loss of customs. I can hardly quote the Post Office as having been reproductive, because it was almost always worked at a loss. However, we lost our Customs, but the State has progressed in spite of that. My reason for supporting the movement is not the loss of anything we have to contribute to the support of the Commonwealth, but the want of sympathy, the want of friendship that the people of the other States show towards this State. I dare say that this movement will be taken up throughout the Commonwealth itself, and if the people speak out in every State in the same way as they will in this State, I am positively certain that the tactics of the Commonwealth authorities must alter, or else the union must be dissolved. I have not thought this matter out with regard to what I have to say, but I intend to support the motion of the hon. member for the reasons I have given.

On motion by the Hon. W. Maley, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8·12 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 4th October, 1906.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4·30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Works: 1, By-laws passed by the Port Hedland Roads Board. 2, Capital Cost of Fremantle Harbour Works—Particulars.

RAILWAY WORKSHOPS INQUIRY.

MR. BOLTON'S CHARGES.

FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSION.

The Premier brought up the report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the charges made against certain officials in the Railway Department.

Report received, read, and ordered to be printed with evidence; the consideration of the report made an order for next Tuesday.

QUESTION—ABATTOIRS AT KALGOORLIE.

Mr. WALKER asked the Premier: In view of the fact that tht Swan Meat Company recently received permission from the Kalgoorlie Roads Board to erect and establish a slaughter-yard, can the Government give any definite idea when the Kalgoorlie public abattoirs are likely to be started?

The PREMIER replied: Provision has been made on this year's Loan Estimates for the work. The plans have been put in hand, and it is anticipated that the department will be in a position to call for tenders in two months time.

BILL—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Works, and read a first time (in lieu of Bill introduced previously in the Council, and withdrawn to avoid irregularity as to the House of origin).

BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.

THIRD READING.

Mr. J. VERYARD (in charge of the Bill) moved that it be now read a third time.

AMENDMENT.

Mr. H. BROWN moved an amendment—

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

Having been out of the Chamber when the second clause was passed in Committee, he must again oppose the Bill, which sought to give to bakers, on the third Wednesday in every month, a monopoly of the sale of bread. In Perth and suburbs much bread was sold by grocers, who would on that day be prohibited from selling or delivering it. Yesterday the hon. member stated he had never known him to do anything for the benefit of the worker. He was as good a friend of the worker as was the hon. member, and, unlike him, had never lived on the workers, but had worked all his life.

MR. P. STONE supported the amendment. The Bill would prove a hardship to many Perth bakers who sent up-country by rail hundreds of loaves per day.

MR. T. WALKER: If the mover of the amendment really believed that an injustice would be done to a few grocers, he could have easily inserted an amendment permitting those grocers to sell; but his object undoubtedly was to deprive hard-working men of one holiday a month.

MR. H. BROWN: The bread-carters had the holiday. The Bill sought to favour the employer.

MR. WALKER: Certainly not. Was it a hardship to give the carters one holiday a month?

MR. H. BROWN: No.

MR. WALKER: Who would suffer by it? Was it worse than any other holiday, or the weekly holiday on Sunday? What pleasure could the hon. member find in depriving of a holiday the hardest-worked men in the community?

MR. H. BROWN did not wish to deprive the men of the holiday; but the public should not be inconvenienced. Let the Bill be recommitted.

MR. J. EWING would not support any amendment to kill the Bill; but if bakers were in the habit of sending out bread every day in the week, farther consideration was required. Would it be possible to recommit the Bill after this vote was taken?

MR. SPEAKER: If the Bill was to be recommitted, the amendment must first be withdrawn.

THE PREMIER: Could the Bill be recommitted without notice given?

MR. SPEAKER: The Standing Order provided that—

> Amendments may be moved to such question by leaving out "now" and adding "this day three months," "six months," or any other time; or the question may be negatived, or the previous question moved.

There was no alternative but to put the amendment.

Amendment put, and negatived on the voices.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

IN COMMITTEE.

Resumed from the 2nd October; MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair, the PREMIER in charge of the Bill.

Clause 39—Poison leases:

THE PREMIER: This clause was fully explained on the second reading. It repealed Sections 70, 71, and 72 of the principal Act, practically abolished poison leases, and made it lawful for the Minister to grant a certificate for the issue of the fee simple for a poison lease granted under the principal Act or any regulation, if he were satisfied that the conditions of the lease had been substantially fulfilled, notwithstanding that the poison plants had not been entirely eradicated for any prescribed period prior to the expiration of the lease. Cases of hardship had been instanced on the second reading, principally that of the Tone Estate. After Mr. Tone had spent £4,000 or £5,000 in eradicating poison, he died. The Curator of Intestate Estates, in the interests of the beneficiaries, decided to proceed with the improvements, and some £5,000 was spent in farther eradicating poison; but the work was not completed two years before the expiration of the lease; hence, as the law now stood, the beneficiaries were not entitled to the freehold. The provision was first made because Parliament thought the fact that the land could carry stock two years prior to the expiration of the lease would be good evidence of the thorough eradication of the poison. Members would recognise it was fair and reasonable after the conditions had been complied with and the poison

thoroughly eradicated that the title should issue.

Clause passed.

Clauses 40 to 49—agreed to.

Clause 50—Amendment of Section 96 (Pastoral Leases).

AMENDMENTS TO STRIKE OUT OR REDUCE.

MR. BUTCHER: The object of the clause was to increase the rental values of pastoral leases throughout the State. This Bill was unquestionably dealing a great injustice to those who would probably later on take up land which was at present vacant, with the object of stocking and improving it. Of course it would be understood these areas at the present time were unoccupied for some cause or other. The best land no doubt was taken up and it was only the inferior land that at present was open to selection. It was unreasonable to expect that the people who thought the land not fit to take up at the present rental would take it up at an increased rental. He was not afraid that the increased rent would affect the present leaseholders, because it could not do so. It was impossible for people to take up the balance of the pastoral areas and make a success of them at the increased rental. In South Australia, in the Northern Territory areas, the rental was something like 1s. 6d. per 1,000 acres, and in the Kimberleys, which was precisely the some country, we were charging 5s. per 1,000 acres, and now the Government sought to increase the rental to 10s. per 1,000 acres. Coming to the areas in the North-West, the Gascoyne and the Murchison country, in South Australia, on similar country, the rentals were much under those charged in Western Australia. It was useless to expect the land still available would be taken up if the Government increased the rent. He moved—

That the clause be struck out.

THE PREMIER: It had been recognised generally by members that the rentals paid at the present time in the northern portions of the State were exceedingly low. This clause provided that the leases in the South-Western Division, which at present were let at £1 per 1,000 acres, should remain as they were, while in the Western and North-Western Divisions the rental was increased from 10s. per 1,000 acres to £1, and 10s. per 1,000 acres was the price fixed in the new Central Division. The rental in the Eastern Division was increased to 5s. per 1,000 acres in place of 2s. 6d. for the term of the lease, so that it practically meant in the northern portion of the State the rents had been increased. These increases would not affect many of the present holders, but those who had not taken up land under the 1898 Act, when their leases expired, would come under the clause and have to pay the increased rentals.

MR. TROY: What formed the Central Division?

THE PREMIER: The Central Division was in the vicinity of Kalgoorlie and the Eastern Goldfields. The North-West would be farther up. Then there were the Kimberley Division and the South-Western Division, practically embracing the whole of the agricultural areas of the State extending from Geraldton southward by a line some 100 miles east of Northam. That boundary would remain as at present.

MR. TROY: It was a very big jump from 10s. per 1000 acres to £1 for these leases, particularly when we remembered that the best portions of the pastoral areas were taken up. All that remained was country which was not so serviceable as other portions. He did not think it possible the clause would be struck out, but it would be advisable we should reduce the rental from £1 to 15s. per 1,000 acres. The Government might meet the hon. member in that way.

MR. UNDERWOOD agreed with the member for Gascoyne. In the North-West there was much land that could well afford to pay £1 per 1,000 acres a year, but the whole of that land was taken up, and what was left was not worth more than 10s. per 1,000 acres. A revision of the rents should be made, but all the land should not be placed on the same level. Poor land was bound to be left on the hands of the Government if such were done.

THE PREMIER: Persons who stocked their land were entitled to a rebate of half the rental under Section 100 of the principal Act, so that it followed pastoralists were paying 10s. per 1,000 acres if they complied with the conditions.

MR. TAYLOR: In speaking on this measure he had urged the Premier to do something to make leaseholders on the goldfields areas stock the country they held, and which they had held for many years to the detriment of the farther pasturing of the State. There were a large number of leaseholders in the Eastern Goldfields, covering an area from Coolgardie to Lake Way and Lake Warramboo, holding country unstocked and which could only be retained for speculative purposes. People having stock in other parts of Australia desirous of settling here saw the thousands of acres taken up and that they were shut out. We should enforce stricter conditions. He wished to see the lands of Western Australia utilised to their fullest value, both in the agricultural areas and the pastoral areas. He had no desire to work hardship on any people, and the condition proposed would not be very hard even on the people the member for Gascoyne represented, because if they stocked up to the conditions, they would get a rebate of half, so that they would only have to pay 10s. If land was not worth 10s. it was not worth anything. Squatters were pretty intelligent, and they would not take up land that was no good. The clause should be carried as it stood in the Bill.

MR. BUTCHER: In some districts there might be areas of pastoral land almost unused; but such was not the case in all parts of the country, though in his district there were some sinners in this direction. There were holders of areas there at the present time who had held them for a great number of years; and the land was in an unused condition. But if the rental were three times as great as at present, that would not have the effect of bringing the land into use. A man prepared to take up a big area for speculative purposes was a man of large means, and what did he care about a little increased rental? It would have no effect unless we had a compulsory stocking clause. All those areas nearest to the ports and railway stations, those most accessible, those supplied with water and so forth were already occupied, and they were granted at a certain rental. We were going to increase the rental of those other unused areas farther from the ports and railway stations by 50 per cent. or more, and that was unfair to those who would come in afterwards. He would be willing to meet the Premier in some respects. He did not wish to strike out the whole of the increase, if the hon. gentleman would make the amount 15s. The Premier somewhat misled the Committee, though not intentionally, when he said there was a rebate which applied to pastoral districts. There were districts which would have no rebate at all, and it was a mistake to create farther anomalies.

THE PREMIER: It had been stated that this proposal would not affect the annual rent. [MR. BUTCHER: It would do so only in the case of leases which expired.] Those leases which would expire amounted to a very considerable area. On the 31st December next year those leases taken up under the 1887 regulations would expire, and their area was 21,301,000 acres. In the Eastern Division, it meant that they were to pay 5s. instead of 2s. 6d. as at present. The Eastern Division was the whole of the country to the east of what was known as the Central Division. The Central Division included all the area within a certain radius of the goldfields, whilst the Eucla Division extended from Starvation Boat Harbour eastward to Eucla. The South-Western Division was practically the present South-Western Division, extending as far north as a little beyond Northampton, and coming round the coast as far as Hopetoun and east as far as Burracoppin, whilst the North-Western extended from Northampton right up as far as about 19·30 degree of latitude, almost up to La Grange Bay.

MR. BUTCHER: Let the proposal apply to those leases which were expiring.

THE PREMIER: New country was being taken up every day, and why should not these people pay the increased rate, the same as the holders of the 21 million acres?

MR. BUTCHER: That was of increased value.

THE PREMIER: We had only the hon. member's statement for that. There had not been an increase of rental in the case of the Eucla Division, for owing to the inroads of rabbits it did not seem reasonable to impose an additional tax on the holders of that land. In view of

the fact that the Government were spending and intended to spend a considerable sum of money in putting down bores to help the squatters, it was only fair and reasonable that we should get some little additional rent.

Mr. TROY moved an amendment—

That the words "one pound" be struck out and "fifteen shillings" inserted in lieu.

The Government should see their way clear to accept the compromise. The charge of £1 was too much, because the areas now available in this particular division were not provided with the same facilities as the land already taken up. In the district of Mount Magnet all the pastoral country adjacent to the railway and with a fair rainfall was already taken up and held at 10s. per thousand acres; and intending pastoralists in that district, after the passing of this Act, if the amendment were not agreed to, would not get the same class of country nor the same facilities as the pastoralists already in the district, yet they would be called upon to pay double the rent. That was unfair; and as very little was being done for these pastoralists, the compromise should be accepted. The amendment would raise the present price.

The Premier: To what it was now in the South-West.

Mr. TROY: There was a good rainfall in the South-West Division. The land in the South-West was worth five times the value of the land on the Murchison.

The Premier: All the good land in the South-West was taken up for agricultural purposes. It was only the poor land that was let for pastoral purposes.

Mr. TROY: At Kellerberrin pastoralists held land which was fit for agriculture, and which was worth ten times the value of the land in the Murchison district. If we doubled the rent we would not encourage people to take up land under lease on the Murchison. They would go elsewhere.

Mr. BUTCHER: It was true that the areas now available for pastoral purposes in the central districts of the State were not worth £1 per acre. For years past pastoralists had found it difficult to pay the present rent, but the amendment was a fair compromise.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Government should accept the amendment. The member for Mt. Margaret said that if this land was not worth £1 per acre it was worth nothing, but the hon. member with all his great pastoral experience did not know the country in the Nullagine district, where there were millions of acres worth nothing, and where it was necessary, in order to secure the small alluvial flats, to take up great stretches of worthless country, which someone had described as only fit to carry two beasts to the thousand acres. There was much country for which the lessees could not afford to pay £1 a thousand acres, and if that rent was charged the land would remain unoccupied. People were holding country on the Oakover and Davis rivers and between Nullagine and Peak Hill, and the State would not be losing any thing if we let them have the land rent free, because anyone going out to that country endeavouring to raise stock deserved well from the State.

The PREMIER: When all was said and done, the additional rent would only mean an increase of £6,200.

Mr. Butcher: But that was an annual charge.

The PREMIER: Yes. On the other hand, improvements were being effected by the Government in the way of putting down bores and giving better facilities.

Mr. Taylor: And opening up stock routes.

Mr. Butcher: That was all of benefit to the State.

The PREMIER: The Government were now putting down a bore 67 miles from Derby at a cost of £3,000, practically half the estimated increase in the revenue.

Mr. Heitmann: How many people would be affected?

The PREMIER: Some held millions of acres. There were people like Copley and others in the Kimberley who would be affected, but they could stand the increase. At present squatters were undoubtedly the most prosperous class in the community, and it was reasonable to insist on the increase. If the member for Gascoyne allowed this clause to go through, and made an amendment later on with regard to the rebate for stocking, increasing the number of stock per thousand acres, he (the Premier) would be glad to consider a rebate on those conditions.

MR. BUTCHER: It would not be wise to increase the number of stock per thousand acres, because much of the country was not capable of carrying stock. It had to be taken up, because the minimum was 20,000 acres, and one was bound in taking up land to include the inferior country. The average carrying capability of the Murchison country was about one sheep to 20 acres, so that a man would need to take up 1,000 acres to carry 50 sheep.

MR. TAYLOR: But the rebate was then secured.

MR. BUTCHER: The rebate did not apply to that area. In the Gascoyne district the country was better. It would carry 100 sheep to 1,000 acres, taking it from one end to the other; but many parts of that district would not carry 25 sheep to the thousand acres. It would be absurd to add to the stocking clauses so as to put more stock on the country than it would carry. All he desired was a compulsory stocking clause. We should not allow a man to hold millions of acres unstocked in one district because he was running stock on another lease. We should not impose an additional burden on people honestly doing their best to improve the country; and we should not compel people either to stock their land beyond its capacity or pay double rent, while the man alongside with the same class of country was paying half the rent and could not be touched for 20 years.

THE PREMIER: Accepting the argument of the hon. member that a thousand acres would carry only 50 sheep, it meant that the pastoralists paid 10s. for 50 sheep, and the average profit on a sheep was 5s.

MR. BUTCHER: Sheep could not be fed for nothing. The expenses were extremely heavy.

THE PREMIER: For 10s. the pastoralist kept 50 sheep for 12 months and derived £12 10s. from the wool. That was a very good return for the money invested in rent.

MR. TROY: In the Mt. Magnet district the land would carry 50 sheep to the thousand acres, but they could not be kept without water.

MR. SCADDAN: The Government spent money in finding water for the pastoralists.

MR. TROY: Not in the Mt. Magnet district. The Government put down a bore at Broome, and proposed to put one down at Derby, but not in the Murchison. Sinking wells and erecting windmills cost money, and the pastoralist must fence his thousand acres or employ men. There were 16 men employed on the Gabiong station. After the costs were met very little was left to the pastoralist. The question whether the squatters were the most prosperous people in the State should not come into the argument at all. We should not charge the affluent person more than any other. We were not going to increase the rental of the squatters who now held land, but the increase of rent would be on the lessees who came in afterwards.

THE PREMIER: Twenty-one million acres fell in next year.

MR. TROY: Land on the Murchison now available was far from as valuable as the land already held.

THE PREMIER: If the member for Mt. Magnet would read Clause 57, he would find that it was inserted to prevent pastoralists from converting their leases from the 1887 to the 1898 regulations to avoid the increased payment.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Mt. Magnet was under a wrong impression in regard to the position the Government took up as to the development of the back country. If the member would wait until the Loan Estimates came before the House, he would find that an attempt was made to deal with the question of artesian boring. Considerable expenditure was going on every year in connection with the opening up of stock routes. On all sides people wished the Government to do everything, and thought they should contribute nothing. People should recognise the large amounts spent by the Government, and therefore the Government were fully justified in seeking to obtain some return.

MR. WALKER: There was something to be said for an elastic charge in the various districts. No doubt some country was not worth 5s. per 1,000 acres, but included in the areas affected by the rise in rent was some exceedingly good land, and the circumstances under which the additional rents would be charged were such as to justify the

Government in taking the step, because the country now was not to be compared with what it was when the original pastoralists went on the land. Although we had not taken the railway right away to the North-West, yet we had brought markets closer to the pastoralists and spent large sums of money in exploration, and it was just possible that in the Pilbarra district we should be constructing a railway within a short space of time. Our mining development along the track to Peak Hill had done something towards conserving water and constructing dams. The country had improved and a better market was supplied. The chance of the squatter to-day was not to be compared with the chance of the squatter when the member for Gascoyne first took up land. From this time forth the country must of necessity improve and go ahead. In these circumstances there was no possible wrong in making an addition to the charge that was proposed. It would not be the new squatters who would bring the revenue to the country, but those who would pay were those who had enjoyed an immunity for years and whose leases would fall in in a couple of years time.

Mr. TAYLOR: The arguments advanced by members in support of the re-reduction seemed strange. Had this demand been made some years ago there would have been justification for it, for the early settlers in Western Australia, both agricultural and pastoral, had a very bad time. For the last ten years squatters had made more money in a legitimate industry than any other class of people in this country, and they were in a position to pay an increased rent for the concessions received from the State. It was said the Government gave nothing to the squatter. All Governments since Responsible Government had been most liberal to people who settled on the land. The Government had opened up stock routes and conserved water to enable stock to be driven to the markets on the goldfields. The squatters were getting nearly to the terminus of the railway. Eight years ago when the House reduced the tax on stock, it did not cheapen the meat to the consumer, but the squatter benefited. Nor would the clause raise the price of meat to the consumer. The meat ring argued that a reduction of £1 on seven or eight cwt. would not admit of reducing the retail price. The Government could not open up stock routes without some return from the land leased to squatters. The £3,000 to be spent by the State on a bore would not be recouped by the rent of the whole country side; and in view of the items on the Loan Estimates for the opening up of stock routes the clause should stand. Years ago, in New South Wales and Queensland the squatters, who not only held the country but owned the magistrates and every contrivance for crushing the workers, used the same flimsy argument that we heard here against closer settlement, that they could not squat except on millions of acres. Yet to-day from five to ten squatters were satisfactorily growing wool on land alleged to be too poor to support more than one pastoralist. Pastoral members complained that our country would not carry stock; yet lecturers were sent abroad to advertise our valuable land. On the goldfields was magnificent pastoral country, but if overstocked it would not stand a drought. Having had full experience of sheep, horses, and cattle, he knew the necessity for preventing men from holding large areas for speculative purposes, to the detriment of the State.

Mr. BUTCHER: With all due deference to the human encyclopædia who had just sat down, he would compare the country we were discussing with lands similarly situated in South Australia, and the respective rentals. Our boasted liberal land laws could not withstand the comparison. In Western Australia, the squatter paid £25 rent for 100,000 acres, while for similar land in South Australia he paid £2 10s. in the hundreds, the pastoral areas of the Northern Territory, down to the agricultural areas where wheat growing was possible. There was only an imaginary line between the Northern Territory and East Kimberley; yet Connor and Doherty paid 1s. 6d. a thousand acres in the Northern Territory, and on the other side of the border 5s., and now our Government sought to charge them 10s. Farther south we charged the squatter £25 per 100,000 acres, while South Australia charged him £5; for 400,000 acres we charged £100, and South Australia £36, under precisely similar conditions; and the

carrying capacity of the South Australia runs was higher than ours, and the rainfall the same.

MR. COLLIER: Why should we be foolish because South Australia was foolish?

MR. BUTCHER: Then why boast of our liberal land laws? Years ago, in South Australia many squatters abandoned their holdings; and to promote fresh settlement rents had to be reduced. Here the squatter paid four or five times more than in South Australia; and to double the rents would be altogether unfair to present and future leaseholders. He would support the amendment, though it did not go far enough.

MR. JOHNSON: The intention of the Government was to increase the rents in the Kimberleys and the Western Division?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

MR. JOHNSON: The member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) said the money spent by the Government justified our increasing the rents of future lessees. Surely not. Present leaseholders held the best part of the country, and when the leases fell in during the next 12 months the rents should be increased by 50 per cent.; but the settler in new country, far from ports and railway communication, should be assisted to make a start, should have the same facilities as the older settlers had at the commencement. New country should, for a given term, be let at a lower rental than old.

MR. MALE supported the amendment, though it did not go far enough. The Government assumed that all lands in an enormous district were of equal value, though the values varied with distance from port, with river frontages, etcetera. In 1904 it was realised by South Australia that the rentals charged were not based on proper values, and a board of commissioners was appointed under the new Pastoral Act to deal with the area, boundaries, and annual rental of pastoral leases. Had we such a board of commissioners here, it would be easier to determine the fair rental for our areas. In South Australia the terms were much easier and fairer for the new squatter; their tenure was 42 years, except in localities likely to be suitable for closer settlement, where the tenure was fixed at 21 years; and rents were subject to periodic reappraisement. In South Australia, encouragement was given to the station-holder by allowing a remission of rent on land surrounding within a radius of 100 miles any artesian water discovered on land hitherto unwatered, and if a holder succeeded in discovering a permanent supply of 5,000 gallons per day suitable for stock he was granted a remission of 10 years' rent. Again—and we had a lot of this class of land in our State—when an application was made for land unoccupied for three years and situated more than 50 miles from seaboard, a peppercorn rental only was charged for the first 10 years, for the next 10 the rental was only 6d. per square mile, and 2s. a square mile during the remainder of the lease. These conditions were much more favourable to the man who desired to take up new country than was the clause under review, which really penalised the new man. The Premier had used the argument that by stocking, pastoralists could secure a rebate. But that was merely farther penalising the new man, because the man who was established and had his land stocked would pay only 5s. a year per thousand acres, while the new man would have to pay £1 for similar or inferior land. He would support the amendment.

MR. HAYWARD: The land should be classified. In the South-West Division it was well-known that all the best of the country was taken up in the early days and now held at £1 per thousand acres, with the result that those who took up land in recent years had to pay at the same rate for inferior land. To classify all the lands of the State might involve considerable expense, but it should be done in order to arrive at an equitable basis of rental for pastoral leases.

Amendment (to reduce) negatived, the clause passed.

Progress reported and leave given to sit again.

BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

Schedule of four amendments received from the Legislative Council now considered in Committee.

No. 1—Clause 2, line 1, after "in" insert the words "sections three to thirteen inclusive of":

The ATTORNEY GENERAL moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to. The reason for the amendment was explained by amendment No. 2, which was to add a new clause exempting wool and stock from the operation of the Bill. He had looked up the Victorian Act, on which this Bill was largely drawn, and found this exemption was included therein.

Mr. TAYLOR hoped the amendment would not be accepted. The suggestion was, in other words, to exempt Dalgety and Co. and the large squatters, who if they required a loan could obtain it with greater ease than could the poor man who desired to raise a loan on his chattels, and whom it had been thought fit to bring within the scope of the Bill. He desired to hear the reasons which prompted the proposed exemption.

Mr. WALKER would also like to hear some reason for the exemption. It was scarcely sufficient to say the amendment was on the lines of an Act in existence in another State. Why should wool and stock be exempt? If the ordinary chattels of the small householder were brought under the Bill, why not also wool and stock? No explanation was given excepting that this was on all-fours with an exemption in another Act from which this measure was drawn.

At 6·30, the Chairman left the Chair.
At 7·30, Chair resumed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Presumably the reason for the amendment by the Upper House was that portions of the State were far removed from the Supreme Court, where under the provisions of this Bill the necessary documents had to be filed. If such provision was necessary in Victoria where this Act was in force and from which this Bill had been copied, it was much more so in Western Australia, where the distances were comparatively speaking much greater. It was not correct to say that this was ancient legislation. We could not successfully resist this amendment, and for that reason and for the reason that the precedent on which this Bill was founded established the same position, he suggested that it would be wise to assent to it.

Mr. TROY: The amendment absolutely changed the whole character of the Bill, in that it exempted the persons referred to from the operation of the measure. These people had no more right to be considered than any other class of individuals. If we were legislating on behalf of the country, let such legislation apply to all parties.

Mr. TAYLOR: The mere fact that the Bill was practically a copy of similar legislation in Victoria was by no means justification for our accepting it. The amendment indicated a desire to exempt a section of the community, and there was no justification for such exemption. If it was necessary for a person who wanted to raise £30 or £40 on goods and chattels to give certain notice before that could be done, how much more necessary was it for the large man dealing with thousands as a wool grower? If the provision in the Bill would press harshly upon anybody it would be upon the small man, because a man with small values had a greater difficulty in getting an advance than a man of large means. It would bring no hardship on the squatters. He knew how easy it was for a squatter to obtain a loan on his clip after it had reached a certain growth. Why should these people be exempt? Was this House appointed for the purpose of passing legislation for Dalgety & Co. or for these large holders of pastoral areas? The possessor of wool, stock, sheep, and land, no matter under what condition it was held, would be exempt. That was an absolute absurdity. The Committee should rise to the occasion when they found legislation sent here protecting people of this class as against another section of the community; that imposed hardships on one section of the community which we were not prepared to impose on another. The necessity of this Bill was urged by the Attorney General, and this was the very provision which the Attorney General fought hard for. The member for Gascoyne had pointed out the hardship this would work and the member for Kimberley had pointed out the necessity to make an exemption in the case of people in outlying districts, and the Attorney General was forced to

make some provision to meet the case of people beyond the reach of the telegraph system by extending the period from seven days to 14 days; yet on top of his former attitude, because another place recommended exempting squatters wholesale the Attorney General now discovered that this legislation was copied from legislation in Victoria. The hon. gentleman had fought to put outlying districts on the same level as the metropolis, but now accepted an amendment for such a wholesale exemption in that spineless way in which the Government generally accepted amendments from another place. It should be remembered that Victoria was the most conservative of our States, and that her legislation was the worst we could follow. Members should picture the squatter able to raise money by a bill of sale at a moment's notice, and the unfortunate poor man, endeavouring to get money on his household goods, being hampered with every restriction. We should not allow these restrictions to be placed on the poor man, as was desired by the democrat from Kalgoorlie. [MR. SCADDAN: The alleged democrat.] It would be better to lose the Bill than to bend and wobble to another place so plastically. Squatters were to be exempt, but the honest, hard-working man was not to get consideration. This legislation should apply to all, and not to a class. Labour members were twitted for advocating class legislation, but he challenged the Press and the Government who laid that accusation against Labour members to compare this amendment, where it emanated from and the spineless attitude of the Government, with legislation the Labour party advocated; then they would see where class legislation came from. The Attorney-General should say straight out that he would not accept the amendment, and the responsibility of losing the Bill would be on another place. The Attorney-General was the man with the backbone of steel, who was going to make a mark in this country, who was not going to bend and twist in matters of land, who said that no Government should bend to the wish of this or that party, but that they should take an honourable and straightforward stand that would endear them to all sections of the people and inspire confidence in the country. Here was an opportunity for the hon. gentleman to show his strength, and for the Government to rise to the occasion and tell another place that if they desired to legislate for the squatocracy of the country, the Government were not going to aid them. By this exemption we would exempt Dalgety & Co., while imposing restrictions on the poor man.

MR. WALKER: The hon. member had put the matter in a nutshell. If we accepted the amendment it would be the most distinct class legislation ever proposed. The amendment practically proposed to exempt from the clauses of the Bill a certain class of goods. No reason was advanced for this, except that squatters lived at great distances from the metropolis, and that this was copied from the Victorian Act. If squatters were to be exempt on the score of distance, were there not many miners and business people situated at great distances from metropolis who should also be exempted? Why was this special material of the squatter exempted? Because here we came face to face with the most powerful institutions in the State, the banks who advanced the money, and such wealthy firms as Dalgety & Co. In this instance, the Labour party was fighting against class legislation, and insisting that the same drastic laws and inconveniences put on the poor man desiring to borrow £50, should be placed on those who dealt with the big banking and financial institutions. The fact that this was copied from Victorian legislation, was not sufficient reason. The clause having been omitted from the first Bill was enough to show that it should not be now inserted. It was put in by another Chamber more intimately connected with the big banking institutions. Victoria was about the worst State in the Commonwealth to copy in connection with liberal legislation. Especially in connection with matters concerning banking institutions and wool merchants, Victoria was undoubtedly the worst model we could set up. Probably in the early stages of a State's development, when the staple industry was wool, there might be some reason for such an amendment; but that reason did not exist now. Where was the democrat in this kneeling down to the old fetish of the wool god, and the golden calf? It was purely legislating

for the rich. If members desired to do justice, we should insist that the man who required a loan on his household goods should have just the same privilege as the richest bank in the State, or the richest squatter in Western Australia. That was justice, that was law; but if there was favouritism, and one section of goods and one section of people was to be excluded, and all the inconvenience be be placed on the poor citizens, let not the Government call itself democratic, but what it was, an up-to-date class Government.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was impossible for some members to discuss anything without allowing themselves to be carried away with passion that could have no origin unless they were incapable of indulging in honest criticism. Presumably the reason for the distinction made in Victoria in the Act, and presumably the reason made by another place, was because the stations were not to be found in any sort of juxtaposition to the metropolis or the court where the bills had to be filed.

Mr. Taylor: Why did not the Attorney General say that, when the Bill was before the Chamber?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Because the provision was not in the Bill. These stations were not within the mischief of the Bill. If members examined the records they would find numerous cases that supported the passage of a measure of this character, and there was no case in which the holder of station lands occurred, which would farther necessitate the extension of the Bill to the owners of stations. This was said to be a class measure; surely if anything was prominent now-a-days, it was that the lands of the State were made available to anyone, no matter to what class he might belong. Those who would pretend to be the enemy to the existence of class were perennially talking about it. Let members assume that their argument was justified. As far as land was concerned it was absurd to talk about class, for every person in the community had an opportunity of becoming a landowner in the State. It was impossible to shut ones eyes to the passage of the Bill through another place. This measure had one of the most difficult passages that any Bill ever had in this State. It was hung up, executed, and then by some marvellous means came to life again and was passed. We would be foolish, if we thought the Bill worth anything, in risking any farther attempt in such a place, because the inevitable result would be the loss of the measure. The Bill as it stood was worthy of being placed on our statute-book, although the clause as suggested was not one he himself would be the author of. As these people were found by experience not to be within the mischief of the Bill, therefore although they were the exception, the Bill would work as much good with the exception as without. This measure was directed against the large trading firms dealing here, who every member knew gave no credit until they got a bill of sale. Local business people, on the contrary, give credit to the last moment, and found, when the crisis came, the individual whom they had trusted, had filed his schedule and was in the hands of the big merchant.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Attorney General was not the originator of the clause, but it originated in another place, and the argument of the Attorney General was that if we attempted to repudiate anything that another place had done, that other place would reject the Bill. Did one ever hear such a miserable cry and wail about the whip of another place? The Attorney General, when accused of spinelessness because he accepted the Council's amendment, shed tears of blood. He (Mr. Taylor) would not sit in silence to pass legislation for Dalgety and Company and other financial institutions already on a high pedestal, and to crush the workers. He cared not what the capitalistic Press might say in the morning. He knew its value and the value of those who wrote for it. According to the Attorney General the large landed proprietor had a soul above robbing anybody. What about the New South Wales land scandals? Those implicated were not poor men. This was absolutely the most appalling amendment sent to the House within the last six years—class legislation pure and simple, in the interest of the wealthy pastoralist and detrimental to the small man at a great distance from civilisation and desirous of borrowing money. Reject this atrocious amendment even if we

lost the Bill, and try, before next session, to educate another place to the need for doing justice to all. The Attorney General was in a weak mood, because another place had given the Bill a rocky time. The hon. member said we must accept the amendment or lose the Bill. We should lose the Bill and let another place be responsible for it. As long as he (Mr. Taylor) had the confidence of the people of Mount Margaret he would never lend himself to legislation exempting one section of the community and persecuting another section. The Legislative Council had pointed out what "sheep" meant and what "wool" meant. Fancy telling a lawyer what "wool" meant when the hon. member had been fleecing for years! The Government had been firm in not acceding to the request of their supporters in this Chamber to grant exemption to people living in outlying districts, but they were supple enough when another place desired to exempt wool growers. Members who would accept the amendment should advance some reasons. The Press might not take a note of those reasons, but they were recorded in *Hansard*. This Bill would work a hardship on people in the agricultural districts and on the goldfields, while the squatters were to be exempt by this atrocious amendment. Members should say a word on behalf of their electors.

MR. HORAN: The hon. member would not give members a chance to do so.

MR. TAYLOR: Rather than pass such legislation, it would be better to lose the Bill, and let the onus rest on another place. It would be better to have no legislation on our statute-book that would have a crushing effect on the people, until we educated persons to know that already we had too many of these class laws. As a Minister with a democratic mental fibre, he had found how difficult it was to administer Acts of a conservative character. It was a miserable position for anyone to be placed in. He would prefer to lose the whole of the 34 Bills now before Parliament rather than pass this measure. Ministers who were in their political swaddling clothes should not be too eager to accept amendments from another place. In the past he had raised objections to Bills. Every objection he had raised against the Arbitration Bill had been proved up to the hilt, and he could see injustice in this measure.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment, which he did not altogether like, could not be described as extreme class legislation. If members would look at the definition of "station" they would find that it included not only the big squatter but anyone who depastured cattle on his property. There were plenty of small men in the pastoral industry who were exempted under the clause, just the same as the big men; but there were big merchants in this State who in the past had had unfair advantage over small tradesmen. How many of these merchants were bigger than the squatters? This Bill would touch these people. Despite the somewhat unfortunate amendment, it would be well for the Committee to accept the measure. If members referred to the original Bill, they would see the time limit there stated was 14 days, although the member for Mt. Margaret had said that the time limit was either 7, 14, or 21 days. The Bill came in with a 14-days limit, and left the Chamber with that limit. This measure did not exempt one portion of the community, for it not only exempted the wealthy squatter, but the small man also. Because an amendment was sent to us in this Bill, that was no reason why we should refuse relief to a considerable number of small tradesmen in the community who desired to see the Bill passed.

MR. TROY: The Attorney General would have acted wisely if, when the objection was first raised to the time limit, he had extended it. When the Bill was before the Committee he (Mr. Troy) endeavoured to have a longer period stated for the lodging of a caveat to suit people living in outlying portions of the State. If another Chamber had provided that any industry situated in remote portions of the State might be exempted, then the measure could not be regarded as a class law; but another place had singled out one industry for exemption. Could not the Attorney General now provide that all persons resident in remote portions of the State should be exempt, because every person besides the pastoralist in the far distant areas would be placed at a disadvantage; We should not legislate for any class or

party, and this amendment was exclusively in the interests of one class. In order to save the Bill he would vote for the Bill if the Attorney General would provide that all persons situated in remote portions of the State should be exempt as well as pastoralists and agriculturists, so that there should be no class distinctions but justice dealt out to all persons alike.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This Bill was not directed against small tradespeople, but wholly and entirely against the large trading firms who were the grantors, the people who obtained the benefit of these bills of sale. The measure was intended to protect small tradespeople, because they were the very class of people who gave credit. Had he had the opportunity and power to frame legislation solely according to his own ideas, it would not have been on the lines of the inclusion of a clause of this character; but at the same time he wished the Committee to understand that the mischief which the Bill was meant to meet and defeat would be met and defeated by its means, although it did include this clause, because as a matter of experience we found that the particular mischief did not occur in the case of individuals who were engaged in this form of occupation. Should we have the Bill when it achieved the end it was meant to achieve, or should we abandon it rather than accept an amendment which under other circumstances we might feel very strongly inclined to reject? He preferred to have the Bill. Let us put on our statute-book a measure that would cure a real evil.

MR. SCADDAN: The Attorney General did not argue whether the amendment was necessary or not. Members were not arguing against the Bill, but were contending that the amendment as suggested by another place was simply of a class nature and should not be accepted. The amendment referred to pastoralists only, and the most peculiar thing about it was that the gentleman responsible for this amendment did not represent a pastoral district, for he represented the West Province; yet he came down with the amendment so nicely worded, and it was accepted immediately by the Government in another place. Why this desire to exempt these particular people? The Attorney General did not throw any fresh light on the subject, and he (Mr. Scaddan) was not prepared, even at the risk of sacrificing the Bill, to accept the amendment.

MR. DAGLISH: The peculiarity of the amendment was that it dealt with stock on stations in an entirely different fashion from that in which stock not on a station were dealt with; therefore, if a man pursuing an avocation in Perth or in the suburbs or on the goldfields was using stock for the purpose of earning his livelihood, his stock could be included in a bill of sale, and the provisions of this Bill would apply, but if the same man had the same number of stock on a station, then the provisions of the Bill would be entirely inoperative. What could be more distinctly class legislation than a provision of that description? The mere fact that stock were treated so differently if on a station from what they were if not on a station proved the class nature of the amendment, and in his opinion entirely justified the Committee in refusing to accept it.

MR. TAYLOR: If stock were on a station, they were exempt from this clause. It was not usually a small person who had stock on a station, whereas a person who had stock which were not on a station was likely to be a man in not too good a financial position, and consequently his stock were included. The amendment on its very face bore the stamp of class legislation. It proposed that the provision should not apply to bills of sale on wool or stock. The people who owned wool had no difficulty in raising money, and no restrictions were placed on them. The conditions to obtain money were made as easy as possible. In the case of people who had chattels only to the value of £50, these restrictions would be imposed, and the Bill would operate to their detriment. The Attorney General had not convinced any person in the Chamber, who desired to exercise the faculty of thought, and not to exercise the faculty of blind loyalty to a Government on all occasions. He did not want to see repeated the unholy spectacle which was witnessed in relation to the educational question. He did not wish to see a repetition of that ignominious back down. There were members who

violated the wishes of their constituents on that particular point and supported the Government when pressure was brought to bear on them. If these Council's amendments received the same public ventilation as the school fees regulations, Government supporters would again be taken to task by their electors. The Attorney General and the Minister for Works differed hopelessly in their opinion as to how this amendment would affect the Bill. Laymen in the House were too eager to accept legal opinions from the Attorney General, who had, the other night, been tied up by another lawyer, the member for Dundas (Mr. Hudson). The remaining legal luminary (Mr. Foulkes) was also absent. Counsel's opinions were often upset by Judges. Report progress until the members for Claremont and Dundas were present. If they agreed with the Attorney General, he (Mr. Taylor) would admit himself mistaken.

MR. DAGLISH: Probably the Minister for Works was correct.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes; for it was hard for a lawyer to forget how such an amendment would affect his profession.

THE CHAIRMAN: What had this to do with the amendment?

MR. TAYLOR: The Minister for Works and the Attorney General disagreed as to the effect of the amendment; hence we should report progress, not allowing the Committee to be led into a trap. It was most unsatisfactory that a Notice Paper should be brought in with four amendments from another place, and members expected immediately to grasp their meaning. We should sacrifice the measure rather than sacrifice a principle. Progress should be reported to give members an opportunity to obtain legal advice untainted and unprejudiced in any way by politics concerning the effect of this amendment. Before the Attorney General forced this atrocious amendment on the country, which would ruin and damn the future of many people, members should have breathing time so that they could see the effect of the amendment on each clause of the Bill.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: There was nothing on which it was necessary to obtain legal opinion except what was conjured up in the mind of the hon. member. There was no need to report progress.

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

Ayes	...	...	15
Noes	...	...	11
Majority for	...		4

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Davies	Mr. Eddy
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Heitmann
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Horan
Mr. Gull	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Hicks	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Walker
Mr. Layman	Mr. Ware
Mr. Male	Mr. Troy (*Teller*).
Mr. N. J. Moore	
Mr. Price	
Mr. Smith	
Mr. Hardwick (*Teller*).	

Question thus passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2.—Insert the following new clause to stand as Clause 18:—

Sections three to thirteen inclusive of this Act shall not apply to any bill of sale of wool or stock, separately or combined, on any station, made *bona fide* for valuable consideration. The term "station" means any land used wholly or in part for the purposes of depasturing stock, whether the same shall consist of freehold land or land held under lease or license, or partly of freehold land or partly of land so held. The term "stock" means and includes any sheep, cattle, or horses:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This was the subject that had been so fully discussed. He moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to.

MR. SCADDAN: Apparently the Attorney General did not understand the amendments. The records showed that the Colonial Secretary had moved the first amendment. Therefore this amendment could not be treated as consequential.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: As a matter of fact the first amendment did not relate to the matter which had been discussed at such a length, having been moved by the Colonial Secretary by instructions from the Parliamentary Draftsman in order to insert in the definition clause a purely technical provision relating to certain clauses added to the Bill in the Assembly at the suggestion of the member for Dundas. The discussion on the subject matter of the second amendment had really taken place

on a purely technical amendment dealing with an entirely different matter.

Question passed, the amendment agreed to.

No. 3—Insert a new Clause (Duration of Act):

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This amendment gave the Bill a three-years duration and would enable the effect of the measure to be seen. He had no doubt, because of the fact that the Bill had been so successful in other States, that it would be renewed. He was willing to allow the measure to prove itself on trial. He moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Question passed, the amendment agreed to.

No. 4—First Schedule, strike out all the words after "Fremantle":

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to. Clause 3 of the Bill provided that before a bill of sale could be registered under the principal Act, notice had to be lodged at the office of the registrar of the court and certain prescribed fees paid; in some cases seven days' notice had to be given. Members had pointed out that fourteen days was stated to have been wrung out of him as a concession; but it was in the original Bill as printed, and if the wringing process did take place, it was before the Bill was brought down. The effect of the amendment was that Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Northam, York, Bunbury, and Geraldton, named in the first clause, were struck out, and the seven days' notice made to apply only to Perth and Fremantle and any places not exceeding 20 miles from Perth and Fremantle, and that fourteen days be applicable to all places outside that area. Power was conferred in the same clause that the Governor by *Gazette* notice could add to the number of municipal districts. If a longer interval was not necessary, it remained open for the Governor-in-Council to proclaim any municipality in addition to the two in the first schedule, and there places would come under the clause that required seven days' notice.

Question passed, the amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair; the ATTORNEY GENERAL in charge of the Bill.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Bill had included in it the amendments made by municipal conferences, and he would draw the attention of the Committee to the amendments as they were reached.

Clause 1—Short Title:

MR. DAGLISH desired to draw the attention of the Government to the amount of consideration they were receiving as compared with the consideration they gave to the Government of which he was the head. This Bill was allowed to pass the second reading, as it should, without discussion; but when he (Mr. Daglish) had introduced a Bill to amend the Municipal Act, it was met with absolute obstruction on the part of the Premier and other members sitting with him then on the Opposition side. He wished to point a moral for the benefit of the Premier, that in the immediate future when he happened again to be sitting in Opposition, the hon. member should follow the example set by the present Opposition.

THE PREMIER realised it was a sore point with the member for Subiaco that when he was Premier unfortunately he had not marshalled his forces, and the Opposition secured an adjournment of a fortnight against the Government.

MR. DAGLISH: We were not playing the game; they were.

THE PREMIER: The Opposition had an opportunity, when the Attorney General was moving the second reading, to ask for an adjournment.

MR. TAYLOR: The Attorney General pleaded with the House to allow the amendments from the intellectual municipal conferences, which covered many years, to be included in the Bill. The Attorney General pointed out the necessity of members taking cognisance of the recommendations of the municipal conferences; and the Committee allowed the amendments to be inserted. When the Labour Government brought down similar legislation to this, also the Health Bill, forces were marshalled against them.

THE PREMIER: We put the Navigation Bill through for that Government.

MR. TAYLOR: It required a lot of piloting. He was assisted in some degree by the Premier, who was then new to politics and had not become contaminated by evil associations. The Opposition had helped the Government in every way with this measure, knowing how it would affect the local governing bodies of the State. It was to be hoped the Attorney General would not force the Bill through the Committee stage to-night.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—Divisions:

MR. TAYLOR: How far were the Government going?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Any important amendments he would draw the Committee's attention to; but the Bill had been before the Assembly ever since the first week Parliament met, and it was no good members saying they had not had an opportunity of considering it.

Clause passed.

Clauses 3, 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Interpretation:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The definition of "Road District" had been inserted at the request of the municipal conference. The addition to "surveyor" of the words "or engineer," and of the words "and includes building surveyor" was also made at the request of the conference. The addition to the definition of "street" of the words "or any such thoroughfare of less than sixty-six feet in width which the council may by public notice declare to be a street" was made by himself. In the definition of "way" the words "not being a street or road" were inserted at the request of the conference.

MR. SCADDAN suggested an amendment—

That after the word "municipal" in the definition of "outlying district," the words "or roads board" be inserted.

We had a certain clause in the Bill which permitted of annexing an outlying district to a municipality. Clause 24 dealt with petitions for the exercise of the powers contained in Clause 11. We said then how the petitions should be drawn up. The only definition we gave of an outlying district was that it was not part of a municipal district, so we made it read that a municipality might annex part of a roads board district by obtaining the signatures of 20 owners of property outside a municipality. That was not desirable. In consequence of the extent of some of our municipalities and the general policy of a great number of them to expend the greater portion of their rates in the central portions of the municipalities, the outlying districts, though paying rates, received no benefit. Some portions of municipalities, especially on the goldfields, had been agitating to be cut off the municipalities, considering they would get better treatment from a roads board.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member wanted to provide for certain restrictions on the expansion of municipalities and the inclusion within municipalities of adjoining territory, where the outlying territory was part of a roads board district. There was no such thing as an outlying district of a municipality which was not within the jurisdiction of a roads board. The hon. member would see that under Clause 11 the only power that the Governor could exercise would be to annex an outlying district forming with the district of a municipality one continuous area. The words "outlying district," as far as this measure was concerned, meant that which joined a municipality and was not part of a municipality already.

MR. SCADDAN: The definition was very clear from the standpoint of a municipality, but not from a roads board standpoint. An outlying district was any land outside a municipality, whether it was within a roads board district or not. He knew of cases where there had been considerable difficulty in dealing with this matter. The Kalgoorlie roads board had been continually corresponding with the Works Department and the Crown Law Department, asking for a definition. They had had portions of their territory annexed to municipalities against the wishes of the residents. They endeavoured to get a clear definition and could not do so, and they now desired to make it perfectly clear. The Attorney General could raise no objection to these words being inserted. They would have no actual effect beyond making the defi-

nition clear from the roads board standpoint.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member's definition would deprive a municipality of the possible right to expand by including the whole or any portion of an adjoining district. The only power the Bill reserved to the Governor-in-Council was power to annex an outlying district or portion of a district which formed with the municipality one continuous area. Provision was made also to sever any portion of a municipal district and annex it to a roads board district. The discontented people of whom the hon. member spoke would thus be relieved, if they could convince the Governor that they had a good case.

MR. DAGLISH: Better fight this question on the clauses dealing with the conditions of annexation. From a municipal standpoint the only outlying districts were those which adjoined the municipality.

MR. WALKER: The definition of "street and road" seemed rather peculiar: every thoroughfare being 66ft. or more in width, or any thoroughfare less than 66ft. in width which the council might by public notice declare to be a street.

THE PREMIER: That provided for a thoroughfare like Hay Street, only 80 links wide.

MR. WALKER: No distinction was made between road and street, though street had a specific meaning of its own, and should be defined separately.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Though a road might differ from a street, the distinction was of no consequence in the Bill. Both were municipal thoroughfares which the public were allowed to use, being of a certain width, or of less width if declared by public notice. The definition was sufficient for the purposes of the measure.

MR. WALKER: Let the definition mean one thing instead of two things. The wording was not good English. According to it, a road was a thoroughfare of a certain width, or of less than that width; and it was also a street.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The words "road" and "street" were *ejusdem generis*.

MR. WALKER: Why not define "street or road" as "every public thoroughfare in a municipality"?

MR. DAGLISH: It would be necessary to retain the power for the council to declare the thoroughfare to be a street.

MR. WALKER: Yes; in the case of paths which had been in use by the public.

MR. DAGLISH: That was not the object. We should leave in the hands of the municipality the power to declare a street.

MR. H. BROWN: The wording of the definition was necessary because of a recent prosecution that had failed. The offence had been alleged to take place in Hay Street, but the prosecution had failed owing to the fact that Hay Street was not 66ft. wide. This definition of a street or road would enable a prosecution to lie in the case of an offence taking place in any thoroughfare 66ft. wide or in a street less than 66ft. wide if the council had declared it to be a street.

MR. DAGLISH: The decision referred to had been based on a clause in the old Act. To enact that a street must be of a certain width was foolish. It would meet all requirements if the council had power to declare any thoroughfare a street.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Under the old Act if a person cut up land and made streets 66ft. in width, the municipality had no power to prevent the thoroughfares being converted into streets, but without that provision in the old Act the council would not have power to prevent any thoroughfare less than 66ft. wide being converted into a street, which would be against the public interest, especially in a climate like this. The amendment proposed in this Bill provided that any thoroughfare less than 66ft. wide could be converted into a street with the permission of the council, but the council would not have power to refuse to recognise any thoroughfare 66ft. wide as a street.

THE PREMIER: As subdivisions were going on all over the State, and people were making half-chain roads which the council had afterwards to take over and maintain, a clause had been put into the Municipal Bill to prevent a council spending money on any road under 66 ft. wide. It was essential, however, that

some streets under 66ft. wide should be constructed and maintained by the municipality. Therefore the enlarged definition contained in this Bill was necessary.

MR. WALKER: The hands of the council would be sufficiently fortified by striking out the words "being 66ft. or more in width, or any such thoroughfare of less than 66ft. in width." It should be left entirely to the council to declare any thoroughfare a street.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: By doing that we would not give the right to any person making a 66ft. road to have it taken over by the council.

MR. WALKER: It might not be in the interests of the council to take over a street 66ft. wide.

THE PREMIER: In that case the council would not approve of the plan of subdivision.

MR. H. BROWN: If this definition had been in the existing Act there would have been no necessity for the Bill from the Fremantle Council asking to be allowed to take over certain streets. Years ago these streets were cut up and residences were built along the full length of those streets. Under the existing Act there was no power to take over those streets because they were not 66 feet wide.

MR. DAGLISH: Unfortunately in past days the Legislature had allowed streets to be made by persons cutting up property any sort of size, and the consequence was in almost every municipality there were streets half-a-chain wide. In Subiaco, which was less than 11 years old as a municipality, there were streets less than half-a-chain wide.

THE PREMIER: On the advice of the owners who wished to get as many blocks as they could out of the land.

MR. DAGLISH: The Attorney General might tell the Committee whether this definition would enable owners to subdivide their estates in the future and to cut up their land in such a fashion as to create in them streets less than a chain width and require a municipality to take them over. He would like the matter made clear, so that even if a municipality wanted to pass the plans they would not have the right to do so. Parliament might define the duties of a municipality. There might be a time in a municipality when there were a number of persons in the council owning land who wished to cut that land up, and by a sort of mutual arrangement plans not in the interest of the community might be passed by the council. That should be prevented. He did not know if the Bill provided for these cases.

THE PREMIER: Clause 221 provided that no street should, after the commencement of the Bill, be set out unless the width of the street was 66 feet at least, and no council could declare any street of a lesser width.

MR. WALKER: That was in direct opposition to the definition.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: These were the existing thoroughfares.

THE PREMIER: Subclause 3 of the same clause also provided for the same thing.

MR. BOLTON: There was no definition of "treasurer." In Clause 144 it stated that the council might from time to time appoint a town clerk and other officers. As a rule the treasurer of a municipality did not receive any remuneration, and it would be as well to define treasurer in the Bill, because in the past there had been a good deal of trouble in municipalities and roads boards over this matter.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: What advantage would be gained by stating that the treasurer was the person appointed to be treasurer?

MR. BOLTON: If it was necessary to define the town clerk, why was it not just as necessary to define the treasurer?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The reason for the definition of town clerk was that for the purpose of executing municipal documents it was necessary that they should be signed by the town clerk and the mayor. The treasurer had no such duties to discharge.

MR. BOLTON: In Clause 147 the word "treasurer" was frequently used, and it was stated that he should do such and such acts. The town clerk had nothing to do with the funds.

Question put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Power of Government to onstitute municipalities:

MR. DAGLISH: In Subclause 1 it vas provided that the Government might rom time to time constitute any portion f Western Australia, containing rateable roperty capable of yielding upon an nnual rate lawfully made under the rovisions of a sum of £500, to be municipality. The amount was too ow. He knew that at present we vere working on a sum considerably lower han that. There were many munici-alities which had an income below £500. Ie went to one district where the total nnual income from rates was about 3150, and there was a town clerk, who vas also lamplighter, receiving £130 a ear. The balance of the money, apart rom the purchase of kerosene and other tores, was spent in the upkeep of the nunicipality. We should restrain dis-ricts from rushing into municipal govern-nent too early, before they had a sufficient evenue from rates to justify it, because mmediately a district became a munici-ality, if it had not a sufficient revenue rom rates, it "passed the hat" for its redit's sake to the Government, and xpected the Government to pay for the pkeep of the municipality, devoting the evenue from rates to a large extent to he salaries of officers for administration. The tendency in the majority of cases vas to have municipalities too early, nd this Bill afforded an opportunity of hecking that. He moved an amend-ment—

That the words "five hundred" be struck out, with a view to inserting "one thousand."

Whilst there were many districts where a municipality was eagerly rushed after before there was ample revenue, in other cases there was a desire on the part of districts to refrain from becoming muni-cipalities. He could give instances, such cases as the Cottesloe, Peppermint Grove, and Buckland Hill roads boards, in which they ought to be either separately or conjointly municipal districts. They kept out of municipal life for the purpose of bleeding the Government under the roads board vote, and we ought in this Bill to deal with cases of that sort.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The provision which hitherto prevailed specified a sum of £300; so we had made an advance from £300 to £500. How many municipalities in the last six years had been created in Western Australia to which any exception could be taken? And yet during the whole of those six years it was possible to create a municipality having an annual rate capable of yielding £300, as against £500 provided in this Bill.

MR. JOHNSON: There was a big mistake in Broome, in creating that a municipality.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was a matter for regret to learn that Broome would not be able to sustain the full dignity of a municipality. This was a country where young municipalities were growing up every day. In a growing country we could start at a figure which in places that moved more steadily might be a dangerous one. The amendment was unreasonable. If the Committee thought £500 was not quite a safe limit—though he submitted that an advance of £200 on existing conditions ought to satisfy the Committee—he was prepared to go to a somewhat higher figure, say to six or seven hundred pounds; but to jump from £300 to £1,000 was practically blocking, to an unheard of extent, the creation of municipalities in this State.

MR. WALKER hoped the amendment would be withdrawn. In mining districts the annual rates of small municipalities fluctuated in sympathy with the mines. Broad Arrow and Paddington constituted one municipality. In the event of a rush to either, they might wish to divide.

MR TAYLOR: Past Governments had difficulties with small municipalities, which, when unable to rate adequately, depended on the Government for subsidies and grants. Though permitted by the Bill so to do, the Government would be loth to declare a municipality defunct, thus depreciating the value of property in the town, and lessening the attractiveness of the district, the last state of which would be worse than the first. Some safeguard was needed against the hurried creation of municipalities. Without interfering with existing municipalities,

make the minimum annual rate required £750.

MR. DAGLISH would accept the last speaker's proposal; but the extent of the increase did not affect the question. It was absurd to complain that an increase of £200 or £500 was large. The object of the amendment was to protect the contributions of ratepayers by requiring people wishing to form a municipality to secure a district large enough to provide a reasonable revenue. All existing municipalities except Broome were in existence before the present Act was passed, so the argument of the Attorney General did not hold. We should determine what was sufficient for local improvements after the cost of administration had been deducted.

Amendment (Mr. Daglish's) by leave withdrawn.

MR. TAYLOR moved that "£750 be inserted.

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 21 to 19—agreed to.

Clause 20—How division or alteration in the number of councillors affects the council:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The words "until the next following thirtieth day of November" had been inserted at the request of the municipal conference. This would provide that in the event of a division of a municipality into wards the number of councillors would not be affected until the next following 30th November, when all the councillors would go out of office.

Clause passed.

Clauses 21 to 23—agreed to.

Clause 24—Procedure, signature of petition:

MR. SCADDAN: As this was a debatable clause progress should be reported.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Where was the clause debatable? The municipal conference had not touched it.

MR. SCADDAN: It did not affect municipal bodies, but affected roads boards.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The clause was not debatable.

MR. DAGLISH: Several of the subclauses were debatable.

MR. SCADDAN: Seeing that roads boards might be included in the areas of municipalities we should extend some consideration to roads boards.

On motion by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, progress reported and leave given to sit again.

TIMBER INDUSTRY DISPUTE.

MR. T. WALKER: With the permission of the House I desire respectfully to ask the Premier whether he is aware of the serious gravity of the dispute that is going on in the timber districts. The impression is gaining ground that some action has already been decided on, or partially decided on, by the Government, which will obviate the necessity of forcing the men to appeal for lower terms to the railway authorities, or to the Government. If that be so, I shall be pleased to hear a statement to that effect, if it is possible at this hour, from the Premier.

THE PREMIER: In reply to the hon. member, I may say that the question is now under the consideration of the Government. As he is probably aware, steps have been taken to give effect to the suggestion made by this House, and the wharfage rates have been reduced to an amount which will approximate something like £9,200 on the basis of last year's output. These reductions came into force on the 24th of last month. At the same time we are considering the question of making a reduction of the freight on timber for export only, and I hope to be able to make an announcement later on. I have not had the opportunity of ascertaining exactly what it will amount to.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past 11 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.