of machinery, yet how could it be decided what were parts of machinery and what were not? Users of machinery frequently imported a lot of parts in duplicate; and were these to be considered as "parts of machinery" or as machinery itself? A man importing machinery brought duplicates with it for use in case of accident.

HON. H. W. VENN: The customs would look after that.

MR. MITCHELL: It was not clear how that could be done.

MR. WALLACE: The words "parts of" were too vague. Would engines of all classes, and boilers, be machinery?

THE PREMIER: Boilers would hardly come within the category.

MR. GEORGE: They were in a separate schedule.

MR. WALLACE: If machinery and parts of machinery were to pay a duty of 5 per cent., how would that affect pumps

and pumping apparatus, which were now on the free list? Part of a mining plant was the pump, and pipes were part of the pump.

MR. GEORGE: There was now a duty of 5 per cent. on pipes.

MR. WALLACE: That showed how contradictory the tariff was. It should be more explicit.

MR. A. FORREST: Pipes were used for more purposes than one.

MR. GEORGE: The item referred to machinery of all kinds.

MR. WALLACE: The description was too vague, and he mentioned the matter in the hope that the Premier would see it made more explicit. None would dispute that a pump was part of a mining plant, and that it would come under the heading of machinery.

MR. HUBBLE: Undoubtedly there should be a duty on parts of machinery. There were many foundries here which, though they could not turn out the whole of a machine, could turn out whatever parts were required. Such foundries should be encouraged, and the extra duty would operate in their behalf. The duty on machinery should be 5 per cent., and on parts of machinery 10 per cent.

MR. CONOLLY: As a mining member, he admitted that 5 per cent. duty on machinery could hardly cause serious inconvenience to the users of mining machinery. The tax would principally affect those who were erecting machinery; and that class consisted, to a large extent, of those who, in the mining world, would be considered absentees. Probably the goldfields here, as well as in other parts of Australia, would be controlled by foreign institutions; and while he was pleased to see large foreign companies opening up our goldfields, they had undoubtedly received great advantages here, including the benefit of railways which had cost the country an immense sum of money. So, payment of a duty of 5 per cent. would be a very small return which this colony might very reasonably expect such companies to contribute. As to the effect on prospectors, every member of this House recognised prospectors as a most important portion of the mining community; and we should be careful not to injure them in their enterprise in pro-

specting and developing claims. This tax would not seriously affect them, for prospectors usually sold any property they might have, and induced people of capital to come in and do the more heavy and costly portion of development, involving the erection of machinery. This duty would fall, to a very large extent, on the absentee mining man, and he (Mr. Conolly) was pleased to support it.

MR. WILSON: The discussion of this item had developed into one of freetrade *versus* protection. He did not see how a duty of 5 per cent would protect local foundries. How were foundries in Victoria flourishing to-day? Members would find they were shut up, most of them having gone "smash." As to parts of machinery, they were only a question of degree; and if we carried the matter out to its logical conclusion, we must admit that foundries which could produce the parts could produce the whole. If mining parts of machinery were meant, why not specify them? The member for the Murray (Mr. George) had admitted that any part of machinery used in the colony could be manufactured here.

MR. GEORGE: So it could.

MR. WILSON: Then a duty of 5 or 10 per cent. would simply mean putting a little more profit into the pockets of those who owned foundries.

MR. GEORGE: Not a bit of it.

MR. WILSON: Why should the whole of Australia be taxed to the extent of perhaps £15,000 or £20,000, so that persons might make an amount of profit which would enable them to enlarge their foundries? The imposition of the proposed duty would be hard on large companies, such as that with which he was associated. If one industry was to be protected, all should be.

MR. GEORGE: A duty was to be imposed on wooden doors.

MR. WILSON: That would not afford protection. The consumer would pay that.

THE PREMIER: The doors needed in Western Australia could be made here.

MR. GEORGE: Coombe, Wood, and Company said they could do it.

MR. WILSON: They were wrong. When the question of freetrade *versus* protection came forward, he would be prepared to argue it on its merits; but at

the present we were considering what would be a just tax to enable the Premier to obtain the revenue required.

THE PREMIER: The words "every kind of" should be substituted for "of all kinds."

MR. WILSON: That would cover engines and boilers as well.

THE PREMIER: No. Boilers were under another head. Engines were free.

HON. H. W. VENN: What was the difference between "every kind of" and "of all kinds?"

THE PREMIER: The Attorney General thought the words "every kind of" would be better.

At 6.27 p.m. the CHAIRMAN left the chair.

At 7.30 the CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Amendment (Mr. Moran's) to strike out the words "of all kinds and," put and negatived.

MR. GEORGE moved, as an amendment, that the words "and parts of" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed, and the item as amended agreed to.

New item:

THE PREMIER moved that a new item be inserted, namely, "Machinery, parts of, 10 per cent. *ad valorem*."

Put and passed, and the new item inserted.

Meat items in Schedule—Bacon 2d. per pound.

MR. WILSON protested once more against the meagre amount of reduction in the meat duties proposed by the Government. He wished to see cheap food available for the people, and bacon was an item which might be cheapened by the reduction of the duty. In order to have this protest entered on the records, he moved, as an amendment, that the words "2d. per pound" be struck out, with a view to inserting the words "free of duty."

MR. KENNY supported the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived, and the item passed.

Meat—Hams, 2d. per pound:

MR. WILSON moved, as an amendment, that the words "2d. per pound" be struck

0.1, and "free of duty" inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and negatived, and the item passed.

Meat—Fresh, frozen, and chilled, $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per pound:

MR. HUBBLE: Taking into consideration the amount of duty taken off live stock, 15s. per head, he moved that this item be struck out.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was useless to occupy the time of the Committee, for the Government had their majority behind them. He protested against the amendment; for he at first thought the hon. member wished to strike out the words " $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per pound" with a view to inserting the words "free of duty," whereas the amendment would have the effect of allowing the duty to stand at its present figure. In view of the difficulties under which the people of the colony had to labour, and the great importance of the meat supply as part of our daily food, the Government supporters might well give way in this matter, by taking the duties off several of the food items, and putting duties on something else. If the amendment were carried, he would move that the words "free of duty" be inserted.

THE CHAIRMAN: The question was, that the whole item be struck out.

THE PREMIER: The Committee would act more wisely by leaving the item as it stood, at $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per pound. The duty received last year from frozen meat was £16,444.

MR. A. FORREST: That was at $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. per pound.

THE PREMIER: The Government proposed to strike off £8,222 by reducing the duty to one half. As all were aware, the most important of the food duties was that on meat, and the price of meat in the colony was no doubt too high; nevertheless, the squatters did not charge too much for beef and mutton, for which they received 3d. to 4d. per pound, as a rule.

MR. KENNY: They would like to get it.

THE PREMIER: That was what they got, and a little more sometimes; but somehow the expenses incurred between the time the animals were bought and the time they were sold were so great, that the price of the meat was in some cases

doubled, and people engaged in the butchering business did not, as a rule, make fortunes.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The imported supply would make meat cheaper.

THE PREMIER: Not being in the business, he might be told he knew nothing about it; but there ought to be some means devised by which the margin of 40 or 50 per cent. between the wholesale and the retail price could be lessened. If he, as a wholesale dealer, were to sell an article for 4d., it was not reasonable that the retail purchaser should pay double that sum for it. Still, the butchering business was a very expensive one, and a losing business, too, for there were all sorts of casualties connected with stock—the falling away after purchase, the killing and transportation to different parts of the colony; and, if it were not an expensive business, the people engaged in it would make large fortunes, in view of the apparent margin of profit. It was mainly from the producers' point of view that the question should be considered. Everyone desired to assist the producer of stock in the colony; and, if he could get protection to the extent of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a pound the producer would not have much to grumble at. On a 700lb. bullock this rate would amount to £2, which ought to be sufficient.

MR. MORAN: A bullock could be bought for £2 in some colonies.

THE PREMIER: Not in this country. It should also be noted that the cost of sending frozen meat to the colony was much less than for live stock.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why should not the public get the benefit of that?

THE PREMIER: It was necessary to look after our own producers, to some extent, and it would be disastrous for the Committee to do anything which would ruin the pastoral industry of the colony. It was not the desire of hon. members that one part only of the colony should flourish, their desire being that all should flourish. People would never eat frozen meat if they could get fresh meat. A little protection of this kind was necessary to encourage our own pastoralists, otherwise, we would be importers of meat for ever, which was not desirable. If all the producers were driven out of the colony, by our encouraging only

those of other countries, we would soon be at the mercy of the foreign exporter. That was the argument the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) had doubtless used many times in Victoria.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And might use it again.

THE PREMIER: It was only the force of circumstances that compelled the hon. member to change his front on the fiscal question.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There had been no change of front.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member had sat a good many years in this House, and had scarcely ever voted except as a free-trader, though his sympathies appeared to be with the protectionists; and the reason was, apparently, that the hon. member represented a non-producing community; whereas if he were the member for Bunbury or for the Williams district, he would vote very differently. The proposal of the Government to reduce the duty on this item by one-half was reasonable, in existing conditions; for while it would protect the producer, it did not unduly favour the introduction of fresh, frozen, or chilled meat; and in view of the low price which, as the hon. member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) said, was charged for meat in some other parts of the world, a duty of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb. would not be too heavy, and would not prevent meat being sold here at a reasonable figure. This amount was a fair compromise between those who desired the duty to remain as it was, and those who asked for its total abolition; therefore, he hoped hon. members would agree to the proposal of the Government that the duty on fresh, frozen, and chilled meat be $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb.

MR. MORAN asked the Chairman's ruling on the question, whether the proposal before members to strike out the item was not equivalent to raising taxation. Was it competent for the Committee to increase the taxation proposals of the Government?

THE CHAIRMAN: It was competent to strike the item out.

MR. MORAN: Would it be competent for a member to propose to raise it $\frac{1}{4}$ d.?

THE CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. MORAN: In other words, the duty could be raised $\frac{3}{4}$ d., but could not be raised $\frac{1}{4}$ d.

THE CHAIRMAN: That was not the question before the Committee.

MR. A. FORREST: This question was a very important one to the district he represented, which had already, at the will of the Treasurer, foregone half the duty on imported live stock—a great blow to the producers in the Northern division of the colony. Now we were asked to reduce the duty on frozen meat by one-half. If the Government had proposed to reduce it to 1d., they would probably have had the support of every member on their own side of the House; but members representing the producers were not satisfied now, and the reason was not far to seek. In the great colony of Victoria, which imported nearly three-fourths of its meat supply, the duty on frozen meat, was nearly 1d. per lb.; in South Australia, which imported three-fourths of its meat supply, the duty on frozen meat was 1d.; and in New South Wales, where there was at present no duty, pastoralists were in such fear and dread that they did not know which way to turn.

MR. MORAN: They were supplying Western Australia with meat.

MR. A. FORREST: The Queensland ports were at the present time shipping meat from the tick-infested districts to the port of Sydney, and selling it there at a price which defied the competition of the pastoralists of New South Wales. In times of depression, meat was stored in the eastern colonies, and it could be subsequently admitted here at a cost defying competition. Grazers and producers should be adequately protected against Queensland, which was the only country we feared, as it had large areas of pasture land from which, in good seasons, produce could be sent here at a price against which it would be impossible to compete. He would not be afraid to have the duty on live stock taken off altogether; but it would be impossible to compete with frozen meat imported into this colony from other colonies in times of plenty. The duty should be altered to 1d. per lb., which would do no harm to anybody, because he did not suppose a farthing per lb. would

affect the cost of living. Last year a vessel came into Fremantle with a large cargo of frozen beef and mutton, and it did not afford employment to a single person in this colony, the ship being anchored out, and five or ten or twenty sheep carcasses at a time being brought ashore and sold. The people who carried on that business were not like the butchers and importers, who had to employ a large number of people in the colony. Not only were a large number of men engaged in the butchering trade, but the railway also received a considerable revenue from the traffic in live stock; whereas we should get no benefit from the importation of frozen meat, except in relation to a small portion which might go to the goldfields. We had in the North a big industry at the present time, and everyone was doing well there; but, if we admitted frozen meat into this colony free of duty, those now flourishing would be brought to bankruptcy. None of the other colonies, except New South Wales, admitted frozen meat free of duty; and surely we should be acting correctly if we followed the example set by our big sister colonies. He hoped hon. members would pause before wiping out the whole of our pastoral districts north of Geraldton.

MR. KINGSMILL: The argument put forward by some members who wished to keep up the duty was that we must protect the producer, and he agreed that we should do so; but by admitting frozen meat with a duty of three farthings a pound, we would not be doing the producer any harm. It would be better to reduce the duty to a half-penny. This would benefit the consumer. The ruling prices of meat in this colony were these:—To large consumers, publicans, etc., beef, 7d. per lb.; suet, 6d.; tongues, 3s.; hearts, 1s.; tails, 10d.; tripe, 7d. Mutton, 6d.; tongues, 2d.; and trotters, 2d. To small consumers the prices were:—Beef, 8d. to 10d. per lb.; mutton, 8d.; pork, 10d. There were sufficient reasons now, unfortunately, why people should leave this colony, without our adding another; and if we could render the colony more habitable to the working classes, we should endeavour to do so. The cost of mutton frozen and put on board at Melbourne was stated to be 2d.,

the freight being about four-fifths of a penny, while the storage per month amounted to another fifth or a penny. Thus the cost price of frozen meat landed here would be 3d. a pound, and it could be sold retail at 5d. The frozen meat trade had never received fair treatment in this colony. Some 12 months ago a regulation was passed that the Collector of Customs might permit all goods, except frozen meat—such as tobacco, wine, spirits, etc.—to be sold to ships in the harbour in bond, free of duty.

THE PREMIER: That was the same everywhere. It was just the same in Victoria.

MR. KINGSMILL: There or four wrongs did not make a right, and we might strike out for ourselves. What occurred was a case of most glaring injustice. He had heard members say the frozen meat was unfit for consumption; but there could not be much in the objection, for members knew that the fare on board steamers was not bad, and passengers were practically confined to meat which was frozen. The Premier need not be afraid to reduce any of these food duties, especially one of such importance to the colony as this; and to make up the revenue, most members present would willingly submit to an increase of 1d. per gallon on beer, in order to get a greater reduction of duty on frozen meat. There might also be an increase of 3d. in the duty on English beer.

MR. HUBBLE: As to what had been said about sympathy for the squatters, some members did not want them to prosper at all. He asked leave to withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. KENNY moved, as an amendment, that the words "three farthings per pound" be struck out, with a view to inserting the words "free of duty." This would be the only means of reducing the price of meat, and no member who had listened to the statement made by the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) the other night, would fail to perceive the necessity for this amendment; for that member had made it clear that any reduction in the duty on live stock would not be felt by the consumer, but would go into the pockets of those engaged in

the trade. Therefore, that argument would apply equally to this duty on imported frozen meat. The member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) had shown how easy it was for members to rise in this House and represent themselves first, their constituency second, and the country afterwards. Common decency alone ought to forbid members getting up and advocating their own interests. The member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) had lifted the marionette who represented the Gascoyne (Mr. Hubble), to make an impossible proposal, and then withdraw it on command. Importers of frozen meat had found it cheaper to pay demurrage on a large steamer at Fremantle for weeks, rather than pay the duty on a cargo of frozen meat, in order that they might dispose of it without paying the high duty. As to the plea of helping the poor squatter—

MR. HUBBLE: The hon. member wanted to crush the squatter.

MR. KENNY said he would like to crush the member for the Gascoyne. If the Government would endeavour to assist the poor squatter by reducing rent, he would support that; but it was a mere bogey to set up a plea about sympathy for the poor squatter, for the purpose of putting money into the pockets of persons interested in the business.

MR. A. FORREST rose to a point of order, and asked whether the hon. member was in order in imputing motives.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member had no right to impute motives, but he appeared to have been speaking generally.

MR. KENNY said he had spoken very generally.

MR. SOLOMON: It was not correct to say that the frozen meat imported last year was all sold from the ship's side; for the fact was that shops were opened in various places, and the importers arranged to supply meat in a regular way, the same as a butcher would do.

MR. A. FORREST: They were evading the Customs duty all the same. He had not said that all the meat was sold from the ship's side.

MR. WILSON supported the amendment, because it was right and necessary to allow fresh, frozen, and chilled meat to come in free of duty. In the debate on meat duties last session, it was shown

that the duty on meat was exorbitant and unjust in the extreme. The duty on frozen meat was equal to 75 or 80 per cent. of the invoice value; and such a tax was unjust and unwarranted.

THE PREMIER: The same as in every other colony.

MR. WILSON: In Victoria, in South Australia, in New South Wales, and in Queensland, fresh meat could be bought in the butchers' shops at less than half the price charged here.

MR. A. FORREST: The duty did not do all that.

THE PREMIER: Thousands of cattle were imported into Victoria every year. The hon. member must know that.

MR. WILSON: Evidence was produced last year to show that this was an unjust tax.

MR. A. FORREST: All taxes were unjust.

MR. WILSON: The hon. member never supported those members who wished to remove the food duties. The Government had brought in the revised schedule professedly for revenue purposes, and to reduce the cost of living, in order to redeem the Premier's promise and with the object of attracting more population; but would this schedule have that effect? He feared that not only would it fail to attract population, but the colony might be at a standstill in that respect. It behoved us to do all that was possible to make the cost of living cheaper. There must be money to carry on the spending policy of the Government, of course; but this schedule, so far as it had gone, provided for an increase of £53,000 for the year, and the reductions proposed by the Government would amount to only £45,000. The cost of wearing apparel had been increased; the duty on machinery would bring in some £13,000 more; the increase on galvanised iron would produce about £16,000 more on last year's figures; and the increase on doors would be £10,000 or £11,000. The Premier had already thus got £53,000 more, while expecting to lose only £45,000.

THE PREMIER: The £45,000 was all off food.

MR. WILSON: By abolishing this duty on fresh, frozen, and chilled meat, the loss would be something like £8,000, according to last year's figures; and in view of the £53,000 which the revised tariff

would produce, surely the Government could well afford to strike off this item, and let the people have free meat. If the pastoralists in this colony were to be wiped out as it was said they would be, by admitting frozen or chilled meat free of duty, then how was it that the pastoralists in Queensland were able to exist, and they sold meat cheaper than it was sold in this colony? Then it was said the people here would not eat frozen meat; and, if that was so, what had we to be afraid of in allowing frozen meat to come in free of duty, when it would not compete against the fresh meat of the colony? There was a natural protection in freight, storage, and other charges equal to 1½d. per lb., and this protection should be sufficient.

HON. S. BURT: While sympathising largely with the object of the hon. member who had just spoken in trying to reduce the cost of living, yet the tone of the debate showed that the whole question as to the cost of living appeared to centre in the price of meat. Men did not live on meat alone.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was a big item.

HON. S. BURT: Yes; and he could give other big items. Butter, for instance, was much used in every household, and the value of imported butter last year amounted to £32,000—an enormous item; and he would like to hear those who complained of the cost of living say what they thought of the cost of butter.

MR. WILSON: Members on this (the Opposition) side had tried to reduce that also.

HON. S. BURT: In the debate during last week, no attention was directed to the cost of items other than meat. Another important item was the duty on flour, of which £24,000 worth was imported last year. Eggs were largely used, and £8,000 worth were imported last year. Potatoes were used in every household, and £12,000 worth were imported last year. Cheese to the value of £12,000 was imported last year. All these were articles of consumption which made up the cost of living in this colony.

MR. OLDHAM: Take it all off.

HON. S. BURT: It must not be forgotten that we were all protectionists. The hon. member who was interjecting told us the other night that he was a

protectionist from the top of his head to the sole of his foot. If so, he surely would not say he wanted to take the duties off flour, butter, eggs, and cheese! If he were a protectionist, he would want to keep them on.

MR. WILSON: The Government were taking them off.

HON. S. BURT: The Government had done it far enough, and hon. members should leave it at that. The Government had knocked down the duty one-half, and they asked protectionists to be satisfied with that, and not wipe out altogether one industry amongst the many that were under the wing of protectionists. The plain result of the proposition before the House would be the annihilation of the squatting industry in the North.

A MEMBER: The object was to reduce butchers' profits.

HON. S. BURT: It was not the squatter who made those profits.

MR. KENNY: Hear, hear.

HON. S. BURT: The squatters sold the meat at about 4d.; and how, then, was it that the consumer had to pay 8d. a lb.? The margin was too much for the expenses of the butcher; but, by admitting imported meat free, we would not be attacking the man who now had the money in his pocket, but we would be attacking the squatter.

MR. WILSON: Not at all.

HON. S. BURT: What chance would the squatters in the northern part of the colony have of selling their mutton, if meat were admitted to this country free of duty? None whatever. The duty on these articles should rather invite the sympathy of protectionists, for no squatter in this country could do more than eke out a bare existence. One would think the protectionists in the House would sympathise with those people in the North-West, who themselves had to pay duty on every conceivable thing they used, and had paid it from the first, and who were handicapped, too, by the burdensome rate of freight.

MR. VOSPER: It was proposed to put them out of their misery.

HON. S. BURT: That language would hardly be used by the hon. member if it were proposed to wipe out the mining industry.

MR. VOSPER: That had been attempted.

HON. S. BURT said he did not know that. The mining population did not pay anything at all in the way of duty. Prior to this session, at any rate, they had got their houses, their galvanized iron, their blankets, their billycans free; and what we did tax of the articles used by the mining community did not appear, except in respect of the item now before the Committee, and which it was proposed to greatly reduce, namely, the tax on preserved meat. If the miners did not pay on meat, they would pay duty on nothing. The pastoralists paid rent; and what for? They could hardly tell. They paid rents for the privilege of seeing their sheep die. The lands for which the rents were paid had frequently neither food nor water on them. He was informed there was a rent day during the current week; and he would like some hon. member to go to the door of the Lands Office on that day to see the poor people going in with their rents, for land on which he could assure the Committee there had been no rainfall worth speaking of for 12 months, and in some cases for two years, and not as much food for stock as there was on the floor of the House; and yet, year after year, those people were asked by the Government to pay rent. When it came to the question of rents for pastoral leases, he would certainly ask his friends on the other (the Opposition) side of the House to join him in urging the Government to forego such rents altogether, on the ground that such country was not worth rent. On some land which he held he had asked that day what the rent was charged for, and the official could not tell him, though he knew there was no water and no food on the land. The officer laughed and pocketed the money. That was the case with the squatters in the North, and now hon. members were endeavouring to wipe them out, whereas their object should be to cheapen the article after it left the runs of the squatter, and before it was distributed to the public. A year or two ago it was suggested in the House as a partial remedy that the Government might establish or subsidise public abattoirs in some con-

venient part of the country, where stock could be kept in something like condition while waiting to be slaughtered. That had not been done, though it was a very good suggestion. The slaughtering of stock close to Perth, where there was no pasturage to keep it in condition while the consignment was going through the butchers' hands, was a source of great expense to the man who slaughtered, because his meat was being reduced in weight every day. To do away altogether with a duty which was imposed in every other colony with the exception of New South Wales would simply result in the utter annihilation of the squatter in this colony, and surely hon. members did not wish to do that. By the proposal of the Government the squatters were asked to give up half the duty, and they were prepared to do so. The hon. member who last spoke suggested that, as Queensland could sell meat at a certain price, why could not it be sold for the same price in this colony?

THE PREMIER: There was a 25 per cent. duty there.

HON. S. BURT: Yes; and look at the difference between the two countries. Queensland could produce stock to far better advantage than could be done in our northern climate, and it must be borne in mind that the producers in the North were handicapped by the heavy freight on everything they used. Even the galvanized iron, of which the settlers' houses were built, and the timber and the flour, for which they had to pay 30s. a ton, were taxed by the heavy freight. Until recently it was all carried on subsidised steamers which the settlers had to help to support. The freight from Perth to his (the Ashburton) district very often amounted to twice and sometimes three times the freight payable on the same articles from Perth to Melbourne. It was to be hoped hon. members, before going to the length of suggesting that this item should be free of duty altogether, would consider the gross injustice that would be done to men who were surely deserving of some consideration, if that proposition were carried. Consider how those men have spent their lives, and many of them a good deal of money, in endeavouring to

make reproductive the large pastoral areas in the North. Given good reasons, the squatter could bear a good deal more than he could now in the shape of taxation; but the experience of 20 or 25 years taught them it was next to impossible to more than make ends meet. An hon. member spoke of a squatter coming to Perth and living at the rate of £2,000 a month. It was not clear where he got the money from. He must have got into debt to do it, and if the hon. member could only see the palatial residence to which he returned—four walls of galvanized iron in a climate where it was often 130 degrees in the sun, and where he (Hon. S. Burt) had known it to be 118 degrees in the shade for weeks, he would not remain long in that squatter's residence. Protectionists in the House had in times past put on the existing duty, and surely they would not seek to-night to put this item on the free list. Rather should they agree with the Government that the necessities of the present occasion were fully met by reducing the duty one-half. Then the squatting industry would contribute to the reduction of the cost of living as nothing else had done. What did the maker of cheese contribute under this schedule? Only a little. But we asked the squatter to contribute a great deal. Was that fair?

MR. WILSON: The Ministry asked it.

HON. S. BURT: The squatter had contributed a good deal in respect of the items already passed, and was contributing more on this particular item, if the figure was left as it stood, which he hoped would be done.

MR. HOLMES: After hearing so many authorities on the meat question, he felt somewhat diffident in pressing the Committee on the subject; still, it was his duty to point out to hon. members, as one who claimed to understand the meat trade, how the matter appeared to him. Under the tariff as suggested by the Government the advantages of the importer of frozen meat were very great indeed. The duty of 1½d. was prohibitive; but the duty of ¾d. now proposed was very much in favour of the introduction of this article. When speaking on the tax on live stock a few nights ago, the House gave him credit for honesty, and he hoped he would be

credited with dealing fairly on question. The first advantage was that the importer of frozen meat could obtain his supplies direct from the tick-infested areas of Queensland at a ridiculously low rate, because the pastoralists in Queensland had no other market available. In other colonies the quarantine regulations were strictly enforced in respect to live stock, and the Queensland producer could only find a market by exporting frozen meat. The next advantage was that the Queensland Government were now offering a bonus of ½d. a lb. to encourage the export trade in meat to this as well as to other colonies.

THE PREMIER: Was that an absolute fact?

MR. HOLMES said it was given him as a fact.

THE PREMIER: It was hardly credible that the Queensland Government would do such a thing with respect to the export of meat to the other colonies.

MR. HOLMES: Hon. members could believe or disbelieve the statement as they liked. The Queensland Government were at the present time offering such a bonus to encourage the export trade. Another advantage was that the importer of frozen meat could have his supplies carried by steamer at a lower rate than could the importer of live stock, and also at a lower rate than it cost our own pastoralists to transport their meat from Kimberley to Fremantle. It cost about 1d. per lb. to carry live stock from Kimberley to Fremantle; and frozen meat could be imported at a lower rate than that.

A MEMBER: Seven-eighths of a penny.

MR. HOLMES: Again, the importer of frozen meat would receive the numbers and weights shipped to him, whereas our own pastoralists in the North lost at least 100lbs. per bullock in transit on a shipment of live stock. That loss of 100lbs. per beast meant at least ¾d. per lb. in favour of the importer of frozen meat, which ½d. a lb., together with ¾d. bonus the Queensland Government were offering, placed the importers of frozen meat practically on the free list when compared with our own pastoralists. These facts had been arrived at by going into the question very carefully. Hon. members would notice that in speaking of the importer of the frozen meat as being on the

free list, he was referring to the tariff now presented by the Government—15s. on a live bullock and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a lb. on frozen meat. He would however like the Committee to understand that he would be in favour of abolishing the duty on frozen meat altogether if our own pastoralists in the Kimberley districts—which were without doubt the finest cattle growing districts in Australia—were given facilities to compete with those of Queensland in this trade.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Freezing might be started there.

MR. HOLMES: If the duty on frozen meat were altogether abolished at the present time, the pastoralists would be wiped off the face of Western Australia. There would be no hope for them, for they would have to compete with Queensland straight away.

MR. WILSON: The hon. member said this country was quite as good as Queensland; why then could not our pastoralists deliver at Queensland rates?

MR. HOLMES: At the present time they had not the necessary facilities. Give them the facilities, and then, if they could not compete, it would be their own fault; but to ask them to compete in existing circumstances was asking them to do the impossible.

MR. VOSPER: Who gave the facilities to the pastoralists of Queensland?

MR. HOLMES: Whoever gave the facilities, he knew they had them. Almost anyone could get hold of a few head of stock and sheep, and compete with the butcher in connection with the frozen meat trade, and that was where the capitalist might make his fortune. The first move of the capitalist would be to erect large freezing and receiving works at Fremantle, and the next move would be to charter steamers engaged in the colonial trade. At the present time there were only two steamers capable of carrying frozen meat between West Australia and the eastern colonies, and both of those would be available to him (Mr. Holmes) if any further reduction was made in the duty on frozen meat. If members had any sympathy with the pastoralists, with the people, or with the future of Western Australia, they would do well to ponder before allowing the trade of the country to be

handed over to a frozen-meat company. The Attorney General twitted him, the other night, as to his apparent honesty of purpose, and informed the House there was no doubt members would see what was underlying the whole of his (Mr. Holmes's) arguments. The hon. gentleman had no conception of what political honesty was. He (Mr. Holmes) did not occupy the position of representative of such an important constituency as East Fremantle through his political ability, but in consequence of his honesty of purpose; and he was not sent here by that constituency to be insulted by men of the stamp of the Attorney General. Even though he did occupy a seat on the Treasury bench the hon. gentleman might have committed a political somersault which no other member of the legal profession could be found capable of accomplishing. If in future the Attorney General crossed his path and used insinuation which were not deserved, he might expect something even stronger than has been given him to-night. He (Mr. Holmes) regretted having to make such a severe statement, but when a member reflected on his honesty of purpose, it was his duty to retort. Although he (Mr. Holmes) was connected with the meat trade, the decision regarding the duty would not affect him one way or the other. He was not a pastoralist, but he had the welfare of the country at heart.

MR. MORAN: The pastoral industry must be fostered, and he was strongly in favour of reducing the pastoral rents. Indeed he considered it was not fair to ask pastoralists to pay rents at the present time.

THE PREMIER: Where was the revenue to come from?

MR. MORAN: It was not a bit of use trying to get blood out of a stone. As far as the consumer was concerned we were asked to protect an industry which did not exist, for we could not get cattle out of the cattle-producing districts, unless we adopted the suggestion of the member for East Fremantle, who proposed that we should not only have a duty of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound on frozen meat, but that £60,000 should be voted for the establishment of freezing works at

Wyndham. Seeing that we had no cattle trade in West Australia, there was no reason for having a duty of 2½d. per pound on frozen meat, except for revenue purposes; and we knew this was the one commodity on which it was unfair to raise revenue at the present time. If we wanted to protect the pastoral industry, there were various ways of doing it. Kimberley would be able to compete with the best pastoral districts in Queensland, if the restrictions at present existing were removed; but the majority of cattle that would supply the market of this colony were excluded. The pastoralists in this House had locked up the country, for the imaginary protection of people in the southern parts of the colony; and he saw no reason why the duty on frozen meat should be retained, even as a temporary expedient. When we had overcome these foolish restrictions, he would be once more prepared to grant protection to graziers. There ought to be some means that would enable cattle to be landed, killed, and sold at a distributing price of sixpence per pound. In Queensland, a butcher got as good wages as butchers in this colony, and yet meat was sold retail at 2½d. or 3d. per pound; whereas here the wholesale butcher bought meat at 4d., and the retail customer paid 8d., and the difference between the wholesale price and the retail was thus a penny per pound more than the amount at which meat was actually raised and distributed in Queensland. When such a state of things existed, there must be something wrong. He would like those who wanted fresh meat to have it, but a man would rather have frozen meat than none at all. If frozen meat could be sold at 4d., 5d. or 6d. a pound, the butcher would manage his business in such a way that he would be able to compete with the frozen meat industry, and we all knew that those who could afford to pay 1d. per pound more for fresh meat than for frozen, would do so. Whilst the present anomaly existed, we were not justified in starving the people of Western Australia with regard to meat. He would ask the Committee to strike out the duty altogether, or to reduce it to a half-penny a pound.

MR. OLDHAM: The Premier had not redeemed his promise in the proposed schedule, for he did not reduce some duties, nor had he abolished others.

MR. HUBBLE: What about the duty on stock?

MR. OLDHAM: Was that a food duty?

MR. HUBBLE: Then meat was not food?

MR. OLDHAM: As a protectionist, he was willing to protect any industry that was worth protecting; but the member for the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt) had said the pastoral country was not worth the rent, that there was no water, and there was no feed. What was the use of protecting an industry of that kind? The member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) had said, on the contrary, that our country was the finest cattle grazing country in the world. These two opinions did not agree. While sympathising with the squatter, he (Mr. Oldham) was not willing to see the people in the centres of population starving; for the average working man, earning 35s. to £3 per week, could not afford to pay 10d. per pound for butchers' meat, nor could he afford to pay even 8d., the price which some members said was charged.

MR. A. FORREST: That was for the best. He could get ordinary meat for 6d.

MR. OLDHAM: He could not afford to pay even 6d., out of a wage of 7s. per day with broken time. This tax on food was preventing hundreds from staying here, it had driven hundreds away, and it was preventing many others from coming. Only one thing would convince the Government of their mistake, and that was the voice of the people at the ballot box.

MR. A. FORREST said he was prepared to test the electors in that way.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member had no electors.

MR. OLDHAM: One boot manufacturer informed him that, with a reasonable protection, the bootmakers in Perth could employ three times the number of hands they had now. The Government had done nothing for the manufacturing industries. They should protect them, instead of spoon-feeding the squatting industry, which had been described by the member for Ashburton in those significant words, that the land was not

worth the rent, that there was no water and there was no feed.

MR. QUINLAN: The proposal of the Government on this item was a reasonable one, and he would support it. He, like the member for North Perth, was a protectionist, but he tried to be consistent. He did not agree that the food duties were driving people out of the country, or preventing them from coming here; for he remembered that twenty years ago the price of food was double for most articles, except meat, and he would particularly mention light, jam, butter, candles, tea, sugar, clothing, boots, and flour, all these being nearly double in price, as compared with present prices. The principal cause of the high cost of living at present was the high rent and the cost of firewood.

MR. OLDHAM: Why did not the hon. member reduce rent?

MR. QUINLAN: Rents of private houses were not under his control. The meat industry was entitled to consideration, for although not producing sufficient to supply the colony's requirements, there should be assistance given to industries all round. As to free rents for assisting the squatters, the colony could not afford to forego the revenue from rent in the present circumstances. To raise a moderate amount of revenue by customs duties was the best and fairest method; and it was not unreasonable to ask that the duty on this item should be maintained at three farthings a pound, instead of the former rate of 1½d. Some member had suggested a tax on property or on incomes for raising revenue; but he did not think either of these would pay for the collection, there being so few persons in the colony who could pay these taxes, and one effect would be to keep capitalists and others out of the country. The member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) had referred to the amount of revenue which he said would be received from machinery, doors, and galvanised iron, on the basis of last year's figures; but there was reason to discount those figures, because there was likely to be much less expended on these articles during the current year than there was during the last twelve months. The plain reason why wives and families had not come here in larger numbers was that they had not

been able, in many cases, to dispose of their homes or little properties in other colonies; and not being able to realise on them, they could not come here to settle. This colony had been going at a fast pace, and spending borrowed money lavishly, so that people were attracted here in considerable numbers; but this state of things could not continue, and a turn having come, he hoped that with economical management, the colony would be put in a more satisfactory position during the current year.

MR. KENNY: As to protecting the squatter, he remembered meeting a squatter last year from Yatheroo, just after the shearing, going with a trainful of sheep to Geraldton; and his story was that he had taken the sheep to Perth, and being unable to sell them there, the highest price being only one-third the price of meat retailed in the shops, he decided to take them back to his station. His explanation was that it was impossible to lease a paddock near Perth, because all paddocks were in the hands of persons who controlled the trade; that there was a combination amongst them, and they had arranged to give only the small price he had mentioned, equal to 200 per cent profit on the sheep. These sheep were fat and in really marketable condition, as he saw them for himself. He did not expect the amendment on this item would be carried, but it had been proposed and supported as a duty to the country, and as a duty to those constituents who had sent members here to obtain a reduction of the food duties.

MR. A. FORREST: The last speaker knew nothing practically of the subject. Hon. members on the Government side ought not to be led away by the cock-and-bull story of some squatter on the Geraldton line who trucked a large number of sheep to Perth, which he could not sell, and then trucked them back to where they came from. He (Mr. Forrest) knew a little about the trade, and if those sheep were fit for the market there could have been no difficulty in selling them in Perth. It was not credible that a good price could not be obtained in our local market for live stock from any part of the northern districts of this colony, either at the present time or during the last twelve months, for the market rate in that period had

been the highest known for a long time. Yet the hon. member had deliberately given this as one of the reasons why the duty should be reduced.

MR. KENNY: And the hon. member knew it.

MR. A. FORREST: It was very edifying to listen to the hon. member. If he could prove that this man from Yatheroo could not get the market price for fat stock in Perth, he (Mr. Forrest) was prepared to give £100 to the hospitals. He would do that if the hon. member would give the names of the wholesale dealers to whom this stock was offered, and a description of the stock. Such statements were unfair, and could not be called facts. The hon. member, in his desire to knock off this duty, should not bring before this House anything but absolute facts; for he ought to remember that a large number of electors in his own district (North Murchison) were squatters, who helped to put him into this House; and even if this duty were abolished, it would not have the effect of increasing or decreasing the price of meat in that district, where it was perhaps 2d. or 3d. per lb. In the Kimberley district meat was sold at a fraction over 2d. per lb., and the expense of transit to the southern ports brought it up to 4d., the price at which it was sold to retail butchers in Perth.

Amendment (Mr. Kenny) put, and a division being called for by Mr. WILSON, it was taken with the following result:—

Ayes	12
Noes	20
Majority against				8

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Conolly	Mr. Connor
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Doherty
Mr. Gregory	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Kenny	Mr. George
Mr. Kingsmill	Mr. Higham
Mr. Moran	Mr. Holmes
Mr. Oldham	Mr. Hooley
Mr. Solomon	Mr. Hubble
Mr. Wallace	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Wilson	Mr. Locke
Mr. Vosper (Teller)	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. Pennefather
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Quinlan
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Russell
	Hon. H. W. Venn
	Mr. Wood
	Hon. S. Burt (Teller)

Amendment thus negatived, and the item passed.

Meat—Salt beef and salt and cured mutton, preserved and tinned meat, tongues—agreed to.

Musical Instruments—pianos, harmoniums, and organs—agreed to.

Oatmeal, free of duty—agreed to.

Soap—Fancy, toilet, perfumed, borax, and in fancy shapes or wrappers, 4d. per lb.:

THE PREMIER moved, as an amendment, that the item be struck out. This would leave the duty as now, at 20 per cent., which had been imposed by the tariff of 1893. Subsequently he would move to add the words, "soap of other kinds n.o.e., 7s. 6d. per cwt." That would have the effect of raising the duty from 5s. a cwt., as now, to 7s. 6d.; the object being to give a little more encouragement to local industry, and possibly the alteration would produce a little more revenue.

MR. VOSPER asked whether the duty of 7s. 6d. a cwt. would apply to soaps already enumerated in the old tariff.

THE PREMIER: Only one soap was mentioned in the old tariff.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How would "Sunlight" soap come in?

THE PREMIER: The duty on fancy, perfumed, and toilet soap, under the existing tariff passed in 1893, was 20 per cent. By this amendment the duty on fancy, perfumed, and toilet soaps would still be 20 per cent.; and all other soaps would come in at 7s. 6d.

MR. VOSPER: "Sunlight" soap was specified in the old tariff.

THE PREMIER: No; it was specified by the Collector of Customs in his list, but it was not in the tariff. Soaps that paid 5s. a cwt. at the present time, being all other soaps except those specially enumerated, would in future pay 7s. 6d.

MR. HUBBLE: "Sunlight" soap was in wrappers.

THE PREMIER: The present proposal said nothing about wrappers.

MR. VOSPER: The question was, would it not produce more revenue if the item were left as it stood, at 4d. per lb. for these toilet and perfumed soaps?

THE PREMIER said he did not think it would.

MR. VOSPER: If it would, it would be desirable to leave the item alone, and to

amend the item by adding the words, "not being soaps used for household purposes."

THE PREMIER: That would mean a loss to the revenue, for on those soaps which were enumerated the duty was now more than 4d. per lb.

Amendment (the Premier's) put and passed.

THE PREMIER moved, as a further amendment, that the following words be added:—"Soap of all other kinds, n.o.e., 7s. 6d. per cwt."

Put and passed, and the item as amended agreed to.

Timber in barks, in the rough, or hewn or sawn, of not less than 15 inches square, 10 per cent. *ad valorem*:

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The timber specified was used largely for mining purposes.

THE PREMIER: This only meant that it would be cut up in the colony, the object being to provide work here.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We could well afford to allow this wood to come in free.

THE PREMIER: Jarrah could be used.

MR. ILLINGWORTH suggested that the item be struck out.

THE PREMIER: The duty was 5 per cent. now.

MR. KINGSMILL: If the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) had moved, as an amendment, that the words, "except such as used for mining" be inserted, it would have answered the purpose. The duty now proposed would weigh heavily on gold-mining. What would be the duty on timber less than 15 inches square?

THE PREMIER: Ten per cent.

MR. KINGSMILL: Was that an increase on the former duty?

THE PREMIER: It was 5 per cent. at present.

MR. KINGSMILL: The duty proposed would weigh heavily upon gold-mining.

THE PREMIER: In what way? We wanted our own timber to be used.

MR. KINGSMILL: In remote districts the expense of carting jarrah would be more than the cost price of oregon, which was used for cross-bed logs and for engine beds, and it would last for years, practically as well as jarrah.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: Oh, no.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Did the Premier consent to his suggestion?

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Four hundred feet super of jarrah weighed over a ton, and if one would have to pay £35 to £40 a ton for bed logs, the cost would become a serious matter; whereas oregon, which would answer the purpose just as well for the time being, would be only half the weight. If the timber were reduced below a certain size, it would mean that it would come here already sawn, and that would not be desirable.

MR. MORAN: What amount did the duty bring in last year?

THE PREMIER: £107 for barks.

MR. MORAN: The Government would have the labour of imposing the tax, and would derive no benefit from it.

THE PREMIER moved that the item be struck out.

Put and passed, and the item struck out.

This completed the items in the revised schedule.

Motion to fix date:

THE PREMIER moved "That in lieu of the duties of customs heretofore chargeable on the importation of certain articles into Western Australia, whether by land or sea, the several duties of customs mentioned in the schedule, as amended and agreed to by the Committee, shall on and after the 18th of August, 1898, be charged."

Put and passed.

Motion—Excise Duty, to fix date:

THE PREMIER further moved "That on and after the 18th of August, 1898, an excise duty at the rate of twopence per gallon be charged on all beer, ale, or stout brewed or manufactured in Western Australia."

MR. VOSPER: Would it be competent to take any steps, on recommitment, for the purpose of considering items?

THE PREMIER: A Bill would be brought in.

MR. WILSON: Then the Bill could be dealt with.

MR. A. FORREST: Would the Premier make the duty on beer start on the 1st September?

THE PREMIER: It was being paid now.

MR. A. FORREST: Brewers had not been able to deal with the question, in regard to their customers.

MR. GEORGE: How would the refund be given to a man on a threepenny beer?

MR. A. FORREST: Brewers had to sell beer at such a price that they would actually lose the amount of duty between the 18th August and the 1st September. He had been asked to ascertain whether the Premier would consent to the duty coming into force on the 1st September, when all the arrangements would be completed.

MR. WILSON: Brewers were in the same position as others.

MR. A. FORREST: Brewers had their contracts, and they were not in a position to pay the amount out of their own pockets.

MR. WILSON: Others also were not in a position to pay the amount out of their own pockets.

THE PREMIER: By resolution of this House, some of the duties had already been received, and he was afraid he could not accede to the wish of the member for West Kimberley.

MR. GREGORY: The Act made a special provision, that stamps should be sold by the Government to the brewers, and that they should have them affixed to their casks. He took it that, when the Bill was passed, the Government would sell stamps, and that no beer would be allowed to go out without stamps.

MR. MORAN: Had the Premier appointed excise officers to insure the collection of the revenue from beer? The method in Victoria was to place a seal over the bung-hole of each cask.

THE PREMIER: The same method would be pursued for collecting the excise revenue here, when the Bill was passed. The revenue would be collected by the police and the Customs officers, and the expense of collection would be practically no increase. He understood that this was so in South Australia.

MR. MORAN: Liquor was being sold in hundreds of places without any sort of license, particularly on the goldfields, and a revenue of £50,000 might be collected in this colony from this source, if properly looked after. The irregular way in which liquor was being sold was scandalous; and it was a robbery to ask licensed victuallers to pay £50 a year in a regular way, while so many other

persons were evading the license, and selling liquor irregularly in all sorts of places.

HON. S. BURT: If the Government intended to collect the excise duty on beer, it was only right they should give every facility to brewers for paying the duty and carrying on their business, so as not to impede the ordinary course of trade. Stamps should be made and sold for the purpose. He knew the trade had been somewhat restricted already, by reason of the brewers not being able to pay the duty on beer they wanted to send out. How breweries in country districts managed to get on, he could not conceive; for it was bad enough for breweries in town to have their trade practically stopped, as it had been since the 18th August, because the beer could not be delivered until the license was paid, and there was no one to pay it to.

THE PREMIER: The Collector of Customs assured him that he had made all arrangements for collecting the revenue. If that had not been done after the assurance given, the Collector of Customs was not fit for his position. The collector must be held responsible for making proper arrangements.

HON. S. BURT: But the arrangements were not convenient. It might suit the Collector of Customs to say that a cask of beer should not be moved until the revenue was paid; but that was interfering with the ordinary operations of the business. The trade had been as active since the 18th August as it was before, and beer had to be delivered in ordinary course; yet there was no provision made for collecting the revenue, nor for appointing persons to whom it could be paid. The Government should print a stamp and sell it.

MR. VOSPER: The present Government might be entrusted with the collection of the revenue, for he had never known them to fail in that.

THE PREMIER: Our system was exactly the same as that in South Australia and Tasmania.

Further motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and the report made an order for the next day.

HEALTH BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration in Committee resumed.
 Clause 190—agreed to.

Clause 191—Power to close polluted wells:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved, as an amendment, in line 8, that after the word "close" there be inserted the words "or filled up as may be directed."

MR. GEORGE: Who would have to pay for the filling?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It would be done at the cost of the owner of the premises.

MR. GEORGE: That was right.

Put and passed, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 192 and 193—agreed to.

Clause 194—Power to seize and destroy pigs and geese trespassing on reserves:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved, as an amendment, that the word "ducks" be inserted after "pigs," in lines 4, 7, 10 and 14. These amendments were desired by the Perth Council.

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 195—Board may license public and private morgues:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved, as an amendment, that after the word "burial," in line 6, "at an annual fee to be prescribed by the by-laws" be inserted.

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 196 to 200, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 201—Local boards may order works to be done by occupier instead of owner:

MR. GEORGE: Could the Attorney General see his way to give effect to the views expressed by several members on the last occasion, to the effect that the occupier of premises should be relieved of the responsibilities which this Bill would throw upon him? No doubt the first portion of the clause, while providing that the local board might require the occupier to do certain things, stated that the occupier could recover from the owner; but the things to be done under this clause would mostly be done in respect to small tenements, the occupiers of which would either not be in a position to carry

out the work, or, if they were able to carry it out, would not have the means to take proceedings to recover from the owners the money spent on the work. As it was not the intention of the Government to harass the occupiers of small tenements, he respectfully suggested that, if the words which threw the onus of effecting these alterations upon the occupier were struck out, no harm would be done so far as the local board was concerned, and much inconvenience would be saved in respect of the class of tenants referred to.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This clause dealt specifically only with nuisances in premises of which the owner could not be found. If the owner could be found, he was the party against whom the local board would proceed.

MR. GEORGE: The agent receiving the rent could always be found.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If a person remained in any premises in spite of a nuisance that existed in such premises, he must put up with the consequences. It was with respect to the clause dealing with the cleansing of private premises that he had promised to introduce an amendment on the re-committal of the Bill, with a view of protecting the occupiers of small houses; but the clause before the Committee could not be altered without deviating from the ends aimed at. We must make the occupier responsible.

MR. WILSON: The hon. member (Mr. George) had evidently overlooked the fact that the tenant could make any expense he was put to a set-off against the rent, and he was protected in that respect.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes; and he could recover as against the owner.

MR. GEORGE: Such tenants had not the means to proceed against owners.

MR. WILSON: Let them set off the amount against the rent. In this respect the clause was perfectly right. It would be difficult to legislate for the small occupier as distinguished from the large occupier, for the man without means as against the man with means. If there were a nuisance on premises which the occupier could not abate, he would

have to leave the house. If, on the other hand, he could abate the nuisance and had to pay for doing so, he would take care to pay no rent until he had been recouped for such expenditure.

MR. GEORGE: While thoroughly appreciating the explanation of the Attorney General, he must emphasise his point in reference to the occupier. He would point out to the member for the Manning (Mr. Wilson), that the clause contemplated the removal, abatement, or prevention of any nuisance, or the construction of any works for the aforesaid purpose. Such expenditure might be an offset against the rent; but the point was that poor tenants had not the money to expend at the time. He was prepared to accept the Attorney General's assurance that he would amend the provision so as not to harass the class of tenants referred to, but he wanted the matter recorded in *Hansard*. It was for the cause of the small occupier he was contending.

HON. H. W. VENN: *Hansard* would not affect the law.

MR. GEORGE: Still, it would be a record of what the Attorney General had pledged himself to.

MR. GREGORY: The last sub-clause provided that, where the occupier was precluded by poverty from complying with the requirements of the clause, the local board could step in and do the work.

MR. GEORGE: The member for the Manning (Mr. Wilson) had stated that the tenant could leave the house; but only a short time ago people in Perth were obliged to camp out because they could not get houses.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The argument last week, to which the hon. member referred, was with reference to the clause dealing with the erection of proper cesspits and closets. He had promised to modify that clause on recommendation, so that it should not press unduly on the small tenant. But the clause now before the Committee was a distinct matter; for no constructive work was here required to be performed by the occupier, the clause applied only to a tenant who had a nuisance on his premises and chose to allow it to remain there.

MR. GEORGE: Take the words in the fourth line, "construct any works for the aforesaid purpose," and how could they be reconciled with the Minister's argument?

THE PREMIER: If the tenant created a nuisance, he would have to clean it up.

MR. GEORGE: No. It might mean the putting in of drains, to prevent the accumulation of liquid refuse. He knew houses in Perth the drainage of which ran into the back premises of other houses; and such nuisances could be removed only by the construction of drains or cesspits, and why not relieve the tenant from the responsibility? It was clearly the duty of the owner to attend to such matters.

THE PREMIER: Why should the occupant be relieved? He would be the cause of the nuisance.

MR. GEORGE: Surely the right hon. gentleman was not speaking seriously. No one could live in a house without making a nuisance. Clothes and dishes had to be washed.

THE PREMIER: Why should we relieve him?

MR. GEORGE: Simply require that the property owner, who made his profit out of his property, should provide proper means for carrying drainage away. Such matters did not come under the notice of the Premier, who lived in a roomy locality. He moved, as an amendment, that the words "the person occupying or in possession of the premises or," in lines 6 and 7, be struck out. His object was to make the agent receiving the rent, and through him the owner, responsible for constructing the works and doing other things referred to.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 202 to 205, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 206—Power to take possession of and lease property on which expenses are due:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved, as an amendment, that after the word "Act," in line 3, the words "or of any Act repealed by this Act" be inserted.

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 207 to 210, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 211—After twelve years, property to vest in Crown:

HON. H. W. VENN: Was it not altogether a new principle that the Crown should absolutely confiscate property after twelve years' possession?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The object aimed at was that if a man had chosen to let property remain unoccupied for 12 years, and the local board had taken the trouble to prevent the land from becoming a nuisance, the land should revert to the State. That principle obtained in Victoria, and in most of the colonies, and the right was the same as that given to a private individual. What was proposed was not confiscation. It was the duty of persons who owned land to look after it, and if they did not do so, they should bear the consequence.

MR. GEORGE: If rates were paid, the clause, he supposed, would not come into operation.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No.

MR. GEORGE: Then, in his opinion, it was quite right.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 212 to 215, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 216—Letters on health business to be free:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved, as an amendment, that after the word "any," at the end of line 3, the words "medical practitioner" be inserted.

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 217 to 220, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 221—Continued operation of notices and orders:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved, as an amendment, that after the word "occupier" in line 5, the words "and all subsequent owners and occupiers" be inserted.

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 222 to 227, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 228—Evidence:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved, as an amendment, that after the word

"such," in lines 3 and 5, "by-law" be inserted.

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 229 to 237, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 238—Complaint before justices:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved as an amendment, that the words "petty sessions," in line 5, be struck out.

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 239 and 240—agreed to.

Clause 241—Penalties for disobedience of this Act:

MR. GEORGE moved that the clause be struck out. The clause was iniquitous and had been framed to place upon probably the poorer classes of the community a burden which they should never be expected to bear. Hon. members should protect all classes of the community, but it seemed to him that many members were not desirous of doing so, otherwise they would not have allowed clauses to pass in order merely to protect what might call the money-bags or property owners of Western Australia.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Nonsense.

MR. GEORGE: It was not nonsense and he protested against the action of the Government. The Bill created offence and created a penalty, with the idea of putting the penalty on persons who could least afford to pay it, namely, the occupiers. He could not allow this question to pass without trying to convince members of the earnestness of the views he held on the subject. He had striven for such amendments in the Bill as would compel the owner to carry out his obligation by making the premises habitable.

THE PREMIER: Why did not the hon. member move an amendment.

MR. GEORGE: The difficulty was that he had been trying to move an amendment, but could not drive sense into the blockheads before him.

HON. H. W. VENN: Was the hon. member in order in calling members "blockheads"?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not in order.

MR. GEORGE withdrew the word "blockhead." The ground taken by the Attorney General, in charge of the Bill

had compelled him to use that language. The Government had not only provided a penalty, but also in their annual Estimates had provided a gaol in which to put the offenders. The Premier was doing his duty to the country by providing an offence, providing a penalty, and providing a gaol for those whose fault was that they had not got the large means which some hon. members had who were well off. He might be told that what he was saying was all foolishness, but he did not care a button for anything of that kind. He could not see why the Attorney General would not do what he had been asked to do in the previous clause, by knocking out that provision which penalised the occupier. The owner would make any sort of a building serve for a tenement, so long as he could screw rent out of the occupier; and why should the owner evade his obligations? Persons should not be penalised for their poverty, and they might be sent to gaol under the provisions of another clause in this Bill.

HON. S. BURT: The Committee had not got to that clause yet, and the hon. member was out of order in referring to it.

MR. GEORGE: This was a proper time for examining what were the rights of property, and the rights of humanity. He wished to drive into the mind of the Premier that there was a lower stratum of society, which had to be considered.

THE PREMIER: What did the hon. member mean, by wasting the time of everyone in this way?

MR. GEORGE said his object was to get the iniquitous part of the Bill excised.

THE PREMIER: Well, move that.

MR. GEORGE said he had done that already, but the obedient majority which followed the behest of the Attorney General would not accept it. He would try to effect his object in another way. If the owner were made solely responsible for the acts contemplated in the Bill, the owner could recoup himself by the extra rent he could demand from the tenant. Therefore, where was the injustice to the owner? A great injustice might certainly be done to the tenant. More trouble had been caused by the hurry-scurry of trying to force Bills through this House, than by any other cause.

[The member for the Murray (Mr. George) continued speaking on the clause, in a general way, occupying from 10.50 till 11.28. Many interjections were made and replied to.]

THE PREMIER said: We are quite willing to report progress, if you want more time to consider the clauses.

MR. GEORGE: Then I will withdraw my proposition (for striking out the clause), and move that progress be reported.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11.30 p.m. until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 31st August, 1898.

Question: Bulla Bulla Marsh Road—Motion: Swan River Steamers and Boats (postponed)—Fire Brigades Bill, in Committee, reported—Bankruptcy Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, reported—Customs Duties Amendment Bill, first reading—Beer Duty Bill, first reading—Jury Bill, third reading—Paper presented—Interpretation Bill, Select Committee's report—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION: BULLA BULLA MARSH ROAD.

HON. D. MCKAY asked the Colonial Secretary,—1, Whether the Government is aware that traffic is being carried on under the utmost difficulties across the Bulla Bulla Marsh, owing to the road