

## ADJOURNMENT.

The House at 5.20 o'clock p.m. adjourned until Tuesday, 23rd July, 1895, at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 16th July, 1895.

*Want of Confidence Motion—Cost of Construction of Subiaco Road—Introduction of a Fencing Bill—Collection of Stock and Crop Returns—Message from the Administrator: Appointments to Federal Council—Opening of lands for selection under the Homesteads Act—Water Supply in Tanks on Southern Cross Railway Line—Perth Mint Bill; third reading—Agent-General Bill; third reading—Depositing Stone, &c., in River: Message from Legislative Council—Licensed Surveyors Bill; second reading—Customs Duties Repeal Bill; second reading—Municipal Institutions Bill; first reading—Expenditure from Loans and Revenue upon Railways and Rolling Stock—Adjournment.*

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 p.m.

## PRAYERS.

## WANT OF CONFIDENCE MOTION.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Before proceeding with the questions, Sir, I should like to draw your attention to a notice of motion that has just been given by the hon. member for Albany, which, if it has the concurrence of my friend opposite, the leader of the Opposition, really, amounts to a vote of want of confidence in the Government. I should like to know whether the motion has received the concurrence of my hon. friend, because, if it has, I look upon it as a direct vote of want of confidence in the present Government; and it seems to me, Sir, altogether contrary to Parliamentary practice, for the Government to go on with the business of the country while a vote of want of confidence is pending. I do not know whether my friend

opposite is prepared to answer me. Of course, if he does not acquiesce in the motion which has been tabled by the hon. member for Albany, the Government are inclined to treat it as of little consequence. On the other hand, Sir, I would like to ask you how it is possible for the Government to go on with the business of the country when a motion, amounting to what may be regarded as a vote of want of confidence in it has been tabled? It appears to me most unusual that a notice of this sort should be given to be taken into consideration a week hence. How can the Government carry on the administration of the country while a vote of this kind is hanging over their heads? Perhaps the hon. member for Perth is in a position to assure me as to whether he is in accord with the motion or not. If he is not in accord with it, of course I will treat it merely as an ordinary motion by a private member, and will be prepared not to take any serious notice of it.

MR. RANDELL: Mr. Speaker,—Sir, I am sorry to find that the Premier has not quite recovered from his indisposition, as I notice he is still very hoarse in speaking. With regard to the question he has put to me, I am somewhat in a dilemma with regard to it. I think, however, I may say at once that the motion referred to has not my approval, in the shape in which it is presented to the House. At the same time, Sir, I would desire to express the strong feeling which I have that something should be done in the direction indicated in the motion; and, possibly, later on, I may see my way clear to move in that direction. But I am not prepared to take the responsibility at present, at any rate. How long I may occupy my present position of course, I am not able to say—if I find I have not the confidence of my colleagues on this side, I shall retire from the position; but, at present, I answer the Premier's question by saying that the motion has not my approval.

MR. LEAKE: Am I in order, Sir, in making a few observations?

THE SPEAKER: I think not.

MR. LEAKE: Merely this: the motion tabled by me was referred to by the Premier as a private member's motion, and I should like to say that the motion was the result of a meeting of certain members of this House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: At which the leader of this side was present.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I have nothing further to say.

# COST OF CONSTRUCTION, &c., OF PERTH-SUBIACO ROAD.

MR. GEORGE, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works, with reference to the Subiaco Road,—

(a) The total length of light tram rails used in connection with the road, and the actual money cost of same delivered on the ground.

(b) The quantity and details of all fastenings for same, and cost delivered on the ground.

(c) The number and description of sleepers, with cost delivered on the ground.

(d) The number of trucks employed, and the cost of same delivered on the ground.

(e) If the Department intend to re-lay the line to complete the blinding, or whether they intend to continue the use of drays for this purpose.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—

Cost delivered on the ground.

	£	s.	d.
(a) 2,519 lineal yards of road	1	10	0
(b) 976 pairs of fish-plates and bolts, 10½ cwt. of dogspikes	0	12	6
(c) 3,045	0	0	0
(d) 12	0	6	9
(e) No. Yes.			

1. As the question is specifically in reference to the Subiaco Road, the costs, delivered on the ground are given only in terms of the freight paid to get them to the ground, as regards the materials in (a), (b), (c), and (d). In the case of (c) the price paid for the sleepers was for them delivered at Subiaco, and consequently, as Subiaco is on the road to Fremantle by rail, and the sleepers were eventually for use at Fremantle, their cost delivered on the ground, in reference to the Subiaco road, was nil. In the case of the rails, fastenings, and trucks, these had to be brought from Fremantle to Subiaco in reference to the road, and therefore the freight is charged. The actual money cost of this plant is clearly its cost against the Fremantle Harbor Works and Roebourne Tramway, for which it was originally procured, or on which it has now been employed, and is not cost in reference to the Subiaco Road.

2. However, though the figures as above are the exact answers to the questions as framed, it may be desirable to give the actual money cost without regard to where the plant pro-

perly belongs, in which case the answers would stand as under:—

	£	s.	d.
(a) 2,519 lineal yards of road	276	12	3
(b) 976 pairs of fish-plates and bolts; 10½ cwt. spikes	63	14	9
(c) 3,045: Jarrah 3 ft. 6 in. x 5 in. 3 in.	50	15	0
(d) 12 (Twelve)	180	0	0
(e) No. Yes.			

## INTRODUCTION OF FENCING BILL.

MR. THROSSELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, whether it was the intention of the Government to introduce a Fencing Bill during the present session of Parliament.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), replied that the Government hoped to be able to do so.

## COLLECTION OF STOCK AND CROP RETURNS.

MR. THROSSELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, whether it was the intention of the Government to introduce, during the present session, a Bill providing for an improved method of collecting the Crop and Stock returns of the Colony, as promised last session.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), replied that the Government had the subject under consideration, but nothing definite had yet been decided upon.

## MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE ADMINISTRATOR;

### APPOINTMENTS TO RECENT FEDERAL COUNCIL.

The following Message was delivered to and read by Mr. Speaker:—

ALEX. C. ONSLOW,  
Administrator.

In accordance with Section 5 of "The Federal Council (Adopting) Act, 1885," the Administrator has the honor to inform the Legislative Assembly that on the 6th December, 1894, the following gentlemen were appointed Members of the Federal Council of Australasia, viz.:

The Honorable John Winthrop Hackett, J.P., M.L.C.

William Thorley Loton, J.P., M.L.A.

William Silas Pearce, J.P., M.L.A.

On the 1st of January, 1895, the resignation

of William Thorley Loton, J.P., M.L.C., was tendered and accepted, and on the 9th January, 1895, Henry Bruce Lefroy, J.P., M.L.A., was appointed in his stead.

Government House,

Perth, 16th July, 1895.

#### OPENING OF LANDS FOR SELECTION UNDER THE HOMESTEADS ACT.

MR. THROSSELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands, what steps had been taken for throwing open lands for selection under the leasing section of the Homesteads Act.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) replied, as follows:—

In the first place, the necessary steps have been taken in order to enable lessees who so desire it, to take up land within their own leases, under Part II of the Homesteads Act on condition of the balance of their lease being thrown open for selection.

2. The necessary procedure required by the 63rd clause of the Land Regulations, before any lands could be taken possession of by the Minister and thrown open for selection under the Homesteads Act, has now been complied with, but by that clause six months has to elapse before application for such land can be approved, which period has not yet expired.

3. I have had a surveyor, qualified by experience for this particular work, out for some months in the South-West Division, who is instructed to travel over any areas of land suitable for homestead leases, and which, of course, do not include first-class lands; and, after I have ascertained the relative cost of this work per square mile, I shall be able to form an opinion as to whether it would be good policy for the greater part of the South-West Division of the colony to be classified, in order that we may, once for all, have a record on the plans of the colony as to what class any particular areas belong, so that for the future all intending applicants for land may see by examination of the chart what description of land they apply for, and also where to find the class of land they are seeking for.

#### WATER SUPPLY IN TANKS ON THE SOUTHERN CROSS RAILWAY LINE.

MR. MORAN, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works,—

(a.) What quantity of water was at present

in the following tanks on the Southern Cross Railway Line,—

1. The 37-Mile Tank.
2. The Killerberrin (66 miles.)
3. Mereden (103½ miles).
4. Parker's Road (157 miles).
5. Parsonage Tank (Southern Cross, 170 miles).

(b) How long was it estimated that the present supply in these tanks would keep the traffic on the line going.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—

- (a) 1. 155,000 gallons water in tank.  
 2. 835,000 " " "  
 3. 1,133,333 " " "  
 4. 558,750 " " "  
 5. 239,500 " " "

Total 2,921,583 gallons.

(b.) About four months.

#### PERTH MINT BILL.

Read a third time and forwarded to the Legislative Council.

#### AGENT-GENERAL BILL.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### DEPOSITING OF STONE, &c., IN THE RIVER AT ROCKY BAY.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The following message was delivered to and read by Mr. Speaker:—

MR. SPEAKER,

The Legislative Council has this day passed the following resolution, which it presents to the Legislative Assembly for its concurrence:—"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that no more stones, sand, or rubbish be thrown into the river at Rocky Bay by the Government."

GEO. SHENTON,  
President.

Legislative Council Chamber, Perth, Thursday, 11th July, 1895.

Ordered—That the consideration in committee of the foregoing message be made an Order of the Day for Tuesday, 23rd July.

#### LICENSED SURVEYORS BILL.

#### SECOND READING.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): In moving the

second reading of this Bill, I would merely point out that this measure has been prepared upon the recommendation of the Surveyors Board. It has been found desirable to make some necessary alterations in the mode of licensing surveyors in this colony, and these will be found in the Bill. Clause 4 defines how the Licensing Board shall be reconstituted, under the name of the Land Surveyors' Licensing Board, and goes on to say how the members shall be appointed. The Board is to consist of the Surveyor-General and five other members. Sub-section 3 says:—"Except the Surveyor-General, the members of the Board shall retire from office on the 31st day of December next following their appointment, but shall be eligible for re-appointment, and shall be deemed to hold office until the appointment of their successors." Clause 6 deals with examinations and other matters. Sub-section 3 says:—"Examinations shall be held and conducted by the members of the Board, or by any two members of the Board appointed by the Board for that purpose, in the month of September in every year, and at such other times as the Board by regulation appoints." Sub-section 4 provides the mode of issuing licenses, as follows:—"The Board may, subject to regulations, issue a license to practice as a surveyor to any person (a) to whom it has granted a certificate of competency in surveying, or (b) who has received a certificate of competency in surveying from (1) any legally constituted board of examiners for land surveyors in any of the Australasian colonies, or from (2) any authority by whom an examination (equivalent to that required by the Board) to test the qualifications of candidates is required prior to the granting of such certificate; and (c) who is still entitled to practice as a land surveyor in the colony or country wherein he obtained such certificate." Sub-section 5 says:—"The Board may refuse a license to any applicant if it is not satisfied as to his character." Clause 7 says:—"Every licence issued under this Act shall be signed by two members of the Board, and countersigned by the secretary, and shall be in the form contained in the first schedule to this Act; and when registered, shall, except as hereinafter mentioned, entitle the holder thereof to practice as a land surveyor in the colony of Western Australia." Clause 10 is a rather important clause, providing:—" (1) If it appears to the Board that

"any licensed surveyor is charged, or may be reasonably charged, with committing any one or more of the following offences, or with incurring any one or more of the following disqualifications (that is to say),—(a) that he has wilfully certified to the accuracy of any survey or plan knowing the same to be inaccurate, or without taking reasonable precautions to verify its accuracy in every respect; (b) that he has made, or has caused to be made, under his immediate direction and supervision, surveys which are inaccurate or defective; (c) that he has certified to the accuracy of any survey not executed by himself or under his immediate supervision; (d) that he has rendered an account for services which have not been performed; (e) that he has obtained his license or certificate, or either of them, by fraud or misrepresentation or concealment of facts; or (f) that after the date of his registration he has been convicted of felony;—the Board shall inquire into the same, and if a majority of the Board then present find any such offence proved or any such disqualification to have been incurred, the Board may suspend the license of the accused for a period not exceeding three years, or may cancel the same absolutely." Clause 11 provides that, if it be found necessary by a Licensing Board in another colony to cancel or suspend a surveyor's certificate, the Board in this colony may consequently cancel or suspend any certificate held by such surveyor in this colony. Clause 18 deals with offences as follows:—" (1) Any person, not being a licensed surveyor, who (a) falsely pretends that he is a licensed surveyor, or (b) takes or uses the name or title of a licensed surveyor, or any name, title, addition, or description implying that he is a licensed surveyor; or (c) practises, charges, or receives a fee for work done as a land surveyor; or (d) certifies to the accuracy of any survey or plan purporting to be a survey or plan for the purposes of "The Transfer of Land Act, 1893," shall be guilty of an offence against this Act, and summarily punishable before any two or more Justices of the Peace, and liable upon conviction for every such offence to a penalty not exceeding one hundred pounds." This clause is important and very necessary. The whole object of the Bill, I may here say, is for securing some guarantee to the public who employ surveyors, and to the surveyors

engaged in the work, that the men who may be employed as surveyors in this colony shall be duly qualified and skilful; therefore the Bill provides certain penalties to follow upon acts sufficiently bad to call for the exercise of these powers, and the Board will have power to suspend or cancel certificates. It is not necessary for me to say anything more explanatory, and I now formally move that the Bill be read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

## CUSTOMS DUTIES REPEAL BILL.

### SECOND READING.

MR. RANDELL: In reference to the notice of motion I have given, is it not desirable to postpone the consideration of this Bill to a later date?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): After the second reading, plenty of time will be given before the House is asked to go into committee on the clauses. In rising now to move the second reading of this Bill for repealing the Customs duties on certain articles and things, I may say the object the Government have had in view is to reduce taxation on certain articles in the Tariff, and especially on those articles that cannot be produced in the colony, and on those raw materials which are necessary in working up goods within the colony. As members are aware, when the present Government took office at the end of 1890, the Tariff Act of 1888 was in force; and there was a general desire on the part of members in this House and of people in the country for a revision of the tariff. That is a desire which is continuous, and will be felt so long as any duties are levied. Not only was the desire felt then, but no sooner had the Government dealt with the tariff by the Act of 1893 than a general desire began to be again manifested in favor of a further revision of the tariff—a desire which appeared to be felt throughout the country, so far as the Government have been able to judge by hearing and reading the expressions of opinion on the subject. I make no complaint of that. Customs duties always have, and always will, while they continue, press upon some portions of the community. The more indirect the taxation is, no doubt, the less we feel it individually; but I think I am right in saying there always will be a desire on the part of the community or some sections of it—whether it be this community

or any other—in favor of altering the Tariff, so long as any Customs duties are levied. When we were last dealing with the Tariff, in 1893, it was pretty freely stated that the desire of the Government was to increase the taxation in order to get more revenue. We repudiated that idea, but at the same time we had to be watchful of the revenue, because we had entered on great obligations, and in order that we might be in a position to carry out those obligations, and to construct the public works we had entered on, it was necessary that a certain amount of revenue should be obtained. A handle has been made of that fact by opponents of the Government, who have alleged that by the Act of 1893 the Government took the opportunity of increasing the burdens on the people in order to get more revenue. Well, I believe the result of the Act of 1893 has been to give the Government a little more revenue than would have been obtainable in the same period if the Act of 1888 had continued in operation. At the same time, the Government were quite prepared to carry on without increasing the Customs revenue; and, apart from the question of raising revenue, I believe the Tariff Act of 1893 was preferable to that of 1888, in many respects, although a larger revenue has been received under the Act of 1893 than would have been received if the former Act had continued in force. I have had a return of Customs receipts prepared, showing the difference in the receipts under the present law, as compared with the amounts which would have been received if the Act of 1888 had not been altered; and I find that for the twelve months ended December last, the revenue actually received under the Tariff of 1893, was £415,308, as compared with £392,313 which would have been received in the same period if the Act of 1888 had continued in force, this difference amounting to an increase of £22,994. As hon. members well know, the circumstances of the colony have changed considerably since we were dealing with the Tariff in 1893, and there has been a tremendous increase in the general revenue of the colony; therefore the desire of the Government now is to abolish some of the duties which were levied under the Act of 1893; especially, as I have said, the duties upon articles which cannot be produced in the colony, and the duties upon raw materials which are required in local industries. The effect of the Bill I am now dealing

with will be that the revenue will suffer a reduction during the current financial year amounting to between £40,000 and £50,000. The exact amount of duties received during the year ended 31st December last, upon those articles which are mentioned in the Schedule of this Bill, was £36,372; and if we add to that amount an estimated increase of one-fifth for the year 1895—and I do not think 20 per cent. would be out of the way as an estimated increase of Customs revenue on these articles—the total amount of revenue receivable during this year on these articles would be about £43,646. Hon. members will know that six months of the year 1895 have gone by; but, roughly speaking, for the next coming year, that is for the current financial year, a probable total of £50,000 would be received through the Customs on the articles scheduled in this Bill. I do not think that total would be far from the mark. In dealing with these items in the Schedule, I may say the amounts of revenue received upon them during 1894 were the following:—Arrowroot and other farinaceous foods, £642; atlases, maps, charts, and globes, only £1; bags, sacks, and all articles enumerated in this item, £336; blankets and rugs, including shawls, £735; cocoa and chocolate, not otherwise enumerated, £661; cocoa, in slabs, £2; coffee, raw, £184; copper-wire, rod, and sheet, £28; cream separators—this amount I am not able to give, as these articles are not kept separately in the Tariff accounts, but I should think the amount is small; iron wire netting, iron and steel fencing wire, standards and staples, £794; lead—sheet and pig, including piping, £83; molasses and golden syrup, £201; paraffine wax, £10; photographs, not kept separately in the Tariff accounts; rice—paddy, ground, and meal, £1,591; sheep dip, £3; sugar, £13,306; sulphur, £17; tea, £12,367; tin—block and plate, £97; wool bales, £582; zinc—sheet and plain, £8. These articles make a total of £36,392. I have gone through the Schedule very closely, with the desire of taking the duty off articles of food in general use, and which cannot be produced in the colony, also off those articles which are used in local manufactures—such, for instance, as tin and zinc, lead and copper, and a few other things which are in the nature of raw materials. Iron, rod and all kinds, is already on the free list; but iron wire netting, fencing wire, standards and staples, which are very largely used for fencing-in lands, both agricultural

and pastoral, ought certainly, I think, to be also on the free list; for we cannot at present make these articles here, and I think we ought to encourage the agricultural and pastoral industries by admitting these necessary articles free of duty. The list of articles scheduled in the Bill is a small one; it is not an elaborate list, but it is important; and I believe the remission of duty on these articles will in some degree benefit every man, woman, and child in this country. Everyone will be able to get tea 4d. a pound cheaper, sugar a halfpenny per pound cheaper; and if we make these reductions on such necessary articles of general consumption it cannot reasonably be said that the people of the country will not be benefited. It may be said these remissions are nothing—that they will not reach the consumers, but will benefit only the dealers and manufacturers. If that were so, the objection might be a good one; but I believe there is sufficient competition among the grocers and other traders in this colony to bring down the retail price of these articles, not only in proportion to the amount of duty taken off, but allowing also for the interest on the amount of duty paid, which is a necessary charge at present. By remitting the duty on these articles in general use, every person in the colony will be made to feel that the Legislature is trying to do something—if not very much, yet something appreciable, to the amount of about £50,000 in the year. This will be a beginning in a right direction, if we cannot do more at present; and, indeed, we hope the colony will continue to progress, and that things will go on sufficiently prosperously to enable us to do more in a short time. But I would ask hon. members, and especially those on this (the Government) side of the House, not to try at present to add other articles to this list to a much larger extent, because the Government have great obligations, and the colony has great obligations, for we are embarking on further important works, and in order to carry them on we must have a sufficient revenue. The loan of £1,500,000 which was authorised last session, and part of which we raised the other day, will require £60,000 or £70,000 a year more for interest—if not in the current financial year, certainly in the year coming after. One-half of it is payable at the present time; and although the general revenue of the colony is certainly expanding, yet our obligations are also expanding to a

great extent. The question arises—and was forcibly put before the House by my friend, the hon. member for Fremantle, the other day—whether it is wise to reduce taxation and thus forego the development of the colony which might be undertaken with the amount of taxes now proposed to be remitted. If we reduce the revenue still further we cannot carry on the great works for developing this country as we desire to do. The object of the Government is to try and reduce taxation a little, in order to do away with what is a cry here—that this is an expensive colony to live in. House rent must be expensive to those who have to pay it, and some other requirements are expensive; indeed in all our homes we find the expenditure is considerable; but on comparing our present items of household expenditure with what we used to pay formerly, it is difficult to see where the increased cost comes in, because I am sure the articles of food generally consumed are cheaper to-day than they were twenty years ago. I remember that when I was a boy butcher's meat was charged 6d. a pound all round, and the same for pork as a standard price; sugar was 5d. and 6d. a pound, tea was 2s. a pound, and tobacco was 5s. to 6s. a pound, as general prices; so that when you investigate the items of housekeeping in this colony, it is difficult to realise by comparison how it is that living is dearer now than it used to be. I have not much more to say on the Bill, but I would like to refer to the date at which the Act should come into force. The Government are in the hands of the House, almost, in regard to it, and we have left the date blank in the Bill, for consideration in committee. We have had protests or letters from the various commercial organisations, asking that the coming into operation of the Act should be postponed for six months. I do not know why the date should be postponed such a long time. I have noticed previously that when a new Tariff for increasing the duties on imported articles is brought before this House, and is carried, the prices of those articles soon rise in correspondence with the increased amount of duty. [Mr. RANDALL: Yes, before the Bill is passed.] Therefore, I do not know that there is as much in that argument as some persons would have us believe. I asked the Collector of Customs, through the telephone the other day, whether he thought there are in the colony large supplies of the articles affected by the Bill, and he replied

that he thought there are not; that large importers have their private bonds, and are careful not to take more out of bond than they require; and he did not think there are any at present very large stocks of these articles in the colony. I do not think there is anything like six months' supply of these articles anywhere in the colony; therefore I hope that, when we are dealing with the date in committee, we will be able to arrive at a date that will be reasonable and fair, both in regard to the importers who pay the duty in the first instance, and the consumers who have to pay it finally as an extra amount added to the price. It is clear the dealers in these articles cannot wish the operation of the Act to be postponed, except so far as they have stock in hand. My own opinion is that a briefer time should be allowed, and that a delay of two months ought to be sufficient for clearing off the stocks in hand; and you may depend upon it the advantages of this Tariff will not be flashed by electric telegraph to inland places throughout the colony, but that it will take a little time for these changes to reach the country customers in the advantageous form of reduced prices. I now commend the Bill to the favorable consideration of the House, believing that, it is a step in the right direction. I may inform the hon. member who referred to the fiscal opinions of the Attorney-General that, although I have had a great deal of trouble at times in obtaining the concurrence of my colleague, the Attorney-General, I have had no trouble in obtaining his concurrence in this Bill, but, on the contrary, he thought the Bill was a change in the right direction. I hope also that, in many other directions, as time goes on and as far as the greatly increasing revenue will allow, we shall be able to propose further reductions in the Customs Tariff. I ask hon. members—those who are in accord with the general policy of the Government—to be content with the remissions proposed in the Bill, so far as they approve of them, and not to try and put on the revenue a greater burden in regard to reductions in taxation than is absolutely necessary at the present time. The general revenue is very large indeed. We know we received a million and a quarter during the financial year just past, and no doubt the estimated receipts will be still larger for the current year; but when I have the pleasure—if I am to have that pleasure and honor—of submitting to this House the Annual Estimates for this year,

they will be more startling to hon. members by reason of the amount of expenditure out of revenue on public works that will be provided for in the Estimates, than for the total amount of the estimated revenue. I have much pleasure in moving the second reading of this Bill.

#### SPEAKER'S RULING.

THE SPEAKER: I think it is my duty to draw the attention of the House to the procedure that has been adopted, in introducing this Bill by a message from His Excellency the Governor. I believe it has been done through inadvertence. In the early days of Responsible Government in the other colonies, this question engaged the attention of the Legislatures in those colonies, and the result was, they passed resolutions disapproving of the Governor sending down messages for the introduction of any Bills, except when required by the Constitution Act. A Bill of this kind does not require a message from the Governor to introduce it. It is not necessary under the Constitution Act, nor under the provisions of our Standing Orders; and it is not in accordance with Parliamentary practice. I will just read to hon. members what *May* says in reference to this matter; but I may say there is no doubt whatever as to the class of Bills that require to be introduced by a message from the Crown. They are such as contemplate the imposition of a burden upon the people, or when grants are to be made from the public revenue. After having dealt with the expenditure of public money, *May* goes on to say: "A motion to alleviate the burthens upon the people is not within the scope of the Standing Orders relating to the imposition of charges upon the people. Hence a Bill for diminishing or repealing a tax or other public burthens, unless the imposition of a new tax is proposed by way of substitution, needs no royal recommendation on preliminary committee stage, and is brought in upon motion. Amendments, also, strictly confined to relief from pecuniary burthens, can be considered both in committee and with the Speaker in the chair." In dealing with this Bill, therefore, you will deal with it as you would with any Bill introduced to this House without a message from the Governor. You will be able to deal with it in any way you like, except that you cannot increase any item beyond the amount of the present tax.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I should like to say it was an error on my part includ-

ing it with the other Bills. I know very well it does not require a message from the Governor. It was quite an error.

#### DEBATE RESUMED.

MR. RANDELL: It is with considerable satisfaction I speak on this question. When I was over in the other colonies a little while ago, I ventured to express the opinion in view of our increasing revenue, that it was imperative upon the Ministry to adopt one of two courses, either to reduce taxation, or to undertake some railway works,—I specially mentioned railway works—out of current revenue. I should have been satisfied under present circumstances if there had been no reduction in taxation, if the whole of that money had been devoted to the works I indicated. I do not think the money should be frittered away in small things all over the country, for that would be unproductive and unsatisfactory. I know there is a tendency when we have an increasing revenue, for claims to be put in from all quarters of the colony for works of one kind or another, more or less useful and helpful. It will be remembered that not many years ago some money was borrowed for certain works which should have been constructed out of revenue—a course we should deprecate at the present time. The surplus revenue of the colony should be employed so as to give the greatest possible good to the community at large. We all admit that means of communication are about the best way possible of employing any funds we may have. We manifest that in the willingness with which we borrow money to construct railways. If the surplus monies to-day were employed for that purpose, no one would object to it at the present time. The stress and the strain on individuals may be more or less great, but they are not so great as to cause a cry out for the reduction of taxation. I should be perfectly satisfied to construct public works out of current revenue, rather than go into the market to borrow money for the purpose; but I need not go fully into that question now, though hon. members can see how advantageous it would be, if we could do that instead of distressing the people. I am very glad the Government have seen their way clear to introduce the question of reducing taxation; and I hope also to see a certain proportion of revenue put to useful, and I hope reproductive works. I dare say there is a difference of opinion as to the items which form the Schedule to this Bill. Some will think perhaps we



ought not to have gone so far, whilst others will think we ought to have gone very much further. There are items in the Tariff that are pressing more or less heavily upon all sections of the community. Some of the items were enumerated by the Hon. the Premier, who said, they were articles of general consumption, or things we could not produce in the colony and therefore these reductions would be a relief of the burden now pressing upon the people. No doubt but there has been an agitation to a limited extent for reduction, say on sugar and tea, but I think there is a general feeling prevailing that the Government need not have gone quite so far. Possibly two pounds a ton taken off sugar, and twopence a pound off tea would have been sufficient. There is a feeling, too, that if the Schedule had been enlarged by the addition of other items, it would have met with public approval; with much more public approval than has met the present Schedule. I think there are other items upon which we could very well afford to reduce the revenue. In this Bill it is proposed that the duty on particular items should be repealed altogether. I think that is a simple and, perhaps a better way, than interfering with percentage duties upon certain articles. There are three items which go to make up a very large proportion of the sum to be remitted, namely: oil, sugar and tea. These are articles of very general consumption in every family, and I hope they will feel the lightening of the burden. Kerosene also is an item that is not only used by householders, but is in general use throughout the colony, and is largely used in connection with machinery; the opinion has been expressed that it will help to lighten the burdens of machinists, as well as of the bread winners in large families. I am quite sure the reductions on sugar and tea will be received with a great deal of pleasure by all classes of the community, and not simply by those who are called the working classes, but by those who move in a higher position in Society, and who have perhaps as much difficulty in this respect as the man who works at the forge, or bench, or who follows the plough. Hon. members will observe that I have given notice of a very considerable addition to the items that form this Schedule. Upon some of these there will be no doubt a general consensus of opinion, whilst on others I expect there will be opposition. I had included another item in my list, but I found the hon. member for Beverley had

already expressed his intention of moving in the same direction, namely, to place galvanised iron on the free list. That is a very important item, and I think with him it should be placed on the free list because it will tend to reduce the cost of buildings and to that extent will reduce the cost of rent. Galvanized iron is used in many ways, and I believe it will be of very great assistance to certain industries in the colony. I should like to see many other items on the free list. Bran and pollard for instance we cannot produce those articles sufficiently within the colony to meet the demand; and yet upon these items there is an excessive duty. We know that a very large number of people are engaged in the carrying trade, not only in our cities and large towns but also in the country districts, and they need those things for their horses and cattle and pigs, and so on. We cannot supply our own demands, and so for the sake of protecting a few individuals, we are, I may say, inflicting an injury upon three-fourths of the population of the colony. I should rather like to encourage the farmer in some other way; in the shape of cheap transit, and as is proposed here, by taking off the duty from his bags and so on. With regard to the importation of bran and pollard, besides the protective duty, there is the cost of freight and insurance and other risks.

THE PREMIER: It is much more costly by rail than by steamer.

MR. RANDELL: You see the farmers have a large market in other directions. We should not lose sight of the fact, that there is now a very large market in the interior, which will take nearly all the supplies that the farmer can raise.

MR. MORAN: Yes and five times as much more.

MR. RANDELL: The liability to damage of bran and pollard, and hay and chaff, and the expense of transit, is sufficient protection. I think we have no right to go on protecting the farmers in regard to articles which are of such common consumption in our large centres of population, our towns, and also the various gold-fields throughout the colony. We should also include oats, because we cannot grow these in the colony to any great extent, and yet the duty levelled upon oats is a very large item. The amount collected in 1893—I have not the Collector's report for this year—but in that year it amounted to £3,597 9s. 7d. When we consider that this cereal is not grown in this

colony to any large extent, I think it time we should consider this duty which is fourpence per bushel, and endeavor to take it off. There is a very large number of carriers, and they are increasing in number owing to our increasing trade, and who, in many instances have great difficulty in paying their way, and have to struggle and labor hard to get a living.

**THE PREMIER:** Oats are only about two shillings and twopence a bushel now.

**MR. RANDELL:** I think the duty should come down because the colony is not suited to grow oats; they are generally imported from Tasmania and New Zealand.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS:** I have bought them at 1s. 10d., a bushel.

**MR. RANDELL:** I do not intend to oppose the duty on flour, for I consider the present price of flour presses upon no one. At the same time it does seem to me to be entirely wrong to put duty on bread stuffs; and it certainly is no credit to us, as a producing country, that we have to protect ourselves against outside people, who have to send their goods over a thousand miles to reach us. The tax upon cattle and sheep which are brought hither for slaughter is, I think, a most aggravating one; and does not confer any benefit upon the squatter or the producer, while it certainly causes friction. That may arise to a very considerable extent from the fact that meat is so dear at the present. The hon. the Premier said he could remember that when he was young meat was sixpence a pound. I do not think that any of us would grumble if meat were only fivepence or sixpence a pound, but when it goes beyond that, well it becomes the last straw. I do not intend to labour this question, though there are as many arguments on this side as on the other why this tax should be abolished—

**MR. A. FORREST:** And why it should be retained too.

**MR. RANDELL:** I find there is a very general expression of opinion on one subject outside this House, as well as here, and that is that the duty on boots and shoes should be considerably reduced, if not removed altogether. Boots and shoes other than those on the 10 per cent. schedule, and those on the 15 per cent. schedule, yielded in 1893, (and the duty in 1893 was considerably under that of 1894-5) £3,782. I do not intend to include these in my list, but I do think they might be reduced to 5 per cent. duty. Then

too, for butter we collected in 1893 the sum of £7,141. I think the duty is twopence a pound, which might very well be reduced to a penny a pound. Then there are other things such as bacon and hams, things that are regarded by some as luxuries, and by many as necessities of life. I find we collected from these in 1893 the sum of £4,300. I have mentioned in my list baking powder, because it cannot be produced in the colony.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Yes, yes, it can.

**MR. RANDELL:** Well I suppose the duty is put on for the purpose of protection, and it yielded £32 16s. 3d. I may just remark here, I was very pleased to hear the hon. member for the Swan say it was desirable to get as near as possible to freetrade principles. I am in very hearty accord with that sentiment. I am certainly opposed to anything more than 20 per cent. duties. I think that is a duty high enough for anybody, and ought to help the manufactures in the town of this colony. My idea is the Tariff should be for revenue purposes and not for protection. I may say here, I have changed my opinions on this subject. Perhaps hon. members will remember that I have in my place here advocated protection to a limited extent, but I have now been converted. I went to Melbourne some years ago, and when I saw along the river, and along the wharves, those splendid workshops and manufactories, I came to the conclusion—perhaps not upon very good premises—that protection was a very good thing. My second visit to Melbourne, however, disabused my mind of that idea to a very considerable extent. I do think that interests which are established among us should have reasonable expectation of establishing themselves, but if we can find some other way than the Custom House of helping them then we should adopt it. I do not intend to go into the other items I have named, but hon. members will find, if they look at them, that I intend them to serve a useful purpose by assisting industries of various kinds; not even forgetting mining, for I have included quicksilver as well as tinned meats. I am hoping that on all the items I have proposed for the schedule I shall have the support of a majority of hon. members. I believe there can be no justification for continuing the duties upon tinned meats and articles of that kind, which are in use all over the colony, in homes as well as in survey camps.

**THE PREMIER:** See what you are knocking off the revenue.

**MR. RANDELL:** I have mentioned paints and colors and varnish. I think these should come in free, as being absolutely necessary in trade. The same applies to articles necessary for the manufacture of furniture. I think we may render assistance in this way without sacrificing the principle of having a Tariff for revenue purposes. I would again express my satisfaction that the Government have brought this matter forward,—for I am sure it will be generally accepted all over the colony—and I only hope that the schedule will be very materially enlarged.

**MR. CONNOR:** I will not detain the House very long on this subject. I am very proud to know the hon. the leader of the Opposition has come across, not to the Government side, but to the fact, that it is necessary, as far as possible, to have a freetrade policy in this colony. There are two or three items I should like to refer to, before I leave the matter to the abler and more experienced members of the House, who will probably go into the details of the various items. There is one item, however, that has been omitted from this schedule, and that is mining machinery.

**HON MEMBERS:** No, no.

**MR. CONNOR:** Hon. members on the other side say "No no." It is very difficult to understand what hon. members mean. It seems their whole and sole object in life is to turn the Government out, whether they have good reason or not.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What has that to do with machinery.

**MR. CONNOR:** I am talking about machinery. Now Sir, if we have all these taxes taken off; it will suit some hon. members on both sides of this House; but what I advocate in my own humble way, and which I am honest in doing, whilst I do not know whether all hon. members are honest in the action they take—

**THE SPEAKER:** That is a very improper expression for the hon. member to make.

**MR. CONNOR:** I withdraw the expression, and am sorry for anything improper that I have said. The hon. the Premier was speaking of the time this should come into operation, and of the notice to merchants. I think it is necessary some regulations should be framed which would give facilities to the merchants and importers in this colony for securing drawbacks. If that were done there

would not be much need for any lengthy notice to be given of the coming into operation of this Bill. This is a point that I think may have been overlooked, and I hope the Government will take it into consideration, and make some regulation by which merchants will be able, when exporting goods upon which duty has been paid, to obtain a drawback. If that principle were in existence at the present time it would obviate the difficulty of giving notice to holders of large stocks (that a new Tariff Act was coming into operation. I am glad to see the leader of the Opposition has come across. I hope he will be consistent and continue to advocate what he has advocated this evening.

**MR. JAMES:** I should not like it to go forward to the people of this country, or those who are beyond this country, that we have here a Freetrade Government and a Freetrade Opposition, or that the whole of the members of this House, or nearly all of them, believe in the principles of Freetrade, and that they are Freetraders. At the same time I have only to express my own opinion, Mr. Speaker, in favor of Protection, and I am proud that I am a Protectionist—one in favor of doing all we possibly can to foster and promote every class of native industry, and in favor of doing all I can towards the successful establishment of industries to do the work that is now done outside the colony, or as much of it as possible. No doubt many members fancy themselves as really belonging to the Manchester School of politicians, who are generally those who bow down to the fetish laws of supply and demand. Those who follow that out here seem to altogether forget the different circumstances which exist, and how different it is in the case of a manufacturing country like England, where the manufacturers must look to foreign markets to dispose of their goods, to what the case is in a country like this, where the consumption is greater than the demand, and is likely to be so for some time to come. References have been made to Victoria. We know that heavy trouble has fallen upon that colony, but she is still able to hold her head up through it all, and what is more, she is still able to keep employed many people in her manufacturing interests. For such a small country it is a great deal to say, and she undoubtedly owes it to these much despised principles of Protection. It is to the policy of Protection that Victoria owes the fact that many people have been kept constantly

at work when, without protection, these people would have been without employment. I sincerely hope that in this colony we are not going to have Free-trade. I am sure we are not. At the same time I am very sorry to find the Premier allowing himself to be misled on this subject by such an avowed supporter of Free-trade as the Attorney-General. I have no doubt that the latter gentleman has consistently brought under the notice of the Premier those wonderful tracts of the Cobdenites, which are scattered about after every English mail. Of course if we were in the position of the gentlemen who put forward these Cobden tracts we would want to do what they are doing. What we want to encourage here now is the establishment of industries for the employment of labor and capital, upon which we may fall back at the proper time. To do this we want a reasonable measure of Protection. I am amused with the position taken up by the farmers in this matter. Surely there is nothing so heavily protected as the farming industry, and therefore I say the least they can do is to give us their assistance towards obtaining some portion of the protection they themselves enjoy.

AN HON. MEMBER: They will do this.

MR. JAMES: I am very glad to hear it. I was very much surprised to hear the representative of the City constituency declare that he was for Free-trade, and that farming members were also. I can, of course, only judge of people by what they say. There is a danger always at a time like this of taking too much off the duty list. No doubt the Government in this instance is anxious to take off as much as possible, but, as I said before, there is a danger of going too far. What I object to in these matters is that the Government comes down with certain proposals which are to mean certain reductions, but before the matter is disposed of you find the reductions are double what they were at first expected to be. So far as the present proposals are concerned, I cannot help saying that I do believe they will give reductions in taxation in favor of one industry more than any other. I refer to the industries which use bags and sacks, which use wire netting, which use steel fencing wire, and which use other articles forming quite a good portion of this Schedule. I do not say what is proposed to be done is wrong. I don't accuse anyone of any wrong doing, don't wax wroth at once over what I say, but

please let the farmer remember that if, on the other hand, we in the cities ask for a reduction in the duty on raw material necessary in our manufactures, we are only asking a fair *quid pro quo*.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The duties on all the articles you have mentioned do not come to £2,000 a year.

MR. JAMES: That does not matter. The Hon. the Premier will recollect that when the question of the Stock Tax was brought forward the amount of the tax collected was not very great, and he then said that the figures did not affect the principles, and if that was the case then it is still so now. However, Mr. Speaker, I should like to see provision made in this Schedule to have raw material which is to be used in manufactures, and worked up in this country, admitted free of duty. I want certain other additions made when the time comes, and I believe the mining members of the House will support me. I am sure they will support me in any endeavor to give moderate Protection to any industry which is deserving of encouragement. After the praise, laudation and applause awarded by the hon. member for Yilgarn to the speech of the leader of the Opposition—I am sure I can rank him among those who will favor reasonable Protection and encouragement to native industries and local manufactures.

MR. MORAN: I only wish to say Mr. Speaker, that I will support the Bill now brought before this House, and at the same time I intend to give the leader of the Opposition my entire support on the motion of which he has given notice. I will give him my fullest support in any endeavor to reduce the taxation on any of the articles he has mentioned. I was rather struck this evening with the policy put forward by my youthful and learned friend, the member for West Perth. I am happy to say that we agree on most things. We agree when he is making this chamber ring with his eloquent utterances on the question of Australian Federation, but to find him declaring himself an ardent Federationist, while in almost the same breath he declares himself a champion of Protection, does astonish me. The hon. member for West Perth.—

AN HON. MEMBER: You must mean East Perth.

MR. MORAN: Certainly. It is my mistake. The hon. member for West Perth, is of course busily engaged in trying to overthrow the

Pope's letter, and that being so we can let him go by. However, the hon. member for East Perth said that although the colony of Victoria had been badly straitened out, she had managed to hold her head up through all, and that it was simply because of her policy of Protection. The hon. member is wrong. Victoria has been able to hold her head up, not because she is a Protectionist Colony, but because she and her people are ever foremost in enterprise of all kinds. It is by enterprise, and enterprise only, that Victoria has been enabled to hold her own, and Victorians and Victorians have always been able to do so well. Why, Queensland, and the far north more especially, was populated by the people, and developed by the capital of Victoria, and even to-day Western Australia is to a great extent benefiting by this spirit of enterprise on the part of the Eastern colony. It is the free American spirit of enterprise in all quarters that is her great feature. As for the policy of Protection helping Victoria, it is just the reverse. That this is so can be seen by a glance at the shipping returns, when you will find the shipping of New South Wales for last year was double that of Victoria. I was informed by one of the representatives of a leading Company that all the leading offices are being removed from Melbourne to Sydney in consequence of Victoria's Protective policy.

MR. LEAKE: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member speaking to matters in the Bill.

THE SPEAKER: He is advocating the principles of Free trade and merely giving his experience on the working of the Tariff in another colony.

MR. MORAN (to Mr. Leake): You had better go out and get a cup of coffee. So far as the Bill is concerned, Mr. Speaker, it appears to me that we must to a certain extent tax the people of this country in order that there should be no check upon its development. However, there is one form of revenue raising which has not been referred to by the Premier, which I think should be kept before this House. If the country is in want of an increase of revenue—if it wants money to carry on the work of development wherever development may be necessary—let him turn his eyes in the direction of the hundreds of thousands of acres of valuable land lying idle along our Eastern Railways. If revenue is wanted, and if we want this country developed, let him compel the owners of these vast estates to work their

lands. The proper way for the Government to get a revenue is by a resort to a Land Tax. [MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear.] Believe me I will try hard for it. There are of course some who work their lands in a proper form, and employ the necessary amount of labor. Where a large number of people are employed there is wealth to the people and revenue to the State. Not only along the Beverley line but along the Eastern lines generally, it is an eyesore to those who take an interest in the country to find large portions of the best land lying idle, and not producing any revenue, or good to the colony. I would reduce general taxation and I would heavily tax this land. I would tax it until the owners were compelled to cultivate it. One must not prophesy, for in truth there are too many false prophets already in this country, but I will venture a prediction that one of the greatest questions at the next general election will be the question of land taxation, and you will find that the result of that will be that those people who hold land will either have to cultivate it themselves or cut it up and let it go into the hands of those people who will. Of the Stock Tax there is hardly need to say much. To suggest its removal is to provoke the opposition of the hon. member for West Kimberley, but what I do want to see, and what he ought to give us if he holds such a strong position as he pretends, are some figures. Let him quote some figures.

MR. CONNOR: He has done so often.

MR. MORAN: I have not heard him do so at any rate, neither has the hon. member for East Kimberley, nor has any member of this House. What is happening here is just in order to satisfy one or two stock raisers. Our working men are being underpaid. Relatively, they are paid worse than anywhere else, and the price of living is the very highest. The Stock Tax actually runs as high as 100 per cent. compared with the price at which good bullocks can be bought in the Eastern Colonies.

MR. A. FORREST: How do you make that out.

MR. MORAN: The other day 500 head of cattle were sold in Queensland at 30s. per head. If my word is doubted I can give day and date of the transaction. Besides that, look at the small price ruling in the markets elsewhere.

MR. A. FORREST: I doubt it.

MR. MORAN: The man who was in charge

of this stock and sold it at the price I have mentioned, is at present in Perth.

MR. A. FORREST: Why didn't he bring the cattle here.

MR. MORAN: For the simple reason that you will not let him, just to protect a few raisers of cattle who happen to be in this colony. I hope the leader of the Opposition will carry the whole of the list he is to propose when the proper time comes.

MR. A. FORREST: Oh, he won't!

MR. MORAN: The hon. member, I believe, is anxious to see the whole of the people of this colony become vegetarians. The hon. member for the Swan, and the leader of the Opposition in speaking on this subject, have both said that we should go as nearly to Free-trade as it will be possible. At the same time, while I agree with that, we know that no business can be run without money, neither can a Government proceed without revenue. I am no advocate of carrying any principle to the extent of running a colony into bankruptcy, and although I am an advocate of Free-trade, I think we can claim amongst those who are ranked under that principle, members who have an equal grasp on questions of finance with any other section of the House. For myself, I hope it will not be long before we have also an Income Tax in Western Australia for the purpose of revenue.

HON. MEMBERS: There will be no one to pay it.

MR. MORAN: Then if that be the case there will be no one hurt by it—no one will feel it. I earnestly hope that the hon. member for West Perth, who is also the representative of one of our greatest consuming populations, will give the leader of the Opposition his support in some of the matters proposed to be included in the list. I have a vivid recollection of listening to the entrancing accents of that gentleman in dealing with the land question, when he was on the hustings. We never hear anything from the hon. member on the subject now. I am afraid he has fallen to sleep in the arms of Jacob, or rather of the hon. member for West Kimberley.

MR. A. FORREST: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member says I advocated a land tax. I did nothing of the sort.

MR. MORAN: I never said you did. I said the hon. member for West Perth had fallen asleep in the arms of the hon. member for West Kimberley on the land question. I wish hon. members would have the common sense

to listen to what is being said. As I said before, Mr. Speaker, I intend to give my strong support to this motion of the leader of the Opposition, and I sincerely hope he will carry some, at least, of the amendments he hopes to make in the Tariff. If he cannot carry all, and I do not think he will, I hope he will carry some. More particularly do I hope that one will be carried which has reference to tinned meats. Every man on the goldfields consumes on an average 2lbs. of meat per day, and it would be a great benefit to the working classes if the duty on this necessary article of food was taken off. The duty is proposed to be taken off tea, but a miner will not use a pound of that in a fortnight, while he uses about 2lbs. of meat a day. I believe the most of the members of the Opposition will support this part of the proposals of the leader of the Opposition, and they should also receive support from the Government side of the House as well. I trust the representatives of the centres of population will not be behind hand in any movement to cheapen the cost of living, and that even among these will be found the hon. member for East Perth.

MR. GEORGE: Mr. Speaker,—I only intend to offer a few remarks on this Bill at the present juncture, and rise more particularly with the object of referring to the remarks which fell from the hon. member for East Kimberley on the question of drawbacks. I would also refer to the remark made by the hon. the Premier with regard to the stocks held in hand in this country. We are told that large stocks are not held here, and if that be so, then a drawback could not be of the account to merchants and importers it was represented to be by the hon. member for East Kimberley. However, whether that be so or not, I wish to express the most earnest hope that such an iniquitous thing as the drawback system will not be introduced into Western Australia. Possibly the word "iniquitous" is a rather strong term to use, but it only expresses the truth. If there is anything that has created comparatively great loss to our sister colony, Victoria, it is this infernal thing—the drawback. During last year a large quantity of mining machinery was imported into this Colony in order to be realised, and the facts I am going to mention to show what an iniquitous thing this drawback is, are well within the knowledge of the hon. member who first referred to this matter.

MR. CONNOR: Who are you referring to.

MR. GEORGE: I am not referring to you.

MR. CONNOR: You must be wrong. You must not try to connect me with anything iniquitous. I desire the protection of the chair.

MR. GEORGE: I had no intention of accusing you of anything.

MR. CONNOR: I do not wish to be in a position to be accused.

MR. GEORGE: I am positive that was I said was that it would be impossible to induce the hon. member to be connected with anything iniquitous.

MR. CONNOR: I hardly know what you mean.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member in speaking did not impute anything you did as being iniquitous.

MR. GEORGE: After the explanation of the Hon. the Speaker perhaps I need not apologise. However, as I said before, the instance I am about to relate to the House is within the knowledge of the hon. member who is desirous of seeing this iniquitous system of drawback introduced here. A large quantity of mining machinery was brought here for the purpose of sale, brought here within the last twelve months. At the first blush the person who had this machinery, confessed to him one day in the sale yards that where he made the greatest profit was not by its sale, but in obtaining a large amount from the Victorian Government, in the shape of drawback. On one large boiler he had actually received £110 in this way, and had then sold the boiler to the West Australian Government for £150. As a matter of fact the owner of this boiler, after receiving the drawback I have mentioned could have sold the boiler for only £10, and then done well out of the transaction. I know myself that so far as the drawback on mining machinery in Victoria is concerned, it is quite possible for machinery to be in use eighteen months or two years, and then sent out of the colony under a drawback, which is sometimes so large as to be more than what the machinery is actually worth. I therefore most sincerely hope there will be no attempt to introduce the drawback system into this colony. No reason exists for its introduction, excepting that it may be used for the purposes of fraud. I am sure if the Premier will enquire into this point he will find plenty of evidence to support my views. Several

prosecutions have had to be instituted in Victoria for frauds perpetrated under this drawback system. The hon. member for East Kimberley had expressed a desire to see mining machinery introduced free.

MR. CONNOR: That won't suit you.

MR. GEORGE: I do not care if it does come in free, just now.

MR. CONNOR: Oh, it will come in free right enough.

MR. GEORGE: We cannot make this machinery here just yet, but my firm will be able to do so in six months, and then I will come to the House and ask for protection.

MR. CONNOR: You won't get it.

MR. GEORGE: I will try for it, and I hope I will get it. At any rate I will ask for it without losing my temper like some hon. members are doing. I want to employ people in this trade and when I can make this machinery I will ask the hon. member himself to support me in procuring a fair measure of Protection.

MR. CONNOR: But you won't get it.

MR. GEORGE: Well, I will ask for it. We do not always get what we ask for, or what we ought to get. The Bill to my mind might easily include some things it does not, but these can be brought forward at a later stage. I only rose to speak with regard to the drawback question, and I again wish to express the sincere hope that we shall never have an attempt to place such a thoroughly iniquitous law on the Statute Book of this colony.

MR. SOLOMON: I would like to say a few words on the subject, Mr. Speaker. In my opinion the Government are to be congratulated on taking the first step in the direction of tariff reform. I hope to see further reductions as we proceed. In any event I think that in the list presented to this House we could very well have had some items left out, in order to put in other items which would be of far more benefit to the general community. The list is not a large one, but in spite of this some terms might have given place to others. For instance, there is the item "cocoa and chocolate." That is an article which cannot possibly be said to be in general use, but the amount of duty collected, £667, would have been well taken off some other article. Soda crystals, the duty of which is two shillings per cwt., is one of items in the Tariff which I think might very well be reduced. It is an article in general use, and it will be found that it is largely used by

many women who have to gain their livelihood at the washtub. In this manner, I believe, a large quantity is consumed. I trust the present movement on the part of the Government is a preliminary attempt to reduce the burdens of taxation on the people to a minimum. Galvanized iron is another item, the duty on which can very well be reduced as has been properly stated by the hon. member for Perth. With regard to the Stock Tax I think everyone must know there is a feeling abroad that this tax is a very iniquitous one. It is a tax felt by everyone. There are some of these items such as sugar and tea, the duty upon which will not be felt nearly so much as the duty upon meat. Take a household of five or six people, and it will be found in all cases that the article of food most in general consumption is meat. People cannot get along without meat, and they feel the duty more than they do the duty on tea and sugar. I am therefore forced to the conclusion that this is one of the items where the Government might have provided for some reduction by leaving other items in. A reduction in this direction would not only be fair, but it would be generally acceptable to the people. The producer of meat, more than any other person in the community, reaps a benefit from the list of reductions brought before the House. In some of the items he reaps a very great benefit, such as wire netting, sheep dip, wool bales, bagging, besides which he is a large consumer of tea and sugar, the two articles mainly to be reduced. If these stock growers were to give way it would be looked upon and appreciated by the general public, and I feel sure the House would be perfectly willing to meet that class by the reduction of the duty on other items only used by them. I, for one, would be very glad to assist the stock growers if they did this. I do not think it necessary to labor the question at this stage. What the Government are doing is really a step in the right direction, and I give the Government every credit for introducing the measure, in order to make at least one stride forward towards progress and the lessening of the burdens of taxation on the people.

At 6.30 p.m. the House adjourned for an hour.

At 7.30 p.m. the House resumed.

MR. A. FORREST: In rising to support the second reading of the Bill now before the House, I do so with a great deal of pleasure. I am glad to find the Government do

intend to reduce taxation on those articles which we cannot produce in the country; but I must ask hon. members to pause before they propose reductions on a number of articles which can be produced in the country, and which will be produced more largely in a few years than they are at present. The hon. member for Perth (Mr. Randell) wants this House to reduce taxation on flour and oats, which are articles that can be produced here; but I would like to know what good a reduction of 10s. a ton on flour would do in lowering the price to retail consumers? The hon. member also wants reductions of duty on oats, chaff, butter and other necessaries of life which can be produced in the country, but I hope the hon. member will not be able to carry those reductions, because we could ill afford to lose the revenue now received on these importations. If the hon. member desired to go in for a Free-trade policy, there would be something in his contention, but if he intends to go in for a Tariff that shall be one-half Protective and the other half Free-trade, his policy would be a dangerous one to initiate. Since 1893 we have tried all in our power to protect the interests of the producers in the colony, and I regret to say they do not produce too much at present. I hope that, when the time comes for us to consider the hon. member's proposals in committee, he will be found in a minority. The hon. member for Yilgarn, to whom I wish particularly to refer, says he will support the proposals of the hon. member for Perth, in taking the duty off everything; yet in the same breath he asks for more railways and telegraphs all over his district—he asks for a large water supply, he asks for the miner's rights to be reduced in cost to almost nothing, and he asks for many other forms of expenditure in the interests of the miners. We all welcome the miners to this country, but those people who are settled in other portions of the colony, having made their homes here permanently, cannot afford, as a fiscal principle, in the present juncture of affairs, to give everything to the miners and get nothing back. I do not think the miners ask for any such thing. What they want is easy and cheap communication, and a water supply all over the goldfields; but if we take away the revenue derived from all the articles which miners use, the Government may justly say, "We are not in a position to incur large expenditure for these works and facilities on goldfields, because you are taking away the



sources of revenue to which we look for recouping the outlay." The hon. member for Yilgarn also used some strong language about the low price of cattle in the Eastern Colonies, and the high price charged here. I do hope that, when members get up, they will speak on subjects that they really understand. The hon. member has said that cattle can be bought for 30s. a head in Queensland, and that they ought to be imported here cheaply. As far as I am aware, the cattle imported here in a condition fit for sale cannot be bought for any such price. If it were so, this market is open, without restrictions on trade and commerce; therefore, if hon. members were disposed to listen seriously to those statements, which I am sure they are not, they must see that there is no reason why this market should not be flooded with cattle imported at 30s. a head. I may say I am prepared myself, to supply the very best class of meat delivered at Derby, for shipment to the centres of population, at three-halfpence a pound, in any quantity; therefore where does the increased cost come in, if we can supply meat at this price in our Northern ports? The increased cost is caused by freights, insurance, agency charges, and the profits to butchers. As to commission, that amount is very small. Then, as a result of this state of things, we do not find that the commission agents grow rich, or that the butchers grow rich, or that the graziers grow rich. Where, then, is the great hardship that is imposed on the consumers by the high price of meat? The price is high, but I say we cannot avoid it in present circumstances. I say, also, that the Stock Tax will not affect the price to a greater extent than three-eighths of a penny in the pound. This duty is not more aggravating to the consumers of meat, than is the duty on oats, chaff, and flour to those people in the North who have to pay it on what they import. I say the colony is not in a position to go in for a Freetrade policy. If we want to injure one class of the community by treating them differently from the rest of the population, then I say make this a Freetrade colony, in which case we should have no taxes on imported articles, and we should not be able to construct public works. Look at the wages paid at present—the hon. member for Perth knows the amounts that are paid in various employments—I say we could not afford to pay these wages if the cost of living

were cheaper, for it is a universal rule that where wages are low the cost of living is also low. The hon. member for Yilgarn, who came to this country about a year ago, sucks the honey from the people here. He is not a worker, or a producer. Where has he ever done any work in this colony? He has been travelling about, and having been fortunate enough to obtain a seat in this House, he now wants to upset all the institutions of the country into which he has so lately come. He says the country is gasping for a land tax. Well, I think the people who have to depend on the land could not bear a tax, and that the effect of a land tax would be to drive people off the land. But the hon. member for Yilgarn, who knows nothing about this country, except the mining districts in which he has been travelling, tells us that Queensland has put a tax on land, and therefore this colony should do so. I say, let the hon. member go back to Queensland, if he likes it so much better, and let him get on a platform there, and address his opinions to an assembly of people who know as much as he does. He seems to think he can come to this country and turn it upside down just to suit his own ends, and to please some of those people, not those who he represents, but who he thinks he represents. The hon. member is very ready in speaking, and yet he says hon. members will not listen to him. I do not wonder at that. I often see a smile even on the face of the Hon. the Speaker, when the member for Yilgarn is addressing the House. I must say that we who have lived in this country all our lifetime are not going to be dictated to by the hon. member for Yilgarn, when he talks the greatest rubbish about duties, and Stock Tax, and other things. The hon. member, if he wants to be listened to in this House, should confine his remarks to the goldfields, about which he perhaps knows a little. I may inform the House that the reason why butchers' meat is so high in price is that there is no good grazing land near Perth and Fremantle, as the chief consuming centres; and when the stock reaches this district from Kimberley and other Northern parts, the animals are literally starved and in a reduced condition, so that the loss of weight in the cattle, between the time they are sold and the time they are retailed for consumption, together with the expenses, will account for the butchers putting on the price. If the Government would lay down pastures, by clearing Crown land and sowing

it with couch grass, in localities convenient to the centres of population, you might then have meat sold at 2d a pound. But we know that the country near Perth and Fremantle is sandy, and that there are no extensive paddocks for keeping fat stock in condition. As I said, in speaking on the Address-in-Reply, the Stock Tax may give some benefit to the graziers in our Northern districts, and the butchers may get a little; but I can, if necessary, produce the books of one of the largest stock graziers in the colony, showing the transactions for twelve months, to prove that the growers of meat are not making the large profits which some people suppose they are getting through the Stock Tax.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A gentleman said to me, in the recess, that whether a redistribution of seats is required in the country or not, he was of opinion there ought to be a redistribution of seats in this House. I am somewhat of that opinion, if the character of this debate is to indicate the position of hon. members in the House. I would like hon. members to bear in mind that, on questions which affect revenue, it is usual for members in all parts of the House to have an absolutely free hand; consequently if I appear to be somewhat inconsistent to, or adverse to, hon. members who sit on my side of the House, I hope that fact will be borne in mind. First of all, I cannot commend the wisdom of the Government in bringing in the Bill at all. I do think that, in this stage of the colony's development—and this point has been ably brought out by the hon. member for Fremantle—when there is so much to do, and when there are calls from all parts of the country for the expenditure of money, the construction of these works will do more to develop and help the people than any remission of taxation such as the Government propose; therefore I am surprised that the Government should have taken on themselves to bring in this Bill at all. What does it propose to do? Reduce taxation on a few items of imports, to the extent of something like £50,000. That sum would be sufficient to pay interest on a loan of over a million; and yet, with no end of work that requires to be done in the country, with calls from all parts of it, and when the Government are going to borrow more money for public works, they come into this House and propose to remit taxation to

the extent of £50,000. Then comes the question as to what is the real object of this remission of taxation. It was suggested at the outset, by the hon. member (Mr. Throssell) who moved the Address-in-Reply, that this promised Bill was intended to work upon the lines of a free breakfast table. What do we now find? Looking at this proposed remission of £50,000 in Customs duties, we find that something like £30,000 is to be remitted on five of the items—kerosene oil, sugar, tea, coffee, and a small amount for molasses—as for the rest of the proposed remissions, they are mostly to assist the squatters. I am quite willing to admit that a considerable amount of difficulty and anxiety exists amongst those who are engaged in the pastoral industry, and I would like something practical to be done to assist them; but I do not take it that these remissions are calculated to be of any material value to them. Of course a certain amount will be saved on sugar—perhaps not so much for the squatter as the brewer; and as to the other items, they will make such a small difference that one is reminded of the old saying, 'What are these among so many?' I would rather have seen the Government proposing to expend this amount of revenue on public works, than to attempt a half-and-half remission of this kind. If the Government were prepared to enter into a discussion as to putting the Tariff on a broader basis, and if they were willing to deal with it on the principle of a Free-trade or a Protective policy, I could understand why they should bring this question before the House, but this Bill is simply for remitting the duty off a few items, and to tinker with the Tariff for two or three years to come. Hon. members who are accustomed to the ways of trade will know there is nothing more disturbing to commerce than frequent alterations in the Customs Tariff. If this £50,000 remission is proposed only to satisfy a public cry, it will not meet the wants of the workers. I think that if the members who compose the Ministry wanted to reach and benefit the workers, they would have taken the duty off other necessary articles besides those proposed in the Bill. The bread of the people, the meat of the people, and other things which come under the head of necessities, would have been dealt with. We may call tea and sugar necessities, if we will, though I rather question it. I do not think that the remission of duties on

these articles is going to produce any return at all. If, however, we must deal with remissions of duty, there is one item which ought to be included in the Bill, and that is tinned meats—not because it is an item that affects miners particularly, but because, in the present condition of this country, it is almost the only kind of food to be got inland. Everything that can be done to encourage the producers—and the main producer at present is the gold digger—ought to be done in this direction. As far as I know, in the district I represent, I believe the miners would far rather see money expended in developing the country by means of public works, than see it remitted in the directions proposed in the Bill. It is my conviction that the miners would be better served, and the best interests of the country better served, by the expenditure of this extra money upon absolutely necessary developments in the country, than by the merely fanciful remissions which the Government propose. Then the hon. member, the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Randell), proposes to increase this list alarmingly. I say “alarmingly,” because, as I hold, it is not wise to reduce taxation even by £50,000; therefore what will it be to reduce taxation by £150,000. I have not gone into the hon. member's figures, but by the long list of remissions which he advocated, I think the amount would be near £150,000.

MR. RANDELL: No.

MR. J. LINGWORTH: No. Well, I do ask this House to consider whether, in this condition of our country's development, when we are going forward and there is so much to do—and the Director of Public Works knows very well the claims there are for works, especially inland, that are absolutely necessary to the lives of the people, as well as for purposes of development—whether it is wise to remove the taxation which falls only lightly on the great mass of the people, and by doing so deprive the centres of production of those works which are necessary at the present time. I want to make one remark on this taxation question of Free-trade *versus* Protection. I am glad the hon. member for East Perth had the courage to get up at that moment, and at least to intimate that there is one hon. member who is not afraid to use the word “Protection.” I am afraid that most of the persons who use the term “Protection,” which they seem so fond of, just as the term “Freetrade” is

used by others who are fond of it, do not completely understand what is meant by Protection. I think the hon. member for East Perth will agree with me that if it were possible to go for direct taxation, even the protectionists in this House would prefer that, rather than any other kind of protection. If you were going to raise over half a million of revenue through the Custom House, we contend it would be wiser, in the interests of the country, to raise that revenue on those things which will encourage the productions of the country, than to raise it on those things which cannot be produced here; and so far as the items in this Schedule are upon these lines, I necessarily will give it my support, if there is to be a remission of taxes at all. I will name one single instance of—what I mean, when I speak of protected industries. We are not manufacturers of leather, and yet there is a duty of 15 per cent. on it. When that leather is imported from other colonies and landed here, with the necessary expenses added to the price, the difference between what the leather can be purchased for in other colonies and the purchasing price here is about 30 per cent., equal to double the amount of the duty. Another point I want to touch upon is the question of Protection as it affects wages. Here is a statement which has been quoted in the Victorian Parliament recently, and is taken from an American newspaper:—

The McKinley Tariff was an admitted experiment in high duties. The American Senate's Finance Committee, after the Tariff had been working 12 months, examined into the general wages of the country for a year before the high tariff and, after it. That report was as elaborate on the matter of wages as it was on that of prices. It showed that there had been a very general rise in wages under the McKinley Tariff. But more this. A further report on the same subject was submitted by Mr. Charles F. Peck, the Commissioner of Labor Statistics of New York. Mr. Peck's return is of more special value, because it is the work of a Free-trader, who was ordered to do it in order to find material to denounce the tariff. Mr. Peck candidly admitted that he commenced his duties with the intention of condemning the McKinley Duties, and that he was startled at the results which came out. His investigations covered 79 industries, many of which included a dozen or more trades each. He found that wages had advanced under the McKinley Tariff in 52 of these industries, and fallen in 27 of them. He alleges that in the State of New York, the net increase in protections in the year following the enactment of the high tariff was £6,260,000. Out of 79 industries, 52 showed an increase in wages or production, or both. There were 285,000 wage-earners affected in the industries, and the average advance on their wages was £4 12s. in the year, while in 51 of the industries the advance in wages averaged £8 13s. Summed up, this meant that 285,000 persons in the 1,121 trades earned £4 22s.

per head more under the high Tariff than under that of 1899." Such was the report that the freetrader, Mr. Peck, was obliged to give, and his friends were very angry with him. They admitted, however, that the American workman's condition had really improved under the McKinley Tariff. Of course they had their excuses. The improvements would have been still greater under Free-trade. But they were met here by the same kind of invincible facts. Mr. Senator Aldrich made a dissection of the Senate Committee's report, comparing the cost of living during 30 years in Protectionist America and Free-trade England. He published this in the *Farmer* for October, 1892. The period taken was that between 1860 and 1890 in both countries. Of the American experiences he made the following summary:—"During this period average wages in the United States advanced nearly 70 per cent., while the cost of living, as shown by the decline in prices was reduced 5 per cent. In other words, the purchasing power of wages was nearly 75 per cent. greater in the year 1890, after 30 years of Protection, than it was in 1860, at the close of 15 years' experience under a revenue tariff. Co-incident with this advance in wages, a great reduction in the hours of employment took place. These results will appear in the forthcoming report of the Senate's Finance Committee, covering an investigation into prices and wages for 50 years. They are confirmed by the census figures, showing the relative annual earnings of all persons employed in the textile industries in the years 1860 and 1890, the annual average earnings for 1860 being 205 dols., and for 1890 352 dols., or an advance of 61 per cent.

In reading this extract to the House, I contend that the workers are, after all, the foundation of the State: and the extract bears on the question of a Tariff that will raise wages and will also reduce the cost of living, by showing the actual experience in America under a Protective Tariff. The whole question comes to this, that if we can help the workers by increasing their pay and at the same time reducing their cost of living, in consequence of competition, and in consequence of manufacturing being brought nearer home, and in consequence of the avoidance of waste, that will be the best way of helping the workers. When the hon. member for West Kimberley says he can sell meat at 1½d. a pound wholesale in the Kimberley district, I can understand the hon. member for Yilgarn in saying a bullock can be purchased in Queensland for 30s. I am surprised that the Government have not dealt with the question of the Stock Tax. I know this is a sort of red rag to members on the Government side. The Commissioner of Crown Lands told us, the other evening, that the Stock Tax added only a halfpenny a pound to the price of meat. Well, if that halfpenny is sufficient to affect competition, then you come to the point where the difficulty arises; for if the duty of so much per head on imported stock has the

effect of keeping imported stock out of these markets, it necessarily interferes with competition, and the want of competition tends to keep the prices up. On this question I do lean very largely to the view of the hon. member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor) when he emphasises—and I hope this House will take note of it—the fact that one of the reasons that makes meat dear in the centres of population is the want of proper convenience for the killing of meat. Surely the Government should take this matter up. Then the amount that the Government are asked to lose on the Stock Tax is such a trifle. It is the strangest thing in the world that some members should get excited over such a trifle—a matter of less than £4,000. Surely if it is such a trifle they can dispense with it, both from the revenue and the Protectionist standpoints. It is a strange thing that some members call themselves Freetraders, and yet support a Stock Tax, and also support a duty on flour, on chaff, on oats, and on bread. I cannot understand it. Perhaps my education has been neglected in these particulars, but if so, I hope the hon. member for the Williams will give us some light on the subject. I regret that this Tariff question has been brought up at all. I would much rather that the £50,000 of proposed remissions should be used in carrying out necessary public works; but if this Tariff change is to be carried out I think the Government are on the right lines in the items they have selected; and, further, if they would accept several of the items which have been suggested by the hon. member for Perth—though I do not think this House or the country wants the whole list of remissions that the hon. member mentioned—if the Government would accept galvanised iron and tinned meats by adding them to the Schedule, I think this would be going on the right lines of reduction upon articles that cannot be produced in the colony. We might deal with the Stock Tax under another Bill.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): After all the speeches we have heard, I do not think the items in the Schedule for remission of duty require much justification, because the general consensus of opinion is that they are fair, though in some instances it is said we have not gone far enough. It would be very nice if we could afford at present to go as far as the hon. member for Perth suggests; but I do

not think it will be contended that the country can be run without taxation, or without some revenue ; therefore the Government do not consider that they would be justified in taking off more duties than are contained in the present Schedule. I will deal shortly with one or two objections urged by the hon. member for Perth, and more particularly those stated by the hon. member for Nannine. The latter hon. member says he doubts whether it is necessary or justifiable at all to reduce taxation at present ; that the amount of revenue we propose to remit to the people would be better employed in the construction of public works ; and that to spend this money on public works would be a better policy. I entirely disagree with that argument. We must remember, in dealing with that argument, that at the present time this colony can borrow money outside, for public works, at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. ; so that if £50,000 per annum is expended on public works instead of saving that amount to the taxpayers by the remission of duties, we should only be saving the interest on £50,000 at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: You have to pay back the principal.] It must be borne in mind that when people borrow money in this country they have to pay at least 7 per cent. and thus the saving of £50,000 would be worth 7 per cent. to the people affected by these duties whereas if they borrowed British money to that amount for constructing public works, they would have to pay not 7 per cent on the amount, but only  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., thus saving the other  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. It is far better policy to borrow money at that rate, for necessary public works, than to get the £50,000 out of the pockets of the people, when the money is worth to them twice the amount of interest which they would otherwise have to pay. The hon. member for Perth is somewhat contradictory, when at one moment he doubts whether it is wise policy to save £50,000, and the next moment he brings in a list of additional articles on which he wants the duty remitted. I think that was the hon. member's contention. He said he would be content with the present taxes, provided the public works are gone on with ; and then he went on to say we should sacrifice £150,000 of revenue. If we argue that it is better to go on with public works, I do not think we can argue, in the next breath, that it is better to reduce taxation, and to further

reduce the revenue. The hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Marmion), when speaking on the Address-in-Reply, said it would be wise to go in for a large amount of public works. I say there is this strong argument in favor of reducing taxation in times of prosperity, that you have thus always got a force in reserve, and can put duties on again when necessary. Times of depression are liable to come round to any country, and if this colony were to be overtaken with adversity, you would, by keeping up the taxation, have exhausted all your resources in the way of raising revenue. The hon. member for East Perth and the hon. member for Nannine have said the proposed reductions in the tariff will be more beneficial to the pastoral industry than to any other. The hon. member for East Perth has attempted to make a point about the remission of duty on wire netting and fencing wire ; but it should have occurred to any hon. member that these articles are largely used in the improvement of land. Hon. members generally want the public estate to be improved, and if they wish to see improvements going on, they should not object to remissions of duty which will have that effect. The hon. member for Nannine has made a strong point about the wage earner and the working man, in reference to a Protective Tariff ; yet by objecting to the remission of duty on fencing wire and articles of that sort he does not want to encourage people to employ labor. I think it is a wise thing to reduce the cost on these materials, which are used in working the land ; and I should like also to see all the tools and all the raw material used in the improvement of land admitted at as low a duty as possible. It has been a reproach to this country that so much land is locked up without being used as it might be ; therefore I say we should encourage the improvement of land, by reducing the cost of the materials. Hon. members should know the improvement of land is a large expense, and I regret to say the return is so small that this fact accounts for the backwardness of people in undertaking those improvements which we would all like to see. The hon. member for Yilgarn has given us some peculiar principles of political economy. He wants a land tax, and says, "Let us burst up all these large estates along the Eastern railway that are lying idle." The argument is that all these estates are locked up against settlement and improvement. But I can assure

the hon. member that if he is anxious to go in for the improvement of one of these large estates, it is possible for him to purchase a large amount of land at £1 an acre, and that land will keep him employed for years in making improvements, and will absorb all the capital he can put into it.

MR. MORAN: Why do you hold the land? If it doesn't pay, why don't you chuck it up, and let somebody else have a try?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): I can assure the hon. member that a large amount of this fertile land he refers to can be purchased in considerable blocks at £1 an acre. I say that if land in a splendid position, alongside the Government railway, in a fine climate, and with a good rainfall, is not worth more than £1 to £1 10s. an acre in considerable blocks, this fact is proof positive that the return to be obtained by spending money on improvements is not sufficient. I suppose the argument is that, as nobody is disposed to give £1 an acre, the proper course is for this House to put a tax on the land, and in that way make people still less disposed to buy. I begin to think we have almost had enough of the Stock Tax. If hon. members want to do away with it, I say do away with it by all means, and also do away with all other taxes of a Protective nature, so that we may have either Freetrade or Protection as a definite policy. I think it is invidious to deny to one very important industry some protection, while at the same time expecting that the people engaged in it should pay cheerfully the duties imposed on the articles they use, and look pleasant over the operation. In the districts where live stock is raised, you tax the people's flour, their oats, their chaff, their fencing wire, and almost everything they use or consume. They have no interest in the production of these things, which are not local industries in the North; but those people have to pay these duties, and yet some hon. members want to deny them any protection on the stock they raise, which is their local industry. I say let us be Freetrade all round, or let us protect our industries. There is another point. Some hon. members have found fault with the Bill for proposing to take the duty off tea and sugar. They have said this is a doubtful compliment to the working man, and have asked, "Why not take the duties off other necessities of life that are imported, such as meat and flour?" I say

again that, if by these reductions, we save a shilling a week to a man using these articles as necessities, and can do this without injuring our own producing classes, that shilling saved is as good to him as if we enable him to save a shilling a week by taking the duty off some other necessary article. One shilling saved will be the same to him, whether it is obtained by taking the duty off tea and sugar, or off other things that are necessities of life. Why is there this eager desire to benefit one class at the expense of another class? If you can kill the two birds with one stone, by assisting your own people, while at the same time saving to them a large amount in taxes, that is far better than giving help to one class by robbing another class. An amount of £30,000 saved to the community on tea and sugar is £30,000 saved certainly, and that saving will be as good to them in this form as if it were saved to them on other articles which certain hon. members might prefer. There is another very peculiar argument on this Stock Tax. The hon. member for Yilgarn declares that fat cattle can be purchased in Queensland for 30s. a head, and he says that when those cattle reach this colony they are sold for £24 a head. Well, if fat stock can be purchased in Queensland at that low price, and if a bullock realises in this colony so high a price as £24, there is a business in which money is to be made and why don't people try to make it by sending more stock here? There must be some screw loose in the argument, because the hon. member's contention cannot be correct upon the figures he has given. I think that every man who is in a position to do so would rush into this business, and we should soon be swamped with Queensland cattle. As to the argument of the hon. member for Nannine, that if the Stock Tax makes a difference of only a halfpenny in the pound added to the price of meat, that halfpenny brings up the price to a point where it kills competition from outside, I say that is a strong argument for doing away with the Stock Tax. But I maintain that is not the case. One-half the number of cattle consumed in this colony during the last six months have come from the other colonies, notwithstanding the Stock Tax. [MR. A. FORREST: Not more than a third.] Well, we are entitled to say, in justice to our own people, that the cost of bringing cattle from our Northern ports to the Southern centres of population is greater than the cost of bringing cattle

from Adelaide, we are justified in considering the interests of the Northern people more than we should consider the interests of graziers in other colonies. It will be a bad thing if this country ever does launch into a very high Protective Tariff, such as some hon. members want. It has been said we have no really Protective duties—that we have got only 15 or 20 per cent.; but I certainly hope we shall never have excessive duties. It has been found in Victoria, by experience, that high duties kill the revenue, and we might expect to see the same result here under a highly Protective Tariff. As I said on starting, what the Government propose in this Bill requires no justification. The Bill speaks for itself, and I think it is now clear, from this discussion, that hon. members agree with the Bill in the main. There is one other line I would be inclined to advocate, and that is that those classes of goods which come under the saving designation of *N.O.E.* (not otherwise enumerated) shall be transferred to the 10 per cent. class, instead of being classed at 15 per cent. as they are now. The effect would be that any article which happened to have been overlooked in the classification of the Schedules would be put into the lower instead of the higher Schedule; so that if an article is required by a manufacturer, and is not already classified, instead of its being somewhat "slated," it would come in under the 10 per cent. duty. I do not think the Government would be adverse to such a proposition as that. When a Government has the responsibility of running the country, and is expected to provide money for extensive public works, I think it would not be right for this House to take the whip out of its hand, by trying to force the Government to make additional reductions, and to further decrease the revenue. I do not think that this House, by taking such a course, would be dealing justly with any Government in that position; and I think the Executive Government of the country, having the responsibility of managing its finances, and of finding the means for doing all those things which a Government is expected to do, ought to be in a position to judge how much revenue can be safely dispensed with, and how much is required. If Ministers are prepared to say they can do with a decrease of £50,000, it would be putting them in a false position if the House were to say, "We insist on your taking off £100,000." I think the reductions suggested

by the hon. member for Perth would be not far short of £150,000 a year; and, in proposing this course, he ought to be prepared to show the Government how they are to do everything they are asked to do, and to do all this with such a small amount of revenue.

Mr. PIESSE Generally speaking I am in accord with the Government; but speaking from a commercial point of view, I regret that it has been found necessary to interfere with the Tariff Act of the colony, and fear it will be some time, before we shall recover from the effect of this reduction of taxation. I think it very necessary if reductions are to be made, that certain items should be included in that reduction, but I hardly think it is necessary to reduce taxation upon tea and sugar; certainly not to take it away altogether, as is proposed in this Bill. I think if one half the reduction had been made it would have met with general approval. With regard to the reduction upon iron, wire netting, and materials of that kind, I think the small amount of ten shillings per ton can well be spared from the revenue; these things are necessary adjuncts to the development of the land, and the reduction will assist not only the farmer; but those engaged in pastoral pursuits also. The reduction upon mineral oil I think a good one, and will assist many industries, as it as the community generally. I think if the Government had agreed to reduce tea and sugar by one-half the amount proposed, it would have meant a saving to the people of from £12,000 to £15,000 a year. There is one thing I would like to dwell upon, and that is the cost of living. It has been said that the cost of living is much higher here than in the Eastern colonies; but I would point out that the wages of the working man are much higher here in proportion, than they are in the Eastern Colonies. We have not far to look for the cost of high living in cities and towns, because house rents and other charges are excessive. It is that sort of thing that contributes to the high cost of living. If you take the case of one living in the country districts, you will find that a laborer can live there on about eight shillings a week, because their rent is merely a nominal sum, and in fact, in many instances the labourer is found in lodgings by those who employ him, particularly if he be a farm laborer. I would point out that this item of meat, that is so much talked about here, as being ninepence a pound, is from 25 to 30 per cent. higher in the towns than in the country at the pre-

sent time, on account of the cost of slaughtering, and the risks that the butchers run. We have not far to look for the high cost of living, because in the towns where the most complaint is made, we shall find, if we enquire, that the people of to-day are more extravagant than the people were in days gone by. There is not so much economy practiced by householders as there used to be. It is not the cost of living that is the trouble in Perth, but the rents and other charges that have to be met. I mention this because, there are many who strike at the farming portion of the community and say that the price of flour and other things produced by the farmer is the cause of the high cost of living. If we turn to the report of the Collector of Customs, laid before us to-night, we shall find there were imported into this colony, last year, seven thousand tons of flour; and that there were imported also 26,000 bushels of wheat. To produce that quantity of flour there would need to be produced 376,000 bushels of wheat; which at 12 bushels to the acre would need the cultivation of 31,000 acres of agricultural land; or with an average of 10 bushels to the acre, it would require 37,000 acres of land; now, this is not a very large area to ask to have brought under cultivation. We have in the colony about 70,000 acres under cultivation at the present time. I know the development of the soil is going on apace, for this year there will be brought under cultivation something like 25,000 acres of new land. In two years' time we shall probably have 50,000 acres of new land under cultivation, and what will be the result? Allowing for the advance and increase of population, we shall then have caught up with the demand, and be able to supply the people with bread. We have just passed through a series of years that are the worst on record; a series of years unprecedented from an agricultural point of view. I know many farmers in my own district, and in the Eastern parts of the colony who last year did not reap as much as they had sown, and the consequence was there is a very short supply of chaff and other farm products. With such a season, however, as we are now experiencing, and hope to have, and with the vast area that is now being cultivated, the result will be that we shall probably in a short time come up to the demand. If you continue to assist the farmers by retaining the 30s. per ton duty on flour, the sixpence per bushel on wheat, the duties as they now exist, in a very short time the

people of this colony will have no cause to complain. With regard to chaff, we imported last year 7,700 tons. Taking the production of our land at a very low rate, say a ton to the acre, we only require an extra 7,700 acres of land to produce all the chaff needed for our own requirements. When we take into consideration the fact that last year we had a very bad season, a season that yielded only about five hundredweight to the acre in some parts, and consider the prospects of the present season, I think we shall not need next year to import a thousand tons of chaff. There is a sufficient supply now in hand for the next three months, but the disadvantage of the farmer lies in this: that the unfortunate men who live in the district where I live, are so far away from the market that it costs 25s. a ton extra for carriage, and this handicaps them in comparison to those in the eastern districts who can so easily despatch their chaff to market. With regard to bran and pollard, we imported last year 3,400 tons. Allowing that we produce 370,000 bushels of wheat, and allowing twenty pounds per bushel, which is the usual percentage of bran and pollard taken from the wheat in extracting the flour; we have 2,300 tons of bran and pollard, consequently we have no need to import more than 1,000 tons, even with such seasons as we have had in the past. The result must prove that, even if we have this vast area brought under cultivation, the result will be that we shall in a little while hear very little of this cry of no protection. It is heart-rending to find our own people have so little confidence in Western Australia. I can assure hon. members that this colony is quite capable of producing all the requirements needed from the soil, and in a short time we shall come up with the demand. I have made a calculation with regard to the duty on flour. The duty is certainly a protection, but it does not amount to very much. The duty of 30s. per ton means three-sixteenths of a penny per pound; and if this were knocked out who gets it? Does the consumer get it? No, it goes into the pocket of the middleman. If the consumer is a wage earner, and is anxious to see the colony prosper, he must for some time to come put up with this extra trifling cost, and help the farming community for a while, and so help forward the development of the soil. This must go on hand in hand with the develop-



ment of our goldfields, for what on earth is the good of the development of our goldfields, unless we at the same time develop the agricultural areas. Speaking of the Tariff on cereals, we have only to refer by way of comparison to the Eastern colonies. They take no product from us free of duty; it is true they do not need any; but as a matter of fact in South Australia they have a duty of 40s. a ton on flour, in Victoria it is £5, in New South Wales it is 30s., and also in Queensland 30s., and so they are not likely to receive our products. I cannot agree with the hon. member for Perth that it is no credit to us to tax these products, after being carried a thousand miles. I would tax them if they came ten thousand miles. Unless the people of this colony will bear with us and help us, what good is it that people will go out into the far country to attempt to turn the desert into a smiling cornfield? I intend to favor the continuation of the Stock Tax, and I do not think it is good taste of the Northern members to say, because the Stock Tax is endangered we will not continue the tax on the cereals of this colony. I do not believe the removal of the Stock Tax would reduce the price of meat one farthing a pound, if it were taken off to-morrow. I think those hon. members who want to interfere with the duty upon cereals should consider the interests of the whole colony, and not look at the matter from a selfish point of view. I would like to say with regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Yilgarn, as to land lying waste along the Eastern railway, that I do not agree with him. I would tell that hon. member that that land is available for him, or anyone else, and not only that land, but there are thousands of acres of land available for nothing.

MR. MORAN: Where is it?

MR. PIESSE: In every part of the colony. There are hundreds of thousands of acres that can be obtained as a mere gift, and if those do not suit there are as many more that can be taken up at the low rate of sixpence an acre. The hon. member represents a goldfields district, and I, an agricultural one; but I think we should all unite together to make everything satisfactory as far as possible to everyone within the colony. I heard also a request to remove the tax upon leather, and it was said we could not produce it in the colony. I would like to take those who know this colony back for 20 years, and they will re-

member that we sent away leather for exhibition in England, and that we obtained prizes too. We have a large trade in this product to-day, but it is one of those things in which the colonists despise their own industries. Some one said duty should be taken off agricultural machinery, but there is only a five per cent. duty on it now. If a plough costs £6, or even £10, the charge would only be 10s. extra to the farmer, and I am sure the farmers would prefer that the Tariff Bill should remain as it is, and they would then willingly pay the duty upon this agricultural machinery. We have a large manufactory now in the colony, and it has completely revolutionized farming by the manufacture of the stump-jumping plough. It has enabled farmers to bring land under cultivation which never would have been brought under without it. The honorable member for Perth said he would like to see some consideration shown to the farmer in the reduction of railway charges. This would be great assistance; but we want everything done that will tend to cheapen the products of the soil, and enable the farmers to send them into the market, and thus stop the universal cry about the cost of living. Before concluding I would like to say, that perhaps upon enquiry, and upon comparison with the tariff Acts of the other colonies, it may be found necessary to modify the duties with regard to raw materials that cannot be produced in the colony. That would no doubt be a great help to the manufacturers. I think the duty on mining machinery however, should remain as it is. I hope the Stock Tax will be continued for some time longer at least. Speaking from a Protectionist point of view, I think we should do all we can to protect the industries of the colony; and I ask hon. members to bear this in mind. There is no doubt a good deal to justify the outcry of dear living in the city and large towns, but it cannot be attributed solely to the cost of the necessities of life. I hope when the question comes up again for discussion that those who have the interests of the colony at heart will be found maintaining the tax on cereals in its present form, for if you insist upon any reduction, it will be the death blow to the agricultural interests of this colony.

MR. LEAKE: No one I am sure can discuss this question of Free-trade and Protection without supplying arguments to those who are opposed to him. I am conscious that I myself, in my observations, shall probably supply argu-

ments to those who do not agree with me, and, even though I run the risk of incurring the censure of the hon. member for West Kimberley, by dealing with a question that I know nothing about, I shall, notwithstanding, venture upon the discussion of this subject; and if I do err, I have no doubt, I shall err in good company,—in that of the hon. gentleman himself, that profound political economist—the clever man, not the funny man of the Ministry, the hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands, for even he, when comes to discuss this question, gets involved in inconsistencies. It is indeed difficult for anybody to steer a middle course between these two difficult and complicated subjects; either he is bound to be drawn irresistibly over to the Sylla of Freetrade on the one hand, or to the Charbydis of Protection on the other. Let me, while referring to the hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands, refer to one of his remarks. He would not like the hon. members in this House to take the whip out of the hands of the Government when dealing with the Tariff proposals. I do not quote his exact words, but I quote the meaning. That surely could not have been the result of mature thought or deliberation. No Minister can say the Ministry must have a free hand, and they must pass their Tariff proposals through the House without criticism, opposition, or alteration. If that were so I would like to know where the Ministry would be to-day? Are they going to stand by their proposals of this evening? Does any one expect they will pass their present proposals without any alteration? Without professing any profound knowledge of this very difficult question, I admit my tendencies are towards Freetrade, and particularly am I led in that direction by consideration of the fact that Protection, so far as I can understand it, increases materially the cost of living. I do not think any one can deny that that is so in this colony. The cost of living is enormous; and anything that will tend to reduce the cost of living must surely be an advantage to the country. How can we expect to reduce the cost of living when we have high specific duties, and exorbitant *ad valorem* duties, existing as high as 20 per cent? Here I think the Government have made a mistake, and have laid themselves open to the suggestion that they are only tinkering with the Tariff proposals in the measure now before the House. Had they been guided by proper principles, or by a proper system, I think we should have

found them dealing with something more than the free list. That is all that the Bill before the House deals with. It does not deal with the *ad valorem* duties, and particularly the 15 per cent. and those up to 20 per cent. If we are actuated by principles of Freetrade we shall reduce these *ad valorem* duties very considerably; and instead of extending the free list in the way it is proposed to do this evening, we shall place some of these items on the 5 per cent. list. Take, for instance, the particular items in the Schedule. Oil has produced £4,724; rice, £1,591; sugar, £13,306; tea, £12,367. Those are the hon. the Premier's figures, and yet these items are all placed upon the free list. Now, while inclined to Freetrade, I would say do not reduce these duties altogether. Do not put these items on the free list, because after all it does not materially damage the consumer. If we require the Tariff for revenue purposes, let us put these items on the 5 per cent. Schedule, and we shall then derive some revenue without materially taxing the consumer. The same arguments apply to many other items which it is not necessary now to enumerate. Any one who has listened attentively to this debate must have seen the difficulties in which the hon. members have found themselves. No one will deny that this question of Protection is anything but a system of perfect paradox. Leather has been mentioned. Well, I will give an illustration of the paradoxical position which any hon. member may find himself in upon that particular commodity. We find the tanner wants leather protected, but his next door neighbor is a bootmaker, and wants leather free, and boots protected, and his next door neighbor, who may be a teamster, and the father of a large family, wants both leather and boots upon the free list. That is only one instance out of many. You can go through this list, and find strings and strings of such instances, and therefore we come back to what seems to me one of the fairest and soundest arguments for making your Tariff a revenue Tariff; let us reduce it to the lowest possible ebb consistent with revenue purposes. We cannot, of course, abolish the duties altogether; but when we are carrying out such a public works policy as we have been indulging in for the last few years, I am entirely at one with those who argue we cannot carry it on without Protection. But, when we have an overflowing treasury chest, and a

promise of an increasing revenue, I think there is no better time to discuss the relative merits of Freetrade and Protection than the present. If we do not try to reduce taxation now, when will we be able to do so? I do urge hon. members to give the system a fair trial now. The Hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands has used the argument, which is a very sound one, reduce now while you can, because you possibly have ahead of you a rainy day, a period of depression in the future; and when that time is upon you how can you increase your revenue, if you have prior to that time forced your Tariff up to the highest possible level? Therefore I say, reduce taxation now, while you have the opportunity, and if necessity should arise for an increase in the Tariff, in the course of a few months, or a few years, you will have a margin to work upon.

THE PREMIER: We should not have the money to do it with then. We should be hard up.

MR. LEAKE: If we were hard up we should have a margin left for taxation. It is a pity you did not trip up your own colleague, for if I am wrong I am only following up his argument. I do not always support him, but I do in this instance, and in this respect, in the protection of native industries. Some hon. members said, look at prosperous Victoria; but I say look at more prosperous New South Wales. Victoria has protected itself beyond all reasonable limits, as I am informed by those who affect to understand the question, and yet she is not in so prosperous a condition as New South Wales.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Tariff has nothing to do with it.

MR. LEAKE: That may or may not be true; but there is the fact. Victoria is a Protective country, and is in a more or less depressed condition; whereas New South Wales, a Freetrade country, is flourishing and prosperous. With regard to protecting native industries, it is no use saying we must make Australia a manufacturing country, it cannot be done. So far as my reading and observations go, Australia stands but very little show of ever becoming a prosperous manufacturing country. Is it not a fact, that with regard to our staple product, wool, manufactories have been a complete failure? Why it is I do not know; but so it is, and if we cannot succeed with our staple industry, how can we ever expect to make this country a manufacturing country?

I can give an instance in point. Whilst we have clay at our own back doors we find we have to import bricks.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Where is the clay?

MR. LEAKE: All over the colony.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And they pay twenty per cent. duty.

MR. LEAKE: And yet they want more Protection. The farmers are protected, and here is another instance of results, or the lack of results. It was, I think, the hon. member for East Perth, a gentleman for whom I have the profoundest respect, who said that the farmers are protected more than anybody else, whilst on the other hand, the hon. member for Williams says the farmers cannot live.

MR. PIESSE: I did not say that.

MR. LEAKE: Well if you did not, somebody else did; if you did not say it, you thought it. The hon. member for the Murray said he could not make mining machinery now, but when he could he should expect to have a duty put upon it. I do not know whether the hon. member for West Kimberley will endorse that, as a sound principle of political economy; because it is hardly right, as it seems to me, to put a tax upon the general public to advance the interests of one particular individual. So far as the Stock Tax is concerned, I regret that I am opposed to the member for West Kimberley, for I shall certainly vote for its repeal. I confess I get most terribly confused when I hear some people who affect Freetrade principles, saying they will keep on the Stock Tax, and put something else on the free list. It is terribly confusing if you try to follow out the reasoning of some hon. members. So far as I can understand it, instead of attacking this question on general principles, their intelligence is more generally confined to the narrow groove of personal interests.

MR. CONNOR: Is not the hon. member imputing motives?

MR. LEAKE: The hon. member for East Kimberley is one of the very last persons I should have thought of referring to. I had no intention of imputing any motive to him. If we go in for Protection there is always a difficulty in the way of those who advocate the interests of the working man, because when you are protecting one working man, you are taxing another. I do not know that I desire to refer to any other question just now, but I do urge the House to consider the

desirability of reducing the cost of living in this colony; and how can we do that by simply extending the free list in the manner suggested by this Bill? I do not oppose the second reading of this Bill because I am with it in principle.

**THE PREMIER:** It is not passed yet.

**MR. LEAKE:** I am with it in principle, but it does not go far enough. We might increase the five per cent. Schedule, and reduce the general *ad valorem* duties, wiping out altogether the 15 and 20 per cent. duties. We might then strike a happy medium, which would have the effect, not only of reducing the cost of living, but would retain and maintain for the future a Tariff that would produce sufficient revenue to meet the pressing demands of this colony. But above all things, if we are to try this question, if we are to apply the principles of Freetrade, I do urge upon hon. members that this is the best opportunity that has ever occurred, and unless we take advantage of the present movement, the opportunity may not occur again.

**MR. HOOLEY:** A subject of this kind is of so comprehensive a nature that it is not surprising to find hon. members holding various opinions. Each hon. member approaches the subject from his own particular standpoint, so that it is not surprising that they should enter upon the discussion of a subject they do not understand. The hon. member for East Perth calls himself a Protectionist. He would protect those particular interests that he, or his constituents, are interested in, but he would deny Protection to all outside.

**MR. JAMES:** I never said so.

**MR. HOOLEY:** He advocated the abolition of the Stock Tax, but if the hon. member for East Perth were engaged in pastoral pursuits, he would not hold his present ideas. I can assure hon. members that, so far as that tax is concerned, there is very little protection for the squatters in it. In the North I know, and in some places in the South also, the squatting interest is at a very low ebb. Many of the squatters are not in a position to erect fences. The hon. member for Yilgarn is strong in his opposition to the Stock Tax, and instances a case in Queensland, where cattle were sold at 30s. a head. Now it is not very long ago that I had some correspondence on the question of stock raising in Queensland, and I found they could not be brought there at less than £3 10s. a head; and, considering the cost of freight, fodder, insurance, and other charges, it was

found they could not be profitably imported here. If the cattle could have been bought at the price mentioned by the hon. member, there would have been sufficient margin to have enabled people to have gone in for it. This shows the folly of the argument that the high price of meat is caused by the Stock Tax. I can assure hon. members it is nothing of the kind. No matter what the Stock Tax may be, butchers who buy at Fremantle or other places would not take into consideration the cost of raising cattle or sheep, or the cost of landing them at the port; they would simply give the price they thought them worth, apart from all other considerations. I think the high price of meat is caused by the fact that both in Perth and Fremantle every butcher has his own slaughtering establishment to maintain, and his own staff of men, and these items run up into enormous figures. I contend the butchers are not making very large profits, notwithstanding the high price of meat. I would like to impress upon the Government the desirability of establishing public abattoirs, where there could be a proper system of slaughtering, as soon as the cattle were landed from the steamers, or brought in overland. Hon. members would find that that would bring down the price of meat far more than the removal of the Stock Tax. The hon. member for Nannine calls himself a friend of the squatter, and I maintain his argument for tinned meats, in their favor is a very good one. I am not advocating the protection of one section of the community against another, but I do say the people who work in the back country, and are forced to use large quantities of tinned meats, will be very glad to see tinned meats placed on the free list. I am quite satisfied the revenue will not lose by it, and it will not press heavily upon anyone.

**MR. MOSS:** Sir, my remarks will not detain the House at any great length, because the question of this Bill has been discussed in all its aspects by a large number of hon. members. I congratulate the Government upon their efforts to relieve the burden of taxation from a large proportion of the people of the colony. The articles contained in the Schedule of this Bill are things that are used, and consumed, by a very large proportion of the people of this colony. The Hon. the Premier, in introducing the Bill, stated the object he had in view was, as far as possible, to take the duty off the raw material. That seems to have been the moving principle in the mind of the per-

son who drafted the Bill. I find raw coffee and other raw materials have been exempted from the payment of these duties. I think, therefore, this an opportune time to draw the attention of the Government to the fact, that what was almost a promise was given to the proprietors of the tobacco factory at Fremantle some time ago, and I think the proprietors of that factory have been hardly treated from its inception. I think the Premier will agree with me that at the time that factory was started, a promise had almost been made that practically no duty should be levied upon the raw material; and yet, no sooner was that factory started, than the duty on leaf was increased to two shillings a pound. It may not be out of place to mention to hon. members that the duty upon the leaf or raw material is greater in this colony than in the adjacent colonies. The Hon. the Premier stated before this House that the duty had simply been put on for revenue purposes, and that as soon as the condition of the colony justified it, the Government would make reductions. We have a large surplus at the present time, and we find the Government propose a reduction on some articles—sugar, for instance—of £13,000. The opportunity now presents itself, as it seems to me, for the Government to again use the argument, that this amount must be kept for revenue purposes. In reference to this matter I would like to draw the attention of the Government to this fact. We find from the report of the Collector of Customs that there was imported into the colony in 1893, manufactured tobacco to the extent of 10,955 pounds, and last year 18,000 pounds. We find in 1893, the value of the imported leaf,—not manufactured tobacco—was £2,200, and last year, 1894, it was £2,900, so that we see the manufactured article has very nearly doubled; while the raw material has only increased by about one-quarter. There is surely something radically wrong, for we should have thought, with the progress the colony is making, the unmanufactured article imported into the colony would have increased, but we find it is not the case, and therefore I suggest to the Government that this is a very opportune time for making a reduction. When this Bill gets into committee, if the Government will take 6d. a pound off the unmanufactured article, it will only mean a loss to the colony of £700 in round numbers. I am in a position to say that this industry is languishing; and that persons

who have sunk their money in it are receiving no return, though other interests are making returns to their shareholders. I hope the Government will deal equitably, and keep the promise that was almost made some time ago to make the reduction I suggest. We find the Government propose to make a large remission of duty levied on sugar, and no doubt but the consumer will derive a large amount of benefit. My opinion is that the profit will not go into the pocket of the consumer, but will benefit the storekeeper. With regard to the question I am now bringing before the attention of hon. members, I need hardly point out that if the sixpence per pound be taken off the raw material, we shall find a large number of hands employed in that factory. I am given to understand they will be nearly doubled; so that the loss to the colony, will be made up by the extra taxation that those people will contribute. Now I thoroughly agree with the expressions of opinion that have fallen from the hon. member for Perth and the hon. member for East Perth with regard to the Stock Tax. I think it is a tax that is entirely unnecessary, and that should be immediately swept away. I thoroughly agree with the hon. member for East Perth when he says that, if the squatters at the North desire protection, that is not the way to protect them. If they want Protection, and the Government is anxious to protect them, let the Government subsidise a line of steamers for the purpose of giving these people more facilities for bringing their stock to market. But I am sure I cannot see how it can be argued by its strongest advocate that it is not a tax that does not tend to increase the price of meat. Even taking the argument of the hon. member for the Murchison, who is a great authority on matters of this kind, representing as he does a part of the colony having very large dealings in this way, there is no ground for that assumption, for what does he tell us: He says that in Brisbane he finds that cattle can be put on board ship at £3 10s. 6d. per head. Well, even if it be so, surely a duty of 3s. per head (or nearly 50 per cent.) must be a consideration, and must make all the difference to the consumer here. It seems to me, as the hon. member for Albany has stated, that, on occasions of this kind, hon. members are apt to submit facts which, when investigated, will tell against themselves, and this is clearly an instance of it. So much for the Stock Tax. The Premier, in

introducing this Bill, said that a month or two's notice would be sufficient notice before the Act was brought into operation. Had it not been for that aspect of the question, I do not know that I would have added to the length of this debate. I hope the Government will recognise this—and, on this point, I speak with some authority, because I have been approached on the subject by some of the largest importers in Fremantle—I hope the Government will recognise this: that there are large stocks being held by merchants and storekeepers as regards several of these lines upon which the Government propose to repeal the present duty, and that it would be manifestly unfair to bring this Act into operation at once. Therefore I hope the Government will make proper enquiries from storekeepers and others concerned, so that no undue hardship be inflicted upon them. The Chamber of Commerce at Fremantle have, I believe, suggested that six months' notice should be given before the Bill comes into operation. If this period is deemed to be too long, of course it can be easily modified, but I do hope the Government will not bring the Act into force on one month's notice, as has been suggested. If that is done, all I can say is that it will be a great hardship upon large holders of some of the articles which the Bill deals with. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, but, when it gets into committee, I intend to propose one or two extra articles which, in my opinion, should come within the scope of the Bill. I want particularly, as I have already indicated, to deal with the question of a reduction in the amount of duty now charged on the raw material in the case of unmanufactured tobacco. On this particular point I hope the Government will give it their careful consideration, and, having done so, will come to the conclusion that the present is a very opportune time to carry out the pledge they gave to those persons who have largely invested in this particular industry.

MR. WOOD: Mr. Speaker—At this late hour, and at this stage of the Bill, it is not my intention to say very much with reference to the Bill now before the House. I prefer to leave what I have to say on the subject until we go into committee on the Bill. I will, however, add my congratulations to those of other members in saying I am very glad the Government have introduced a Bill which will cheapen the cost of living in this colony. I think, however, that hon. members who have

spoken are rather losing their heads in dealing with this subject, and in the proposals which they have submitted. (Dissent.) I think they are, indeed. It is Free-trade going mad, I consider. They seem to have no consideration whatever for the public Treasury. They don't care if they leave the Government without any money to carry on the administration of the country. So far as I am personally concerned, I hope I am able to take an impartial view of this question. I am neither an out-and-out Protectionist nor an out-and-out Free-trader, and I hope I may be considered a moderate man. I would like to see the products of the country fairly protected until, at any rate, the local supply comes nearly up to the demand. After all, it is to the natural products of the soil that we must look to for solid and permanent prosperity. In the course of this debate it seems to me that a lot of selfishness had been introduced. Every member who has spoken seems to have some particular wish to protect some particular thing. I daresay I may be accused of the same weakness myself. But my desire is to look at this question from a national standpoint rather than from the point of view of any particular industry; and, being the representative of a city constituency, I think I can fairly claim that I am in a position to do that. I have no particular interest to guard, and I hope that when we go into committee on the Bill, we shall be able to arrive at such an adjustment of the Tariff as may be regarded as fair and equitable. We must remember that in dealing with this question we are West Australians dealing with West Australian interests, and that our first consideration should be the interests of the whole colony, rather than of the particular interests of any individual sections of the community, or the interests of other colonies. It seems to me we have to guard ourselves against giving too much heed to the demands of people who do not belong to the colony, but who simply come here to take temporary advantage of the prosperity of the colony. A lot of these people who come here do not care two straws for West Australia, so long as they can get the produce of other colonies here free. This class of traders come here, and their anxiety is to make the best possible use they can of their present opportunities, when the colony is in the full tide of prosperity. When they have served their own purposes, when they find that the colony

no longer affords them these opportunities for making the most they can out of its prosperity, these people will simply take off their hats and go. They won't stay here to bear the burden of the depression that may follow this era of prosperity. Therefore I say our first consideration should be to look after the interests of our own colonists, those who are always with us. We must also remember the financial obligations of the country, and also our duty to protect and build up industries which will in time make us independent of the outside world, and which will bring about a state of affairs that will justify us in entering upon that great consummation which is so dear to the heart of the hon. member for Nannine—Australian Federation. When we have the local industries of the colony so built up as to be self-supporting, we may, perhaps, in the not far distant future, be ready to join with our neighbors in that great movement,—that grand idea which seems to dominate the minds of some hon. members. So far as the Stock Tax is concerned, I can only say that, when the proper time comes, I hope I shall be found on the right side of the House when the question of the removal of that tax is the issue before us.

AN HON. MEMBER: Which side is that?

MR. WOOD: Never mind which side it is. You will find me on the proper side when the division comes.

AN HON. MEMBER: Tell us which side.

MR. WOOD: On the right side.

MR. RANDELL: On the right side of the Speaker, I hope.

MR. WOOD: I know my constituents will be quite satisfied with the side I shall take with regard to that particular tax. I will say this: so far as this tax affects the price of meat I think it affects it very little indeed. It is only a week or ten days ago that I had occasion to travel by train to the Vasse, and by the same train we took a truck load of sheep—they may have been imported sheep, for all I know—and those sheep were retailed in Busselton at 6d. per lb. After being conveyed 130 miles by rail they were actually retailed at 6d. per lb. If that can be done at the Vasse, surely it ought to be done at Perth. The fact of the matter is we are over-butchered in this place. If you want to get at the real secret of the high price of meat you must tackle the butchers. There is one other point I wish to refer to. As to the time of bringing this Bill into operation I hope the Government will not hurry the matter unduly. In fact, the Pre-

mier has assured us to-night that he is entirely in the hands of the House in this matter. So far as I can make out, from the inquiries I have made in Perth, the two great items that are likely to affect storekeepers most, by the proposed repeal of duties, are tea and kerosene. We know that kerosene is an article that is not left much in bond, like most other goods. It is usually cleared straight from the ship. At any rate, so far as business people in Perth are concerned, I should say that there is about six weeks' supply of tea and kerosene in the hands of retailers—not very much more. I cannot sit down, Sir, without referring to what has fallen from the hon. member for East Perth (Mr. James). The lofty way that hon. member patronises some of us humble individuals, is really quite refreshing. He seems to take a particular interest in myself, as the representative of another part of the City. I am sure I am much obliged to him. He said he hoped my constituents would be satisfied with my action in regard to this Bill. I can only assure him that I am quite sure my constituents will be satisfied with all my actions in this House. The hon. member need not concern himself about that.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I rise simply to say a word or two with regard to the effects that some of the proposals put forward by members in the course of this debate may have upon the revenue of the country, next year, if those proposals are accepted. The hon. member for Perth (Mr. Randell) enumerated a long list of articles which he proposes to include in the Bill. I do not know whether the hon. member has gone through the Customs returns, and seen how the revenue would be affected by the inclusion of these articles in the Schedule of the Bill. I am afraid he has not.

MR. RANDELL: Only for 1893.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): If the hon. member had referred to the Customs returns for this year, he would have found that if his proposals had been in operation this year, the repeal of all these duties would have affected the revenue to the extent of £56,000 or £57,000. My friend the Premier tells me it would be about £60,000.

MR. RANDELL: According to the Customs returns for 1893 the difference would be about £20,000.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): This year I believe it would be about £50,000. Next year, with the usual increase of popula-

tion and the consequently larger importations, the difference would probably amount to £70,000 or £72,000. Therefore it should be borne in mind what effect the hon. member's proposals will have upon the revenue if they are adopted. Then, again, it must not be forgotten that, last year, owing to the large failure there was in the crops throughout the colony, very little local chaff, and very little wheat and flour, and very little oats were produced in the colony, and that, consequently, there were very large and unusual importations of these articles during the year ended the 30th June last; though I am glad to say that the crops this year are likely to be very good indeed—larger, possibly, than has taken place for many years past. But last year, according to the Customs returns before us, the duties in respect of imported chaff, oats, and flour amounted to £23,581; and, if we produce that quantity locally this year, or the duties are repealed, we shall lose about £30,000 from these sources alone, if the hon. member's proposals are accepted.

MR. RANDELL: You must set against that the larger purchasing power of the community.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): No doubt with an increasing population the consumption will be larger. I simply wish to point out these things, so that they may be in the minds of members when they come to consider what vote they will give when these proposals come before us, having in view the effect they will have upon the revenue. There is another aspect of the question. The hon. member for Katanning—I beg his pardon; the hon. member for the Williams—said he hoped the farmers of the colony would soon be able to supply such articles as chaff, oats, wheat, and flour in sufficient quantities to supply the local demand, and that in the meantime we must try and bear with the taxation which is imposed for the protection of his friends, the farmers. I do not quarrel with the hon. member for putting forward that idea; it is all very well from his own standpoint. But if the same idea is carried out in other directions, where is the line to be drawn? Another hon. member may ask us to do the same thing with regard to other people,—that is, to bear with them in the taxation they ask in the way of protecting themselves. I simply wish to note the fact that the butchers, the bakers, the tailors, the shoemakers, and the brickmakers—the latter to the extent of 20

per cent.—also ask us to bear with them in the same way as the hon. member for the Williams asks us to bear with his friends the farmers. Every trader in the community asks us to bear with him in this respect, and therefore I feel somewhat inclined to turn round upon the hon. member. It must not be forgotten that the less money there is left in your pockets, the less money you will have to spend. For instance, I hope to be able to keep a horse before long, and I hope I may buy my oats and my chaff from the hon. member for the Williams; but, so long as I have to bear with these other gentlemen around me, who also ask us to protect them, in this way, I am afraid I shall not have enough money to keep my horse. If members will look at these matters from that standpoint, I think they will be inclined to admit that there is something to be said on both sides of the question.

MR. CLARKSON: I think it is to be regretted that the Government have thought it proper to bring in this Bill at all. I really do not know why they did so. As far as I know, there has been no outcry in the country for a reduction of taxation. It is said this Bill is intended to benefit the working classes. I am myself an employer of labor, and all I can say is my men get higher wages now, and get their provisions—their necessities of life, as they are called—at lower rates than they have done for the last 25 years; and I hear no complaint from this class. Then, again, we are spending borrowed money in all directions—some people say we are spending it too freely, and I often hear the question asked, "How are we going to pay the interest and provide the sinking fund for all this money?" Instead of decreasing taxation, I think the general opinion is that it ought to be increased, in order to meet all these obligations, and that it will very shortly have to be increased, in some way or the other. Although our revenue is rising rapidly I think it is known to us all that our expenditure is also increasing rapidly. I think it is rather bad policy on the part of the Government, just at this present time, to talk about reducing taxation, when there is really no outcry for it. No doubt this question of the Tariff is a very vexed one, but if we once commence to tinker with it, where shall we end? There are hardly two members in the House who are of the same opinion on the subject. One wants the duty taken off one article, another wants



it taken off something else. The hon. member for Yilgarn wants to get rid of the Stock Tax and to impose a tax upon land.

MR. MORAN: Unimproved land.

MR. CLARKSON: The hon. member may be a very high authority upon gold mines—I believe he is; but, when he talks about a land tax he is simply talking about what he does not understand. He is going beyond his depth. The hon. member tells us he is inclined to go in for a land tax, because those who own land pursue what he calls a dog-in-the-manger policy with regard to their land. Why, Sir, we have hundreds and thousands of acres of land which we are actually giving away. The great difficulty, I believe, with the Government is to induce people to go on the land at all. Yet the hon. member for Yilgarn tells us we ought to have a land tax. We are asked, with one hand, to give the land away, and, with the other hand, to tax it. Is not that absurd? I say we should make things as easy as possible, in every direction, for those who are willing to occupy the land. I can assure the hon. member there is very little to be made out of it. Now, as to the Stock Tax, I maintain that the tax does not make a difference of one fraction to the consumer. The stock imported here is, when landed, put up at auction and sold to the highest bidder; and if, as we are told, a beast costs £2 or £3 in Queensland, the mere fact of there being a Stock Tax of 30s. or £30, does not affect the price of that beast when it is brought here and sold by public auction. The butcher perhaps buys it for less than it cost the man who sent it over here. It does not affect the consumer in any way—not one jot. Then, again, there is this point: the landlord who lives on the land, as a rule, employs a large amount of labor, and I ask how can the working man prosper if his employer does not prosper? I am not going to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but I tell you candidly I regret that the Government have thought proper to bring it in at all, for I do not think this is the time for reducing taxation, when we are spending borrowed money in all directions. If we have a surplus revenue I should prefer to see it spent in developing the resources of the country. I do not think it is wise at this time to reduce taxation, and decrease our revenue.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I certainly cannot agree with the hon. member who has just sat down, that this is not the time the Government should reduce taxation. I think if ever there

was a time in the history of this colony for remitting taxation, the present is the most opportune time for doing so, and I think the Government have acted wisely in proposing it. I regret, Sir, that they have not seen their way to proceed further in that direction than they propose to do in the Bill now before us. I am also of opinion, Sir, that it would have been wiser if the Government, instead of dealing with some of the articles on the special list, had dealt more with the *ad valorem* duties. I agree with the hon. member for Albany in that respect. They make a great deal of their proposal to repeal the duty on tea and sugar, but, although these articles bring in a large revenue to the country in the aggregate, I do not think that the duty upon them is much felt by the general consumer. We do not hear of people complaining of the high price of sugar or tea. Though the duties yield a large revenue on the whole, I do not think that individually the tax is much felt. With regard to the other articles included in the schedule of this Bill, they may be said to be of minor importance, and do not produce much revenue to the country. I notice that one of these articles is rice. I wonder that some of those fire-eating advocates of the exclusion of Asiatic labor have not strongly protested against the proposed abolition of the duty upon rice. These Asiatics, I suppose, are the largest consumers of rice in the colony; I suppose they consume more of it than the rest of the community put together. As I have said, I regret that the Government, in dealing with this question of the Tariff, did not deal with some of the articles on the *ad valorem* list, such as clothing and boots, and articles of that kind. The removal of the duty upon these articles would have been appreciated by the community a great deal more than the removal of the duty from the articles mentioned in this Bill. We are always having the "working man" thrown at our head, and his interests advocated; yet we find that in such articles as boots and clothing, which are important items in every family, the working man is heavily taxed,—more so, as regards his boots, than the wealthier classes, because, upon low-priced boots there is a special duty amounting to about 30 per cent. *ad valorem*, while the higher class of boots are only charged 15 per cent. I hope the Government will see their way to deal with some of the articles included in the *ad valorem* schedule, and so relieve

those who can really ill afford to pay such duties. I think that members who represent the goldfields have great reason to complain with regard to this Bill, and the small amount of relief it will afford the mining population, who, being solely consumers, are now taxed in all directions for the articles which they use or consume. We do not see that the goldfields' population have been considered in the slightest in this Bill. There is still the duty on their mining machinery, and the duty on tinned meats, of which they are very large consumers, and I do not see that they will benefit at all from these proposals of the Government.

**THE PREMIER:** What about sugar and tea? What about kerosene?

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** As I have already said, the duty on sugar or tea is not felt. Tea and sugar are cheap enough. Nor is the duty on kerosene largely felt by the mining community generally. Kerosene is not used on the goldfields to the same extent as it is in the other parts of the colony.

**THE PREMIER:** They use it for their engines.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** I don't think so. They have found that these oil engines are a failure.

**THE PREMIER:** It was urged upon us very strongly.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** We saw it stated lately that an oil engine tried on one of our goldfields was a complete failure for driving gold stampers. I submit that taking the duty off kerosene will not benefit the mining population very much. It is not for me to speak up for the goldfields' population; they have their own members to look after their interests. But I cannot help thinking that the goldfields' people have not been considered very much in this Bill, although they are a very large consuming population, and, as such, contribute largely to the revenue of the colony. Not only are they taxed through the Customs, but they also have to pay double freights on their railways. In some cases—timber for instance—they have to pay four times as high as is ordinarily charged for the carriage of timber over some of our railways for export. I say the goldfields people are taxed to the very highest they possibly can be, and I think their members have very good reason to complain at the small measure of relief which this Bill provides for them. I do not intend to detain the House at any length, at this stage, as all these matters will have to be threshed out in com-

mittee; but, representing a pastoral constituency, as I do, I cannot sit down without dealing with that much-vexed, and what is becoming rather a sickening subject,—the Stock Tax. So far as the stock tax is concerned, I should like to point out this: while we continue to tax every article the pastoralist consumes—his tea and sugar, his clothing, his boots, his saddlery, and everything he uses or consumes—I cannot consent to vote for the abolition of the Stock Tax, which is the only measure of relief or protection that we give him. I am sure we have sufficient stock in our Northern Territory to satisfy the wants of the people of this colony, if proper means and facilities were provided for bringing that stock to market. Stock at present can actually be brought to our markets cheaper from the other colonies than from our own northern districts, for the reason that they have full ships trading in the intercolonial trade—filled with passengers and goods—which enable them to convey goods at low rates; whereas, to send a ship up to our Northern ports to bring down stock costs a lot of money, seeing that the vessel has to go up empty, and can only bring back a few stock. It would be better if the Government, rather than repeal the Stock Tax, were to devote the revenue derived from that tax to subsidise vessels to bring down stock from our Northern areas. Then the consumer would derive some benefit, as he would have cheap meat—if cheap meat is possible under existing circumstances. The main reason why you cannot get cheap meat now is the absence of facilities for bringing stock down, and the absence of facilities and conveniences for killing your stock when it is brought down to the vicinity of the centres of population. Until these conveniences are provided, and public abattoirs are established in convenient places where stock can be kept and fed, and afterwards killed near the great centres of population,—until this is done, I fail to see how meat is to become cheaper. If the duties are to be removed from all the commodities that the Northern settler consumes, I shall be quite prepared for the abolition of the Stock Tax. But I think it would be most unfair to the Northern settlers to remove the only little Protection they have, in the shape of this Stock Tax while at the same time you tax them for everything they require or consume. I congratulate the Government upon their having

made a move in the right direction, in starting, during a period of prosperity, to reduce the burden of taxation. I only regret they did not see their way clear to go further in the same direction. We have a very large surplus at present, and we know perfectly well that when we have a surplus it will be spent, and, very often, not wisely spent. We could not have a better time for reducing taxation than in a time of prosperity. When a time of depression arrives, as we may expect it will some day, we shall then, if we reduce our taxation now, have something to fall back upon when the necessity arises for increasing our revenue.

MR. MARMION: I do not intend to traverse the remarks that have been made by previous speakers in the course of this debate; I rise principally for the purpose of stating I do not think it is necessary at this stage that I should refer to the petition from the Chamber of Commerce, at Fremantle, entrusted to my care. I have already intimated my intention of introducing that subject for discussion when this Bill is under consideration in committee, and it is still my intention to do so. I only refer to the question now because it has been suggested by some members that there is no necessity for delaying the coming into operation of this Bill, as the stocks in hand (of the articles included in the Schedule) are not large, and therefore no great injury would be done by bringing the Bill into operation at once. On that point, I think I think I am justified in stating that the Chambers of Commerce at Fremantle and Perth, and those who are associated with those bodies, are more likely to understand the actual position of affairs in this respect than the hon. gentlemen who have spoken on the subject to-night. Therefore I trust that, when the time for discussing this question arrives, the opinions of these representative commercial bodies will receive the full weight they deserve. Some hon. members have referred at great length to the principles of Free-trade and Protection. That is too large an order to be discussed at this stage. No doubt the time will come when the question of Free-trade and the question of Protection will have to be discussed upon their merits in this House, or some future House. No doubt that hereafter it will become a burning question, and may be the means of unseating Governments. But I do not think there is any necessity for dealing with these great questions at the present time. What I mean to say is that

the Tariff now in existence is simply a compromise. It is certainly not a Free-trade Tariff, nor is it a Protection Tariff, except for purposes of revenue. It is in reality what I say—a compromise. If you look through the existing Tariff, although there may be some little fault to find in regard to some small matters, still I think it will be found that, (speaking generally), those things are taxed which can be produced in the country or which can be manufactured in the country, and that goods which are admitted free are, as a general rule, those which cannot be produced in the country, or which are of assistance to our local manufacturers. On the whole, I do not think there is much to find fault with in our present Tariff. But I want to warn hon. gentlemen of one thing. Speaking now as the representative of one of the centres of population, I wish to warn the producers of this colony—that is, the growers of corn, flour, hay, chaff, butter, bacon, and all those commodities which are largely consumed in the centres of population—I wish to warn them that they must not expect to have these industries protected as they are at present, unless those engaged in these producing industries are prepared to extend the same need of protection to the manufacturing industries of the colony. While saying that, I would also warn those who live in the centres of population, and who expect to have their unmanufacturing industries bolstered up, or to be protected (if I may use the word) at the expense of those who are not manufacturers, but consumers,—I would also warn these that, while this protection is afforded to them, they, on their part, must be prepared to assist other interests and other industries in the colony. The shoemaker must not say, "I want to have boots taxed"; the harness-maker must not say "I wish to have saddlery taxed"; the coachbuilder must not say, "I want to have carriages taxed"; the boat-builder must not say "I must have boats taxed"; and so on with other manufacturers, unless they also are prepared to extend the same helping hand to other struggling industries that stand in need of Protection. If you protect one industry, you must be equally fair to all. If you say you are not prepared to protect all these particular interests alike, and to give them all some little help in the way I have referred, you must then be prepared to pull down the whole edifice at once, and to go in for a Free-trade Tariff all round. When the

country is in a position to adopt that Tariff, I shall be very happy to do all I can to assist it. But at the present time I think we must be content with a Tariff which is a compromise between the producer on the one hand and the consumer on the other, each one willing to give a little assistance to the other. I am very pleased to find that the Government have come to the conclusion that the colony is now in such a prosperous condition that it can afford to lose a little of its revenue, in order to assist the consuming population generally, who, after all, will derive the most benefit from this Bill. No particular industry, I think, will benefit by it, or suffer by it, to any appreciable extent. I only wish the position of affairs had been such that the Government could have placed other items on the free list. I believe there are others that might be included; some of them are included in the list suggested by the hon. member for Perth, and I trust the Government may yet see their way to add to the Schedule of the present Bill, if they can do so without materially injuring the revenue, or doing an injustice to any particular interest in the colony. I will not detain the House longer at this stage, because when the Bill goes into committee we shall have ample time and opportunity for discussing each item upon its merits.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** Before the debate closes I should just like to say one or two words. I wish in the first place to thank members for the generous spirit in which they have generally criticised the Bill, I can only say that the Government have given the matter their most careful consideration with regard to the items included in the Bill. At the same time we did not suppose for a moment that we would be able to please everyone. It must be apparent to members that we did not propose to deal with the whole Tariff. We simply proposed to add to the free list; and, so far as I can judge from the remarks of members generally, the items selected by the Government have met with general approval. The question of the date when the Bill should come into operation is, of course, a very important one. We have two classes of people to consider. On the one hand we have the merchants and traders, who, of course, are represented by the Chambers of Commerce; and on the other hand we have the general

public of the colony, who wish to be relieved from these duties as soon as possible. I do not know why we should altogether consider one section of the community alone. I think we should rather consider the interests of both. I should much regret to do an injustice to those who hold large stocks of these articles which we propose to place on the free list; at the same time I think we should require very definite information with regard to the quantities held by these persons before we continue to subject the whole community to these duties longer than we can help. As regards the question referred to by my friend the hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Marmion)—that of Freetrade and Protection—I think, as he said, it is rather too big an order, it is too large a question, to be dealt with at this hour of the evening. But I may say this, with regard to those who live in the larger centres of population, and who are engaged to a large extent in manufacturing industries,—the present Tariff (that is, the Tariff of 1893) was framed largely in their interests. Let hon. members look at the 20 per cent. list alone. There they will find boats, carriages, waggons, furniture, saddlery, and many other articles of more or less importance; and, if they look at the 15 per cent. schedule they will find the same thing. Therefore I cannot for a moment admit that in the Tariff of 1893 the manufacturing interests of the colony were in any way overlooked. There was great pressure brought to bear upon the Tariff Commission by those interested in the manufacturing industries of the colony. They were well represented, and were heard in evidence, and I believe their demands were carefully weighed; and it seems to me their interests at any rate, were not overlooked, whoever else were overlooked. The hon. member for the Gascoyne seems to think that we have altogether overlooked the goldfields in the alterations we now propose. I join issue with him at once. There is scarcely an article on the list that will not be an advantage to our goldfields population. Take the first item: "Arro root, sago, tapioca, cornflour, and other farinaceous foods"—are these not consumed on the goldfields? "Blankets and rugs," again; are these not articles that every miner in the colony uses? Then we have "cocoa and coffee"—are these not used on the goldfields. Then there is "mineral oil." With regard to that all I can say is that the greatest pressure

was brought to bear on the Government by mine owners in the Coolgardie district to have the duty removed from mineral oil. We reduced it in the first place 2½d. a gallon, but they were not satisfied with that; and now we propose to take off the duty altogether. Then there is another item, "rice;" that is an article which is largely consumed everywhere on our goldfields. "Sugar and tea," again; these are articles largely consumed by people on the goldfields—equally as much so, if not more, than in other places. Therefore, I altogether take exception to the hon. member for the Gascoyne saying that the Government have altogether ignored the goldfields population in this Bill. All I can say is that this colony has been trying to do its very best to assist those who are seeking for gold on our goldfields. We have embarked on great public works, and have burdened this country with an immense loan expenditure not for anyone's interests particularly, but in our own interests; still it was for the development of these goldfields, and the benefit of the people who have gone there, and who are still going there. In fact, no one can say that we have not tried to do our very best to promote the interests of these goldfields. As to the proposals of the hon. member for Perth, so far as I have had time to look at them, no doubt some of them are very good; and, if we could afford it, no doubt most of us would wish to go with the hon. member in that direction. But there is such a thing as doing too much at once, and therefore we shall have to carefully scrutinise his proposals before we can think for a moment of agreeing with them. The Government proposals will entail a reduction of £50,000 in the Customs revenue, and the hon. member's proposals would probably entail a further loss of £70,000, or £120,000 altogether. Now, £120,000 taken off £500,000 (which will probably be the amount of our Customs revenue next year) is a good lot,—over twenty per cent. reduction at one swoop. I think, myself, that is going rather further than the country would be justified in going at one leap. No doubt our revenue is increasing, but so also have our obligations increased. The revenue, I am very glad to say, is largely in excess of the estimate for the year, and I am also very glad to tell this House that the expenditure for the year has not exceeded the estimate. Still, our obligations are increasing, and we must be careful that

we do not go too far in reducing our revenue. There is one other subject—I do not intend to discuss it, though it seems to have become a sort of standing dish—which I wish to refer to, and that is the Stock Tax. Why, Sir, I believe this question of the Stock Tax is getting to be almost as good an Election cry as the Education question. I really cannot look at that tax in the way it has been put forward by some hon. members, nor do I think that some of the statements are intended to be taken seriously. For instance I do not think my friend the hon. member for East Perth could have been serious when he suggested that the Government should subsidise ships to bring cattle to the city from Northern ports, for the simple reason that if the Government were to subsidise ships in this way, there would be no real difference to the consumer. If he did not pay the Stock Tax, as a taxpayer he would be compelled to bear his portion of the subsidy, and it would really come to one and the same thing in the end. There would be no difference at all.

MR. JAMES: Except that everyone would pay for the ships.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Oh, then what would be meant by a subsidy for ships to bring stock down, would simply be that my constituents at Bunbury would be paying a tax from which they could derive no benefit, in order that the constituents of the hon. member for East Perth might get cheap meat. There could not be any benefit to the whole colony by the arrangement suggested, and if the hon. member for East Perth and those who think with him, want cheap meat in this way, they should pay the cost and not other people who will derive no benefit. Altogether I fail to see that there is any good reason whatever in such an arrangement for by it, the whole of the people of the Colony are to be taxed in order that the constituents of such members as the representative of East Perth, should get cheaper meat, than they can get under present circumstances. There is a better and more legitimate way out of the difficulty than that proposed and that is by opening up to the stock raisers of the Colony, every possible means of transit. Let us push on with building our wharves, our jetties, and our railways and we can then bring to market the best stock that any colony can produce. There are thousands of head of stock in the

Kimberley district ready for market, but they cannot be got here. The want of facilities for shipping and other means of transit simply means that it costs more to bring stock from the Kimberley than it does to bring stock from the other colonies. When sufficient means of transit are provided we will not want to go outside our own colony for all the stock we shall require. For another thing, I do not anticipate that the other colonies will go on supplying stock as they have been. At the present time cattle are shipped here from Adelaide and other places and I am content that it should be so, in order that we can have cheaper meat than would otherwise be the case, but when we have opened up the means by which our own stock can be brought to market, the risks of shipping and the cost will prevent the continuance of the importation of stock from the other colonies because of the competition with our own stock, which, as I said before, will be quite sufficient for the whole colony when facilities for bringing them to market are provided. I have nothing more to say at the present stage, Mr. Speaker, excepting to express my thanks to hon. members for the generous way in which they have received the Bill.

Motion put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### EXPENDITURE FROM LOANS AND REVENUE UPON RAILWAYS AND ROLLING STOCK.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, in accordance with notice, moved for a Return, showing,—

1. The total cost of all Government Railways now completed, inclusive of stations, etc.
2. The total cost of all Rolling Stock to date.
3. The total amount expended out of Loan Funds on Railways and Rolling Stock.
4. The amount (if any) expended on Railways or Rolling Stock out of General Revenue.
5. The total amount of interest being paid on Loan moneys expended upon Railways and Rolling Stock.

Question put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 17th July, 1895.*

*Return showing times of arrivals and departure of Bunbury-Busselton trains—Laying of ships' moorings at Quindalup and Busselton—Works Department calling for tenders when funds not available—Neglect of s.s. Australind to call at Broome—Goldfields Bill: first reading—Applications for Homestead Leases—Construction of Mount Park Road—Agent-General Bill: third reading—Criminal Evidence Bill: second reading—Arbitration Bill: second reading; referred to Select Committee—Partnership Bill: second reading; referred to Select Committee—Justices Appointment Bill: in committee—Message from His Excellency: assent to Bills—Municipal Institutions Bill: second reading—Adjournment.*

#### BUNBURY-BUSSELTON TRAIN SERVICE.

MR. COOKWORTHY, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways why the Order of the House with reference to the laying of the return upon the table of the House showing the departures of the evening trains from Busselton, and the arrivals of the same trains at Bunbury, had not been fully complied with.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that the full return would at once be laid upon the table, and he regretted that it had not, through an oversight, been done previously.

#### LAYING OF SHIPS' MOORINGS AT QUINDALUP AND BUSSELTON.

MR. COOKWORTHY, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether it was the intention of the Government to lay down ships' moorings at Quindalup and Busselton, and if so, when.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied as follows:—

The Chief Harbor Master advises the Government that he does not recommend that moorings should be placed at these ports, inasmuch as there is ample anchorage ground, and shipmasters prefer to use their own anchors and chains where there is plenty of room to veer. Some years ago moorings were laid at Fremantle, Bunbury, and the Vasse, but were rarely used, for the above reason.