Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Brown
Mr. Collier	Mr. Butcher
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Carson
Mr. Horan	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Davies
Mr. Underwood	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Walker	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Ware	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Troy (*Teller*).	Mr. Gull
	Mr. Hardwick
	Mr. Hayward
	Mr. Keenan
	Mr. McLarty
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. N. J. Moore
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Stone
	Mr. Veryard
	Mr. Layman (*Teller*).

Amendment thus negatived; clause passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Post-office Savings Bank Annual Balance Sheet and Return.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 20 minutes past 10 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 3rd October, 1906.

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

Prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: Post Office Savings Bank Annual Balance Sheet—Report and returns for the year ended 30th June, 1906.

EXPERIMENTAL FARM RETURN, DELAY.

Hon. W. T. LOTON (East): I would like to ask the Leader of the House when the returns moved for in regard to the Experimental Farm will be laid on the table of the House. It is nearly four months since they were asked for, and the report is a long time coming. I do not wish to offer a threat, but I shall be prepared in a very short time, unless the report is on the table, to move a definite motion that the business of the House be suspended until the report is produced.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): I regret that the report has not been ready before this, but in conversation the Minister for Agriculture informed me that the accounts had not been kept in a form which would facilitate the getting out of the return quickly. He assured me a week ago that he would have it ready in a short time, and it was his intention to see the hon. member and explain exactly how the delay occurred. Anyhow, I will have it ready next week.

PAPERS—ESPERANCE GRIEVANCE, DOCTORS AT VARIANCE.

Hon. C. E. DEMPSTER (East) moved:—

That all papers in connection with a complaint made by Dr. Harrison against Dr. Wace, of Esperance, and the Derby auditor's report relating thereto, be laid on the table of the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): It was unusual for a member to move for papers, without giving some reason. If the hon. member would state his reason, one would know whether it would be desirable to ask the House to pass the motion or not. He would not agree to ask the House to order the production of papers on a motion without some reason. If it was not necessary to state the reason it was not necessary to table the motion.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: The motion was put into his hands by Dr. Harrison, who had a grievance against Dr. Wace, who he thought was resident magistrate and medical officer. There was some difference, it was stated, in their accounts. He had a letter from Dr. Harrison with respect to the nature of the claim, and it was stated that the Government had a claim for postage stamps, and when Dr. Harrison left Esperance he had not time to put the account into order, but said he would come up and pay the amount of £5 to the credit of the department, which he did, and he stated that he would get the amount from Dr. Wace some time later; but he did not do so for some time afterwards. From some experience and the information he (the mover) had respecting the administration of justice by Dr. Wace, it appeared that Dr. Wace was a most undesirable man, to say the least of it; and he (the mover) would have liked an inquiry into that doctor's past record to show whether he was really a desirable man to be in an official position.

HON. M. L. MOSS (West): It was to be hoped the Minister would produce the papers; but he thought Mr. Dempster would find when the papers were produced that Dr. Wace was not the undesirable character supposed. He would ask the House to agree to an amendment that all the papers in connection with Dr. Harrison's occupancy of the position of resident magistrate at Esperance be laid on the table of the House. There had been a tremendous amount of friction at Esperance between the municipal council and Dr. Harrison during the eight or nine months he (Mr. Moss) had control of the Crown Law Department, and it occasioned considerable annoyance and much anxiety. He (Mr. Moss) was largely responsible for the removal of Dr. Harrison from the position he occupied down there. He thought that if Mr. Dempster would take the trouble to peruse all the papers he would find that while Dr. Harrison was resident magistrate, the affairs at Esperance were not so satisfactory as was desirable. The matter pretty well approached a scandal until he (Mr. Moss) took up a determined attitude and obtained the removal of Dr. Harrison from there. He moved an amendment:—

That all papers in connection with the occupancy by Dr. Harrison of the position of Medical Officer and Resident Magistrate at Esperance, including the papers in connection with a complaint made by Dr. Harrison against Dr. Wace, of Esperance, and the Derby auditor's report relating thereto, be laid on the table of the House.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: There was no wish on his part to do anything which would give a wrong impression regarding either of the men.

HON. F. CONNOR (North) seconded the amendment. Did Mr. Dempster accept it?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Yes; certainly.

Motion by leave withdrawn, Mr. Moss's amendment becoming the main question.

HON. F. CONNOR: The motion by Mr. Dempster would have been supported by him, and he would support a motion by any member who wished for information in connection with the conduct of a public servant of this State. He wished to say a very few words on the subject in connection with Dr. Wace. Dr. Wace was in Kimberley and became very unpopular there because of the stand he took up in regard to the visit of Dr. Roth. He (Mr. Conner) was opposed to the views which Dr. Wace expressed, but he did not think Dr. Wace did anything but from the most conscientious ideas. What permeated this discussion to some extent was the old idea of Dr. Wace having given expression to his opinion in the North. That was no reason why Dr. Wace might not be right in this instance. Dr. Wace was wrong in one matter, but he was a most excellent servant, a man of high integrity and of great ability.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was no objection to these papers being laid on the table. The fullest information would be given.

Question as amended agreed to.

MOTION—BUBONIC PLAGUE INQUIRY, GERALDTON.

TO ADOPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central), in moving the adoption of the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into

the outbreak of bubonic plague at Geraldton, said: I desire to point out that the findings of the select committee have been arrived at only after most careful and impartial consideration. Each member of the committee desired to endeavour to approach the investigation of this matter without bias, and I think that if the evidence is carefully considered every member of the House will come to the conclusion that the findings arrived at have been based solely on the evidence. A perusal of the testimony will I think be sufficient to satisfy members that unreasonable and unnecessary delay was shown by the Central Board of Health in sending nurses to Geraldton after bubonic plague had been reported, and that in the meantime the patients suffered from lack of attention. It is probable that had these patients received proper attention from the first, though they might not have recovered, their end might have been less painful. It has been proved beyond doubt that a great deal of delay took place, more than could be justified in the circumstances, and that as a result of the delay the patients suffered to a more or less extent from inattention. About 11·30 o'clock on Monday night a telephone message was sent to Dr. Black, and it was proved during the course of the investigation that the message reached him at 1·42 a.m.; but instead of Dr. Black taking any steps to carry out the requests he simply went to bed and waited until next day. And even next day he made no effort to procure nurses. It was not until Wednesday that any sort of inquiry was made as to the possibility of getting nurses, and even then inquiry was only in the direction of endeavouring to obtain knowledge as to whether, if nurses were required, they could be secured. In fact the Central Board of Health waited, as documentary evidence shows, until they secured a report from Dr. Blackburne in confirmation of the outbreak. I think every member of this House will consider that a course which should not have been followed, and which it is not advisable for the Central Board of Health to pursue in the future. They may send nurses, staff, and every requisite, and it may eventually be proved that there is no plague or dangerous disease; but if they do so in such circumstances the public and Parliament should applaud them. My impression is, and I think it was the impression of the committee, that in a matter of this kind where life is at stake, pounds, shillings, and pence should not be too seriously taken into consideration; and that in future, if any case of infectious disease is reported by a medical man, the Central Board who are responsible for coping with the outbreak should, as we have recommended, despatch with the utmost possible promptitude nurses and all requirements to deal with the outbreak. If members peruse the report they will be able to discover the reasons which actuated us in coming to our conclusions. Every conclusion we came to was arrived at on the basis of the evidence of even more than one person, and in many instances it was supported by documentary evidence. It is not necessary for me to repeat what is already in the report; and assuming that members have perused the report and are satisfied with it, I move that the report be adopted.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan Suburban): It is not my intention to oppose the adoption of this report; but in view of the fact that one of the statements made in the report is not altogether correct, I think there should be opportunity given to remedy the omission. I refer to the fact that, although in the first clause of the report these words appear, "Notes of evidence accompany this report," there is no evidence accompaning my copy of the report. In order that we may have some opportunity of studying the evidence, it will be a good thing if this debate be adjourned until the evidence is printed. I move "that the debate be adjourned until next Tuesday week."

Motion passed, the debate adjourned.

FEDERATION DETRIMENTAL, THIS STATE TO WITHDRAW.

ASSEMBLY'S RESOLUTION.

Resolution from the Legislative Assembly now considered (with request for concurrence) as follows:—

That in the opinion of this House the Union of Western Australia with the other States in the Commonwealth of Australia has

proved detrimental to the best interests of this State, and that the time has arrived for placing before the people the question of withdrawing from such union.

HON. F. CONNOR (North) in moving "That the Assembly's resolution be agreed to" said: In approaching this great question, I admit that I do so with great diffidence. The question requires deep and mature consideration. Some people are frightened that war may come; I do not agree with them, but it is a question that should be fought by the people of this State—and I hope it will be—with all the constitutional means in our power. It is of far-reaching importance to the State of Western Australia, and to a large extent it will cover the fate of what Australia itself will be in time to come. I venture to say that I am voicing the opinions of the great majority of the people of this State. I think I can say that with justice. At any rate I challenge anybody to put it to the test. I would ask that it should be put to the test if possible, if there are any means whereby we can do so; but if there are not, I think I am right in saying that I voice the opinion of the majority in moving this motion. What has been the result of our entering the Federation? Have the great promises made by the gentlemen who led us into the Federation been attained? Are we in as good a position to-day as we were before we entered the Federation? Are we as free to handle our own affairs and to carve out our own destinies? Can we carry on the affairs of the State as well under existing conditions as we could if we had not entered into the Federation? I am prepared to say that again I express the opinion of the majority of the people in saying that we are not in as good a position as we would have been had we not entered the Federation, and that it is right we should get out of the bargain that we have made as well as we can. What has been the result of Federation, I ask again? I am not going to labour the question, and do not intend to make a long speech, but I desire to impress on members the most important points, and one of them is as to the results of our entering the Federation. One of the results has been the depreciation in our revenue. We have not the power to raise money which we could raise legitimately and without hurting the people of the country for the development of the State, and in my opinion we will unfortunately get into a worse position than we have been in to the present. Depreciation of revenue means less spending power; and in a new country like ours, containing almost one-third of Australia, the more money we can spend, whether it is got from revenue or whether it is borrowed, as long as it is judiciously spent on reproductive works, the better it is for the State. That is a proposition to which I am afraid Dr. Hackett will not quite agree. The more money we spend, providing always that we do not do it foolishly and provided that it is on reproductive works, the better it is for the State. The position is: Can we spend as much money on the State now as we could have done had we stood out of the Federation and been running our own affairs? I am sorry to say that the result of Federation to the present in this State has been stagnation in trade; and if we consult the business people of the State we will find that most of them—all of them in fact, except a few faddists—attribute this stagnation to Federation. [Interjection by a MEMBER.] Yes; the land tax is one of the results of Federation. Another result has been that properties that would have been of value to the owners are practically unsaleable in the city and leading towns of the State. I allude particularly to Perth. The result of all this has been that the hopes we were led to believe in, more credit, more trade, and greater enterprise, have vanished, and the result has been, as far as the Federal Government are concerned, broken promises and unfulfilled pledges. Why did we enter the Federation? To benefit ourselves? That is human nature I suppose all the world over; but I say that the reason we entered the Federation was purely a matter of sentiment, and because of a feeling that at one time unfortunately existed between the goldfields and the coastal parts of the State. And even before that feeling did exist, I do not think anybody will challenge that we had as the champions of our Government and State such great men as Sir John Forrest, Dr. Hackett, and the late respected George Leake. They were

opposed to Federation until that wave came; and when the wave did come, was there sufficient reason given for it? I say there was not. It was purely a question of sentiment, and I am afraid we have had to suffer a loss of power for the sake of that sentiment. The old feeling of antagonism I hope is dead, never to be resuscitated in this country; I hope that the differences between the people of the coast and the people of the goldfields are done with; and I am satisfied that if we had Sir John Forrest and Dr. Hackett to fight that fight over again, we would see them on the side on which I fought on the last occasion, the losing side.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: This State had to accept Federation.

Hon. R. F. Sholl: It depended on the way the cat jumped.

Hon. F. CONNOR: I would not put it so broadly as the hon. member, and perhaps such a statement is unfair. Anyhow, I am pleased to hear Dr. Hackett practically admit now that he made a mistake.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: No; I do not admit that.

Hon. F. CONNOR: I understood the hon. member to say he had to accept it. I hope we have heard the last of antagonism between the different communities of this State, and my only regret is that the leader of that movement (Mr. Leake) is dead—that is a loss to this country we must all deplore. Against the Federal movement we had some fairly clever and intellectual men. We had the late Mr. Justice Moorhead. Perhaps he was impelled by a sympathetic prejudice in this matter, because he once said that when we had the control of our own affairs we should be careful not to lose the home rule of those affairs. That sentiment may have influenced him to give his help to the losing side. We had also Mr. C. J. Moran, who put the possible issues against Federation before the country clearly and well. Everything he then said would occur has since eventuated, and much of the result of Federation has not been to the benefit of the country. We had also Mr. Vosper, who at first was an ardent federalist, fighting on the side of those who raised the cry "The Bill to the people." He fought well on that side, until he found the serpent in the grass. I am sorry he is not here now to be complimented on his judgment and foresight as to what was likely to happen under Federation. I am sorry we have not got men of his ability with us now to take up this fight where he left off, and fight it to the bitter end. I should like now to read some extracts from a letter written by a gentleman who went through the campaign against Federation in this State to a friend of his, Mr. Monger, M.L.A. The letter deals with the subject whether or not we have the right to secede, and the writer says:—

> Touching this awful word "secession," which is mouthed so fearfully by unificationists, how few of them recognise that the Australian Union is not a supreme sovereign union. It did not create itself; it is the act of a higher power, the Imperial Parliament.

We should, I think, take into consideration the opinions of men who have a knowledge of constitutional law and procedure at their fingers' ends; and when we find ourselves in a bad position we should not be afraid to accept the responsibility of taking on a fight for an alteration of our conditions by constitutional means, even going to extremes in that direction. I want the extracts fixed in the *Hansard* of this country for future reference when this question is being debated, as it will be, on a broader scale than it is to-night. The writer goes on:—

> Now be it granted that the Australian Union was ostensibly the creation of the Australian desire for union, that is that under the Imperial Constitution it fitted with the spirit of the British people that it should be by popular ballot, still over all remains the fact that the permission of the sovereign power had first to be got and obtained before the subject States could give effect to their will. Herein lies the difference between the Canadian and Australasian Federations and the great American Union. The American Union was the deliberate act of the independent States. Those erstwhile British Colonies had cast off allegiance to the sovereign power which we Australians still cheerfully pay allegiance to. Not only had they rebelled in thought, in aspiration, in declared intention, but they had rebelled *de facto* and had upheld their rebellion by the last of all authorities, namely *vi et armis*. Consequently their act of union was the act of full sovereign independent States, owning allegiance to none. There was no higher power to appeal to when the Southern States sought secession. The sovereign power was the sovereign Federation,

and there remained only what always will remain while the world lasts, an appeal to arms. This silences, while it lasts, all the periods of the greatest constitutionalists, and makes pigmies of great authorities who lord it over all in times of peace. Now, that appeal to arms is not to be thought of. God grant it never will, in Australia's case. Even if Western Australia suddenly withdrew from the union to-morrow—that is if she quietly ignored its edicts, its officers, etc.—'tis not, in my opinion, and I will maintain it anywhere, in the power of the union to compel the State *vi et armis* to a submission. It is the first, last, and indispensable quality of sovereignty that it, and it alone, wields the sword. If any sovereign power parts with the engine of war or abdicates the place of supreme arbiter, then it ceases to be sovereign. The Imperial Parliament could not, the Crown could not, stand by and witness civil war in its dominions. Such a thing is utterly foreign to all past or present fundamental elements of sovereignty. It appears therefore that the appeal would in the ultimate issue be to Cæsar; and I cannot see how it can be escaped. Now the point I am deliberately trying to emphasise is this, that after all the word "secession" is not applicable. There is nothing either very dreadful or very imposing even about the proposal to disintegrate. Let the ranters rant about the great Australian nation: they are city demagogues, a lot of them. I am an Australian, born and bred where Australian life was rough, typical. I hear thousands of footpath statesmen, who would die if they had to live a typical Australian life, mouthing sententious phrases about "our destiny" and such like. Believe me these men would die with fright if called upon to-morrow to maintain "the sovereign rights of the great Australian people" against the world.

I am afraid I have trespassed a little more on the time of the House than I had intended; but there is one other extract:—

Now if that be so, and if the Empire be the first consideration, where then does the awful consequence of our withdrawal from the union come in? Would we not be still the same loyal, contented, and more prosperous British subjects? Let us go farther and push the argument home. If we are not prosperous and not contented in the union, and since the welfare of the whole depends upon the welfare of the parts, is it not our duty, as trustees of this part of the British Empire, to administer it outside the small Australian union for its own greater good and the consequent greater good of the Empire?

MEMBER: Give the name of the writer?

HON. F. CONNOR: The writer is C. J. Moran. I think he was recognised as somewhat of an authority—not perhaps so great an authority as the member who interjected—and I think we should take these opinions into consideration in the vote we have to cast to-night, for a division will be called for. When deciding how we shall vote, I think we should give consideration to Mr. Moran's contention that this is a question to be decided by the British Parliament. If that be so, and if we are labouring under disabilities and injustice—which I think I shall be able to prove before I conclude—then we would be doing nothing unconstitutional in pushing to its farthest this motion asking that the people shall be allowed to decide by a referendum whether or not they are satisfied with the present state of affairs. There is also a leading article—and I suppose I shall have to read it, as I desire that this also shall be published in *Hansard*—it is from the *Age*, a newspaper published in Melbourne, and is dated the 24th September last. I wish it published as a protest not only against the *Age* but against the opposition displayed towards Western Australia by the Eastern Press of Australia generally.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Not all of them.

HON. F. CONNOR: I said the Eastern Press generally. The extract is hardly worthy the high-class journal in which it was published, but it is the only leading article in that paper for that day; and this is what it says:—

It is a good thing of course that such political iniquity as the Desert Railway has been got out of this Parliament. It stands to the credit of the Senate that though it has been asked by three Governments to pass this bad proposal, it has three times refused. This is an instance in which the resolute determination of the Senate to preserve state rights has overcome the lax morality which springs out of party government just as a poisonous fungus grows out of a putrescent soil. The events of the last week were indeed eloquent concerning this deplorable effect of party government. There we saw a Ministry persistently pressing on the Senate this Desert Railway Bill, to the imperilling of a great amount of legislation of real consequence. Everyone saw the game. Time was short, and a large amount of work remained to be done, and yet this political monstrosity for robbing the States was obstinately kept to the front. There must be some very powerful reason for it. What was it? No one for a moment believes the Government, as a Government, had any desire for the perpetration of a disgraceful job like that. Who could think that Sir William Lyne, representing Hume in New South Wales, could have any interest in taxing his constituents

for a railway which must be a dead weight and loss on everybody connected with it? And then there is Mr. Groom, representing a constituency in Queensland. What possible benefit could such a line be to his constituents, who would have to pay their share of it? Or take Senator Keating, a member for the State of Tasmania. Why should he of all men support such a patent fraud upon the funds of the "tight little island"? If we seek enlightenment of the Prime Minister, of the Attorney General, of Mr. Ewing, it is just the same. Not one of them has any representative reason for thus playing the nefarious game of Western Australia. All of them—and Mr. Chapman may be added to them—have interests in the very opposite direction. Sir John Forrest alone is the member of the Government who should have been found, on selfish grounds only, supporting this proposal. How, then, are we to account for all the others?

Thereby hangs a tale, and it is a very ugly one indeed. And yet it is such as should be told and retold until the telling of it has swept away that noxious thing which caused it—party government. It might at first be thought that, since the Deakin Government, the Watson Government, and the Reid Government have all in turn been pledged to this Desert Railway, the project may have some legitimate claims that do not appear. That would not be an unnatural conclusion at which to arrive. But it is not so. There is a much simpler explanation. The existence of three equal parties in the House accounts for it all, as we will show. Those three parties in the House are there because there are three equal parties in the country. These three parties in the country compelled the leaders of the several sections to conciliate the votes of the Western Australian members, who really held the balance which could make and unmake Ministries. Accordingly, we find Mr. Reid making in Western Australia, before the last election, an ostentatious parade of his consuming anxiety to build this Desert Railway. It was a part of the party government game. It was met by Mr. Watson and Mr. Deakin with a counter move, equally shady in political morality, as all purely party tactics are. They also discovered quite a number of unimagined beauties in this Western desert, and possible riches lying under the sand dunes. All sorts of air-drawn excuses, such as defence needs, were invented to eke out the palpable hollowness of the thing and hide its intrinsic deformity. The consequence was that Western Australia got all the party leaders pledged to commit what is almost a national crime, purely in order that the parties should not lose support. That Desert Railway has been a spectre in every Ministerial closet. It has grinned there and rattled its detestable shanks with a constant menace that no set of Ministers elected on the deplorable party system could withstand. It is not much good blaming any one set of Ministers for it. They are all implicated alike, and were all alike inevitably enmeshed in the iniquity, as a part of the game of Responsible Government. No practical man can work the party system and yet be above and beyond it. If he plays the demoralising game at all he must make use of the chicane and tricks which are a part of its degrading nature. During the whole of last week the game was being played. The Western Australian members were holding Ministers rigidly to their Western desert pledges. That Desert Railway was a pistol held at the head of the Government, "Your railway or your life."

It would be quite useless to impute blame to any of the parties. The game was being played according to its recognised rules. The Ministry had need of the Western Australian votes to "make a House" against the Opposition's constant endeavours to "count out" the Chamber. Those votes would be given only "at a price." The price was the Desert Railway Bill. The price had to be paid or Parliament would be brought to a premature conclusion, and the session must end without its Tariff Reform, its Preference Bill, and its New Zealand Treaty. Other things also had to be sacrificed unless this political bribe were paid to placate Western Australia. That is what party government is for ever exacting of its victims. There is not a man in this House of Parliament, or in any other worked under the same system, who is not bound to vote for what he disapproves, and sometimes oppose measures he believes in. When asked why he does things which his conscience condemns, he has a perfect answer—"My dear fellow, it was a choice of evils. I was compelled to sacrifice the measure or the Government. I sacrificed the measure I believed in, in order to save the Government, which I could not afford just then to lose." Why did Senator Keating, for example, vote for a railway which would have robbed Tasmania of more than £500,000? Certainly not because he believed in it. Every one of his friends knows that he does not. But he is a member of the Ministry, and the Ministry is pledged to it. Loyalty to his colleagues was his motive. But it meant disloyalty to his State. And so we may also ask Senator Findley to explain, if such a thing were possible, his disloyalty to Victoria, as abundantly evidenced by the persistent support which he has given to this iniquitous railway scheme. Fortunately the job was defeated. The Desert Railway is dead, as it has long been damned. Had there been no party Government, and had every member of the House been free to treat the subject on its merits, there would not have been more than a dozen members in both Houses who would have advocated it. It should be the duty of the electors to see that this political enormity, being dead, has no resurrection.

I must apologise for occupying so much time, and as I said, I am a bad reader; but I had to read that extract and I think I did right in reading it, so as to have it recorded in this State that such

an article was written. The article proves that the brotherhood business, the great national business, whereby we were to be the favoured brothers of people of the same race in the East, was a delusion. When such an article can appear in a leading paper in one of the principle States of Australia, when such an article can be written against a State such as this that gave up so much for the sake of the national movement, that was led to its own detriment into the national movement, that took the risk and had to pay the price, when such an article as this can be written and read by the people of Victoria and not resented, I say it is time to do our best to get out of the power of the people who produce that stuff and who place it before the public in a leading paper of a leading State. I was about to refer again to the change that came over the opinions of some gentlemen who were leaders in the Federal movement. I do not wish to be unkind; but I say it was a pity that two great men—I will call them great—of such known ability as Sir John Forrest and Dr. Hackett should have transferred their allegiance from the anti-Federal to the Federal party. That was a great pity. I am sorry it occurred. I am sorry, too, that we have lost the power to control our own affairs, which were, prior to Federation, largely controlled by those two gentlemen. They were, to some extent, in charge of the affairs of this country, one being absolutely the Premier, and the other a good lieutenant and assistant. While the affairs of the colony were in their hands. I hold that we were successful and properous; but since that time we are not advancing; our present progress is retrograde; we are going back instead of getting to the front; we are not keeping up to the standard established before Federation; and therefore I say our duty is, not to secede if secession can be avoided, but to secede if necessary; though, if we cannot by any movement which the public men of this State may suggest, obtain better terms from the Federal Government, that is from the rest of Australia, then I say we are justified in adopting any and every constitutional means in our power to attain that object. Again let us cry, "The Bill to the people." That was the cry raised by my old friend, departed a few days ago, Mr. G. T. Simpson. He was the man who raised the cry, "The Bill to the people." Why? He told me himself that he called out "The Bill to the people" because he was dissatisfied with the internal condition of the Colony. And the cry was successful. It was an appeal that went to the people's hearts. "The Bill to the people" is a great cry. Therefore I say, why should we not again go to the people on this question? Benefit by the teachings of history, and again refer the matter to the people, to obtain their verdict. And if we can do that, they will in my opinion vote, if not unanimously, by an overwhelming majority against a continuance of the present Federal conditions. I appeal to members who may be wavering: if there be a division on this motion, though I hope it will be carried unanimously, I would ask the country members here, why have we a land tax proposal? Because we joined Federation. Such a tax could not possibly have been necessary had we retained control of our Customs; and I therefore appeal to members representing country districts to consider, when voting on this motion, why we have a land tax proposed and a Bill before us for its imposition. I tell them that the only reason is our joining Federation. I apologise for the length of my speech, but I commend to the House this motion, which I hope will be passed without a division; and if there is a division, I hope we shall have an overwhelming majority in its favour.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (East): I, like the preceding speaker, hope that the motion will be carried unanimously. I hope we shall be able to appeal to the people, with a view to getting out of the Federation; because we can show clearly and most convincingly that Federation is the cause of all our present difficulties, and that it has been a mistake from the very first. It has entailed an enormous expenditure, which has not been in any single respect reproductive; and instead of being connected with the East by the railway which we were promised on the introduction of the Commonwealth Constitution Bill, instead of having that steel band which was to unite Western Australia with the sister colonies, we see that

the promises made have been entirely ignored, and that the union is non-existent which that steel band was to create. From every possible standpoint we find that Federation is very undesirable in the interests of this country. Our freedom, we may say, is gone; our Customs are beyond our control; we can hardly do anything at all without appealing to the Federal Government; and we know what the Federal Goverment is. We know how poorly we are represented in the Federal Parliament, where we have five members against 70; and how, in view of the feeling proved to exist in that Parliament and in the other States towards this State, can we ever expect to gain a single point we may desire? That feeling has been fully exhibited by the speeches made from time to time in the East; and needless to say, it is not the good feeling which we were led to believe Federation would arouse. In every possible respect Federation has been a mistake. We are too far removed from the Eastern States for the Federation to be from our point of view a success; and our only way out of the difficulty in which we are is to appeal to the Imperial Government to release us from this union which has proved so undesirable and so unprofitable, and which is not at all likely, except perhaps after several generations have passed away, to be satisfactory to Western Australia. We know that from the very inception of the Federal agitation, a large proportion of the permanent residents in this Colony felt and knew that Federation would be undesirable. They all opposed it; but the Colony was forced into Federation, not by those who belonged to the Colony, but by people who had come here with little or nothing of their own to sacrifice, with little or nothing to risk; people who nevertheless had votes. And the question was referred to them, biased as they were by the eloquence of many public men who took up the case and made statements which were perfectly unreliable, and which time has proved to have been founded on nothing, which have been proved to be fallacious in the extreme and never carried out in a single instance. Therefore we have sufficient ground to go on for appealing to the people now, and for using our best endeavours to get released from this bondage we have incurred by entering into a union with the other States. I do not look upon it as treason to move in a matter of this sort; I think it is the duty of every man of courage to come forward and say, "We have made a mistake in the past; we see that entering the Federatisn has created an enormous expenditure and that our State is reduced to serious straits in consequence of the heavy loss incurred." The fact that the Government are now obliged to appeal to the people to pay a tax to meet the deficit incurred through the loss of revenue caused by federating, shows how desirable it is and how it is in the interests of the State to be released from the Federation. I think those of us who see it and feel it should be manly enough to say that we should use our best endeavours to get out of the Federation. I sincerely hope the House will concur in expressing an opinion in opposition to Federation, and in supporting the resolution.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Clarke, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND TAX ASSESSMENT.

MACHINERY MEASURE.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

DEFINITION OF "IMPROVEMENTS."

Hon. C. SOMMERS moved an amendment—

That in the definition of "improvements" the word "roads" be inserted after "planting."

Many estates near towns could not be used for pastoral, agricultural, or horticultural purposes, and could only be improved by being cut up for sale in building lots. The owners spent considerable money in making roads and laying on water on such properties and in making footpaths, and it was only fair these should be considered as improvements.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY supported the amendment. Private individuals in the country spent considerable money in making roads on their properties, and it was right that they should be allowed to consider these roads as an improvement.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What was meant by making a road, macadamising?

HON. V. HAMERSLEY: Forming a road, putting in crossings over gullies and macadamising to a certain extent.

HON. E. M. CLARKE: In the South-West it frequently happened that one of the first things essential for the new settler to do was to build roads to his premises and his different paddocks. This was a big item of expenditure.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The amendment could not be accepted by the Government. If he happened to oppose amendments—and many amendments had been foreshadowed during the debate on the second reading—he was not doing so simply because they were moved by any member who had opposed the Bill. The position was that the House by a majority had agreed to the Bill; and it should be the intention of every member, now that the principle contained in the Bill had been assented to, to make it a workable measure. He was quite willing to accept any amendments that would improve the measure, but members should consider well the fact that the Government had arrived at the present form of the Bill after considerable thought and consideration.

HON. C. SOMMERS: The Bill was not absolutely perfect.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was as perfect a Bill as Cabinet could make it, after studying each phase of the question.

HON. C. SOMMERS: The Government had not all the brains of the community.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was not claimed they had. He did not want any impertinent interjections of that kind. The Government had given the Bill every consideration. Seeing that we were to have a land tax they had tried to put it in the mildest form they could. He was quite willing to consider any reasonable amendment, but this amendment moved by the hon. member who reflected on the brains of the Government was not reasonable. Members must bear in mind that the hon. member had on the Notice Paper another amendment providing that, outside municipalities, improvements need only consist of one-tenth of the unimproved value of the land.

HON. C. SOMMERS: Was the hon. member in order in referring to a later clause?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could refer to the clause, but must not debate it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was necessary to deal with the later clause in order to fully understand the nature of this amendment. In the case of an estate valued at £30,000, all the owner would need to do to improve it to obtain a rebate of the tax would be to construct roads to the value of £3,000, if the amendment of the hon. member was accepted. Members should think of this before they assented to the amendment. It was not at all a reasonable amendment. This was not intended for the benefit of farmers or country lands. Land was deemed to be improved after a pound an acre had been spent on it or one-third of the unimproved value, and that was not very great. Farmers as a rule did not make roads to any extent. Any farm to which it would be necessary to make a road would be cultivated, and one would have had to fence it and build a house, which would be sufficient improvement under this Bill without having a road at all. So this would be of no benefit to farmers, but only to estates cut up near town where roads were made.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: If a man did cut up an estate and make roads, it was the beginning of convenience for the settlement of the people, and a legitimate and proper improvement that should be allowed for. Roads were just as much an improvement when made by private individuals as were houses.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: There was nothing about private individuals.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Private roads were what he referred to. The amendment seemed a reasonable and proper one, and the improvement referred to should be encouraged.

HON. E. McLARTY: If a man spent a sum of money in making a road for the development of his property to give him facilities to get from one portion to another, that work should be considered an improvement, and it should be taken into consideration.

HON. W. PATRICK: The amendment was not quite clear. The construction of roads through country land so

that a farmer or squatter could move from one portion of his property to another was an improvement that ought to be included, but in his opinion that was governed by the other portion of the definition "other improvements." A road through land cut up into allotments would be practically a public road, and in his opinion that should not be reckoned as an improvement from a private point of view.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: The obvious intent of the amendment was to enable the owner of a large estate, perhaps within reasonable distance of Perth or some other large centre, which was held purely for speculative purposes, to have roads made regarded as improvements; but those roads would be constructed with the object of more easily selling the property. He did not propose to increase the exemptions. He would vote against the amendment.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Unfortunately, around Perth and Fremantle most of the land was of a sandy nature and utterly unfit for pastoral and horticultural purposes. Supposing that in Victoria Park or South Perth a person possessed 100 acres, they would be absolutely unfit for those purposes, and if it was desired that it should be utilised for residential sites, the first thing that the owner had to do was to subdivide it.

Hon. M. L. Moss: One did that for his own purposes.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: And in doing it he not only benefited himself but the public. A macadamised road would cost on the average £1,000 a mile. He was willing to say in the amendment "roads macadamised and made by the owner," or to adopt some other definition which perhaps the Committee would assist in framing. To penalise a man who carried out such work as road making would be a monstrous thing. Such work did not come under the heading of "other improvements," because "other improvements" meant improvements of a like nature to those specified, and it was necessary, if a road was to be regarded as an improvement, that it should be specially stated in the measure. When he moved the amendment he was not thinking of country lands. He represented the Metropolitan Province, and two-thirds of the tax would be paid by the people of Perth, Fremantle, Kalgoorlie, and Boulder. As they were paying such an enormous amount of the tax we should be prepared to give some redress to the people willing to spend money in improving their property. There were lots of land around Perth which if forced on the market would not fetch £1 an acre, but which would if sold in reasonable areas fetch perhaps £20 or £30 an acre. The principle of the Bill had been approved, and why should not the Leader of the House assist in making the measure more equitable and more workable? It was the only reasonable way in which a man could spend money in improving this class of land.

Hon. W. T. LOTON: The proposition put forward would not work out fairly to the purchaser of the land cut up. The owner of the estate would retain the value of the improvement in the shape of roads by getting an enhanced price for the land; but the improvement would not count to the purchaser.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: It was for the man buying the block to improve it, if he desired to evade the tax.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It was not with undue opposition to the measure as a whole that he supported this amendment. He made a note of this matter long before a division was taken on the second reading. Road-making was of as much importance as the improvements specified in the Bill. He had also intended to move in the direction of including tramways as improvements. Roads and tramways could not very well be left to the general term of "other improvements," because the taxing officer would rightly hold that since improvements of not as much importance were specified in the Bill, roads and tramways should have been specified, or could not be classed as improvements. Members should give this amendment every consideration, because a considerable amount of money was spent on these roads. Large sums had been spent on improvements that had become exhausted, and we should not call upon the farmers to lose the value of the road-making also.

Hon. H. BRIGGS supported the amendment. That roads were an improvement was a principle recognised by the Lands Department. We saw every week in the *Government Gazette* subur-

ban land put up for auction on certain conditions, such as erecting a fence and spending so much per acre on the land. He had been assured by the Lands Department that roads made through the property would be counted as improvements.

HON. E. M. CLARKE: The thing could be put in a nutshell. When the valuator went round to look at property claimed to be improved by road-making, he would ask the Minister whether he was to consider the value of these roads. The value of the property would be increased and the man would pay the tax in accordance.

HON. W. MALEY: It was his desire, having opposed the Bill, to see as few amendments as possible, and to oppose every exemption afforded, because the Bill should be as broad-based as possible; but he desired to see justice done to every owner of land. One was led to believe from the remarks of hon. members that roads on farms were an improvement, while roads on suburban estates cut up for sale were not. Could anyone say that a road put through a sand-covered estat near Perth was anything but an improvee ment? Surely it rendered service to the community? The idea of constructing roads through estates put up for sale was a new one, and it represented an advanced stage; and in no place was it so necessary as in the sandy country near Perth. What improvements could owners of this land near Perth effect but making roads? He (Hon. W. Maley) had certain land, and he could not and would not attempt to pay the first tax on it. He would take the necessary precaution, as soon as the Bill passed, to transfer perhaps 50 allotments he possessed to the State. What improvements could the owners of Osborne Park Estate effect on the land to be of value? If they put up a fence it would be removed. It was no use putting up houses unless there was a demand for houses and it was impossible to build on all the suburban area at present. Members did not recognise this.

HON. J. M. DREW: What was the meaning of the word "road?" Did it signify a surveyed road, a public road, or a private road?

HON. C. SOMMERS: Any road.

HON. J. M. DREW: That being so, the main object of the amendment would be defeated, because in country districts large estates were divided by cleared tracks; roads which were just as good as those within municipalities. North and south, east and west, and in every direction there were roads made purely in the interests of the owner of the estate.

HON. C. SOMMERS: Under the interpretation of "improvement" the clearing of timber was included, and the making of drains. If a man desired to make a road he cleared the timber first and also drained the land. The improvements were intended for the benefit of country landowners, whereas the exemptions should not only be for the benefit of the farmer, but for the town landowner also. Roads running through stations were not the property of the landowner, but were Government roads. [HON. J. M. DREW: Not always.] If a man made a road and drained it, that was an improvement. There were people who had invested money in land and were paying heavy rates. These persons were spending money in road-making so that they could get rid of the land. Now we had approved of the Bill, let us make it as fair and equitable as possible and make the exemptions apply equally to the country and town landowners. By leave he would withdraw the amendment with a view to substituting another.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

HON. C. SOMMERS moved an amendment—

That after the word "planting" the words "roads made and macadamised by the owner" be inserted.

HON. G. RANDELL: On the ground of common sense he would support the amendment. Roads made through property were in many cases more valuable than fencing, and should be taken into consideraton. There was no doubt the valuator would take these roads into consideration when valuing a property. In the interpretation were the words

"or any other improvement whatsoever." That should cover the amendment. Roads were for the benefit of the general public although they might not be taken over by the local authority, in which case the amendment deserved every consideration.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: A wrong view of the question had been taken by Mr. Randell and other members. Under the present Bill, roads would count as an improvement.

HON. C. SOMMERS: Why oppose the amendment then?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: On account of a subsequent amendment. Any valuator would take into account the presence of a road; therefore the road, as a matter of necessity, should count as an improvement. But how were we to define a road? That was why he objected to the amendment.

HON. G. RANDELL: Say a macadamised road.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: What was a macadamised road? It was impossible to define what a road was. One road might cost £100 a mile, in one part of the country, and another road would cost £1,000 a mile in another part of the country. Country members could rest assured that if the roads on their farms were improved, they would undoubtedly count as improvements. He objected to the amendment on account of a farther amendment to be moved later, which was clearly aimed at suburban land not subdivided. These roads would give an additional price to the land, and the owner would obtain a larger value from the people to whom the land was sold. The vendor would be the only person who would benefit. The amendment would not benefit country members at all. Any permanent improvement would be allowed for.

HON. J. W. LANGSFORD: If the amendment was allowed, we would be entitled to insist that all footpaths in towns and suburbs should be included as an improvement. The words in the latter part of the clause would cover roads and footpaths.

HON. G. RANDELL: When made by the owner.

HON. J. W. LANGSFORD: On private property. There were many footpaths in Perth and suburbs which distinctly improved the value of property; and under the words used in the clause, they would be reckoned as an improvement. If the amendment was inserted, then footpaths could not be regarded as an improvement.

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

HON. C. SOMMERS: Whether "any other improvements whatsoever" would include a road was doubtful. First the Minister said it would, afterwards that it would not; and to make the point clear the amendment was necessary. Country members testified that roads were essentially improvements on country lands, and in certain suburban lands roads were the only improvement possible. He altered the amendment to read "roads made or macadamised by the owner." The farmer who simply grubbed out stumps and formed a road should have it classed as an improvement.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY supported the amendment. A man who spent money on road-making employed labour, and his expenditure should be recognised. It was doubtful whether roads would be included as improvements in the definition as it stood.

HON. E. M. CLARKE: It was clear that the definition did not include roads. Another amendment was necessary: for amongst "improvements" were included the eradication of noxious weeds, though the Government could, under the Noxious Weeds Act, compel their eradication, while by this Bill the owner would be paid for doing the work. He would move to excise the words "noxious weeds."

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Government did not feel strongly on the amendment; but if "made or macadamised road" were inserted, the valuator would not recognise as an improvement a rough track with rude culverts; whereas, if the definition passed as printed, he would have to allow for such a road as coming

under the head of "any other improvement whatsoever."

HON. W. T. LOTON: Surely the valuator would have to take into account money spent by a suburban landowner in making roads, just as he would in country districts.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Certainly.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Better not alter the definition. The valuator would be bound to consider any expenditure on road-making, whether in town or suburban lands. If he did not recognise a track as a road, the owner could appeal.

HON. W. MALEY differed from Mr. Loton. As the definition stood, a property-owner would not feel safe in making such an improvement as a road. If the words were inserted, the owner of a suburban estate having money to invest would be induced to expend money in making roads so as to obtain the privilege under the Bill, and by so doing would be conferring a public benefit. This might lead to a large amount of road-making in suburban areas, and afford a solution of the unemployed problem.

HON. C. SOMMERS: The Minister had refrained from making reference to the application of the amendment to suburban lands. Frequently roads boards or small municipalities had not the funds to go in extensively for road-making; therefore, why not offer to owners this inducement to improvement of their properties by making roads? Roads, like railways, induced settlement; and in this instance it was not proposed that the Government should incur the expense of making roads, but that owners of land be permitted, in return for doing so, to escape the penalty of the higher tax.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY: Unless the amendment were included, it would be almost as well to strike out the reservation in the clause, for the assessor might decide that roads did not come within the category of "any other improvements."

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

Ayes	12
Noes	11
Majority for ..	1

Ayes.	Noes.
Hon. H. Briggs	Hon. T. F. O. Brimage
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. J. D. Connolly
Hon. F. Connor	Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. C. E. Dempster	Hon. J. T. Glowrey
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. W. Hackett
Hon. S. J. Haynes	Hon J. W. Lang-ford
Hon. W. Maley	Hon. R. Laurie
Hon. W. Oats	Hon. W. Patrick
Hon. G. Randell	Hon. C. A. Piesse
Hon. C. Sommers	Hon. R. F. Sholl
Hon. J. W. Wright	Hon W. T. Loton
Hon. E. McLarty (*Teller*).	(*Teller*).

Amendment thus passed.

HON. W. T. LOTON moved an amendment—

That after the word "water" the words "pumps, windmills, or other apparatus for obtaining water" be added.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was no objection to the amendment, other than that the clause already sufficiently covered the matter.

Amendment put and passed.

HON. C. SOMMERS moved an amendment—

That after the word "drains," the words "laying on of water, reticulation, water supply and connections, conservation of water," be inserted.

It was desirable that every encouragement should be given for people to have an abundance of water. Having already agreed to the amendment by Mr. Loton, he did not see that the Committee could object to this amendment.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The amendment was unnecessary, and only on this ground did he oppose it, for it was already provided in the clause that "improvements" should consist of houses and buildings, fencing, planting, excavations for holding water, etc. What was the conservation of water that was not covered by "excavation"?

HON. G. RANDELL: It might be in tanks.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: We should need a very big clause if we enumerated every article.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: If a rate was paid and a connection was put down by the local authority or the Metropolitan Waterworks Board, would that count as an improvement by the owner or occupier of the land?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: Under this amendment it would.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: What he meant was work done by the owner.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: The Colonial Secretary would have done well to consult the Crown law authorities as to what was included in the words "other improvements." The clause could not be made wider than it was.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: The laying of a 4in. or 6in. main was very costly. The Minister thought that this amendment was a matter of repetition; but he (Mr. Sommers) wished to make assurance doubly sure.

Hon. R. LAURIE: If water was laid on, the owners of the property got an increased price for the land. The vendor would get the whole of the rebate for those reticulation pipes, and the man who bought two or three blocks of land would get no exemption.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: According to the hon. gentleman, anyone was to be discouraged from spending money in improving his land. [Hon. R. Laurie: Not a bit.] He could mention a great many estates where water was laid on by owners, and the work had to be paid for out of their own pockets. That was private enterprise which we always tried to encourage. What did a Government lay down a railway for, but to improve the value of the land, and make it saleable?

Hon. R. LAURIE: There were too many exemptions. We had been told all round the House that the Bill was a bad one. We approved of the principle of the Bill, and those who had talked against exemptions were now wanting further exemptions. Supposing one made a road, the land would be improved up to the supposed value, and under this amendment it would be all improved land, and there would be no tax. We could take a portion of the northern part of the State where there would be no tax. The improvement of streets and the reticulation of water pipes would leave the property improved land.

Hon. C. Sommers: And the owners would pay ¾d. in the pound.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This amendment was a needless repetition, and he must object to it and ask the Committee to be good enough not to make the Bill look ridiculous.

Hon. R. F. SHOLL: The owners of the land where such work as that referred to was carried out would be exempted from paying the higher rate, if such work was to be considered an improvement. If such work was to be considered an improvement, it meant that there would be less taxation, and therefore it meant that there would be farther exemption. He was opposed to all exemptions.

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

Ayes	9
Noes	12
Majority against ..	3

Ayes.	Noes.
Hon. H. Briggs	Hon. T. F. O. Brimage
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. J. D. Connolly
Hon. C. E. Dempster	Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. T. Glowrey
Hon. S. J. Haynes	Hon. J. W. Hackett
Hon. W. Maley	Hon. J. W. Langsford
Hon. G. Randell	Hon. R. Laurie
Hon. C. Sommers	Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. J. W. Wright (*Teller*).	Hon. W. Patrick
	Hon. C. A. Piesse
	Hon. R. F. Sholl
	Hon. W. T. Loton (*Teller*).

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE moved an amendment—

That the words "noxious weeds" be struck out of the definition of "improvements."

It was not necessary to provide in this Bill that noxious weeds should be cleared. Under the Noxious Weeds Act power was given to the inspector to require land to be cleared of noxious weeds.

Hon. W. PATRICK: There was no need to strike out these words. It was not intended to tax noxious weeds; they were an incumbrance on the land.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The mover of the amendment must be joking. We could not do better than encourage a man to clear noxious weeds off his land.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. G. RANDELL: Should not the words "Colonial Treasurer" be "State Treasurer"?

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: Under the Constitution Act the office was described as "Colonial Treasurer."

HON. C. SOMMERS moved an amendment—

That in Subclause (a) of the definition of "unimproved value," after the word "sale," the following be inserted, "for cash or on terms not exceeding 12 calendar months."

The subclause provided that the unimproved value of freehold land would be the capital sum for which the fee simple would sell under such reasonable conditions of sale as a *bona fide* seller would require, assuming the actual improvements had not been made. The question might arise as to what were reasonable terms on which the land might be sold. Land sold on 20-years terms would naturally bring more than land sold on 12-months terms, as the conditions would be so much easier. We should do something to limit the term, so that the valuer could arrive at the value of the land. He suggested the inclusion of the words proposed in the amendment.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Reasonable conditions meant the market rate.

HON. C. SOMMERS: If we gave long terms the land brought more, but it was a false value.

HON. W. T. LOTON: The amendment was unnecessary and undesirable because the clause was sufficiently explicit. The price at which the land would sell would be practically a cash price or thereabout.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: It was frivolous to put in the Bill the conditions of the sale of land such as would be read out at an auction sale. It had nothing to do with the Bill whether the people paid cash or took terms.

HON. E. M. CLARKE: The clause was almost word for word with the Roads Act. When we said reasonable terms it was all that was required.

HON. C. SOMMERS: The object was to improve the Bill, and it would not hurt the measure to provide that the reasonable terms a *bona fide* seller would require would be not more than 12 months.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The wording of the clause as it stood was reasonable. If the amendment was carried it would make the value of the land an absolutely cash price, which would be unfair.

HON. W. PATRICK: The present valu was the thing.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The valuato would have a fair knowledge of dealing with land and would ask what was fair thing, perhaps so much cash an so much on terms; but if we limite it to cash it would be unreasonable, an would not be fair taxation. The claus was reasonable and businesslike.

HON. W. MALEY: It was impossibl to arrive at unimproved value. He ha not met the genius who could decid the exact figure of the unimproved valu of all pieces of land. He was not i favour of any unnecessary amendment to provoke members or to prolon the agony, and the hon. member, in thi instance, had perhaps overshot the mark If there was any sense in the clause a all there was just as much as there wa in the amendment proposed.

HON. C. SOMMERS: If the value o the land was the cash value, that would g against the proposals of the Government He asked leave to withdraw the amend ment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

HON. E. M. CLARKE: What was th meaning of Subclause (c)?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Tak a pastoral lease of 40,000 acres. Th rent charged by the Crown was £1 pe thousand acres, which would amount t £40 per annum. Assume it was a goo pastoral lease the fair annual rental fo that would be £2 per 1,000 acres, or £8 a year. For the purposes of taxation th Government deducted the rent paid t the Crown, £40, from the fair annua rent, which was £80, leaving £40, whic was multiplied by 20 giving £800 as th unimproved value of the lease. The ta would be paid on £800. Of course i would depend on whether the lease wa improved. If the lease was improve to the extent of one-third, which in th case cited would be about £300, the the tax would come in under the lesse rate of ¾d.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: This subclaus seemed to be inconsistent with Subclaus (a) of Clause 10.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The land had to be improved up to £1 per acre, or one-third of the unimproved value, and he had shown the way the unimproved value was arrived at.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Could any reason be given why the fair annual rental had to be multiplied by 20?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Government was assuming that the lessee was paying equal to a 5 per cent. rent.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Until an assessment was made, the rent was to be multiplied by 20. Supposing the rent paid was 10s. or £1, that amount would be multiplied by 20, and on that amount the tax would be levied. Was it fair to assume that leases of these lands were worth 20 times the amount of the rent now being paid?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Surely freehold was.

HON. W. T. LOTON: There was no freehold about it. These were leaseholds, and the Government were assuming that the leaseholds were worth 20 times the amount of the rent now being paid. He distinctly said they were not worth that amount. If the Government proposed to tax the leaseholders on these lines, in many instances the Government would have a lot of land to relet, because people would not hold leases on an assessment of that kind. It was an exorbitant assessment.

HON. E. McLARTY: This was a most objectionable clause, and very difficult to understand. Seeing that mining leases and timber leases were exempt he moved—

That Subclause (*c*) be struck out.

It was unreasonable that the Government should give certain conditions and then impose a tax on land which the lessee had no right to purchase. The Government multiplied the amount of the rent by 20, which was an unreasonable proposal.

HON. E. M. CLARKE: In the North a person leasing land from the Crown paid say £200 rent for that land. What would the lessee have to pay in addition to that £200 in land tax?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: A pastoral lease with a rental of £200 per annum would be assessed by multiplying the annual value by 20, which would give £4,000 as the capital unimproved value. If, as was probable, the lease were improved to the extent of one-third of its value, or say £1,200 odd, then the tax would be ¾d. or £12 10s. a year. If the improvements were insufficient, the tax would be twice that sum. Mr. Loton and Mr. McLarty maintained that the freehold of a pastoral lease was not worth 20 times the rent. In the South-Western Division the rent was £1 per thousand acres. For 10,000 acres the lessee paid £10 a year; and the freehold or capital value would be £200. Would members say that valuation was ridiculous? It was ridiculously low. In Kimberley the rent was 10s. per 1,000 acres, or £200 for an estate of 400,000 acres; and the capital value would be £4,000. Would not 400,000 acres of good pastoral land be worth £4,000? On 4,000 acres the taxable value would be about £800, or a tax of £2 10s. a year at the lower rate of ¾d.

HON. W. T. LOTON: As the leaseholder had no right to the freehold, why should he pay a tax on the freehold value?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There must be a basis.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Apparently when a lessee was paying 10s. or £1 per thousand acres, the Government considered his leasehold worth 20 times that rent and would tax accordingly. Of leaseholds he had had large experience, and no leaseholder in the State would refuse to sell his lease and leasehold rights for much less than 20 times or even 10 times the rental. Generally the leases, apart from their improvements, were considered of little value. The Government value was exorbitant.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY questioned the Colonial Secretary's explanation of the subclause, which as printed made it appear that the valuator must estimate whether the lease was worth more than when originally taken up; and if he valued it at a higher rate than was represented by the actual rent, the difference, or the excess value, was multiplied by 20, and the leaseholder taxed on the

product. The Minister's explanation seemed incorrect.

HON. W. MALEY: Many members were suffering from brain fag. The Bill seemed a mass of confusion. A blackboard and chalk would have facilitated the working of the Minister's sums.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: Better postpone the Bill for 12 months, and meanwhile receive instructions from its originator, so that members could understand it when it next appeared. Probably no member understood the system of tax proposed. Subclause (*c*) appeared unfair and inconsistent. On the Gascoyne a pastoral lease could not be less than 20,000 acres, and that area must include much bad country; yet it would be taxed on the same basis as a lease in the South, say of 3,000 acres, all good country. A valuable station near the coast would pay the same tax as one 300 miles inland. Of 50,000 acres taken up in the Kimberleys perhaps one-third would be bad; but for this no allowance would be made. A Kimberley station within 80 miles of the coast would pay as much as one on the South Australian border. That would be rough on the pioneers of the newly-discovered Kimberley leases, who were hardly holding their own owing to their isolation and to the depredations of natives. The scheme of taxation had not been fairly considered; in fact, Ministers, none of whom apparently had ever been north of Geraldton, did not know the conditions under which northern settlers lived.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Where was the justice of taxing leaseholders already paying the full annual value by way of rent? When the rents were fixed the Government recognised that lessees would have to pay for land of which three-fourths or four-fifths was bad. Many pastoralists were obliged, to provide against droughts, to hold enormous areas otherwise useless. To tax their land as if it were freehold was a great and inexcusable injustice.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Why did the hon. member allow the conditional purchase subclause to pass?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: The pastoralist had no right of purchase.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: And he was improving the Government estate.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Yes; by fencing, sinking wells, and road-making.

Progress reported and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at three minutes past 9 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 3rd October, 1906.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—TICK CATTLE INSPECTION

MR. WALKER asked the Minister for Lands: In view of the rumours that a number of tick fever-stricken cattle have been sent to the goldfields, will the Minister state the system adopted by the Stock Department of inspecting North West and other cattle landed at Robb's Jetty?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: All imported stock are quarantined on arrival and subjected to a close inspection by a duly qualified veterinary surgeon. No beast suffering from tick fever is allowed to leave the quarantine ground but is there slaughtered.