

item, in this reduced form, would obtain more support.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the new item, in this form, would still affect the revenue seriously, while its effect on individual users of the articles, when made up as clothing, would be only the difference between 5 and 10 per cent. The Government proposed to give a better margin to the tailors than they had before. When dealing with the tariff, if more revenue could be obtained from particular articles without hurting the consumers, he did not see why the revenue should not be obtained.

MR. LOTON said he was not in favour of the new item in this form, even though he had suggested it. The business of local tailors was in the higher-priced articles, and if the duty on these articles were reduced to 5 per cent., the benefit would go to the persons who were best able to pay, namely, the higher classes, who used tailor-made clothing.

Motion put and negatived.

New Item—"Tanning Materials, Sumac, Myrobollams, Valonia:"

MR. A. FORREST moved that this new item be inserted. He said the materials were used by tanners, and should be admitted at a low duty.

Motion put and passed, and the item inserted accordingly, in alphabetical order.

Schedule, as amended, agreed to, and added to the Bill.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

CONCURRENCE IN ABOLITION OF ABORIGINES PROTECTION BOARD.

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

"Mr. Speaker,

"In reply to Message No. 20, the Legislative Council informs the Legislative Assembly that it agrees to the Resolutions forwarded therewith, respecting the Abolition of the Aborigines Protection Board.

"GEO. SHENTON,
"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber,
"Perth, September 21st, 1893."

CONCURRENCE IN BILLS.

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

"Mr. Speaker,

"The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has agreed to the undermentioned Bills, without amendment:—

"An Act to authorise the Director of Public Works to exercise the Powers of the Council of a Municipality with respect to certain Waterworks within the Municipality of Fremantle."

"An Act to authorise the Raising of a Sum of Five hundred and forty thousand pounds by Loan for the construction of certain Public Works, and other purposes."

"GEO. SHENTON,
"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber,
"Perth, September 21st, 1893."

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 1:52 o'clock a.m.

Legislative Council,

Monday, 25th September, 1893.

Aborigines Protection Board: paper—Land Sales: suggested amendment of Regulations—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 8 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

ABORIGINES PROTECTION BOARD.

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE laid upon the table certain reports respecting the aborigines, from Mr. C. M. Straker, agent for the Aborigines Protection Board, at the North-West.

LAND SALES—SUGGESTED AMENDMENT OF REGULATIONS.

THE HON. J. MORRISON: I have to move, "That the present Regulations and system in force regarding the sales of town and suburban lands throughout the colony require amendment, in order that more revenue may be derived from the sales of such lands; and that a committee of this Council be appointed for the purpose of suggesting an appropriate scheme of amendment." My object in bringing forward this motion is to increase the revenue from the sales of town and suburban lots. At the present time, hon. members will agree, the revenue is far below what ought easily to be realised. It may be said that the motion may be a reflection on the present Government, but it is not so intended, for they are working the Regulations of 1887 as well as they can. It may also be said that this resolution would have been better brought forward in another place; but I take it that if any member here sees a leakage in the revenue, or that anything he might propose is of advantage to the colony, he has a right to draw attention to it. Clause 41 of the Land Regulations of 1887 says:—"Town and suburban lands in all districts of the colony will be offered for sale by public auction at an upset price to be determined by the Governor in Council. Such land may be put up for sale by order of the Commissioner after notices published in the *Government Gazette* and in one local newspaper." If that clause were adhered to, it would almost come to what I wish to suggest; but I have never known of land being offered by the Commissioner for sale except under Clause 42, and at the instance of some person. Clause 42 reads: "Any person may apply to the Commissioner to put up for sale by auction any town or suburban land already surveyed; and at the time of application shall deposit with the Commissioner or his agent ten per cent. of the upset price." We may, I think, look on the Government as the vendor of a commodity, and we do not see people who have commodities to sell sitting down and waiting until someone comes along and asks them to hold an auction. But with regard to our lands, the form that is adopted is this: some person is desirous of buying a lot, and he

makes application to the Commissioner to put his particular choice up. The Commissioner demands 10 per cent. deposit, and when it is paid, he then does his best to call other people together by advertisement to run the would-be purchaser up. I do not think that this is the way the Government should sell its lands. A large preliminary expense is incurred in the survey of new townships, and nothing is done to recoup the outlay until some person comes along and asks for the land to be put up. I find that the cost of surveying town lots is from 10s. to £1 each, and the cost of surveying suburban lots from £3 to £1 each, and I venture to say that if we took the cost of survey of many of the townships in Western Australia into consideration we should average considerably over the £1 per lot I have mentioned. I have recently made inquiries at the Land Office to see how the present system worked. I found that, roughly, there have been 37 townships surveyed during the last two years, out of which 620 lots have been sold, realising £28,582. If in two years, under the present bad system of selling, we can realise such a sum as this, I should like to know what we should get if the Government took the initiative and offered their lands without waiting for speculators to pick out the best of them and have them put up. During the years 1891-92 there was a small boom in suburban land, which, perhaps, accounts for so much being sold; but in town lots very little was done. Take the township of Gladstone: 37 lots were surveyed, and only two lots sold. Mahogany Creek, again, 54 lots were surveyed, and two sold. At Pinwernying only 13 lots were sold out of 90. At Woodamilling nine were sold out of 113; at Coolgardie, 108 were surveyed, and nine sold; at Puntaping 44 were surveyed, none sold; at Nannine 98 surveyed, nine sold; at Tenterden, 56 town and 48 suburban surveyed, none sold; at Cue, 108 surveyed, none sold; at Marble Bar, 71 surveyed, none sold. We have therefore, roughly speaking, 600 town lots and 48 suburban lots surveyed, not sold. I would ask hon. members, what would be likely to happen if, for instance, the Government themselves put up for sale Coolgardie lots? Again, under our present system, no man can go into the Crown Lands Office and buy a town or suburban

lot. During the last twelve months we have had many men here who would have purchased our lands if they could have gone to the office and got them. I know one man myself who would have laid out £250, and this money was lost to the revenue, solely owing to our present system of selling land. Again, the reserves placed on the town lots seem to depend on the humour of the Ministry at the time application is made to have them put up. I think the proper course for them to adopt is to fix a fair price for the value of the land, which will cover the cost of survey and expenses in connection with it, and then leave it to the public to determine what is the value of it, for it will be found that they know a good deal better than any Minister can, what is the market value of it, and they will bid for it accordingly. I ask hon. members to consider this. According to the return I have obtained from the Crown Lands Office, I find that the cost of survey is about £1 per lot. In arriving at a minimum price at which to sell the land, the Government should take this into consideration in this way: take a square mile of country, or 640 acres, the ordinary allowance for streets would be 140 acres, leaving 500 acres for sale. The usual area of a lot is a quarter acre, so that out of a square mile there would be 2,000 lots. If the upset were fixed at £10 per lot, the townsites would be equal in value to £20,000. Of course we could not expect to sell it all at once, and I would suggest that the Government should hold periodical sales, at which a few lots from each township could be offered. At the sales they would attract an audience, and get more buyers than they do under the present system. Any lots that were not sold I would not put up again until the other lots had been offered, unless they were purchased at the average price of the lands sold at the time they were put up. It may be argued that it would not be fair to hold the sales at head-quarters, but I maintain it is the duty of the Government to get the highest price they can, and it is much more easy for people in the country to get an agent in the capital to act for them, than it is for people in the town to get an agent in the country. My system would also conduce to people purchasing country lands. Then there is no reason why the terms should not be better than 10 per

cent. deposit, and the balance in a month. The Government would have the deposit, and they would have the security, and hence could not lose, whilst the longer terms would enable the poorer classes to purchase direct from the Government. Having drawn attention to this matter, I hope the House will agree to pass the resolution, and allow it to go forward to another place. I beg to move the resolution.

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE: I think it hardly possible that the resolution, lucid as it is, —

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): Does the hon. member intend to second the motion?

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE: No.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): Then the hon. member cannot speak to it yet.

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE: I will second it then. At the same time I hardly think the House will be prepared to adopt any detailed system of selling land, such as the Hon. Mr. Morrison has suggested. I think, that having drawn attention to the matter, he should leave it to the Government to act.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I do not intend to debate this question; but I would point out that the hon. member asked us in his speech to allow this motion to go to another place, whereas the resolution itself asks for the appointment of a select committee of this Council to suggest an appropriate scheme.

THE HON. E. T. HOOLEY: I may say that I am very much in favour of the proposals of the Hon. Mr. Morrison, but I fail to see the necessity of a committee being appointed. We should accept or reject the motion on its merits. I propose to strike out all the words after "such lands."

THE HON. J. F. T. HASSELL: I second the amendment.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: If these words are struck out the motion becomes so insignificant that it is hardly worth while transmitting to another place. If we send down such a message the other House will naturally ask how we propose to alter the present system.

THE HON. J. MORRISON: I do not wish this House to do more than draw the attention of the Assembly to the fact that a revision of the Land Regulations

is advisable. I have no objection to the amendment which has been proposed, and I may say that I only inserted the portion asking for the appointment of a select committee so that we might have been able to obtain the information which I have already got from the Lands Office.

THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT: I regret that I am unable to agree with either the original motion or the amendment. We have no possible right to interfere with Money Bills, and as this question practically involves dealing with a financial matter, we shall, if we adopt it, be interfering with the functions of the Assembly. I move that the Orders of the Day be now read.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I second that, and for the reason I have already stated. Our resolutions, this session, have not met with any great amount of success in another place. We have had them curtly put from the chair, and still more curtly debated, and then rejected—mostly unanimously. We are only preparing the same fate for this one, unless the hon. member is prepared to state it more definitely.

THE HON. J. MORRISON: One hon. member says that this resolution is connected with Money Bills. I cannot see that. Probably the Hon. Mr. Wright did not bear my explanation. However, if it be the wish of the House, I will withdraw the motion, although I am sure the country is losing thousands of pounds every year owing to the present system of selling land.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): I have not spoken on this question before, because I really know nothing about it, and I have not had an opportunity of conferring with the Commissioner of Crown Lands upon it. As hon. members know, I am filling two offices under the Government, and having to look after the Bills which go to the Assembly, as well as those which come here, my time is pretty well occupied, without devoting my attention to cramming up the subject of our land laws. I agree with the Hon. Mr. Hackett that a resolution of this sort comes more properly within the province of the Lower House, and I think it is unwise for us here to take in hand any matter unless we can enforce our opinion. It is useless to bark unless we can bite. A resolution of this

House has no effect on the Government. The life of the Ministry does not depend upon this House, but upon its being in accord with the majority in another place. Even if this House passed a vote of censure it would have no effect. At the same time I have no doubt my hon. colleague, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, would be glad to accept any suggestion from the hon. member which would be conducive to the good of the colony; but I do not think a resolution of this kind would do any good. My hon. friend says we are losing thousands a year under the present system. I do not know how this comes in, for I have a very good recollection of attending a sale of suburban land held two or three years ago, and the price I gave was an enormous one, so much so that I have regretted my purchase ever since. I know I sold the land for very much less than I gave for it. In my opinion the land at the Crown Lands Office sales always brings its fair market value. I remember when the land between Perth and Fremantle was sold—the Cottesloe lands. There were crowds of buyers, and the bidding was most brisk. In that case I think the Government are to be congratulated on the price they got, and I believe the purchasers would only be too glad if they could now get anything like the price they paid to the Crown. If, however, the Hon. Mr. Morrison will state definitely what it is he suggests, I shall be glad to bring it under the notice of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and if he can see his way to get a larger revenue by adopting the suggestions, I am sure he will do so.

Question—That the Orders of the Day be now read—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 8:45 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, 26th September, at 2:30 o'clock p.m.