

## NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Bath	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bolton	Mr. W. Price
Mr. Collier	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gill	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Holman	Mr. Ware
Mr. Horan	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hudson	

(Teller).

Clause thus passed.

Clause 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Land Purchase Board to report:

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The clause provided that "the land purchase board, before making their report, may examine the land." It seemed extraordinary that we should allow the board the option of making a report without seeing the land. He moved an amendment—

*That in line 2 of Subclause 2 the word "may" be struck out and "shall" inserted in lieu.*

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.19 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 15th December, 1909.*

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary:—Report of the Agricultural Bank for the year ended 30th June, 1909.

### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Goomalling—Wongan Hills Railway, *passed.*
2. Dowerin-Merridin Railway, *passed.*

### MOTION—COLLIE COALFIELD, REWARD FOR DISCOVERER.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the motion of the Hon. E. McLarty, "That in the opinion of this House the services rendered to this State by Mr. A. Perren, the discoverer of the Collie Coalfield should be recognised."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): I moved the adjournment of this debate yesterday. I must confess that I did not follow the mover very closely. Still I think his main argument was that the State had never recognised the services rendered by the discoverer of the Collie coalfields. I have since secured some particulars from the Mines Department and it would appear that this gentleman has had some substantial recognition.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: All the speakers yesterday admitted that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I listened to Mr. McLarty and I gathered from him that Mr. Perren had got merely a portion of £100.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: He got half of £500.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He has had more than that. On the 10th August, 1887, a notice was published in the *Government Gazette* offering a reward of £1,000 for the discovery of payable coal. In 1889 Mr. Perren showed a certain gentleman the locality in which he had picked up some coal. In October of the same year these two gentlemen arrived in Perth, and applied for certain land in the vicinity of this discovery. Mr. Perren was generally recognised as the discoverer of the Collie field, and in 1889 £100 was paid to him and £100 to the other gentleman. Subsequently the balance of £800 was equally allotted to the two. That makes £500 that Mr. Perren has received in cash. The Collie Mining district was declared on the 25th August, 1892, abolished on the 2nd August, 1895, and again declared on the 21st February, 1896. When this gentleman who accompanied Mr. Perren applied for the reward the following minute was made by Sir John Forrest, the then Premier, to the Hon. E. H. Wittenoom, the then Minister for Mines:—"10th November, 1897.

The discovery of coal at the Collie was made by Mr. Perren, but a great deal of the merit of bringing this matter to light was due to the other gentleman. I expect we shall have to give him a reward and when the whole matter is considered I think both these gentlemen deserve something." The matter was further revived in 1899, when this Cabinet minute was penned by Sir John Forrest :—"Mr. Perren was the original discoverer." That goes to show that a Cabinet record recognising Mr. Perren as the discoverer of the Collie coalfield, is in existence. That, I think, is the great point Mr. McLarty wished to attain, namely that Mr. Perren should be recognised as the discoverer. It is on the records, penned by Sir John Forrest, that Mr. Perren was the original discoverer and that this other gentleman did all the rest ; that is to say, brought it under the notice of the Government. In 1900 Mr. A. S. Roe, the police magistrate, Mr. R. C. Clifton, Under Secretary for Lands, and Mr. H. S. King, Under Secretary for Mines, were appointed a Commission to investigate the question of the discovery of coal. Their recommendation was that £600 be paid to Mr. Perren, and £200 to the other gentleman. In the same year a select committee of another place was appointed to consider the question, and on the 29th September they reported that the balance of £800, if the Government decided to pay it, should be paid in equal proportions to Mr. Perren and the other gentleman. This was accordingly done. The reason for the committee's recommendation was that they had taken into consideration an agreement between the two claimants under which it was agreed that they should share equally in the reward. All this shows that Mr. Perren received £100 in one lot, and, two years later, another £400, and the select committee's report disclosed an agreement between them under which they were to divide any profits accruing to them from their joint venture. Seeing that it has been fully considered both by the Commission in 1900 and again by the select committee appointed by the Assembly, I do not think this House is called upon to do anything further. In the first

place it is officially recognised that Mr. Perren was the discoverer and again, all the compensation has been paid to them which was offered at the time, and all that the Commission and select committee declared Mr. Perren was entitled to. It seems to me the mover was not aware of the full facts of the case yesterday. Personally I have no knowledge of the case beyond what was stated here and is on the official records.

Mr. McLARTY (In reply) : I certainly was under a misapprehension as to the amount of reward paid. I was aware that £1,000 had been offered by the Government. Yesterday I had not all the particulars to refresh my memory, which I have since obtained. But notwithstanding the fact that the reward of £1,000 was offered and that Mr. Perren was recognised as the actual discoverer, it must be remembered that he received only half that sum, and that the other half was paid to the other gentleman. At that time there were grave doubts as to the commercial value of the coal, but at this stage in its history the fact has been demonstrated beyond any doubt that it is a most valuable asset to the State. We are using it now, not only on the railways but for every purpose, and the bunkering trade is increasing enormously. No doubt it will continue to increase. Therefore, seeing the great results that have been obtained from the discovery, the small request I made yesterday is one that members might readily assent to. I know it is recorded in the Blue Book that the field was discovered by Mr. Perren and the other gentleman. That will be handed down to future generations, whereas Perren's name should be mentioned emphatically as the discoverer of the field. The small concession of a free pass on the railways has been granted often for far less deserving cases than this one. I hope members will make this small recognition to a deserving man who has been a good settler to the State, and has done a good deal in the way of developing the country. I am not asking for one penny from the Government, but merely that he should be given a pass. He would esteem it a

great compliment if the country recognised his services in that way. He does not travel much, and the concession would be availed of to a very small extent.

Question put and passed

## BILL—CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

### *Second Reading.*

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) in moving the second reading said: It is very necessary for me to point out to members that this is a very small Bill, but at the same time it covers a rather important amendment to the Constitution, and it is to amend that portion of the Constitution Act which materially affects this House. Members are aware that in 1889 this State, then a colony, was granted Responsible Government. At the beginning the other place was elective, while this Chamber was nominated by the Government. Later on when the State attained a certain population, this House also became elective. When the present Constitution Act, as amended, was passed the qualification of electors for this House was fixed as follows:—(1.) Legal or equitable estate situated in electoral Province of the clear annual value of one hundred pounds sterling; (2.) Householder within Province of clear annual value of twenty-five pounds sterling; (3.) Leasehold estate within Province of clear annual value of twenty-five pounds sterling; (4.) The holder of a lease or license from the Crown within the Province at a rental of not less than ten pounds per annum. Or if the name of such person is on the electoral list of any municipality or roads district within the Province, in respect of property of the annual rateable value of not less than twenty-five pounds. That has been unaltered up to date. Briefly the qualification is annual value £25 or freehold worth £100. In some of the other States the Legislative Council is elected on a much narrower franchise

than this one, while in others it is nominative. In Queensland and New South Wales it is nominative, while in the remaining three States, Tasmania, Victoria, and South Australia, it is elective. In Victoria the qualification is:—(a.) A freeholder of land in the Province rated at not less than £10. (b.) A lessee of an unexpired term originally created for not less than five years, or the occupier of property rated at not less than £15; or a graduate British university, matriculated students, Melbourne University, qualified legal and medical practitioners, ministers of religion, certificated schoolmasters, and naval and military officers. In South Australia the qualification is as follows:—(a.) Occupier of a dwelling house of £17 rental. (b.) Registered proprietor of a Crown lease on which there are improvements to the value of at least £50 the property of such proprietor. (c.) Freehold estate in possession situate within the State of the clear value of £50 above all charges and encumbrances affecting the same. (d.) Leasehold estate in possession situate within the State of the clear annual value of £20, the lease having been duly registered and having three years to run at the time of voting, or containing a clause authorising the lessee to become the purchaser. (e.) Minister of religion. (f.) Head teacher of a school or college residing on premises belonging to the college or school. (g.) Postmaster or postmistress residing in building used in connection with post office. (h.) Stationmaster residing in premises belonging to Government. (i.) Every member of police force in charge of a police station. In Tasmania the qualification is:—(a.) A freehold estate of the annual value of £10. (b.) The occupier of property of the annual value of £30. (c.) Graduates of British Universities, legal and medical practitioners, and naval and military officers.

Hon. J. T. Glowrey: What about New Zealand?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Upper Chamber there is nominative. The present qualification is, as I have said, the possession of freehold worth £100. This Bill proposes to strike out

the words "clear value of one hundred pounds" and insert "value of fifty pounds." It further omits "twenty-five pounds" for the purpose of inserting "fifteen pounds."

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Clear annual value.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The words "clear annual value" are omitted for various reasons. One particular reason is that great trouble has been experienced in defining what it means. There have been various decisions given, but it has always been a trouble to decide what is the "clear annual value." This clause will make it plain, for it will say "fifteen pounds annual value or fifty pounds freehold." That means, if a person is paying £15 rent, which is about six shillings a week, he will, if this Bill is carried, be entitled to vote. A similar amendment to the Constitution was proposed by the then Government in the latter end of 1903. I know that several members who then voted against the reduction do not hold the same view to-day, and probably for the same reason that influences me, which is that at that time it was felt it was not necessary to reduce the £25 because there were no bona fide householders at that time who were not rated at £25 a year. I remember that I then obtained returns from the Kalgoorlie municipality which showed there were 1,400 ratepayers on the roll, while there were 1,397 on the roll for the Kalgoorlie division for the North-East Province, so that practically every ratepayer was at that time on the roll.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Rightly or wrongly.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Rightly; no ratepayer was valued below £25. As a country becomes settled values undoubtedly become less. Rents have been reduced since then, and a house which probably would have fetched £25 a year at that time, would not bring more than £15 to-day.

Hon. W. Patrick: Have the numbers on the rolls been reduced?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I will deal with that later. I think it is the desire of every member that every bona fide householder should be a voter

for the Legislative Council, but it would be a rather difficult thing to state in the Bill that the qualification should simply be that of a householder, for it would lead to no end of bother as to whom were householders. It was not thought necessary to alter the Act in 1903 as £25 covered every householder, but now things are very different, and a necessity has arisen to reduce the amount from £25 to £15. I am sure that the difference in the values is so great between then and now that if the rolls to-day were strictly scrutinised a great many people, a very big percentage of those on the roll, would be struck off.

Hon. J. T. Glowrey: Why?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Simply because values have decreased, and the names have not been struck off. I think I am pretty safe in saying that if the rolls were scrutinised a great number of names would be struck off. Therefore, in effect, in passing the amendment we shall not be adding to the roll of the Legislative Council, to anything like the extent some members may suppose. In regard to the matter I mentioned a little while ago, that is as to the number of ratepayers and bona fide householders not qualified to be on the Legislative Council roll, I have obtained a return, and I find in the city of Perth there are 9,697 assessments; there are 3,151 of these below £20, and 1,600 below £15. In Claremont there are 1,700 assessments, and 947 of these are below £20 and £31 below £15, clear annual value. In Kalgoorlie—I specially draw members' attention to this—there are 2,959 assessments, while 1,500, or 50 per cent. are below £20, while six years ago there were practically none below £25, and there are 795, or 26 per cent. below £15.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: Your land tax did it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think the hon. member is right there. I do not think the land tax had anything to do with it. In Boulder, from information I have received from the council, there were 3,000 assessments, 1,000 of which are below £20 and 500 below £15. I draw attention to this, that 564 are below £15. The argument that it will

not embrace bona fide householders or ratepayers is, therefore, not correct; it will, because the £15 municipal value means £20 clear annual value. There is a difference between the annual value and the ratable value. What Mr. Sommers mentions is quite correct. A good many of the assessments below £15 are for vacant blocks. In all these places there are a number of vacant blocks and they are generally low priced blocks. That is an additional argument that the £15 will embrace all bona fide householders and ratepayers, therefore, it is necessary to reduce the franchise to that amount to bring it up to what it was years ago, and no one will then be left out. In Northam there were 731 assessments, 380 of which are below £20 and 284 below £15. In Victoria Park there are 1,340 assessments, half, or rather more than half, 700, are below £20, and 450 are below £15, and it is quite impossible to give the people that are assessed below the £15 clear annual value a vote unless we reduce the franchise to £15.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Have not many of them a vote now?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: A great many of them have. I repeat, if the rolls were strictly scrutinised a great number of names would have to go off.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: What is the average?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Probably one-fifth or 20 per cent.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: That is a guess.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not guessing. I have given a good deal of thought to this matter, and from parts of the country I know, it would run about 20 per cent. I have already pointed out to members the difference between annual values set forth in the Bill and the municipal values. Practically in the old Act, which led to a great deal of trouble, it almost compelled people to take the municipal values; that is to say if a person was assessed by the municipal council at £20, he would in reality pay £30 rent; and according to the strict reading of the Act, he would not be entitled to go on the roll. This Bill makes it clear that if a person pays £15 rental he can

claim the vote. It may be said by some that this is rather a late hour in the session to bring forward a Bill of this kind. True, it is late, but at the same time it is a question that has been before the country since 1903, and every successive Government since, have made it a plank in their platform, a reduction in the franchise to this scale. It has to be remembered that at the last two or three general elections the question has been fairly put before the people; and it cannot be said that the question has not been considered by the people, for it has been before them for several general elections. It has been before the people for six or seven years covering the elections for every member of this House. Therefore, the electors are fully acquainted with the question, and members have had every opportunity of making up their minds as to whether, in the best interests of the country, it is desirable to reduce the franchise or not.

Hon. R. W. Pennefather: Why was the Bill not brought down earlier?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think there is any reason to complain. It is a very short Bill and the principle has been before the country for a long time. I know it may be argued by some members that they have stated at their elections that they are pledged to £25. I, myself, was elected on the first occasion, when I declared in answer to questions, that I did not see any necessity—that was in 1902—of reducing the franchise; and I was re-elected last year, and although I had declared for £15 franchise, if I had declared for £30 franchise, probably I should have been elected just the same. Therefore, it does not follow that because the electors elect a man they may not disagree with one principle, and it does not prove that it is a mandate from the people.

Hon. R. W. Pennefather: The argument might apply the other way.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What members have to consider is this: there was a very good argument in favour of the Bill used in another place recently, when a member, who was very much in favour of the abolition of this House, was opposed to the measure, and he said, "if

we give them this we give them a fresh lease of life." That is a very excellent argument why members should vote for the Bill. I am not here to say the Bill is brought down because the House has not been democratic. This House has never refused to pass any democratic legislation that has not been in the best interest of the country. It has never been a House, as long as I have known it, that has in any way obstructed business; but it will strengthen the House and make it more popular to give every bona fide householder, which was intended in the first place, a vote. It will strengthen the House: there will be greater interest taken in the elections, and more people will probably become candidates for the Council, and there will be a greater choice. Altogether, it is in the best interests of the House, and it will strengthen the Chamber very materially. I move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

A pause ensued, and the President stated the question.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): I am very sorry to come first, but surely there is something to be said. I am a little apprehensive, knowing there is a great deal of opposition to the Bill, lest that opposition might be all the more fatal in being silent. If I thought silence meant general consent to the Bill I would not delay the House for a moment; but if the silence means a silent adverse vote, I think it would be a very great pity, I think this House would be placed in a false position before the country. However, I am not disposed to give a silent vote. I think this is one of the most important questions that has come before the House this session, and this House owes it to itself to not only vote for the Bill, but to let it be known there are strong reasons why the House should pass the Bill. The only point on which I am disposed to differ from the Minister and the Bill is the first qualification. I cannot see any reason why "clear value," in connection with freehold qualifications, should be struck out. Under the present law a freehold qualification is property

of the clear value of £100. That means something. It means some little stake in the country, but if the alteration stands, as in the Bill, by omitting "clear value of £100," and inserting "£50," which may be covered by a mortgage, it may mean the supposed owner of the land has really no valuable interest in it whatever. I cannot see how it constitutes a qualification. The fact that a man has bought land to the value of £50, without paying anything for it, except a nominal deposit, I cannot see how that constitutes a valuable stake. A mistake was evidently made in drafting the Bill. It was necessary to take out the words, "clear annual value" with regard to rental, and the draftsman evidently has made the mistake of applying it to the first clause. I hope the Minister will look into that. I maintain that the freehold qualification here is utterly insufficient. If we take out the clear value of £100 and put in £50 there is no freehold qualification. On general grounds however I support the Bill. I can understand what we may term a high and dry conservative saying "Let things stand as they are; there has been no great popular demand. As for the demand made occasionally upon the hustings, it comes from people whom we need not fear." This is an argument I have heard: "People who have the vote are satisfied. As for people who have not the vote, well they cannot do us any harm. We have nothing to fear from them. Let things stand as they are. We are before the people who have the vote. We cannot suffer from those who have not the vote. Therefore let things stand as they are." That is the stock argument of the high and dry conservative. I do not think there are many high and dry conservatives in this House, or in the State; but there are a few; and that is their argument. The Minister's strongest argument was that the liberalising of the franchise will strengthen this House and make it more perfectly representative of the country, and give it such a broad basis that not only will the old fallacy about the House being conservative be killed, but the House will have behind it the support of

a large majority in the country, which will give strength to all its decisions. Some may say that this strength may be gained at risk, but I wish to point out that the diminution of the qualification, the liberalising of the franchise, does not at all affect the safeguard provided in our qualification. I want to emphasise the fact that the present qualification is not primarily a property qualification. At all events it is not in any sense a class qualification. The meaning of the qualification is this—it is an attempt to draw a line between the mere comer and goer, the nomad, and the man who is patriotic enough to settle in the country and make it his home. That is the essential of the present qualification, not property, not class, but an indication that one has settled in the country and made his home in it. Anyone must recognise that it is a sound principle that for the revising of legislation, the putting of the final stamp on legislation, the ultimate word should rest, not with the comers and goers, but with the settled people of the State. I want to emphasise this point, because there is such a prevailing misunderstanding about it. It is commonly said, "You want to put a premium on property," I say "No such thing," the wealthiest man to-day who is only a lodger is not allowed a vote. It does not matter how much money he has, if he has not some settled stake in the country, either freehold or leasehold, he is put beneath the simplest cottager who occupies property worth £25 a year. That is altogether a sufficient answer to the superficial argument that this is a property-and-class House. Property *per se* has nothing to do with it. It is simply a guarantee of stability, or in other words of, patriotism. We want Western Australians to vote for the revising House, and the richest comer and goer, if he owns millions but is simply a sojourner in the country, will not have a vote. That is the position to-day. By lowering the qualification we are not touching the principle of it at all. So long as we have something to show that a man or woman has made his State his or her home, we will give

the franchise. Now, this is sufficiently indicated by £15 a year. That is practically household suffrage. A number of the advocates for liberalising the franchise have asked us to do what they say is the simplest thing, to make it household suffrage. I say there is the mistake. If we use simply the term "household suffrage," we would have to interpret what "house" is. Would we allow a few boughs stuck up with a bit of hessian over to count as a house? The merest nomad might run up a place like that and call it a house. In the State of Western Australia £15 a year gross covers all legitimate householders. I press the point that in lowering the franchise so as to embrace everyone who has made a home here, we are not at all prejudicing the principle we have been going on, we are still distinguishing between the settled population and the nomadic population. With regard to the attitude this House should assume, I take it it is one of the most serious decisions the House has been called upon to make for many years. What shall we say in reply to this request that another third of the population should be granted a franchise for this House? Shall we say that the power is wholly ours, that we will let things stand as they are because no one can effectually question our exercise of that power? I say the power is wholly ours; in fact I would take the ground that the Bill should have originated here, and not in another place. The House concerned should have the privilege of setting itself in order. The Bill should have originated here, but I am sure the minds of members of this House are too large to let that small consideration affect their decision. What shall be our decision? Shall we say that because we need not open the door we will not open the door? Is there not a larger view? The very fact that it rests with us should compel us to take the larger view. After all, for a House like this perhaps the most important virtue is that of magnanimity. It would be magnanimity for this House to say, "Because no one could compel us, because this change could not be enforced without us, be-

cause it rests with us to say 'yes' or 'no,' we will say 'yes,' we will open the door more widely than it has been." That is the answer at all events I should be inclined to give. I would like to quote three or four lines from a great authority, on the virtues that should govern the administration of public affairs. Ruskin, in speaking of the graces and virtues that should guide public administrators, says—

"The treasures are given in charge to a virtue of which we hear too little in modern times, as distinct from others—magnanimity, largeness of heart, not softness or weakness of heart mind you, but capacity of heart, the great measuring virtue, which weighs in heavenly balances all that may be given, and all that may be gained, and sees how to do noblest things in noblest ways."

Now the House is called upon to do the magnanimous, the noble thing of saying, "We will gladly welcome every settler of the State to a voice in the selection of members of the Chamber." I trust we shall do it in a noble way.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): As there is no doubt a division will be taken on this all important matter, it is my duty, in the first place, to my constituents, and also to myself, that I should explain the action I intend to take. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill with the object of moving amendments in Committee to substitute £20 for £15, and to strike out the clause reducing the freehold qualification from £100 to £50. Only under those conditions will I support the Bill to any further stage. If we make haste slowly in the matter we will be taking up the right stand. A reduction of £5 is a very important one, and I am prepared to go that far, and if we find there are no evil results following we can easily consider the matter of a further reduction at a future date. I shall vote for the second reading on the understanding that if the Bill is not amended in Committee I shall certainly vote for throwing it out at the third reading, or at any subsequent stage.

Hon. J. M. DREW (Central): The phrase "long looked for come at last,"

in my opinion aptly applies to this Bill. The question has been before the country for many years; from as far back as 1903; and when Mr. Rason made his appeal to the electors in 1905 he made the reform of the Legislative Council one of the most prominent planks of his platform. Mr. Rason met Parliament late in the year when it was impossible for him to take any action in the direction he had indicated. Subsequently, and before the meeting of Parliament the next session, Mr. Rason accepted the position of Agent General and the Premiership devolved upon Mr. Moore. In the very first policy speech before the opening of the first session over which Mr. Moore presided as Premier, he made a distinct pledge that the liberalisation of the Legislative Council would have prompt attention. From time to time similar pledges have been made, yet four years have elapsed and nothing has been done. Now in the closing hours of the session, this Bill is brought down. I do not think the Government are in any way to blame for bringing the Bill down at such a late hour for the reason that the matter has been before the country for years. Every candidate for a seat in one House or the other has been catechised on the question on the platform and he has had to express his views on the subject, and consequently every member of both Houses must be in the position to-day to come to a definite conclusion on the wisdom or otherwise of the introduction of this measure. I think every fair minded person must, after giving the matter ample consideration, come to the conclusion that it is advisable to widen the franchise for the Upper House in Western Australia; indeed on the grounds of common justice alone, rests the claim of those who wish to see reform in the Legislative Council conceded. What is the position to-day? Although there are 137,000 voters for the Legislative Assembly there are only 37,000 for the Legislative Council, and although there are 37,000 for this House it by no means follows that there are 37,000 persons who are entitled to vote, because plurality of voting exists in connection with the Legislative Council, and it does



not exist in connection with the Legislative Assembly. Hence those 37,000 voters may mean only 30,000 persons. There are two parties in another place, the Government and the Opposition. The Government are in the majority, but the Opposition command 42 per cent. of the representation of that Chamber. But the party to which the Opposition belongs can only claim in this House one solitary member. I ask members is it fair that where we have two parties governing the country, that where the Opposition in one Chamber has 42 per cent. of the representation, in the other Chamber—the Legislative Council, it is only represented by one man? I do not anticipate that the passage of this Bill will mean anything in the nature of a political revolution. It will mean the granting of the franchise to many deserving householders in the country districts where rents are low, and who occupy a far better house for less than 10s. a week than do people in the city for the same sum. It is a great grievance among many residents in small country townships that although they have been for many years in the country, and many of them have been born in Western Australia, on account of the low rents they cannot enjoy a vote in connection with Legislative Council elections. This may not be a great grievance to the metropolitan centre where rents are higher, but it certainly is a grievance in country townships where the rents are lower and where it would have to be a good block which would fetch anything like £50. I am not in accord with those who state that the Legislative Council have been opposed to advanced legislation. The records of the past will prove otherwise. We have only to look up *Hansard* and *Votes and Proceedings* to find ample contradiction. Indeed this House was the first to move in the matter of payment of members. The first resolution which led to the introduction of payment of members was passed in the Legislative Council. It was followed up in the other House, and within three months the measure became law. In addition there is the Early Closing Act which has become a beneficent boon to employees.

Then again there is the Factories Act, the Inspection of Machinery Act, and the Workers' Compensation Act, so that it cannot in justice be stated that this Chamber has in the past been opposed to advanced legislation.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: The Industrial Arbitration Act.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I regard that as not exactly advanced legislation. It was decided upon between employer and employee as the best means of settling disputes, consequently I omitted it from my list. But from my experience I can say that the House, while at times it has made strong denunciations against progressive legislation, yet when the House has come to consider that legislation it has in almost every instance, where it has been reasonable, given its sanction to it. I had some experience in this Chamber as Minister representing the Labour Government, and I must say I received most generous treatment. During one session 42 Bills were introduced, and certainly not more than three were rejected, and those were Bills which were not of vital importance. Even though those measures had been moulded in accordance with the ideas of the Labour Government they received reasonable and fair treatment from this House. I will admit, latterly there has been a tendency to take sides and show some party spirit, but only occasionally, and perhaps it has been pardonable under the circumstances. I am very much afraid that if this Bill is lost the feeling which already exists in regard to unification in connection with the Federal Constitution, will be increased. It exists now, there is no denying it. There is a large number of people who have representation in the other House, and in the Commonwealth Parliament who are in favour of unification, and though the feeling exists—and it may be groundless—that this is a property House and simply represents capital, and that if unification could be brought about these people would stand a better chance of having their views and ideas carried into effect. If the measure be passed I think all such feeling will be

dissipated, and for many years to come the position of this House will be considerably strengthened. If the Bill be rejected an agitation will be started from one end of the country to the other, not only from those in favour of the abolition of the Chamber but from those who wish to see it continue to live. It is generally regarded that the electors have pledged the whole of the members of the Legislative Assembly to support this measure, and it is recognised that not much longer delay can take place in bringing about the reform which will give a larger number of persons in Western Australia representation in this House. Besides that, we cannot overlook the fact that the Legislative Assembly has a direct mandate from the people, and has had this mandate not on one occasion but on many occasions, and we know too there is unanimity in another place with regard to this Bill. The position is this: Is the Legislative Council prepared to fight the people, or is it prepared to flout their wishes? If they do the latter—I do not wish to use a threat, I am merely expressing my own opinion—the agitation I have referred to will assuredly commence, and the end will be that this House will be forced to concede the position. It is not necessary to say more. Every hon. member has considered the matter long since, and has been compelled to give a reply to the question straight from the public platform, hence there is no necessity to complain that the Government have at the eleventh hour introduced a Bill of this character.

Hon. S. J. HAYNES (South-East): I am afraid I shall be put in the class mentioned by Mr. Cullen—the high and dry conservatives, but whilst I may be in that class, or mentioned in that class, I must declare that I have always fought for measures which were liberal, and on democratic lines. In the present instance, however, with regard to the Bill before the House, I may say right off that I propose to vote against it. It has been said by previous speakers that there is a mandate from the people. I deny that.

Hon. G. Randell: Hear, hear.

Hon. S. J. HAYNES: There has never been a mandate for the reduction of the franchise; at any rate not a serious demand for it through the public Press. It has been incidentally referred to on the hustings, but no candidate has ever been returned on that special issue, and I am perfectly satisfied that the country has not asked for it.

Hon. R. W. Pennefather: The *West Australian* has.

Hon. S. J. HAYNES: The *West Australian* is an undoubtedly powerful paper, and there has appeared a leading article recently, but it is only recently that the matter has been touched upon seriously by that newspaper. The proposed reduction of the franchise, even if there was a demand for it, is far too drastic. At the present time our franchise, in my opinion, is more liberal than that of all the other States put together, with perhaps the exception of South Australia. I take two States of the Commonwealth, New South Wales and Queensland. In Queensland, the State which is the nearest approach to Western Australia as far as population is concerned, they have an Upper House, the members of which are nominated for life, and I believe, and I am subject to correction, that in New South Wales it is similar. We find the mother State is satisfied.

Hon. R. W. Pennefather: With a million and a half of population.

Hon. S. J. HAYNES: That is so. Surely we should pause before we enter upon legislation like this. With regard to Queensland the same remark applies, and we have seen no agitation in either of those States for a change. Therefore we must assume that the system in those States has worked satisfactorily. As regards Victoria, one of the most important States, the franchise comes nearer to what is proposed here; but even there it is less liberal than our present Constitution. The franchise in Victoria is a freehold of the value of £10 per annum; and, as regards occupancy, £15 per annum. But the members there are not paid. It makes a difference. It is democratic in that regard.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The Victorian Legislative Council is probably the most conservative body in Australia.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: Or in the world.

Hon. S. J. HAYNES: Still, Victoria is one of the most prosperous of the States. In Tasmania, the franchise is a freehold of not less than £10 per annum, and £30 annual rental. In South Australia we find that it is a freehold of the value of £50, and a rental of not less than £17 10s.; also Crown leaseholds with improvements of £50, and a leasehold estate of a clear value of £20. We know that so far as the sister State is concerned they have had great battles there. I suppose South Australia is one of the most democratic of all the States, yet the Constitution of their Upper House is less liberal than our present Constitution. What do we find proposed? In the first instance it is proposed to strike out "the clear value of £100," and insert "value of £50." What does that mean? That every man mortgaged up to the hilt will have a vote for the country.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: Why should he not?

Hon. S. J. HAYNES: A man who has so mismanaged his affairs should not have a vote.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: You would probably disfranchise half of them.

Hon. S. J. HAYNES: I should be sorry to think that was so in this wealthy State. When we come down to the franchise of £15, I say it is coming down to practically half our present value. It is too drastic altogether. In introducing the Bill the leader of the House said that it would bring in a large number who were at present disfranchised. I doubt that. A large number of these £15 allotments are owned by those who already have a vote. Another reason for objecting to the Bill is represented by the question, "Where is this to end?" If we reduce our franchise to £15 there will be from the so-called democratic side a demand for further reductions until, ultimately, it will be the franchise adopted in our Commonwealth Parliament. I do not think that is a success; the Houses are too much

alike. If we keep on cutting at our franchise like this we will alter the very character of the House. We represent property, and rightly so too. We represent the thrift and backbone of the State; but I will say on the other hand, do we not as honestly and as liberally represent every other class? I say we do. I have sat in the House for 16 years, and I have never known the House to act illiberally or unjustly, nor have I ever been in the company of a fairer minded or more liberal body of men than the present Legislative Council. We have passed and, indeed, we have initiated, some of the most liberal legislation. Take payment of members. I personally was opposed to that, and I think it is one of the greatest curses of the land that it ever passed. But it goes to show to those advocating a reduction of our franchise that this House has in no wise acted illiberally. It has been said that we should show magnanimity in this matter; but we have to act for what we consider is the true welfare of the State as a whole, without fear or favour. Mr. Drew said there would be an outcry throughout the country if we did not pass this measure. I am not afraid of that outcry, nor do I think there is any cause to anticipate such an outcry. Why should we be nervous if we think there is proper representation under our present franchise? For my part I submit that there is. I have pointed out before, and I will again ask hon. members, has this House on any occasion dealt extremely from any class point of view? It has not. I say on the other hand it has been the supporter of democratic measures, and, indeed, has introduced them. I am decidedly opposed to the Bill and shall vote against it. If, however, this House thinks fit to carry the Bill I trust, at any rate, to make important alterations in Committee. I recognise it is an important Bill; perhaps one of the most important introduced this session; and if we throw it out we will be taking a serious step, which should be seriously considered. I have no hesitation in saying that in my humble opinion it is in the best interests of the

State that no alteration should be made in our present franchise.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: I move—

*That the debate be adjourned until Friday next.*

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

Ayes	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	12

Majority for .. .. 2

#### AYES.

Hon. T. F. O. Brimage	Hon. W. Patrick
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. R. W. Pennefather
Hon. F. Connor	Hon. C. A. Plesse
Hon. S. J. Haynes	Hon. G. Randell
Hon. W. Kingsmill	Hon. T. H. Wilding
Hon. R. Laurie	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. E. McLarty	(Teller).
Hon. M. L. Moss	

#### NOES.

Hon. J. D. Connolly	Hon. W. Oats
Hon. J. F. Cullen	Hon. B. C. O'Brien
Hon. J. W. Hackett	Hon. S. Stubbs
Hon. A. G. Jenkins	Hon. G. Throssell
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. J. W. Laughsford	(Teller).
Hon. R. D. McKenzie	

Motion thus passed, the debate adjourned.

(Sitting suspended from 5.58 to 7.30 p.m.)

On resuming,

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said: I had expected that we would have received some Bills from another place, but they are not forthcoming.

*House adjourned at 7.32 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 15th December, 1909.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands: Report on the Operations of the Agricultural Bank to 30th June, 1909.

#### QUESTION — RAILWAY FACILITIES, MADDINGTON.

Mr. GILL (for Mr. W. Price) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Was a petition received asking that railway facilities be provided at Cattenham-street, between Cannington and Maddington? 2, Upon the occasion of the Minister's recent visit did he inspect the site suggested by the residents signing the petition? 3, Is he aware that the petitioners were not informed of the visit? 4, Did the Minister on that occasion visit Kenwick, the land in the vicinity, which is held by an absentee corporation? 5, Before deciding finally, will the Minister visit the proposed site for a station at Cattenham-street, as petitioned for, or will he afford the petitioners and residents an opportunity of placing their views before him?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, No, the petition was presented on the occasion of my visit, namely, 24th September last. 4, I understand that the petition was presented at or near Kenwick. 5, I will be only too pleased to afford the resi-