

THE PRESIDENT: In any case, it was not in the province of the House to deal with the construction of telephone lines.

HON. C. A. PIESSE (in reply): Apart from the difficulties mentioned by hon. members, there were others which he had discovered. He was informed the Federal Parliament had recently passed an Act dealing with telephone systems, which Act should be before us ere such a motion was passed; and as something could probably be done at a later stage, he asked leave to withdraw the motion with a view to gaining farther information.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8.35 o'clock, until the next Wednesday.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 1st October, 1902.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITION—FACTORIES AND SHOPS BILL, DAIRYMEN.

MR. F. McDONALD (Cockburn Sound) presented a petition signed by 44 dairymen of Perth and Fremantle, praying

for the extension of the provisions of the Factories and Shops Bill to their business.

Petition received and read.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

CAMELS IMPORTATION, FAIZ MAHOMET.

THE PREMIER, in presenting papers relating to the proposed importation of 500 camels by Faiz Mahomet, moved for by the member for South Perth (Mr. Gordon), said that the Government, having been threatened some time ago with an action in respect to this matter, had obtained legal opinions from the Crown Law officers. He had thought it advisable that these opinions should be extracted from the jacket, since they did not affect the facts of the case.

OTHER PAPERS.

By the TREASURER: Papers relative to the retrenchment of Mr. George Berry (moved for by Mr. Nanson).

Ordered: To lie on the table.

QUESTION—COOLGARDIE WATER SCHEME, MUNDARING.

MR. HASTIE asked the Minister for Works: 1, How many acres of timber land have been ringbarked within the Mundaring catchment area. 2, At what cost per acre. 3, Who authorised the work. 4, Why it was done.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replies: 1, 21,020 acres. 2, 3s. 2½d. per acre. 3, It was recommended by Mr. T. C. Hodgson (late Engineer-in-Charge of Coolgardie Water Supply Scheme), concurred in by the late Engineer-in-Chief, and approved by the then Hon. Minister for Works. 4, To increase the percentage of rainfall flowing off the catchment area to the reservoir.

SUPPLY (TEMPORARY)—BILL, £500,000.

Message from the Administrator having been received and read, the House resolved into Committee of Supply.

THE TREASURER moved in accordance with the Message: "That there be granted to His Majesty, on account of the service of the year 1901-2, a sum not exceeding £300,000 out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and £200,000 from moneys to the credit of the General Loan Fund."

MR. MORAN: The House would regret unanimously this very slipshod method of financing. He did not know if it were the fault of the Government, but some fault must rest with them for not having brought down the annual Estimates. This was the second application of the kind this year.

THE TREASURER: If the hon. member would wait until this motion was passed, an explanation would be made.

MR. MORAN: It was to be regretted that hundreds and thousands of pounds had already been spent, and that the functions of Parliament had been abrogated by the Minister now rushing down for authority and putting a Bill through the House in five minutes. No criticism could take place in a matter of this sort.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

Resolution in Committee of Ways and Means also passed.

Supply Bill introduced, and read a first time.

SECOND READING.

THE TREASURER: I move that the Bill be now read a second time; and I should like to say that no one regrets more than I do the necessity for coming down a second time to ask the House for supply. I say also, unhesitatingly, that this House has a right to insist that the work of preparing the Estimates should be done during recess; and the Estimates for the succeeding year should be ready on the 30th June of the present year, so that a few days after the House meets the Treasurer can deliver his Budget speech and the House be fully informed of what money we require. I think the House should insist, in justification of itself, that that shall be done. I say, as Treasurer, the present system is one that, while it throws on the Treasurer the responsibility of the finances, practically gives him no control. In this particular it would be wise if we brought the Estimates down in order that the Treasurer could control the finances. As it is now, three months of the financial year have gone, and before the Estimates are through practically four and a half months will be gone. The only basis we can go on is the expenditure of last year, and I would like to know what Treasurer

can control the expenditure of this country upon such an unsatisfactory basis as that. I am sure nobody would attempt to do that who wants to discharge his duties faithfully and well. In this particular we have been rather unfortunately placed. We are trying to do what we honestly believe the House wants us to do, that is to put a certain amount of reform at least upon the Estimates. It is utterly impossible either physically or mentally for anyone to discharge the duties we are discharging for any length of time. We have to fight the Estimates; we have to go through them, cut them down —

MR. MORAN: You are singing out very early. One man did it for ten years.

THE TREASURER: We have to discharge our duties as Ministers; to sit in the House, consider Bills, and have to do the thousand and one things which take us from 9 o'clock in the morning until 12 o'clock at night. If the House insists that the Estimates shall be placed on the table early in the session, immediately the House meets, we shall be able to give better consideration to the Bills before the House and do the work of the country honestly and faithfully as we desire to do it. That is the position. To-day we have gone through the Estimates, and we have seen that the Federal Parliament has thrown out the Loan Bill. In that Loan Bill there was an amount of £45,000 provided for works in Western Australia. If the money for those works has to be provided out of the revenue, we shall have again to go through our Estimates and cut them down by £45,000. I have to-day wired to the Commonwealth Treasurer, asking whether we are supposed to do these works out of our revenue; because, if so, there will be another delay in that respect. I purpose delivering the annual Financial Statement on Thursday in next week. It may possibly occur that if we have to go through these Estimates again in consequence of the reply from the Commonwealth Treasurer, I may not be able to deliver the Financial Statement until Tuesday week. I should like to say also that the revenue for the present month of September is £352,903 17s. 5d., showing a surplus for the last quarter over the previous quarter amounting to

£58,429. I may also say the expenditure for this month will, I think, be proportionately heavy, because we are trying to follow out the practice we introduced at the end of the last financial year by seeing that everything is charged up that can be rightly charged against the particular period, so that the people of the country may know, when the Treasury accounts for that quarter are issued, that the returns for the quarter show the actual financial position of the State. With this explanation, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): I do not quite understand the Treasurer in making an appeal to the House, and at the same time demanding that the Estimates shall be laid on the table earlier in the session. The whole question is in the hands of the Government, and not in the hands of this House. There is nothing to prevent the Government, so far as this House is concerned, from bringing down their Estimates early in August. The practice has been that the Estimates have always been late, and every year there has been a complaint from members about the lateness at which the Estimates have been laid on the table. It is a matter the Government have within their own control, and not this House.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison): It is undesirable that year after year the annual Estimates should be brought down so late as we know has been the case for some years past; but we must recognise that during the present session there are exceptional circumstances. The Treasurer has not been in office very long, neither has the Premier; and I understand the Treasurer will be making his annual Financial Statement in the course of ten days at the most. Under these circumstances, I anticipate there will not be opposition to the passing of this Bill through all its stages; but at the same time I trust the Government will recognise that if they do happen to be in office at the time next year when the Estimates should be brought down, it is the wish of members of this House that the Estimates should be brought in very much earlier than is the case this session. If the Government should happen to leave office towards the close of the financial year, and some other Government

take their place, there may possibly be again delay.

THE TREASURER: We hope to have the Estimates ready then.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

Clause 1:

MR. MORAN: In reference to the £200,000 of loan money, what amount would that leave to the credit of the loan fund?

THE TREASURER: All he could say was that he had the funds, they were all right.

Clause passed.

Clause 2—agreed to.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

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

SEAT VACANT, HANNANS.

THE PREMIER moved:

That a vacancy having occurred in the Electoral District of Hannans, owing to the death of the late member, Mr. J. Reside, the Speaker do issue a writ for the election of another member.

Question put and passed.

SELECT COMMITTEE—CHANGE OF MEMBER.

On motion by MR. HAEFER, consequent on the death of Mr. Reside, Mr. F. Reid was appointed to fill the vacancy in the Select Committee on Spark Arresters.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by MR. PIGOTT, leave of absence for one fortnight granted to the member for East Kimberley (Mr. F. Connor), on the ground of urgent private business.

MINES DEVELOPMENT BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

PAPERS—PUBLIC SERVICE, HOW AFFECTED BY LEGISLATION.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco) moved:—

That the papers containing the opinions of the Crown Solicitor and the late Attorney General, upon the question whether Section

29 of the Public Service Act has a retrospective effect, be laid upon the table of the House.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James) : Perhaps the hon. member would state the object of the motion. If the object was to ascertain the opinion of the Crown Solicitor and of a previous Attorney General, it could be attained in a much simpler way. To call for papers containing the opinions of the Crown Law officers in relation to a certain matter was in itself a practice which might become objectionable. Presumably the House was not so much concerned with the legal advice given to the Crown in certain matters, as with the action taken by the Government on the advice in such matters. To make the position clear, the Government acted on legal advice: whether that legal advice were good or bad hardly affected the House. If, however, acting on certain advice the Government adopted a line of action which the House disapproved, then the House could make its displeasure felt in the ordinary way. Although no objection existed to the production of these particular papers, the practice of moving for papers to be laid on the table of the House was being pushed somewhat too far. In many cases, if not in the majority of cases, members could ascertain all they wanted to know by applying for an inspection of files to the Minister in whose charge the files were. During this session many bundles of papers had been laid on the table, but it was highly questionable whether many members had taken the trouble to go through all the bundles, or even some of them.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue) : Was it not contrary to rule to lay the legal opinions of the Crown Law officers on the table? He would be glad to know the Speaker's opinion on the point.

THE SPEAKER : While not prepared to rule the motion out of order, he recognised that it was of an extremely unusual nature, and such as would seldom be acceded to by a Minister.

MR. DAGLISH (in reply) : What objection there could be to the carrying of this motion was not apparent. If the motion were for papers of which the production might lead to litigation injurious to the Government or the State, objection might well be raised. These papers, however, contained nothing which

could possibly lead to any litigation whatever; and therefore no question of principle or policy was involved.

THE PREMIER : The objection was to the practice.

MR. DAGLISH : If the question was merely one of practice, he would have been happy to meet the Premier had the hon. gentleman asked him privately not to pursue the motion. Since, however, the Premier had allowed the motion to be moved without expressing any objection to it in advance, there was no necessity for him now to take up an attitude of opposition.

THE PREMIER said he was satisfied with having drawn attention to the matter.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—PRINTING COMMITTEES, TO CONFER.

"HANSARD" REPORTS, ETC.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James) moved :—

That the Printing Committee of the Legislative Assembly have power to confer with the Printing Committee of the Legislative Council, with the view of considering the advisability of curtailing the cost of printing and issuing the *Hansard* debates and all other parliamentary printed papers.

This motion was brought forward with the object of drawing the attention of the Printing Committee of the Legislative Council to what appeared, on the face of it, wasteful expenditure in connection with parliamentary printing. Every member now had before him a file of papers containing various reports, of which probably very few members had read the whole. While all members should have the right to obtain a copy of such reports from the proper officer, no reason existed why copies should be distributed regardless of whether they were wanted or not. Not only were copies distributed, however, but at the close of every session each member received about half a ton of stationery containing the Votes and Proceedings and copies of documents previously distributed. Surely no member of the House wanted a copy of the Votes and Proceedings. Here were two instances of useless expense to which it was desirable to draw the attention of the Printing Committee of both Houses. All of us were, of course,

anxious that every document of value should be published, and that members should be afforded every possible means of ascertaining the contents of printed documents, and also of other documents not printed. The present system, however, was somewhat extravagant. Economies might also be effected in other directions. He hoped, therefore, that the House would carry the motion.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): It was to be hoped the proposed conference of the Printing Committees would not lead to a curtailment of the *Hansard* reports at the cost of their correctness. He strongly objected to finding a debate in which he had taken part misrepresented in *Hansard*. For this misreporting he blamed the Printing Committees, and he therefore took this opportunity of stating that expressions of opinion by Parliament should guide the Printing Committees. He believed that at the beginning of the session the Premier, in moving a motion of this nature, had stated that the Printing Committee of this House would not take on itself too much in the way of cutting down reports until the House had adopted such cutting down as part of its policy. While at one with the Government in seeking economy, he thought there was something even more important than economy, and that was correctness. He referred particularly to the report of the debate on the Railways Acts Amendment Bill, in which he had taken part. That debate had been misrepresented in *Hansard*, and he strongly objected —

THE SPEAKER: What had this to do with the motion?

MR. MORAN: This much, that the Printing Committees, in cutting down the cost of printing, ought to do their duty.

THE SPEAKER: No doubt they would.

MR. MORAN: The Printing Committees, in seeking to reduce the cost of the *Hansard* reports, ought to be most careful to see that no injustice was done to any member in the reports of debates. A very grave injustice, and one which he felt keenly, had been done to him.

Question put and passed.

On farther motion by the PREMIER, resolution transmitted to the Legislative Council for concurrence.

MOTION—CONTRACT SYSTEM, TO ADOPT.

MR. W. ATKINS (Murray) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is in the best interests of the country that the construction of Government works should, wherever practicable, be thrown open to public competition instead of being undertaken under the system of Government day labour.

He said: I will lay before the House in as few words as possible the position in which a contractor stands in relation to the Government of this country, because it appears to me a majority of members do not understand the position at all. I will just read a few extracts from a Government contract. In the first place a tender is put in. The contractor offers "to construct, completely finish, and maintain the various works in accordance with the drawings, specifications, and conditions of contract prepared for that purpose by the Public Works Department." And annexed to the tender is a complete schedule of the quantities and prices, showing how that sum is arrived at; consequently all the work has to be scheduled, which shows there is no guesswork about it. The extras cannot be charged for as a contractor likes, but in accordance with the schedule:—

The contractor is to make and execute, in the like manner as aforesaid, and with the like materials as aforesaid, any additions, deviations, or alterations to, from, or in the works which the executive engineer may from time to time, previously to the commencement or during the progress of the works, by an order in writing require. The cost of such additions, deviations, or alterations shall be valued by the executive engineer at the several prices or rates set forth in the schedule of prices annexed to the tender, and if any additions, deviations, or alterations shall comprise any description of work not named in such schedule, the same shall be valued at rates to be fixed by the Engineer-in-Chief. If the cost of the additions, deviations, or alterations when valued as above provided, shall be greater or less than the cost, valued in the same manner, of the portion of the original works in which the additions, deviations, or alterations are made, then the difference in cost shall be added to or deducted from the contract price. But no extras, whether extras within or extras without the contract, and no payment for any additions, deviations, or alterations whatever which shall be claimed by the contractor, will be admitted or recognised under any circumstances, or will be allowed or made, which shall be done or executed without or contrary to an order from the executive engineer in writing as

aforesaid, nor unless the total quantities and the rates of payment for such additions, deviations, or alterations shall have been approved by the Engineer-in-Chief, whose decision as to quantities and prices shall be final and binding on all parties.

I read that to show members that all rates are fixed by a lump sum at first, and if there are any alterations, deviations, or additions they must be governed by the rates, and if not the Engineer-in-Chief is the sole judge of what value shall be given to the work. Therefore, so far as it appears to me, the whole power is left to the Engineer-in-Chief. I cannot see in that case how contractors can make more money out of extras if the Engineer-in-Chief does his duty, and I do not think anyone will say that the late Engineer-in-Chief did not do his duty to the country. To show some of the powers which the Engineer-in-Chief has, I will just read a portion of a contract:—

He may, on giving written notice to the contractor of his intention so to do, forthwith cause additional men to be employed, and additional materials and plant to be purchased, and the cost of so doing may be deducted from any moneys due under the contract; and may use all or any of the materials and plant which may be in, near, or upon the works for the purpose of being employed in or about the same, without payment or compensation to the contractor, whether for the use of or on account of any loss or injury which may happen to such materials or plant; and it is expressly agreed that the exercise by the Minister of the power herein given to cause additional men to be employed shall not debar him from afterwards exercising any other powers otherwise provided under this or any other conditions forming part of the contract.

That shows the Engineer-in-Chief has full power to have the work done as he thinks proper. With regard to the completion of the work:—

The contractor shall complete the whole of the works of the contract on or before the day mentioned in the special conditions; and the Minister, on behalf of the Queen, shall be entitled to deduct or set-off for each and every week's delay after that date, and as by way of liquidated damages, and not as and in the nature of a penalty, the sum mentioned in the special conditions; and such damages shall be deducted from the final balance and the cash deposit to be made by the contractor as provided in Clause 2, or, at the option of the Minister, from any other moneys due under the contract. And in the event of any alterations, deviations, or additions, or extra works being required, the Engineer-in-Chief shall allow such an extension of time, if any, as he shall think adequate for such alterations,

deviations, additions, extra work, or delay; and at the expiration of the time so allowed the deductions or set-offs for delay shall come into operation.

With regard to progress payments, the contract says:—

No certificate given to the contractor for the purpose of any progress payments shall prevent the executive engineer at any future time before the termination of the contract from rejecting all unsound material or improper workmanship; and, notwithstanding the giving of any certificate that portions or the whole of the works have been satisfactorily performed, the executive engineer may require the contractor to remove and amend, at any time previously to the final payment on account of the construction or maintenance of the works, any work that may be found not to be performed in accordance with the contract, or any material used that may be found to be unsound or not in accordance with the specifications; and the contractor shall remove and amend, at his own cost, all such work and material when so required, notwithstanding any previous approval made or given by the executive engineer, assistant engineer, or overseer.

That shows that the whole power lies with the Engineer-in-Chief, and so far he is able to control. With regard to a question that has come before the House several times, that Ministers consent to a contractor charging what he likes, and that sort of thing, clause 39 of this contract which I have here says:—

The contractor shall not, without the written authority of the Minister, use the works for or in connection with any business or undertaking, nor permit or suffer any other person to use the same or any part thereof; and shall not keep, store, or carry goods thereon except materials and plant required in the carrying out of this contract, and shall not use passenger or goods trains over the line or any part thereof.

That seems fair enough, does it not? Then the contract says also:—

Should any dispute arise as to any matter or thing connected with the execution of the works, or as to the intent or meaning of these conditions or any part of the contract, it shall be referred to the decision of the Engineer-in-Chief, and his decision, interim or final, shall be finally binding and conclusive on all parties.

It seems to me that this clause safeguards the Government from the contractors, and the House must surely be wrong in supposing that the contractor can get at the Government in the way that has been talked about and laughed about in the House, unless the Government servants are not fit to do their work, and if

they are not fit to do that work they are not fit to undertake the whole of the work themselves. With regard to the reasons and causes for extras being paid on contracts, these conditions and specifications are almost the sole cause. Here is one clause which I will read, and it is the greatest bone of contention between the contractor and the Government. It is the most faulty and silly clause that can be inserted, because it is impossible to define it. This clause is in regard to cuttings and embankments, and says :—

All cuttings shall have such width of base at formation level as is specified or shown or noted on the drawings. Slopes shall be $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 in solid rock, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 in soft or loose rock, $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 in sand, and 1 to 1 in all other material; but should the engineer require any other slopes, the difference in cost, estimated at schedule rates, shall be added to or deducted from the contract sum; the engineer shall be the sole judge as to what class the material in the cuttings belongs to. No alterations in slopes to cuttings will be permitted unless concurred in by the engineer in writing, and no flattening of slopes due to alleged slips, or liability to slips, will be paid for unless, in the written opinion of the engineer, such slips are due or likely to be due to steepness of specified slopes alone, and not to contractor's method of working—such written opinion to state also the extent of flattening authorised, which will be binding on the contractor as regards the quantity to be paid for. Whenever any change is made in the inclinations of any slopes, it shall be done gradually, and in not less than 20 yards in length horizontally.

The great trouble is that there is too much definition. Instead of giving the contractor such a long clause, why not make him do the work to the satisfaction of the engineer in charge, and not allow him to say something is hard rock, something else is soft rock, one thing is sand and another thing is earth? That is the cause of all the trouble. Here is another clause about the traffic :—

The contractor shall not use the line or works, or any portion thereof, for the carriage of goods or passengers for hire or otherwise, unless with the consent in writing of the Minister.

Surely with all these safeguards, if the Minister and Engineer-in-Chief control the work, the contractor should not be able to charge more than a fair price, and if the contractor does do it, it must be the fault of the executive officers of the Crown. In regard to delivering rails, here is a clause pertaining to that—this contract which I am reading from is in

reference to the construction of the Donnybrook to Bridgetown railway :—

The Minister anticipates being in a position to commence delivering rails and fastenings by the 1st day of January, 1897. Should he not be able to commence delivering by that date, the Engineer-in-Chief may grant such extension of time for the completion of the works as he may consider fair and reasonable, but the contractor shall have no claim for compensation on account of any delay in such delivery.

That appears to be quite sufficient to safeguard any Government with ordinary common sense, and ordinarily efficient men. There can be no doubt there is going to be a big saving by doing work by contract. There always has been a big saving to the country, and there is a saving going on now; therefore, why the Government should persist in doing work which is costing the country certainly 30 to 50 per cent. more than there is any occasion for I do not know. All the public works of the world are constructed by contract. The Victorian Government have gone back to the contract system; they are sick and tired of the day labour system and the butty-gang system. I have a cutting here from the *Argus*, with reference to day labour *versus* contract, and it is headed "A Victorian experience." Dealing with the subject of how money is wasted, and proving an assertion that £12,000 or £15,000 has been thrown away by carrying out certain State works by day labour, the *Argus* published the following statement :—

It was recently announced in the *Argus* that the Ministry had determined to abolish the day labour system in connection with the South Gippsland roads near Mount Fatigue. If it were not such a serious matter for the taxpayer, this decision on the part of the Government would be laughable. Departmental reports show clearly that it is a mere shutting of the door after the horse has fled. Two sums of £15,000 each have been almost expended in the making of roads in the "Green Area" and the Mount Fatigue country in South Gippsland. The small sum of about £15,000 only remains available out of these two votes. That a large amount of money already expended has been absolutely wasted is now beyond dispute. The reports of responsible officers like Mr. W. Davidson, the inspector general of public works, and of Mr. Catini, the engineer who carried out the works, prove that fact up to the hilt. Mr. Davidson, in a memorandum to the Minister, dated February 18, says: "It is a matter for regret that the work so carried out has proved so costly. I think from a thorough inspection that Mr.

Catini's estimate that it has been 50 per cent. above possible contract rates is excessive, but undoubtedly the loss entailed by the system of employment adopted has been very great; certainly 35 to 40 per cent. This system has to a very large degree been one of piecework, both for clearing and excavating, the rates for which were supposed to be fixed as to admit of an average man working diligently for eight hours per day earning 7s. Mr. Catini describes the effect so clearly that I need not here repeat his remarks. But in these works is fully exemplified the impossibility of the Government obtaining results under a day labour or piecework system, or wherein it becomes the direct employer of the workmen, at all comparable with those which would, in the ordinary course of business, be looked for under contract, even with all the minimum wage conditions rigidly enforced. It may certainly be claimed that under the Government method as practised in South Gippsland and elsewhere individuals obtain work, and have for the time being means of living which they could scarcely hope for under contract system with minimum wage conditions. Herein is approached considerations of policy, out of which instructions as to methods are evolved. Our experience in connection with these particular works, and the piece or butt-gang system, is by no means singular. We have indubitable evidence in many directions of its costliness wherever adopted, i.e., always as compared with the contract system. I feel bound to recommend that in any future expenditure in this district, in the swamps or on the levels, the utmost value be obtained for it, which can be secured only under the contract system."

... Mr. Catini, writing on the same subject, remarks: "Another bad effect of the present system is that what are known as the local unemployed (who, by the way, are the best men we have) are not, in reality, unemployed at all, but farmers and selectors in the district, who prefer to earn 50s. per week under the Government than 30s. on their own farms."

Everywhere that we see work done by day labour in this State and can compare it with work done under contract, we shall see there is a dead loss to the department. The firm with which I was formerly connected (Atkins & Law) is building a jetty at Bunbury. The Government did a portion of the work before this contract began; that portion certainly being easier work. The contractor has to bore for rock, which the Government workmen did not do; and the contractor is doing the work for the same price which it cost the Government, and hopes to make a profit out of it. Instead of putting their piles into the rock, the Government workmen did not take much trouble about it, and part of the jetty has

gone bodily six inches. I understand the department are exercising their minds at present to prove that some figures I stated in this House are not correct. As I am suffering from a bad cold, I cannot speak at length to-night; but I do commend to this House that we ought to stop this wholesale waste of public money through the day labour system in public works. We would have had hundreds of thousands of pounds more to spend for the benefit of the country, if it had not been for the waste and the bad execution under the day labour system. I have referred to the Bunbury jetty, and the same may be said of the South Quay at Fremantle, where the jetty cost a lot more by day labour than it would have cost by contract; and we know that the jetty at Fremantle would have gone bodily into the harbour if some additional work had not been done to it. I urge on the House that some better way should be found than the Government system of day labour for public works.

MR. H. J. YELVERTON (Sussex): In supporting the motion, I may say, from my own knowledge, that I am sure the country is not getting fair value for the money expended on public works under the day labour system. And wherever you go throughout the length and breadth of this country, you will see that where day labour is being carried out under the Government, it is being done in an absolutely perfunctory manner, and you will see the Government stroke is fully carried out. Take the Coolgardie Water Scheme, and the Goomalling railway construction: these were glaring instances in which the cost of the work has been far in excess of what would have been necessary under the contract system. If the matter is fully inquired into, it will be found that public works carried out under the day labour system have cost fully a third more than they should have cost; and I say, with a full knowledge of the facts, that the manner in which these works are being carried out under day labour is an absolute scandal, and is costing the country fully a third more than should be necessary. It is all very well for the Premier to smile; but I know something about this matter.

THE PREMIER: The present Government have not done any work by day labour.

MR. YELVERTON: I am not referring particularly to the present Government, but to the system which has been carried on by the Works Department. I fully acknowledge that this scandalous system was commenced under the old Government. My only hope is that the present Government will see the folly of it and will amend it. I noticed the other day, in newspaper reports, that the Trades and Labour Council had made references with regard to the extras which had been paid to contractors in previous periods under several contracts which had been let. I say those references were absolutely unfair, because in giving the amounts of extras paid under those contracts there was no allusion to the fact that many of the extras had been authorised after the contract had been let, and were absolutely additional to the works specified in the contracts. I will say, in regard to those persons who support the day labour system, that they are doing an absolute injustice to the country, and are piling up the national debt in a scandalous manner; thereby leaving to those who come after us a large amount of burden which they should not have to bear, in the shape of interest and sinking fund. With regard to the cost of workmen employed on day labour works at the present moment, the indifferent workmen earn their money far too easily, and without an adequate return for what they receive. I say, too, that the system is absolutely unfair towards the honest and good workman; for while I know there are many good men employed on day works carried out by the department in this country, yet those men have to suffer on account of the indifferent work done by their fellow workmen. There is no chance or inducement for a good workman to rise, under the day labour system; for no matter how good his work may be, the indifferent men get a good deal of the credit for it. Another factor in the departmental system is that the foremen over the workers have not the power of instantly dismissing a man when he deserves it; and that is a reason why to a great extent we do not get the best work out of the men under that system. As pointing to some of the

public works in which the country has suffered under the day labour system, I would refer to the Fremantle Harbour Works; and in regard to these, I have frequently heard it stated that it was impossible to carry them out under the contract system. I say that is nonsense. The work could have been done more efficiently and far more cheaply than under the departmental day labour system. The drilling of rock at the bar of the river is a particular instance. That drilling is stated to have cost 6s. 6d. per foot, under the Government system of day labour; yet it is within my knowledge that a firm of contractors in this country, drilling in similar rock with proper appliances, have done it for about 2s. 9d. a foot. I believe the member for the Murray (Mr. Atkins) can confirm the statement. It has been said also that the rock drilling in the Fremantle Harbour Works was too large to be let by contract; that the department did not know exactly what class of rock would be met with, and that it would not do to let that kind of work by contract. Against this I will refer to the last extension of the Fremantle jetty, made by the firm of Atkins and Law, after the hon. member (Mr. Atkins) had left it. That firm did rock drilling with mechanical appliances for about 2s. 4d. a foot, while the Government were at the same time drilling the same class of rock at a cost of about 6s. 6d. a foot. Then with regard to the statement that it was impossible to let works of this kind by contract, we have read in the newspapers this morning that the construction of an outer harbour at Port Adelaide has been let by contract; and I believe it will be found that the work there, which is to cost under contract about £450,000, would cost under the day labour system much more than that amount. I support the motion, and hope the Government will, in every case in which it is possible, let the public works of this State by contract rather than execute them by day labour.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Williams): This motion can well be accepted by the Government, since it merely asks that wherever practicable work shall be thrown open to public competition instead of being done by departmental day labour. Having a knowledge of the comparative merits of the day labour and

contract systems, I came to the conclusion long ago that the construction of public works by day labour was certainly far more costly than their construction by contract. At the same time, I must admit that there are some works which certainly should be carried out by day labour; and the motion leaves it open to the Government to carry out such works departmentally. Reference has been made to the costly nature of works done by day labour: such works as the Fremantle Harbour Works, the Goomalling railway, and the Helena weir. The fact remains, however, that had some of these works been done under contract, a great deal of difficulty would have been caused with the contractors, and the State would have been involved in heavy expense for extras. In regard to the Helena weir, although contracts are made for certain cubic contents of rock, earth, or other material at specified rates, undoubtedly great expense would notwithstanding have been caused to the Government by reason of the fissure discovered during the progress of the work. While unquestionably that fissure occasioned large expense under the day labour system, I maintain that it would have occasioned a good deal more if the work had been in the hands of a contractor.

MR. MORGANS: The Government have to pay for the work in either case.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Quite so. The mover has raised many points, and I am with him in his contention that amendment and simplification are necessary in the conditions under which contractors work. I believe that matter is receiving attention at the hands of the Government. With all deference to the mover, however, I say that contractors are a class of people who, whether dealing with a State or a private person, being only human, after all are actuated by a desire to make as much as possible, and to pile up a heavy bill for extras on the slightest opportunity. At the same time, I feel bound to state that I do not favour the day labour system if contracts can be so drawn as to safeguard thoroughly the interests of the country. With that proviso, I regard the contract system as by far preferable. I do not say this now, having failed to say it when I was a Minister: one of my last official acts was to record my opinion that the construc-

tion of the Menzies - Leonora railway should be done under contract. Had my advice been followed, the railway would have been completed in much less time at less cost, and to the greater satisfaction of the country. One strong objection to the day labour system is that, notwithstanding many of the men employed by the Government are excellent workmen, as good as any to be found in the employ of contractors, the best of employees are in the course of a long period of Government employment apt to develop "Government stroke." Farther, there is the objection that the Government are either unable or unwilling to deal with men guilty of shirking or neglecting their work as a contractor would deal with such men. With the Government, other considerations than efficiency and economy of work come into play. The political element raises difficulties. Government employees, if pushed at all, frequently turn round and appeal to the politicians representing their districts, who thereupon urge the Government to concede what a contractor would not concede. In such circumstances, a contractor would simply tell the men to go about their business and would engage others in their place: the Government, on the other hand, mostly give way. To my mind it is a great mistake that numbers of labourers should be employed by the Government on works which can well be done by contract, such as railway construction works, for example. On the whole, there is so little work which cannot be done by contract that I see no reason why that system should not prevail over the day labour system. The motion leaves it open to the Government to adopt the day labour system where the contract system is impracticable. I regard the contract system as better even for Government officials, who under it can devote more time to supervision, whereas under the day labour system many small but harassing points arise for decision, giving no end of trouble both to the supervising officials and to the Minister. Although, as I have said, there are good workmen employed on Government day labour, still they eventually become demoralised by reason of the improper influence brought to bear on the Government by interfering politicians. If it were not

for that influence, the day labour system would work well. After all, that system merely means the transference of responsibility of management from the shoulders of the contractor to the shoulders of the Government. If, however, a contract be so drawn as to cast full responsibility on the shoulders of the contractor to do certain work for a fixed sum, and if the conditions of the contract are such as will insure the proper performance of the work, and moreover its performance on such lines as will prevent heavy claims for extras, then I say the country will gain by the adoption of the contract system. To maintain that such a contract as I have described cannot be drawn, is absurd. Proposals were made to the late Engineer-in-Chief by the Contractors' Association for certain amendments in the conditions of contract; and those amendments, I think, were worthy of consideration. Many of them, I believe, might have been adopted with advantage. If the whole system of drawing contracts were thoroughly revised, the Government would be able to guard against the heavy claims customary in the past. No doubt, heavy claims will be made in the future under any system, because contractors will make claims, which they regard as one of their perquisites, so to speak. A contractor considers it right to get all he possibly can out of those who employ him. Under the contract system, great care must be exercised, both in drawing the conditions of the contract and in supervising the execution of the work. The two essentials for meeting claims for extras are, firstly care in drawing the conditions of contract, and secondly skilfulness of the Government officers in combatting the frequently unreasonable demands of contractors. With good Government supervisors, objection to the contract system disappears. Certainly, the day labour system has involved the country in heavy expense, and therefore should be avoided in the future. I support the motion, because I regard it as a step in the right direction. The proposal comes from a member of a practical turn of mind, and therefore will, no doubt, commend itself to the House from that aspect. We must not forget, however—I say this with all due deference to the mover—that the hon. member, as a contractor, regards the

matter from the contractor's standpoint, whilst our duty is to look at it from both sides—that of the contractor and that of the State—and to compare the merits and demerits of the two systems. I shall support the motion, because I consider that with adequate safeguards for the interests of the country, preference should be given to the contract system over the day labour system.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS AND RAILWAYS (Hon. C. H. Rason): Whenever a question of this nature arises, a great deal of theorising on both sides is evoked. We have had much theorising—if I may be allowed to say so—in regard to the benefits of the contract system. Anyone who studies the subject will admit that, on theory alone, it ought to be possible to construct Government works by day labour as well and as cheaply as by contract, and so save the contractor's profit. On theory alone, that argument could hardly be controverted. Unfortunately, however, the theory I have just enunciated, like many other theories, does not come out well in actual practice. I am not prepared to admit that the whole of the arguments advanced by the mover are absolutely sound. No doubt he intends them to be perfectly correct, but I do think with the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) that the mover, being a contractor himself or having been a contractor until very recently, naturally takes the contractor's view of the question. [MEMBER: "Contracted" view.] An hon. member suggests that the mover takes a "contracted" view of the question also, but I am not prepared to say that such is the case. Naturally, however, the mover regards the matter very much from one standpoint. So many references have been made to the Coolgardie Water Scheme as being a dreadful object lesson in regard to the excessive cost of works performed by day labour, that I cannot refrain from farther adverting to that great undertaking. I wish to say that in connection with that work, as in connection with every other Government work being carried out by day labour at the present moment, this Administration is not in any way responsible for the initiation of the practice of day labour. Even in regard to the Coolgardie Water Scheme, however, I have no hesitation in saying

that given a fair chance—and a fair chance will be given as between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie—to show what can be done by day labour with proper supervision, the figures quoted by Mr. Mephan Ferguson as representing the contract prices in connection with a similar scheme in South Australia will be equalled, if not beaten, by day labour in this State. Hon. members may say that the issue depends entirely on good supervision. Undoubtedly, good supervision is the secret of success under the day labour system; but is it not also the secret of success in connection with the contract system?

[MR. DIAMOND: Yes.] If works are let by contract and the supervision is not good, then the contractor undoubtedly reaps a greater profit than he expected when he signed the contract. I do submit that, whatever may be the laudable intention of the mover, we do not find many contractors—I can say this even with the little experience I have had in administering the Works Department—actuated by a great regard for the benefit of the State. My experience has been that contractors have a greater regard for their own individual profit than for any interest of the State. So that even under the contract system a great deal depends on proper supervision.

MR. HARPER: Cannot that be said also with regard to the Government supervisors?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS AND RAILWAYS: Certainly; it applies all round. I do not think, however, that there is any objection to the adoption of this motion, if, as I understand, it is the wish of the House that a considerable degree of discretion should be allowed to the Government even although this motion be adopted. The motion says:—

It is in the best interests of the country that the construction of Government works should, wherever practicable, be thrown open to public competition instead of being undertaken under the system of Government day labour.

I presume it is meant also wherever it is practicable, and in the interest of the State it is desirable. If we are limited entirely to the absolute wording, I cannot imagine any work which it would not be practicable to throw open to public competition; but I can well imagine, as can the member

for the Williams who formerly administered the Works Department, cases arising in which it would be very undesirable to let the work by public tender. If I understand the wish of the House correctly, that wherever practicable and desirable in the best interests of the State, is to throw open works to public competition, that shall be done, then there is no objection on the part of the Government, always provided and understood that in all these works it shall be the duty of this Government to see that the interests of the workers are properly safeguarded and a minimum wage clause inserted in all contracts. If that be done the Government have no serious objection to this motion.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner): My opinion is that this will always be a question that one can listen to from both standpoints, much like the question of free-trade and protection. We like to listen to each other's arguments, but we do not think the arguments on either side are convincing. There may be occasions when it is very desirable that public works should be let by contract, and there may be occasions when it would be a wise thing if public works were done by day labour.

MR. JACOBY: Small ones; not big ones.

THE TREASURER: When Mr. Seddon was going on a trip to the old country, I had a conversation with him in regard to the system pursued in New Zealand, and Mr. Seddon said that in New Zealand there was a system of the engineer giving a price for the work, and adding to that price 10 per cent. Then there was an extension of the butty-gang system applied. The Government would provide officers to take out estimates for the men to the amount they required; then a dozen men banded themselves together and took as much or as little of the work as they liked. The Government provided the supervision, and saw that the work was properly done. Mr. Seddon said the result had been very satisfactory. A dozen young fellows had earned as much probably as £4 or £4 10s. per week each, and gradually the scale went down to old men, who averaged about £2 10s. per week each.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: That is the contract system.

THE TREASURER: I say that in itself is an internal system of contracting. I asked with regard to the supervision, and Mr. Seddon said the works had been very much better and more solidly constructed under this arrangement than had been the case hitherto. He said it did away with gangers and overseers, because each man was an overseer to his neighbour. Where there were a dozen men working and one man "loafed," the other men in the gang told him he had better get out of the contract. In this there may be a wise solution of the problem as between contracting, as spoken of by the member for the Williams, and the day labour system that we know to have existed where the Government have made losses. I think the Government really do not get such good supervision as private employers do; I think private employers are more apt to pick their men for the knowledge they possess, whereas the Government send a departmental man who may only have a knowledge how to deal with a certain phase of the work. A contractor takes a man who has a general knowledge of contracting and a general knowledge of dealing with men at the same time, and if a man does not suit, the overseer simply says, "I do not want you," and there is an end to the arrangement. This is a subject which every time it is discussed must open up some new light, and eventually we may come to a solution of the question that both sides will agree to, and a happy issue will be the outcome.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I did think when the hon. member for the Murray proposed a motion like that brought before the House to-night, he would have fortified himself with some arguments in support of it. However, my anticipations were disappointed. The hon. member has come prepared, I imagine, for the House to find the arguments in order to justify him in supporting his motion. I find the wording of the motion is, "That it is in the best interests of the country that the construction of Government works should, wherever practicable, be thrown open to public competition instead of being undertaken under the system of Government day labour." The hon. member made no attempt, or no serious attempt

at all events, to show that it is in the best interests of the country this course should be adopted. He has simply thrown the motion at the House, as it were, for the House to take or reject. He has given us some very interesting reading in the specifications for a Government contract; interesting but hardly serious enough for a body of this description, hardly dry enough, rather of too light character to be introduced in what should be a serious discussion; but the mover has utterly failed to give us solid reasons or solid proof of the statement he asks us to affirm. I contend that when we are asked to affirm so plainly and so positively a statement like that contained in the motion, we should have positive and indisputable evidence put before us, not merely a bald and general statement. The member gave us a general statement that day labour had been costing the country from 30 to 50 per cent. more than it should, but he did not take any particular work and analyse it and give us the figures. I contend it is not reasonable to ask us to adopt a motion on that general statement. It is quite possible for me to take any particular work let by contract, and bring forward a statement that that individual work has cost 30 to 50 per cent. more than it should; but it would not be fair for me to make that statement unless I was prepared to go into details. I should not be warranted in asking anyone to accept that on my *ipse dixit*. The hon. member has not proposed that we should depart from the question of day labour in favour of other systems, but of one other system. He has not suggested that any railway construction should be tried on the butt-gang system.

MR. ATKINS: It has failed.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member says it has failed; but the experience of New Zealand is against that failure. The hon. member stands forward, not as one who definitely condemns day labour but definitely advocates, instead of it, contract work. At present the position is in favour of what the member for the Williams thinks should be done, not that there should be any motion of the House binding the Government to contract work, day labour, or the butt-gang system. It is quite open for the Government, when deciding on any particular work, to decide

what system should be adopted in respect of that work, and those who may be in favour of any other system than the contract system have never tried to force the hands of the Government for the purpose of getting any one system decreed as the one that the Government should adopt. Now an attempt is made by the hon. member to tie the hands, not of this Government but of all Governments, by a definite motion of the House; and I ask members to pause and deliberate, at all events to get some facts, some reasons, some arguments brought forward before they decide to take so pronounced a step.

MR. MORGANS: This motion does not tie the House.

MR. DAGLISH: This motion ties the hands of the Government to do work by public competition wherever practicable. It is not wherever desirable, it is not wherever the circumstances make it reasonable to do so, but wherever it is practicable; in other words, when it is not impossible to do the work by contract it shall be done by contract. There may be good reasons against a contract, but still if it is not absolutely impracticable to invite tenders, then tenders must be invited if the motion is to be observed. If the motion is not to be observed, the House is acting unwisely if it passes a motion which after all would be a piece of waste-paper work. The hon. member, I was saying, has given a general statement in regard to the cost of the day-labour system in the State which I assume it is impossible for him to prove, and therefore it is unnecessary for me to attempt to disprove until I get tangible facts to disprove or figures to answer. He told us, in justification of the motion, that nearly all countries had adopted the contract system. He did not bring forward a single instance where a motion of this description to tie the hands of the Government has been passed.

MR. ATKINS: In South Australia and in Victoria motions have been passed.

MR. DAGLISH: I think the hon. member has failed in his duty to the House when he did not bring up those motions. The hon. member says I should go and look them up for myself. He forgets that when a member proposes some new departure, it is the duty of that member to justify that departure,

and it is not the duty of those who object to a hard and fast rule being made to fight at all on the question until some justification has been given for the new departure. The hon. member, strange to say, in the only particular case which he cited against day labour, that of a road in South Gippsland, gave a case which is against his own argument. The road was made by piece-work, in other words the road was done by contract, but by individual contract, by a contract system according to the very extreme; and the hon. member told us that because the road was done by piece-work or contract work in South Gippsland and had cost far more than it was said it would cost, therefore in Western Australia we should not have any work by day labour introduced. The instance quoted by the hon. member would condemn his own argument, as it condemns the motion. He also produced an extract, not from an impartial source, but from a newspaper that exists for propagating certain political theories—a newspaper that has been attacked time after time for misrepresenting facts to farther its political theories. I am sorry to say that outside of this State there are newspapers which do misrepresent facts to suit their own purposes. The member for Sussex (Mr. Yelverton), who was in such a hurry to support this motion, has not been in a hurry to get facts to warrant the statements he has made. He referred to the Goomalling railway construction, and gave us only a bald statement with no particulars that warrant him in saying the work has cost more by day labour than it would have cost under contract. He told us that day labour was piling up the national debt; a sentence which sounds very nice, but even a nice-sounding sentence requires proof, and euphony in a sentence is not enough to warrant our acceptance of such statements, although euphony is in itself a recommendation. He told us that men earned their money too easily under the day labour system as carried on by Government. But the trouble is, I think, that those men are not contractors; for we have read of cases in the Press of men taking away £40,000 or £50,000 from this State, after finishing a big contract for the Government. It is not cases like that which the hon. member objects to, but the fact that possibly a few men

earning eight or nine shillings a day are not driven to the utmost of their powers in doing work under the day labour system. Even in that matter the hon. member did not adduce evidence. He told us there was no chance for a good man to rise to a better position under the day labour system, but he did not tell us what possible chance there is for a man working under contractors to rise to a better condition. It is only reasonable, when such arguments are adduced, that the other side of the question should be set forth, in order to show what advantages the contract system offers to counter-balance the alleged disadvantages of the day-labour system. We are told that foremen employed by the Government in carrying out public works have not the chance of dismissing workmen. I say it is not the fault of the day-labour system, if it be a fact that foremen have not that power; but I am under the impression that foremen carrying out Government works have the power of dismissal. [MR. YELVERTON: They never exercise it.] If a foreman has not the power, the next man above him has the power; for we must remember in connection with the Coolgardie Water Scheme that the works manager had the power of dismissing a foreman, and he exercised the power, though I admit he exercised it very badly. Such an argument should not be used against the principle of day labour. The member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) recognises the true position, that it is desirable the Government should have an absolutely free hand as to the system they adopt in carrying out public works, and that they should have power to work in the fashion which is considered to be most desirable in the circumstances. If this motion be rejected, the power to exercise this choice will remain with the Government as it is at present.

MR. YELVERTON: Give us some facts in favour of the day labour system.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member is very greedy in regard to facts. I am arguing, not in favour of any particular system, but against a motion which will tie the hands of the Government improperly if passed by this House. If the object of the motion is not to tie the hands of the Government, what is the object which the mover has in view? If the Government are to be as free in the

future as they have been in the past, there is nothing to be gained by the motion, and this discussion is a waste of time. If there is anything to be gained by a motion of this kind, it is not my business to provide the mover with facts. I will give one fact against it that will take a great deal of answering, and that is in regard to the Coolgardie Water Scheme which has been quoted so often this evening. I pointed out the other night that the manner in which a system is administered has most to do with its efficiency or inefficiency; and the evidence taken by the commission which inquired into the Coolgardie Water Scheme showed that where the day-labour system was well administered, that system was a success. I will read an extract from the report of the commission relating to weir construction, being the first section of the report. It says:—

The commission has been unable to obtain sufficiently precise evidence as to the cost of rock excavation and concrete in similar work elsewhere; but as far as the evidence goes, it supports the view that this work has been done at a reasonable cost, especially when it is borne in mind that the rate of wages has ruled high in this State, and that large quantities of cement were landed long before being required, involving storage in railway sheds at a cost of £2,449 5s. 9d. to 31st March last. During the progress of construction the engineer-in-charge, Mr. Hodgson, wrote to the engineer supervising the weir construction (Mr. Leslie) in very strong terms (Appendix I.), censuring him for extravagance and threatening immediate action if greater economy were not practised. This produced a vigorous reply from Mr. Leslie, giving details of the cost of the work, and inviting the threatened action. The fact that no reply to this was given, nor the threatened action taken, leaves the impression that Mr. Hodgson was ignorant of the real facts when passing the censure.

This extract proves that the weir construction was carried out as cheaply and as reasonably under the day-labour system as it could have been done under any other system; and shows that where there is good administration like that of Mr. Leslie, who was in charge of the work, we may get fair value for money expended on the work under the day-labour system. I will not trouble the House with the remarks in the appendix contained in the letter from Mr. Hodgson; but there is an appendix to the report giving the answer of Mr. O'Connor

to a number of statements made in the two Houses of Parliament, and one of those statements was in regard to departmental *versus* contract work. This is Mr. O'Connor's comment on a passage quoted from *Hansard* :—

[In connection with Couston and Findlayson's recent offer *re* caulking, the Engineer-in-Chief has made a change of front. The Engineer-in-Chief, in speaking at a banquet held at Midland Junction, condemned the contract system. (Several passages were quoted from the speech referred to.)—*Hansard*, page 2745.]

As regards the general question of departmental *v.* contract work, I do not admit that I have changed front at all, my opinions on the subject for several years past having been as set forth in memo. dated 21st March, 1901, which was written for the information of the Hon. Mr. Throssell; and as regards the occurrence at Midland Junction, I have already, in a sworn affidavit lodged in the Supreme Court in October, 1899, repudiated the accuracy of the report thereof; and as regards what I did say, I have also several times pointed out that I am not alone in my opinions in that respect (*vide* memo. hereunder) :—

"The case of the caulking of these pipes, however, is an exceptional one, special skill and knowledge being required for it, and its being desirable at the same time that it should be done at moderate cost."

Mr. O'Connor goes on to quote from an affidavit made by him in the Supreme Court, in an arbitration between W. N. Hedges and Her Majesty, and from this affidavit I will read paragraphs 6 and 7 :—

6. With reference to paragraph 13, I deny that on the occasion referred to I expressed an opinion adverse to contractors generally, or that I said anything from which it might be inferred that I was biased in respect of any claims which might be made against the Government by contractors.

7. I repudiate the accuracy of what I am alleged to have spoken at Midland Junction on September 29th, 1889, as set out in the affidavit of Julian Edmund Tenison Woods. The report is neither full nor accurate. The substance of what I said was as follows :—That as regards Government contracts generally, I would wish to say something of wider significance and to sound a word of warning, *viz.*, that if the practice which seemed to be recently growing up of regarding a Government contract merely as a stepping-stone to profits to be derived from a big law suit, were to continue, the effect of it would be that the letting of such contracts would become so dangerous as to be prohibitive, and that whereas there was a time some years back when all contractors, such as Messrs. Brassey, Peto, Betts, and Dargan, and many others of that class, all thorough experts, went

into the business of making legitimate profits by their legitimate earnings, there seemed to be a tendency of later years for people to go in for contracts who were bush lawyers or employed bush lawyers rather than expert workmen, and who cared not how the work was done, having no reputation to lose, so long as they made money out of it. In the olden times there was the greatest possible cordiality between the engineers and the contractors, the object of both being to secure a good job, one of the objects of the contractors in such being to get farther contracts, and I believe that that applied to Mr. Hoskins and his contract; whereas in some cases of late years the object appeared to be merely to make as much money as possible, irrespective of how the work was done, thus leading to continual bickering between the engineers and the contractors; and although there are many bright examples to the contrary, there seemed to be a tendency for this to grow and grow until, as before stated, it might render the letting of contracts by colonial Governments, on the present basis, prohibitive altogether. In the interests of legitimate contractors this was very much to be deplored, and legitimate contractors were not responsible for it, as it was brought about, first by the intense competition arising for contracts of late years, and secondly by the almost necessity of colonial Governments accepting the lowest tender.

This, I think, warrants the House in pausing before passing a motion that will bind the Government to let public works by contract wherever it may be practicable to invite competition. If farther argument were needed, I have here (in the same report) an extract from statements made by the Under Secretary for Public Works and Commissioner for Roads in New South Wales, taken from the annual report for 1897, as follows :—

Under the day-labour system, the department is saved from the many vexatious complications and claims which are so liable to crop up under the contract system. Once the work has been completed by day labour its exact cost is definitely known, and there is no possibility of demands for extra payments being brought against the department. This is a very important aspect of the question, as the department has had, in the past, to face not a few very heavy claims on the part of contractors. For this reason alone, if for no other, the Engineer-in-Chief is prepared to recommend that, wherever practicable, the day-labour system should be adopted in preference to giving the work out to contractors.

At 6-30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

In accordance with Standing Orders, debate on the motion adjourned.

PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT
BILL.

RECOMMITTAL.

On motion by Mr. FOULKES, Bill re-committed for amendment.

New Clause (vacancies):

MR. FOULKES moved that the following be added as Clause 13:—

All vacancies in the public service shall be advertised in the *Government Gazette*.

The manner in which vacancies had been filled up in the past was haphazard and unsatisfactory. The practice appeared to be for the Minister, or the permanent head of a department, to select for appointment to a vacancy which he did not decide to fill from the ranks of the service someone on the list of his acquaintances. Thus the area of selection was unnecessarily limited. Fifteen or twenty years ago a Minister might have known practically every person in the State, but the large increase in our population had made it impossible for any Minister to be sure when filling an appointment from the list of his acquaintances that he had as large a selection before him as he ought to have. Moreover, few people except the residents of Perth and Fremantle knew of a vacancy arising. The inhabitants of such places as Northam and Bunbury, also goldfield residents, rarely knew of a vacancy. Thus people at a distance from the capital had practically no opportunity of obtaining Government appointments. It was true that a list of applicants was kept in the various Government departments; but that list became out of date, and thus was practically of no use. The very best men available should be obtained for the public service. The new clause proposed to help Ministers or heads of departments towards making suitable appointments. They would have a larger number to select from, and the wider the area of selection the better the chance of obtaining the best officer. According to the Public Service Act of New South Wales, provision was made that when there were vacancies in the public service the Government had to give notice three times in a Sydney daily newspaper. It was true that in that State it was the duty of the Public Service Board to hold examinations, and he believed one of the first things the present Government did was to provide for the examination of candidates for appointment to the public

service. The wider the selection Ministers had, the better it would be for the public service.

THE TREASURER: The necessity for this clause was not apparent. If one took a big service such as a bank, that institution did not advertise for applications when transferring an officer. The Government would have to rely almost exclusively on the heads of departments as to the qualifications of men likely to be fitted for the vacant position. Supposing fifty applicants was the result of an advertisement and the Minister wished to fill the position of a junior clerk at 30s. a week, it would not be possible to examine the whole of those applying to see if they possessed the necessary qualifications. The Government of their own accord had decided that no positions should be filled except from the service. If the head of a department wanted an officer, he sent round to the other departments to see if they had an officer suitable to fill the position, and from the recommendations the best officer was chosen. There was not the slightest necessity for advertising every vacancy in the *Government Gazette*. The clause did not say how far it was proposed to go. If an office boy was required, would it be necessary to advertise that position? No doubt the hon. member meant that any important position should be open in a public way, and not positions such as those of office boys or junior clerks. It would be just as well if the power was left in the hands of those who had charge of the administration, and to trust them to fill each position with the best officer obtainable.

MR. FOULKES: When this clause was brought forward on a previous occasion, the Colonial Secretary opposed the motion in almost exactly the same words as the Treasurer had done now. The reply of the Treasurer was to leave the matter to the Government. It was not the Ministers who made the appointments: it was practically left to the heads of departments. No harm could be done by advertising. He wished to assist Ministers in appointing the best men, and to give an opportunity to all classes of the community in all districts to obtain appointments. The Treasurer referred to all vacancies where practicable being offered to officers already in the

service. That he concurred in, but the clause did not deal with that at all. There were a great number of appointments that were not given to officers in the service, and it was to meet cases of that kind that he had moved the clause.

THE TREASURER: There was a clause now in the Act practically making Ministers do what the hon. member desired.

MR. FOULKES: There was no reason why the amendment should not be carried. It would be a means of strengthening the hands of Ministers, and giving them a wider selection. He could not see what objection there was to the clause. In country districts people never knew when vacancies occurred. It was just by chance that he happened to-day to know of a vacancy in the Education Department, and perhaps that vacancy was only known to a few.

MR. MORAN: There was a good deal in what the hon. member had stated. The trend of the times for years past had decidedly been in making the public service open, free, and removed as far as possible from anything underhand or secret, and free from political patronage. On many an occasion, a desirable man might become aware of a vacancy in the service by public advertisement, which vacancy would otherwise have been unknown to him. Notwithstanding what might be a departmental law that under-secretaries should write to one another when vacancies occurred, that would not quite work out. The proposal was a little cumbersome, and perhaps a little expensive, but he did not suppose that the expense would be more than a few pounds in a year, while there was a spirit of openness in the matter which did not now exist. He did not know what harm could be done by advertising even for a cadet or a boy to lick the stamps. The principle might be a good one, but something absurd could be pointed out against every proposal. Persons in all parts of the country should have the fullest opportunity of applying for vacancies in the public service.

THE PREMIER: What possible good would be obtained by the clause as it stood, or by the clause in any way in which the Committee might reasonably amend it? It was obvious that vacancies in the service should be filled by a system of

promotion, therefore those positions would not be advertised. Then there were vacancies which were filled by transfer, where one department wanted an officer, and a public servant from another department was transferred to fill the position. The new clause would not apply to such a case. If those cases were eliminated, we might provide, if the clause were so amended, that in other cases we should advertise in the *Government Gazette*; but having done that, with whom rested the power of choice? It rested with the same persons who exercised the power now—the under-secretaries or the Ministers. There was no test applied by the suggestion. If it was the question of refusal, those who were administering affairs now had that responsibility. There could not be a wider choice than there was at present, because every department had a list of applicants containing dozens of names. Members knew that whenever a young man had spare time he sent in an application for employment in the public service. What was required was a system of examination, and that was the only system that could obtain; and, as members were aware, the Government had dealt with that matter. There had been a report from the Royal Commission, who had made recommendations with which the Government did not entirely agree. The first progress report of that commission would be laid on the table to-morrow. The commission suggested that there should be an examination, and those persons who had passed the examination, if vacancies had to be filled by persons outside the service, should receive the appointments. Their names would be recorded and they would be entitled to appointment in the public service whenever vacancies occurred. In regard to appointments outside those of cadets, it was difficult to see what good a clause like this would do. If a position other than that of a cadet had to be filled, and it could not be filled within the service, it would be a position requiring special knowledge. If all vacancies were to be advertised in the *Government Gazette* there would be a rush of applicants, and the result would not lessen the work of Ministers, nor would it curtail the right of choice existing at present in making appointments.

The only way would be to adopt a qualifying examination, and this the Government proposed to do as soon as it could be arranged. He did not think this clause, even in an amended form, could do any good. If this House were to discourage the ambition of those persons who were anxious to enter the Government service, we should be doing more good than by endeavouring to put them into the service.

New clause negatived.

Bill reported without farther amendment, and the report adopted.

AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and read a first time.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST BILL.

RECOMMITTAL.

On the order for consideration of report from Committee:

MR. PIGOTT moved that the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of striking out Clause 3. As the effect of his motion would be to challenge a decision already come to in Committee of the whole House, he hoped the course he was now taking would not be out of order.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member should go on with the motion now, but it must be opposed.

MR. PIGOTT: When the Bill was in Committee, a vote was taken on an amendment that Clause 3 be struck out, the division resulting in a majority of one in favour of the clause. The Premier called attention to that division when a second vote on the clause was about to be taken, and he distinctly intimated that if the clause were not passed, that decision of the Committee would wreck the Bill. The clause was put and passed by a majority of two. When that was done, the Premier rose and made a statement that was absolutely unparliamentary and unconstitutional, for he threatened this House with a dissolution; a course which no Premier, no matter what the provocation might be, was justified in taking. The threat which the Premier used on that occasion had the effect of putting a wrong construction on the vote which he (Mr. Pigott)

had given in the first division on the clause. He had voted with the Government in order to save the Bill, whereas the Premier's threat made it appear as though he (Mr. Pigott) had voted to save the House from a dissolution. He had said on many previous occasions that a dissolution would be a good thing; therefore he now wished to make his position in respect of his vote on this Bill perfectly plain and distinct, by moving that the Bill be recommitted. This course would give the Premier another chance of threatening with a dissolution those members who, while they almost invariably voted with the Government, did not do so on that occasion.

MR. MORAN: Merely for the sake of discussion, he would second the amendment.

Question put and negatived.

MR. TAYLOR: If in order, he would move that the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of amending Clause 28, by striking out the words "work or," in line 10. He was absent from the Chamber when the clause was passed; otherwise he would have opposed it then.

POINT OF ORDER.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Was it not compulsory to give notice on the Notice Paper of amendments to be moved on recommitment?

THE SPEAKER: Yes; if the Bill was down for the third reading.

THE PREMIER: How many motions for recommitment could be made?

THE SPEAKER: Standing Order 295 provided:—

On the motion for the adoption of the report, the whole Bill may, on motion, be re-committed, and farther amendments made; but a subsequent day to that on which the second report is brought up shall be fixed for moving the adoption of such second report; and the Bill, as reported with such farther amendments, shall in the meantime be printed. If no amendments have been made, the report may at once be adopted.

THE PREMIER: That Standing Order referred to motions to recommit the Bill as a whole.

THE SPEAKER: The Bill might be re-committed for certain clauses only.

THE PREMIER: There was only one motion to recommit a Bill.

THE SPEAKER: A Bill might be re-committed a dozen times.

THE PREMIER: But when dealing with a report there should be only one motion to recommit; otherwise one member might move to recommit Clause 1, another to recommit Clause 2, and a third to recommit Clause 5.

THE SPEAKER: The notice of motion standing in the name of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. Pigott) had been to recommit the Bill for the purpose of amendment of one particular clause. Now another member had moved to recommit the Bill for amendment of another clause.

THE PREMIER: Was that admissible?

THE SPEAKER: Yes; he thought so. At the same time, members ought to give notice of any amendments proposed to be moved on recommittal.

DEBATE.

MR. TAYLOR: The object of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. Pigott), in moving that the Bill be recommitted, was to test the feeling of the House with respect to a previous vote. The object might be, as the Premier had pointed out, to wreck the Bill. Such, however, was not his (Mr. Taylor's) desire. He merely wished to test the feeling of the Committee with regard to the retention of the word "work."

MR. MORAN: The amendment which the hon. member (Mr. Taylor) proposed to move amounted to the removal of a ridiculous feature of the Bill. The late Engineer-in-Chief, who was the highest authority on the point, had frequently stated that work in connection with the Fremantle harbour could not be, and ought not to be, let by contract.

MR. NANSON: The clause left the Harbour Trust a discretion in the matter.

MR. MORAN: The subject ought not to be mentioned in this Bill at all.

THE PREMIER: If the object of the member for Mount Margaret was such, the amendment might be discussed in Committee.

MR. MORAN: If the Premier would give an assurance that he would allow the Bill to be recommitted, no more need be said.

THE PREMIER: The amendment was worthy of farther consideration.

Question passed, and Bill recommitted.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 28—Commissioners may make contracts, etc.:

MR. TAYLOR moved that the words "work or," line 10, be struck out. The clause would then deal only with material. The success of the Fremantle Harbour Works so far under the day labour system justified the Government in proceeding on the old lines. All reference to contract work should be omitted from the Bill.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: On reconsidering the amendment moved by the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas), he was inclined to accept the view of the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor). Practically all the work to be done by the Harbour Trust was in the nature of maintenance, and it would be extremely difficult, in many cases, to let such work by contract.

MR. NANSON: There was no compulsion under the clause.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was not much reason for retaining the provision. Undoubtedly, tenders should be called with regard to material. The suggestion with regard to doing work by contract, however, amounted almost to a command that work over a certain value should be let by contract.

MR. NANSON: No reason had been shown for farther amending this clause. The power given to the Harbour Trust was purely permissive. A direction that wherever work could be done by contract it should be so done was desirable. The commissioners still had the power to do by day labour any work which could not well be let by contract. Every measure dealing with public works ought to contain a clear direction that the cheapest and most effective methods should be adopted. The country had only a small amount of money available for the development of its resources, and therefore it was particularly undesirable that work should be carried out in a needlessly expensive manner. Unquestionably, departmental day labour, no matter whether carried out in London under the County Council, or under the Governments of the Australian States, had proved, taking a number of cases, infinitely more expensive than work done under the contract system. In the interests of good administration, of economy, and of a wise conservation of

public funds, the Committee should lose no opportunity of affirming its faith in the system of carrying out work by contract. He hoped the Government would stand firm by the clause, and not amend it. It was not as if the clause gave a general direction. The Government should stand firm to the principle that wherever possible, work should be done by contract.

MR. DIAMOND: If the amendment of the member for Mount Margaret were carried, was it within the discretion of the Harbour Trust to either call for tenders or do the work by day labour?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Certainly.

MR. DIAMOND: In that case he would vote for the amendment.

MR. MORAN: The amendment had taken a wrong form. He objected to the compulsory calling for tenders for work costing over one hundred pounds. It was absurd and ridiculous that in the maintenance of the harbour, where there might be a flood or an accident, to call for tenders because the cost of the work might exceed £100. The Committee might ride principles to death, and this was riding a principle to death. It was not necessary to insert an amendment in every public works Bill to make it compulsory to call for tenders for every hundred pounds worth of Government work. It would not be possible to call for tenders for one hundred pounds worth of work in case of an accident or a flood.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The leader of the Opposition had said that the clause as amended was not mandatory. But it was mandatory that tenders should be called for works over one hundred pounds in value. In the earlier part of the clause it stated that the board might enter into a contract. He did not think the words "work or" in the proviso were needed.

MR. TAYLOR: The member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas), at whose instance the proviso was inserted, did not object to the words "work or" being struck out. His object was to prevent material being purchased in a hole-and-corner way.

MR. DAGLISH: Would the amendment of the member for Mount Margaret meet the case? The whole proviso should be struck out, which was necessary to meet the view of the member for Mount

Margaret. Would he be in order in moving to strike out the whole proviso?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The proper amendment would be to strike out the whole proviso. A difficulty might arise in which more than £100 worth of material was wanted in a hurry, and if the harbour trust were prevented from buying £102 worth of material for a special work, and were obliged to call for tenders, trouble might arise. The application in regard to the purchase of material was the same as in regard to work. It would be advisable for the member for Mount Margaret to withdraw his amendment so as to allow the whole proviso to be struck out.

MR. TAYLOR: In the absence of the member for Dundas he did not like to move that the proviso be struck out; but if it were necessary for him to withdraw his amendment to enable some other member to move to strike out the proviso he would do so.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved that the proviso added to the original clause be struck out.

MR. NANSON: The Colonial Secretary had stated that a similar proviso to this was in the New Zealand Harbour Trust Act. If the proviso worked well in New Zealand, why should it not work well here?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Speaking from memory, the New Zealand Act provided that materials only of the value of £50 should be tendered for.

MR. DIAMOND: It was the almost unanimous decision of the Committee that the members of the Harbour Trust should be business men of standing; therefore it was not wise to have this proviso to the clause. Men of repute and standing would not take much interest in their work if their hands were tied in regard to every detail. He would vote for the amendment.

Amendment passed, and the proviso struck out.

Bill reported with a farther amendment.

MOTION—FOOD DUTIES, TO ABOLISH.

Debate resumed from the 24th September, on the motion by Mr. Hastie "That all inter-State duties on butter,

cheese, eggs, bacon, ham, potatoes, onions, and flour should be immediately abolished."

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): In a discussion of this kind, particularly one dealing with local production and import duties, one notices there are always two strongly opposite points of view. It seems as if the goldfields members cannot get the farmer out of their minds' eye in discussing the question, that they look on him with some sort of antipathy. It also seems that some of the champions of the farmers use as arguments the goldfields foibles and vices. Hence it seems almost impossible to discuss this matter so as to bring the two interests into harmony. Yet if it can be shown that certain duties are not required by the State for its revenue, and that they are no protection to the farmer, why in the name of conscience should there be this ever-recurring antipathy and these bitter expressions from the representatives of these two great interests?

HON. F. H. PRIESSE: I do not think I have ever shown antipathy to the goldfields people. I have always spoken of them as people to whom we owe so much in regard to the development of this country.

MR. MORAN: I did not have the hon. member in my mind when I spoke—I said certain representatives of the farmers. I will say this of the hon. member, that it does not lie in my mouth to accuse him of having ill-feeling towards the goldfields, when I know that he supported a former Ministry for so many years that did so much good when it had the power, and used that power so greatly for the benefit of the goldfields. I could not accuse the hon. member of having any but the best kind of feeling towards the goldfields. It cannot be denied that there always appear to be these arguments used; and members for the goldfields seem to look obliquely across the House—for instance, the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie); and from the farmers' phase of the question I instance the speech of the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), who brought out the old drink argument, in my opinion very unwisely. I cannot see what good can be done by pointing out the foibles and vices of the goldfields people, and saying they are drink consumers; and I

take it from the argument of the member for Beverley that the goldfields people want their food cheaper in order that they may drink more. This is only begetting more antipathy and ill-will, rather than supporting the farmer's position. I take this standpoint, that I have always been for the last nine years a staunch supporter of the farmer in every phase; and I have the unique position of having been perhaps the only goldfields representative who always fought his election campaigns as a champion of the farmer, while always seeking the benefit of the goldfields. I won two elections that went against a free-trader; and the third election, which I lost, I did not lose because I was a supporter of the farmer, but for other reasons altogether. I have always taken the view that a man who holds earnest convictions can win a seat in Parliament if he likes. I have always been a champion of the farmer in Western Australia, and I fought tooth-and-nail against what I considered a great blow at him, that was federation. I did hold that we should have kept out of federation for many years to come, in order that Western Australia might utilise the prosperity of our goldfields to help in building up the farming industry. But when you have duties remaining which are of no use to the farmer, and are a distinct injury to the prospector and the miner, I say what two mad men, speaking from opposite sides of the question, would keep a compact made between them, after both wanted it undone, and had realised that it was injurious to both? Why talk to me of a supposed compact, why talk of protective duties, when there is really no protection in those duties? Surely there is no protection in the duties on butter or cheese in Western Australia. Were we free as a colony, I should vote for retaining those duties, because I see a hope of building up a good and permanent industry in Western Australia; but who is going to vote for retaining those duties in order to build up an industry, when the duties must disappear in two years, and the industry will not then be built up? Meanwhile, you are penalising the people of the country where living is very high, and for no reason except that the Treasurer of this State wants the money which

is extracted from the simplest items of food, the supposed protection of which does not exist. I take the point of view of a consistent advocate of protection, where I can see any chance of building up a local industry. On the very day after the Federation Tariff was laid on the table of the Commonwealth Parliament, I addressed a large meeting in the Queen's Hall in Perth, publicly advertised, and I said there that, as one who had closely followed the history of the federal movement, I thought Sir John Forrest and Sir George Turner were entirely wrong in stating that Western Australia would remain just the same under the Federal Tariff as it had been under the local tariff. I cannot understand how Sir George Turner, the Treasurer of the Commonwealth, could have arrived at that conclusion.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He estimated £700,000 instead of £1,300,000.

MR. MORAN: He made a mistake, as the hon. member says, of nearly 100 per cent., and Sir John Forrest wired over here to the newspapers, insisting that the Federal Treasurer was right in his estimate. I met Sir John shortly afterwards, and asked how he could make such a statement as that in support of Sir George Turner's estimate. Sir John's reply was characteristic, for he said, "It was not my business, and I was not going to get behind our own Federal Treasurer." Sir John Forrest knew, and no one knew better, that we in this State were going to have a heavily increased customs taxation through the Federal Tariff. At the Queen's Hall meeting I advocated the immediate abolition of the food duties as being no longer a protection to our farmers; that if they protected at all, the time in which those duties could operate was too short to be of real use for benefiting the farming industry. I said also that we should be severely taxed under the Federal Tariff. I took the view then, and I hold it now, that for several years after federation any tariff which proposed to protect the industries of the Eastern States, and which was based on what may be called the average of the duties in those States, must greatly increase the customs taxation in Western Australia; because of all the tariffs, those of Western Australia and New South Wales were the lowest. Nobody was

hurt by our tariff before federation, because it was a low tariff; but any averaging of the State tariffs must of necessity bring up the low tariffs, if it also reduced the higher tariffs to get at an average. We have to-day the Treasurer of this State saying he has got a revenue of four millions a year from the people of Western Australia. Such a revenue is phenomenal, and almost sounds as if it were fiction. Still we have the free-trade party Treasurer, we have here the federation party which came into power on the wave of federation; and we have to-night the very Treasurer who was brought from oblivion by the federation movement and placed in his present position, whose chief argument then was that federation was going to cheapen living in Western Australia, that being the cry which carried federation; and now that he has got into position by the federation movement, he rises in this House and gives us this most extraordinary political theory, that no Treasurer has ever been known to advocate the reduction of revenue. I say that is a most extraordinary doctrine.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then who does propose a reduction of revenue?

MR. MORAN: If the proposal does not come from the Government in power, how can we ever get a reduction of taxation? The proposal of one party in or out of power is to decrease taxation, and the proposal of the other party in or out of power is to increase taxation; and so the contention goes on between the two parties all the world over. Have we not had Mr. George Reid going before the electors of New South Wales as a free-trader, and proposing in that Assembly to abolish nearly all the duties in existence there? [MEMBER: He did not do it, though.] He abolished millions per annum of duties in New South Wales.

MR. TAYLOR: He ran two years on Dibbs's tariff.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Political parties are always reducing or increasing.

MR. MORAN: Yes; that is policy; and the Government which promised this country so much reform in the way of economy should be the last to stand up here and champion the dragging out of the people for food duties several more thousands of pounds per annum—what for? Surely to carry on the policy which they so much detested in past Govern-

ments, the policy of distributing sops over West Australia. What do they want these four millions for? [MEMBER: Sops.] It is for the old policy of sops. I maintain that we have arrived at a stage when we can safely abolish the food duties or the greater part of them; and before I sit down I shall propose an amendment on the motion before the House, which should bring about unanimity in this House on the question, and it is that if we consent to give the farming representatives what they ask for, they should give something in return that is equal to it, by taking off the food of Western Australia a large portion of the cost. If I say I am willing not to include potatoes and onions in the duties levied, I give everything the farmer has asked for in this House; and if, on the other hand, I say we should assist the workers out back by taking the duty off tinned fruit and vegetables, tinned fish, and tinned meats, I will defy every farming representative in this House to say his constituency would not consent. I have never found the farmers unreasonable. They know that Western Australia was made by its goldfields, and the man who seeks to get away from that conclusion is no friend of Western Australia, if he does not recognise that our market is those great goldfields. If we can do anything to cheapen the cost of living, and to make the terms of life more comfortable for those people, if we can by any means encourage the prospector even by giving way to his foibles, if by making a concession that has nothing material in it we can show we are with him, we shall be doing a great work for the farmer of Western Australia, who for many years must look to his own State for his market, and who will have to be very much stronger before he can compete in the markets of the world as an exporter. If we protect flour, we are giving to the Eastern Districts all they require; if we protect onions and potatoes, we protect the farmer in the South-West; while we know the fruit-grower has nothing to contend with except bad railway arrangements, that the fruit-grower can sell his fruit and crops if the Government give him quick railway transit. We will then bring about unanimity on this subject, and show that we are doing something to lighten the

cost of living in Western Australia to those who comprise three-fourths of our people—those who are delving in our back blocks, east, north, and south. What about the metropolitan population—is not the cost felt in every household in Perth?

MR. DIAMOND: So it is in Sydney, and Melbourne, and Adelaide.

MR. MORAN: I wish to goodness I could help people in those places; but enough for me to try to help people in our own State. It is no argument to proclaim that the cost of living is high elsewhere. It is sufficient if we can undo an injustice here in our own State. I am not going to talk about the horny-handed prospector, about the miner in the earth, or about the pearler, or the pastoralist; but I will talk about the civil servant, about the railway employee, about the man who is drawing his £150 a year in Perth. How is such a man living to-day? Is he living in the lap of luxury? If he dresses himself and, having a family, educates his children, then I say he lives a life that is very uncertain, that is very close to the brink indeed. The big bulk of the people of this metropolis are to-day living pretty hard, because of the heavy cost of living brought about by federation. We know, however, that we can reduce this heavy cost of living, and without hurting anybody, by removing the food duties. There is another point of view I wish to place before the House, and particularly before the farming representatives. What is going to happen in Western Australia in a few years when the protective policy which I feel sure is coming over Australia as a Commonwealth has full play? I am as certain as I stand here to-night that the destiny of Australia is to be protectionist. I do not think it can be avoided. If we look carefully at the history of young countries and young continents, if we look at the examples of Canada and the United States, we are compelled gravely to consider whether the destiny of Australia is not inevitably protectionist.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Aren't you a free-trader?

MR. MORAN: The hon. member asks me whether I am not a free-trader; but the hon. member knows that I am and have been all along a staunch protectionist, and that as a protectionist I

fought him and his federal fads. Perhaps the hon. member thinks that anyone who proposes to remove a duty is not a protectionist?

MR. DIAMOND: It looks very much like it.

MR. MORAN: Will hon. members tell me that every duty is protective?

MR. DIAMOND: No. A duty on tea would not be protective.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member has supplied a sufficient answer to his own argument, and so has saved me the necessity of replying. I was about to ask members in general, and particularly the representatives of the farming districts, what is going to happen when we lose the great revenue we are getting to-day by our customs taxation? If Australia become a protective Commonwealth, it inevitably follows that the Commonwealth will make within its own borders the goods it requires, and that the large revenue derived from imports will in a great measure be lost. If that should come about in a few years, and if this State should have become habituated to a large revenue, how is the deficiency to be made up?

MR. DIAMOND: By land taxation.

MR. MORAN: I am again helped by the member for South Fremantle. Now is the time for the people of Western Australia, and more particularly for the farmers to support any member, any party, proposing economy as a doctrine. Let us cut £80,000 or £70,000 or £60,000, or whatever the amount may be, off the revenue for the coming year; and then the Government will soon economise to a corresponding extent. Let not hon. members preach to me the doctrine of economy, if they pass by a chance like this of cutting off revenue the collection of which admittedly affords no protection to any industry of this State. Since this reduction of the revenue will mean helping the poor working classes—and they are the great bulk of our community—who will not vote for the motion? Here is a means of practical economy. Let us remove £70,000 of taxation anyhow; let us ease the burden on the working classes of Western Australia to that extent; let us say that we will let food come in somewhat cheaper, at all events. Let butter come in cheaper. Australians all use butter, if they can get it. Let bacon and cheese

come in free; and, as a compromise, in order that something may be gained, that something may be carried—for I see clearly that the motion in its present form will not be carried—let us retain the duty on flour, seeing that we have a large and important farming community in our Eastern Districts. I am free to admit, as I admitted when speaking in the Queen's Hall, that flour should be exempted for the reason that the duty on flour does mean some protection to the farmer. Competition is so keen, the margin of profit is so narrow, that the duty on flour does represent some protection to the farmer. Flour is a preservable, compact, solid, easily handled article of merchandise, and may therefore be brought here largely to compete with the local product. I do not know whether the duty is worth retaining for the sake of two or three years, but it is worth retaining in order to arrive at a compromise with the farmers' representatives in this Chamber. Again, we may compromise with the members for the South-West Districts, where intense culture obtains, and where potatoes and onions are largely grown, by retaining the duty on those two commodities. I would leave those hon. members the duty of £1 per ton on potatoes and onions. I should be in favour of deleting those articles from the list set out in the motion, and substituting the commodities referred to in a return given me by the Treasurer. According to that return, the duty on vegetables last year amounted to £3,500; the duty on meats, fish, etc., in tins amounted to £3,870; and the duty on honey, jams, etc., to £3,566. These are all things to be found in every household, and more particularly are they to be found in the back-country camps of those doing the pioneering work of the State. The removal of the duties on these articles will not hurt anybody. The remission of this taxation means so much off the cost of living for the man who is delving and prospecting. The removal of these duties will not hurt the farmer, whom I would allow to retain his £1 per ton on potatoes and onions, though candidly and sincerely I do not believe that those duties constitute the slightest protection. In company with the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) I have just spent four or five days among the farmers growing

potatoes for market. Those farmers express no great antipathy to the removal of the duty of £1 per ton, but they do grievously complain that the present railway freights are hampering them and injuring them ten times more than would the removal of the duty on potatoes. The increase of the minimum load is a great grievance to the small farmer, as also are the bad regulations for the carriage of produce to market, the slowness of the trains, and the irregular service. The high minimum in particular hampers the farmer in conveying his produce to the goldfields. I would give the farmer the very lowest railway freights possible. I would help the farmer by every legitimate means, and in so doing help also the gold miner by affording him a regular supply of fresh vegetables. That is the way to protect the Western Australian farmer in future. I am reminded by the leader of the Opposition that the remission of the duties will mean a reduction in revenue; and in this connection I wish to emphasise that we can do with much less revenue and still carry on the work of government. The State does not want a revenue of four millions. So inflated a revenue constitutes a positive danger; for it cannot last, and the time will come when we shall be compelled to turn round and look for revenue from land and income taxes. I have no desire to hasten unduly the advent of fresh taxation in Western Australia; therefore I wish to economise, to teach the State to live on an ordinary revenue. I have said that the duty of £1 per ton on potatoes and onions is not much good to the farmer. Local potatoes always command a better price than the imported article, because people naturally prefer the fresher vegetable. If things are fairly even in our State and in the Eastern States, imported potatoes cannot well compete with ours. The potato is a most perishable commodity, very unlike wheat. Distance matters little in respect of wheat. While the freight on potatoes is not heavy, still tremendous loss is caused by handling. I am told that the duty of £1 per ton on potatoes prevents the despatch of speculative consignments to our markets. I am informed that if there were no duty on potatoes, Eastern States farmers would load up our jetties with their potatoes; but I have also learned

from a member of this House something I did not know before, that importers are permitted to pick consignments of potatoes over, and pay duty only on those potatoes which are good instead of on the whole quantity of consignments. That reduces the strength of the argument materially, because it appears that the duty may frequently be 2s. 6d. instead of £1 per ton.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: But the remainder, on which duty is not paid, does not come into competition.

MR. MORAN: I am addressing myself to the argument that the duty prevents speculative consignments. It is claimed that a man will have to fork up £1 per ton on a speculative consignment; whereas it appears that he has to pay £1 per ton, not on the quantity he consigns, but merely on the quantity he brings into local competition. Will the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) tell me that the statement of the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss), that imported potatoes were bringing £10 a ton here whilst they stood at £5 in the East, is not correct? How does that come about? How much of the increase of 100 per cent. would be represented by the £1 of duty?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The difference is largely accounted for by the deterioration you have mentioned.

MR. MORAN: It must be accounted for by something. A duty of £1 per ton, I say, is not a big factor in the increase, at all events. I am pointing out that I am willing to give way in respect of the £1 per ton duty on potatoes and onions, though personally I do not think the farmers greatly benefit by that duty.

MR. HAYWARD: The duty is only 16s. per ton.

MR. MORAN: That makes the argument all the worse or all the better, as one likes to look at it. Last week the farmers could not do without a protective duty of £1 per ton: now it appears they are doing with a protective duty of 16s. per ton.

MR. DIAMOND: Not now; from this day week onward.

MR. MORAN: I say that the bad system of carting produce to market means many more shillings detriment to the farmer and to the consumer than the respective benefit or detriment of the

duty of 16s. per ton. I am, however, willing to give way on that point, and also as to the duty on onions. I propose, therefore, to allow whatever protection there may be on flour, potatoes, and onions. Having struck out those items, I propose to add to the list fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, honey, and jams, which articles bring in a revenue, according to our Treasurer, of £10,000. I hope the House will not flout the cry of the people of Western Australia. However much or little truth there may be in it, still a deep feeling exists on the goldfields that they are unduly taxed on their food supplies at the present time, particularly in view of the recent increase in railway freights. From the hand that should feed them the goldfields get nothing but smack after smack; from the free-trade Government they get protection; from the economical Government they get increase of railway freights. I say this House can, with justice to itself, with justice to the people of Western Australia, to the people of the towns of Perth and Fremantle, and the people everywhere else, strike off the duties on those items, whatever they may amount to. Let us do our utmost; anyhow, let us do what in us lies to reduce the duty on foodstuffs from the Eastern States. That can be done without hurting the Treasurer: rather, it will do him good, since it will take away surplus revenue. I say it is a proper thing to show a spirit of compromise. Let us listen to the request of the people where it can be shown that to do so will hurt nobody. Let us remember that the goldfields have always shown a spirit of compromise towards the coast. I have never found the goldfields unwilling to encourage the farmer legitimately. My return time after time for a goldfields constituency as a strong supporter of the farming interest goes to show that the goldfields, when approached by men who are able to explain the case, are willing to act fairly by the farmer. I say now we should be just as fair. We should not be fetish worshippers. We should not cling to the fetish that because we have a duty it must be protective.

MR. DAGLISH: What do they say at Donnybrook?

MR. MORAN: They always say fair, at Donnybrook. I just want to say a

word on what appeared to be the great argument of the member for Beverley, that because the goldfields people appeared to be a thirsty people we should tax their food. That is an unfair argument to take up. I put this to the farmers of Western Australia, and their representatives: supposing the goldfields people in Western Australia were struck with a teetotal wave to-morrow and drank no more, supposing the doctrine brought forward by the member for Beverley took root deeply and the gospel of temperance spread there, what would happen to the revenue of Western Australia? How would the Government make up the loss? The farmers again would be hit. If the goldfields did not take a little judicious nutriment in the way of stimulant as they do occasionally, the farmer in Western Australia would have a very hard time; and so would we all. It is from this British habit of doing as the leader of the Opposition said there was biblical authority for doing, "taking a little wine for the stomach's sake," that we derive so much revenue. It does not do to be always talking, as the member for Beverley talked, of how much the people on the goldfields drink. There is, perhaps, reason why the goldfields people should drink more than some do in other parts of the State. They are all adults on the goldfields, and they are not hide-bound skinflints like some people are: they work hard and drink moderately. Let us admit this, that the miner pays a great deal more to the revenue than the farmer does. Let us be fair all round. I do not like this line of argument, to be continually bringing up the foibles and vices of the people on the goldfields, pointing them out as drinkers and gamblers. The miner spends and drinks generously. He works from morn till night. He is paying taxes from the time he wakes up to the time he goes to bed, and again from the time he goes to bed at night till he wakes up in the morning; he is paying taxes all the time, while the farmer is not. The blanket he sleeps in, the clothes he wears, the billy he boils his tea in, the pick he uses, the waterbag—everything, his tinned dog at the present time, he is paying duty on. His tinned milk, his onions, his potatoes, his loaf of bread, he is paying duty on them all, and the farmer is not paying

duty on as much. Let us be generous. Our gold miner pays more to the revenue of this country than other people do. I might say the same of the man mining in other parts of the country. I might also say the same of the man cutting timber in the country. The wage-earner is the big taxpayer in Western Australia at the present time. Do not let us talk too much of the virtues of the farmer and the vices of the gold miner. It does no good. The gold miner might say to the farmer, "You have a good home to sleep in at night; you have not the heat, and the dust and the dirt, and the discomfort of the goldfields. You have had a fairly good time in Western Australia. You have had good water to drink, and to wash in; you do not have to pay for the water which you use. You do not pay as much to the revenue as I do—because you have a spree about once a year, and some of you never at all." Do not forget that the goldfields man is entitled to turn round and say that to the farmer. But that is not my style of argument, nor has it ever been. We are all dependent on each other in this country. The farmer is dependent on the gold miner for his market, and the farmer has always been ready and generous to support the spending of money on the goldfields. It was the policy of Sir John Forrest to bring these people together. He always preached the gospel of "live and let live," and if Sir John Forrest had been Premier to-day, sitting where the Premier is sitting now, and if he had found how things had gone after federation, and how much we were getting from the Federal Tariff, Sir John Forrest would have made the compromise I suggest, or he would have suggested something better. I am asking the goldfields representatives to leave the duty on flour for the East, and the duty on potatoes for the South. That is all that has been asked for by the member for Northam. That is all that is asked for by the member for the Williams. That is all they have asked for, and I am prepared to vote for it. All that remains to argue about is the statement of the Treasurer of Western Australia, that he wants the money collected from these food duties, or Western Australia will perish. Western Australia will not perish. We are justified in saying that, according to the Treasurer's own

words to-night. He said that we were collecting at the rate of four million pounds a year. That is an answer to his own statement. We are getting more money than was expected from the Federal Tariff; let us give away what will not hurt anybody. I ask members not to pass this matter over lightly, not to vote in a blind way. Talk about the compact—there is no sense in keeping a compact if both parties benefit by breaking it. The compact was for protection. No one advocates it for revenue purposes; therefore there only remains the statement of the Treasurer that it is usual for Treasurers to cling to all they can get. That is a new doctrine for me, and I refuse to believe it. I put this matter before the House, and I will conclude by moving a formal amendment to the motion of the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) :

That the words "potatoes, onions, and flour" be struck out, and that the words "fruits and vegetables, honey, jams, meats, and fish" be inserted in lieu.

I put this as a guide more than anything else. I give the items because other little things might be tacked on. This will mean a reduction of £10,000. The items are given in the schedule submitted by the Treasurer to-night—fruit and vegetables, £3,500; meats, fish, etc., £3,870—they are a particular line under the customs tariff, I expect—honey, jams, etc., £3,556; amounting in all to £10,926.

THE PREMIER: There are the imports from the places outside the Commonwealth.

MR. MORAN: This is a clearly prepared statement, and the Treasurer gives the special tariff rates.

THE PREMIER: That is the duty collected on these items from the Eastern States. In addition to that there are importations from New Zealand. Directly we wipe off the duty on the inter-State products, we at once absorb all the market, and stop the importations from New Zealand; therefore we lose all that duty.

MR. MORAN: I do not care if the amount be £20,000, instead of £10,000. The Government can afford to lose it. I am not wedded to this particular amendment. I am willing for anyone to include tinned milk if he likes. I have picked out the articles which go into the

camp of the workers in every part of the country; I give an equivalent in what I propose to leave on for the farmer. I shall be willing to put on other items to reduce the cost of living in Western Australia. I do not care if it means a loss of £100,000. I am prepared to sacrifice £100,000 of the revenue of Western Australia in view of the magnificent revenue we have to-day. I ask the House to vote in support of the compromise, to view it as business men, and to do the best they can under the circumstances, independent of the question of free-trade or protection. Let us do the best we can so that the people may live here, that those who are coming here in large numbers can get their daily bread as cheaply as possible.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL: I second the amendment.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): The House has listened to the member for West Perth. Now I would like the House to listen to the hon. member for East Coolgardie. In the 1900 *Hansard*, page 488, there is this—

MR. YELVERTON: Who is the gentleman you are referring to?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The gentleman's name is Moran, the same individual. The House has just freshly listened to the speech of the hon. member for West Perth. I read now under "Mr. Moran (East Coolgardie)," as follows:—

I hope good faith will be kept by this dying Parliament, and no attempt made to interfere with the privileges that remain under the federal sliding scale. Nothing could be more absurd than for this House to attempt to interfere with the tariff when we are within, we may say, a few days of a general election and shall have to decide under a new constitution, an increased representation, and the most liberal electoral laws in Australia, what shall be our policy under the sliding scale for the next five years. Nothing could be more foolish, or more calculated to bring discredit on us as a Parliament, than to interfere with the tariff in the present crucial state of the colony's finances.

* * * I was pleased a day or two ago to see in the leading federal organ of Western Australia—a paper most hostile at the present time to the producers of Western Australia, and to any protection that may be given to them—an expression of opinion that Parliament should allow the duties to remain under the sliding scale for five years. The paper I refer to is the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, with which I do not always see eye to eye in public affairs. That newspaper has not been in the habit of saying sweet things about me, nor have I been

in the habit of saying sweet things about it; but on this occasion I noticed, with a great deal of pleasure and a certain amount of satisfaction, that the *Kalgoorlie Miner* at least is not going to break the pledge given by the federalists of this colony to the producers, a pledge by which many thousands were led to vote for federation, who otherwise would not have done so. That pledge was to adhere to the scheme laid down, with, I hope, such alterations as will make the steps of the ladder even, and make the duties accommodate themselves to the fall of one-fifth every year. I hope that nobody, for the sake of gaining a little popularity, will get up in the House and propose to interfere with the duties, because, in the first place, to do so would be a breach of faith on the part of the country as a whole, if not on the part of the individual member. * * *

And for the sake of removing a cry, for the sake of doing away with the name of a duty which is so small that it only realised £11,000 last year, to remove this agitation and bring quiet to the minds of the people, the reduction of this one duty which we could with some decency interfere with has been proposed in this Bill. This reduction was promised before federation, and therefore there is no breach of faith; but to go on farther interfering with the tariff would be unjust, injudicious, inopportune, and a breach of faith at the present time. Who knows but that at the next general election a Parliament may be returned which will take advantage of the powers under the sliding scale, and increase the duties so as to give Western Australia protection for five years? So far as I am concerned, if I have the honour of being re-elected I shall go for increasing some of the duties. However popular or unpopular the opinion may be, I maintain that for the next three years at least, we should do our best to give the staple products of Western Australia a little more protection than they have at present, and that the protection should be arranged in such a way as to let the duties fall by easy gradations, so that after three years they may be abolished altogether. Not only do I oppose interfering with the duties at present, but when the time comes I shall be prepared to listen to any proposal to increase the duties on some of the staples of Western Australia.

That is from the hon. member who has just spoken.

MR. MORAN: Very wonderful! What a mare's nest you have got, to be sure! Perhaps you will hatch some chickens out of it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I desire to quote this change of opinion in the hon. member because I think it is possible some other members may also desire to change their opinions on this subject; and after such a great authority as we have heard to-night, it may be that some

other members may desire to follow his example. Speaking now of the pledge which was undoubtedly given during the federation campaign, a good deal has been said in this House and out of it which was inconsequential. We have had, for instance, figures quoted by the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) to the effect that only so many people in the agricultural districts voted for federation. But I contend that the greatest federal champion in this State, during the federal movement, was Sir John Forrest, the man whom the people in this State were prepared to listen to, almost before any other man in it; and the one thing in regard to federation constantly iterated and reiterated by the right hon. gentleman was that we were to get for five years certain protection over our farming industries, and that if we did not take this five-years protection and did not go into the federal union, it was fairly certain that the Parliament of this State would abolish those duties long before the five years elapsed. He pleaded with the farmers in the country, and with the people in towns on the goldfields, to go into federation in consequence of the sliding scale being an existent reality. It will be remembered that when I spoke in this House last year, from the Treasury bench, I asked members to wait at any rate for another year, so that we should see the operation of the new tariff. Hon. members will recollect that when the Budget speech was delivered in this House last year no one knew what the Commonwealth Tariff was nor what it was likely to be. I had always asserted that the Federal Tariff would bring in more revenue than would be derived from the State Tariff as it then existed in Western Australia, and that the supposed £300,000 of loss in the first year under the sliding scale would not take place. I desired that there should be no change made in the first year, in order that we might test the operation of the Federal Tariff. Hon. members know that when the new tariff was brought in, many things that yielded a large revenue in this State were included in the tariff—for instance tea, sugar, kerosene, and a very heavy duty on mining machinery; and as soon as that tariff was named, I could see that we were going to collect in this State a

much larger sum than was anticipated, and it was in view of this fact that the Leake Government brought in the revised Estimates for £114,000 more than was originally estimated, because we felt that the tariff was going to yield a great deal more than was expected. I would like hon. members to take into consideration the fact that only now have we the Commonwealth Tariff, that it is only now a fixture. It has been in a condition of flux all the year, no one knowing what the basis was to be. For the present month of September it is possible we have something approaching to what the revenue really is in this State under the Commonwealth Tariff. I notice to-day that the customs returns for the month are £130,000—nearly a million and a half of money per annum through the customs! It will clearly be seen that the customs revenue under the Commonwealth Tariff is going to be much larger than we ever anticipated, so far as this State is concerned. I always predicted that it would be larger than was expected; but even the most sanguine could scarcely expect that this revenue would realise so large a sum from the Federal Tariff. A good deal has been said as to excessive taxation in this State. The amount of revenue depends to a material extent on the increase of population in this State. In the year 1896 we had 45,000 people coming to the State, and the effect of that immense increase was that the average revenue per head amounted to £8 2s. 6d. from customs. But when in 1889 the ebb of population went away, as it did to some extent in 1900, under the same tariff the taxation per head fell to £5 3s. 6d. in 1899, and to £5 11s. 6d. in 1900. When the tide of population again turned in 1901, the average rate of taxation per head rose a little to £5 17s.; but during the past year we have had the Federal Tariff in operation, and therefore we have had the dual tariff. We have had the sliding scale in operation; and we have been told again and again in this House, in the Press, and all over the country, that this population has been so immensely taxed that the burden was crushing the people. What was the burden of taxation? Under the sliding scale and under the Commonwealth tariff of the past year, the figures I have here up to June, 1902, show that the amount was £6 15s. 4d.

per head under the dual tariff. These are not theories, but simple facts.

MR. MORAN : That is double any of the other Australian States.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : That may be so. But if that amount is crushing taxation under both tariffs, what was the crushing taxation of the Forrest Government at £8 2s. 6d. per head in 1896 ? That is the question to be looked at. This is not theorising: these are the actual figures. I ask hon. members to look at the figures in detail. It was the boast of Sir John Forrest that while he had raised and expended a large amount of revenue, he did so without adding a shilling to the taxation of the people. Well, we find that the taxation from customs alone in 1896 was £8 2s. 6d. per head, in 1897 it was £6 18s. 5d., in 1898 it was £5 9s. 6d., in 1899 it was £5 3s. 6d., in 1900 it was £5 11s. 6d., in 1901 it was £5 17s., and in 1902 (the financial year) it was £6 15s. 4d., on a population which had increased to 200,000, nearly 20,000 being added in the last year. So, hon. members will see that with the dual tariff, with the sliding scale and the excessive Commonwealth Tariff, the rate of taxation per head in this State has practically fallen. Passing to another point, the actual increase of revenue from customs and excise for the year ending June, 1901, amounted to £232,315. That is the actual increase, the increase of the Federal Tariff *plus* the State Tariff or sliding scale. For the purpose of the present argument, I am prepared to admit that the whole of the £232,305 comes from the dual tariff or from the sliding scale. Taking that as a point, we have to deal first with the effects of the reduction of 2s. a gallon on spirits. The estimate of that reduction given to-day by the Commissioner of Customs is £35,000.

MR. MORAN : What was your estimate last year ?

MR. ILLINGWORTH : My estimate was about £60,000.

MR. MORAN : You made a mistake of only 100 per cent. in that little item.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : I am prepared to maintain the same position to-day.

MR. MORAN : A school-boy would not have made that mistake.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : It is a matter of estimate. I still say that the revenue

from spirits will be reduced by £60,000, notwithstanding the estimate of the Commissioner of Customs. However, that is not what we are dealing with just now. I shall take the estimate of the Commissioner of Customs, which is something over £35,000. Reducing £232,305 by that amount, which we shall lose anyhow by the reduction of the duty on spirits—indeed we shall lose more even according to the Commissioner of Customs—there remains an amount of £200,000, which we may say for the purposes of the present argument comes from the operation of the dual tariff. Of course, hon. members know that the whole of that amount does not come from the operation of the dual tariff. Now, what is the proposal before the House ? The proposal is to remove the duty on flour, hams, butter, bacon, cheese, onions, potatoes, and eggs.

MR. MORAN : That is not the proposal before the House now.

MR. YELVERTON : That was the original proposal.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : The proposal before the House is to remove the duty on flour, hams, bacon, butter, cheese, onions, potatoes, and eggs, involving a reduction of revenue of £130,000 in all. The member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) proposes to amend the motion by removing flour, which represents £15,000; onions, representing £2,000; and potatoes, representing £8,000, or a total of £25,000; but he proposes to add other items representing £10,000 of revenue. I venture to say that possibly if other items are added —

MR. MORAN : You are wrong.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : The figures come out to pretty much the same thing. The reduction is, perhaps, something like £120,000.

MR. MORAN : You are making a mistake. The proposals of the mover do not involve a reduction of £130,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : I say they do.

MR. MORAN : Have you the estimates ? Please read them out.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : Flour, £15,000; ham and bacon, £35,000; butter, £40,000; cheese, £8,000; onions, £2,000 —

MR. MORAN : How much are you allowing on the ham and bacon ? The list given me by the Treasurer says —

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I have not seen that list.

MR. MORAN: That is the latest authority.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I have not seen it, however.

MR. MORAN: The Treasurer states the duty on bacon at £13,000. I presume hams are included with bacon.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Taking the figures quoted by the hon. member, we come back to £100,000.

MR. MORAN: That's more like it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member proposes then to take off £100,000. I wish to point out, however, that if we deal with a balance of £200,000, having taken off the spirits first of all, and debit the whole of the balance to the unfortunate dual tariff, we have to remember that £40,000 comes off immediately, for we must reduce duties by one-fifth. Thus the amount of revenue produced by the dual tariff—

MR. MORAN: Will you allow me to state that I do not think the amount is even £100,000?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I do not pretend to be accurate; I am merely arguing.

MR. MORAN: If you don't claim to be accurate, that is all right.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am allowing a sufficient margin when I give the House the whole of the difference between the revenue before the dual tariff and the Federal Tariff came into operation and the revenue since. I have allowed the whole of the excess for the year, debiting it all to the sliding scale. This allowance, we know, is excessive. Now, however, we have to deal with the simple fact that out of the £232,305 of extra moneys collected during the year under two tariffs, we must give up £35,000 or more in any case. For the sake of even figures, we now come to £200,000, one-fifth reduction of which brings us back to £160,000. Now, if we take £20,000 off the amount of £100,000 which the hon. member admits, we come back to £80,000; and thus we see that the proposal practically is to remit £80,000 out of £160,000 of taxation. By the kindness of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham) I have the figures relative to hams and bacon. The total duty on hams and bacon amounts to £24,000.

MR. MORAN: That brings the amount back to about £100,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We come back, then, to £100,000. One-fifth of that amount must go anyhow, whether we like it or not. The question before the House, thus, is to reduce the revenue of the State by £80,000. Now, I say that this State through its Premier, and through all its leading men on the platform of federation, promised not the goldfields and not the farmers, but every portion of this country, not to interfere with the sliding scale. I took that stand in my district, and I was cheered when I pointed out the effect of the pledge involved in standing by the sliding scale. On my last election I fought a free-trader—I am glad to be with the member for West Perth as a protectionist—I fought a battle with a gentleman who was for abolishing the sliding scale. I told my electors that I was not prepared to break the pledge entered into by leaders on both sides with regard to the sliding scale. The pledge was not given merely to those who voted in the agricultural districts, but to the people of Perth and Fremantle and to the goldfields residents. I venture to say that the vote on the goldfields in favour of federation was very largely influenced by the consideration which the goldfields had for the agricultural people. I am glad to be with the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran). In every election speech I have delivered I have made the agricultural interest an important item.

MR. MORAN: But you have voted against the agricultural interest every time.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member is not correct. I have never voted against the agricultural interest yet.

MR. MORAN: You voted against State Banks and everything else.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No. The hon. member will always find me in the same division lobby with himself on questions affecting the agricultural interests. I have pointed out to my constituents when seeking election, and also at other times, that the State must give help to the agricultural industry. I am glad to be with the hon. member in that respect. We are now asked to lose £80,000. I should like the Treasurer, who is not here, and Ministers generally to

recognise the simple fact that the whole proposal involves a question of merely £80,000. If the question be simply one of money, there is no difficulty about it. The Treasury is overflowing, and can afford to lose £80,000. Therefore I sweep aside altogether the plea that it is necessary to hold these duties for the sake of revenue. We come back, then, to this question: is it advisable to remit £80,000 of taxation. Whether we carry this motion or not, the reduction of the duties will go on from year to year. Of course, if we take all the duties off now, well and good; but I ask hon. members, do they suppose that the reduction proposed will benefit anybody except the direct traders? I know a little about business, and I say that the reduction proposed will not cheapen the cost of living, will not advantage the consumer one iota.

MR. MORAN: Why not? Why these all-round-my-hat statements? The thing is not true simply because you say it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We have sometimes to accept the authority of the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) on matters which he understands, and we are always glad to do so. Is it unreasonable that after 40 years' experience in commerce I should claim to know the operation of tariffs? If it is unreasonable, then let hon. members discard what I say. However, I have had a great deal to do with tariffs, and with constantly changing tariffs. I was in Victoria before the tariff movement began, and I went through all the tariff changes which occurred; and I say I know that, when it comes to the point of retailing, the consumer never gets the benefit of such reductions as proposed by this motion.

MR. MORAN: Duties do not increase the cost of living, according to you.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Any duty put on an article materially increases the retail cost of the article. It will, perhaps, come as a surprise to the hon. member to learn that a duty of 10 per cent. put on will probably, by the time the article reaches the consumer, amount to 30 per cent. But to take off a duty of 20 per cent. does not mean that the consumer will be benefited at all.

MR. MORAN: Did you not fight for the removal of the duty on meat many a time in this House?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I did.

MR. MORAN: Why?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Because I wanted to cheapen meat.

THE SPEAKER: Do not interrupt a member when speaking.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: When, however, a proposal was made by the Government to divide the amount of the duty, I refused the remission of the half duty, because, as I told the House then, the reduction of the duty by one-half would never affect the consumer. I say now that we must take off one-fifth of the duties, and that if we take off the other four-fifths the reduction on the items enumerated in the motion will not reach the consumer. What will happen, then? The proposed remission of £80,000 will go into the pockets of the leading merchants and leading traders of this State. Well, the money will be acceptable, no doubt; but the State has a great deal to do with its revenue. Two other matters I wish to put before the House, and then I shall have done. One is that we have made an honest pledge to the people of this State, and I say that we ought to keep that pledge. I say that when we make a pledge, even though we find that to keep it involves us in loss, we still must stand by our promise. Whether the people will be benefited by the removal of the duties does not enter into the question at all. A distinct pledge was given by every man who went on to the federal platform, beginning with Sir John Forrest, who had more influence, perhaps, than all the rest of the federal advocates put together. A most distinct and positive pledge was given to the country. Everyone was called on to vote for federation on the ground that the interests of this country had been conserved by an arrangement of a five-years sliding scale. We went for the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill. If the question were but the loss of £80,000 of revenue, I should say, "Well, and good; the Treasurer can afford to lose that amount." If the result of removing the duties would be to reduce the cost of living in the smallest degree, either on the goldfields or anywhere else, I should be pleased to vote for the reduction. I am not afraid for the Treasurer. I was afraid a year ago, because I did not know what the tariff

was going to be. We were faced last year with difficulties, with a deficit, with many considerations which rendered it unwise for me as Treasurer to advocate the abolition of any duty; but to-day I say that if the House were satisfied that the £80,000 of taxation proposed to be remitted would reach the consumer, then, so far as the Treasurer is concerned, we might let the duties go. But behind that is the distinct pledge which was given to the country, and although members may slight it, although they may bring in their figures, as they have done, that such and such an agricultural district only voted so many for federation and so many against, I say that is not an answer at all, for the simple reason that the whole State was influenced by this proposal. Every man in every part of the State was influenced, more or less, by the promise made. We entered into federation, and the other States also did so, with the consciousness that this concession was to be made to Western Australia. Why should that be broken? The bulk of this money will pass into the hands of the direct traders. One half will be at the other end, and the other half will be here. So that when you came to deal with the question you would have to divide among 200,000 the £40,000, even if you could reach the whole; but from my knowledge of trade, I say—and members will take it for what it is worth—that a reduction of that kind will not reach the consumer; while, on the other hand, I know that the addition of £20,000 would reach the consumer to the extent of about £60,000; consequently an increase of a duty is one thing and a decrease quite another. If members choose to consider it they can consult men who have had years of experience in this State, and I think they will get the same answer. The question to me is not one of money. The reason why I shall vote against the proposal is not because I am not anxious to help the consumers. I would vote twice the money if I thought it would reach the consumers; but what influences me is that the country, through its leading men, from Sir John Forrest downwards, pledged the whole of this community to that sliding scale, and I am not going to break that pledge. I have no other reason. I have made the pledge. If I made a mistake,

well and good; I am prepared to take the responsibility even before my constituents or before the country; but having made a pledge, honestly believing it to be necessary in the best interests of this State, having united with others in endeavouring to carry federation on that pledge, I could not understand myself—other members can judge for themselves—voting to do away with the sliding scale which was the basis pledge upon which federation rested, and therefore I must vote against the amendment and against the motion.

MR. H. J. YELVERTON (Sussex): I shall support neither the motion nor the amendment. I am one of those who, like the last speaker, believe in keeping the pledge we made to adhere to the sliding scale. It is all very well for the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) to get up and use specious arguments as he has done, but I trust the members of this House will not be misled by them. It ill becomes that hon. member who has so long posed as a supporter of the agriculturist, to come here in the days when he should have learnt better and completely reverse the position he then took up. I congratulate the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) upon the able and logical speech he has just made, in which he advanced arguments which, to my mind, completely upset those held forth by the member for West Perth. The member for West Perth referred to the men on the goldfields as moderate drinkers and hard workers. I do not allege that they are not so, but I say for the agriculturists of this State that they certainly deserve those epithets. The member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) said, when moving this motion, that there was no increase in the production of the various articles he referred to amongst the agriculturists of this State. I assert that the statistical returns from the various departments here completely disprove the statements made by him in that respect. In advocating an immediate and a complete abolition of the food duties the hon. member, to my mind, is very unfair indeed. He is seeking to benefit the workers of this State at the entire and absolute expense of the agriculturists. The agriculturists, to my mind, are a section who are more hard-working, ill-paid and deserving than any

other section of the community. The member for Kanowna stated that there was no profit attached to the production of these articles throughout the State. I will admit that the profit was little and not at all commensurate with the labour attached to producing it. The hon. member's farther statements, to the effect that the farmers will not produce the articles in question and that there is no desire on the part of the farmers for the retention of the duties, that they do not work long hours, that they are a highly prosperous and an enviable class of the community, are to my mind, and I think to the mind of every fair-minded man in the House, absolutely absurd. Those statements are unjust, untrue, and contrary to fact. It has been stated by some members that the articles referred to are not perishable. I would like to know, if butter, cheese, eggs, hams, potatoes, and onions are not perishable articles, what are perishable articles? I venture to say that any man who has dealt in and handled those articles, knows they are absolutely perishable. A question touched upon has been this, that we require a permanent increase of population in this country. I say that from no section of the community can you expect a more permanent population to be obtained than from these very agriculturists. I do not think any one will attempt to deny that the cost of living in this State has increased somewhat recently; but let us saddle the right horse for that increase. Let us put it upon those gentlemen who voted for federation. The increase in the cost of living in this State is entirely due to our having entered into the federal union and the additional duties now cast upon us by reason thereof. Let the federalists admit, as they should, that these increases have occurred to a very great extent since the Federal Tariff came into operation. Their argument at the time as to the reduction in the cost of living was erroneous. It was argued then that there would be a reduction in the cost of living when federation came into operation, but what do we find? There has been an increase in the cost of living.

THE PREMIER: And in the cost of timber too.

MR. YELVERTON: Certainly. I should like these hon. gentlemen who voted for federation to also admit that

the wages and the benefits to the workers in this State have increased since the introduction of federation and since these extra food duties have fallen upon us. During the course of his speech the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) stated that the increased cost of living per head of the population was 8s. 7d.; that the increased cost per family per week was 9³/₄d. I have gone into these figures advanced by the hon. member for the Williams, and I find they are correct, approximately at any rate. We will take the three great wage-earning sections of the community. I refer first to the miners and those who are in kindred callings in this State; the second section to which I refer consist of the railway employees and the various branches thereunder; and the third section consists of the sawmill employees and the timber getters. In every case, with regard to those great sections of the wage-earners of the community, they have had an increase of wages and an increase of benefits generally since the operation of the Federal Tariff began to be felt.

MR. HASTIE: The miners have not.

MR. YELVERTON: The miners under a recent decision of the Arbitration Court have undoubtedly received benefits.

MR. HASTIE: They have not.

MR. YELVERTON: They have; and their advocates have expressed themselves as satisfied with the decision of that court.

MR. TAYLOR: Some of them have lost 1s. 8d. a day.

MR. YELVERTON: And some of them have gained double that amount.

MR. HASTIE: Very few.

MR. YELVERTON: I assert that those men are satisfied with the decision of that court, and I have never yet known men of the character of those who were advocating a measure of that kind who were satisfied unless they got an increase. I say that the decision of that court has been of benefit to the miners. Then with regard to the railway employees, have we not very recently, within the last 12 months, found that a number of those employees have had their wages increased? and have we not also found that they have had the eight hours system granted to them, whereas formerly they were work

ing longer hours? I argue that those are benefits the workers have derived, and I do not for one moment say they are not entitled to them.

THE PREMIER: Have all these benefits arisen since federation?

MR. YELVERTON: They have.

THE PREMIER: Then why complain that federation did not carry it out?

MR. YELVERTON: Let me finish my argument. Then with regard to sawmill employees and timber getters, within the last month they have been granted a reduction in the number of working hours. Instead of working 52 hours, they are working 50½ hours. I for one do not begrudge that concession to the timber workers; and I assert, as far as my own men are concerned, they fully justify the granting of these shorter hours to them, and I am glad to say I am getting as much out of them as before, if not more than with the longer hours.

MR. MORAN: Take another hour off.

MR. YELVERTON: No; I do not say that. But I say they have got the extra which they were entitled to. I have figured it out that whereas these food duties amount to 9½d. per family per week, the increased pay for the lowest wage man in the timber industry is 1s. 5d.; double the amount his family is going to cost him extra. In the face of this I say it is absurd to argue that the workers are injured to any very great extent by these food duties. Then with regard to the effect it will have upon our financial position: as was stated by the Treasurer, the loss of £70,000 will occur from the abolition of the food duties, and there will be a farther loss of £80,000 to £100,000 from the reduction in the sliding scale. I say, in view of the obligations which the Treasurer pointed out to us, which will amount to about £120,000 per year for interest and sinking fund alone, it would be absurd to cut off the amount we should lose by the abolition of these food duties. Members sneer at the fact of a promise that was made to adhere to the sliding scale. I say that if no promise was made, there was certainly an understanding that we should adhere to the sliding scale, which induced many to vote for federation who otherwise would not have done so. I say farther that it would be a distinct breach of faith on our part now to abandon

the sliding scale. I cannot conclude without referring to the position taken up by the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie). I must say it seems peculiar to me that, while the hon. member asserts, as he does assert, that this matter is of such paramount importance to those whom he represents, he should in this House have supported the Leake Government, who were opposed to the abolition of the sliding scale, and should continue to support the present Government, who are still adhering to the sliding scale.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There are other things besides the sliding scale.

MR. YELVERTON: As I have already said, I shall oppose both the motion and the amendment.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): I will at once say that during the general elections, on the hustings I pledged myself to my constituents that I would not, so far as my vote was concerned, allow any interference with the food duties, to which I consider we are all committed. The sliding scale was a distinct pledge made to the people of this State. I for one told my constituents that I was not prepared to truckle in any way with that pledge; and I know that my promise met with the commendation of my electors, nor have I seen any reason for saying that they are now of a different opinion. But irrespective of my pledge, I should like to say a few words from a practical point of view. Over 30 years ago I was a member of the Tariff Revision Association of South Australia, an association formed for the imposition of duties for purely protective purposes. I was not only a member of that association, but at a rather early age was on the committee, and was one of the secretaries. At that time South Australia was importing virtually the whole of her potatoes, hams, bacon, cheese, and some other lines from Victoria; while, on the other hand, Victoria was taking practically the whole of her flour and wheat from South Australia. Probably the member for the Murray (Mr. Atkins) will recollect the time of which I speak. It was proposed in South Australia to put duties on those imports, so that we should stimulate local production, and thus do some good to our colony. The usual outcry was heard—a very loud outcry—that we would increase the cost of living to con-

sumers; and for some considerable time we could not make any headway. But at last Victoria, incensed at the fact that she was not growing her own breadstuffs, put £1 a ton duty on flour; and through this action on the part of Victoria, my association in South Australia got the ear of the people, and eventually induced Parliament to put duties on the imports I have mentioned. Now there was an equal outcry in Victoria from the miners. Ballarat especially was, if I remember rightly, very loud in its condemnation of the Victorian Parliament for putting on those duties so as to increase the cost of living to the miners. I wish this House to mark the result. Within a very short time Victoria became an exporter of flour. I mention these facts for the special behoof of the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran), who this evening said he did not believe in protecting because we had nothing to protect. I wish the hon. member to understand that if his policy were persisted in, there would be nothing to protect, for the simple reason that if we do not give the necessary encouragement to start an industry, the industry cannot possibly be started.

MEMBER: For how many years do you think it fair to protect?

MR. DIAMOND: Until protection is not required. I think my assurance will be sufficient to show that what I say is true. I am not prepared to take away from our farmers the chance they have of building up their great industry. At the same time, I yield to none in my sympathy with the mining industry of this State. It has been our backbone and our mainstay; but after our mining industry begins to wane, what will be our backbone and mainstay? What to-day is Ballarat, the great producing centre of 30 years ago, where at the time of which I speak people said "If you put these duties on our wheat and flour and increase the cost of living, you will damage the mining industry." Ballarat to-day, instead of being the greatest mining centre, is one of the greatest farming centres in Australia.

MR. HASTIE: It is still a mining centre.

MR. DIAMOND: I say it is bad policy to stir up ill-feeling between the miners and the farmers. Their interests ought to be and must be the same. And

in comparing the two industries, it will be sufficient for me to speak in favour of the farmers' claims, without disparaging the claims of the other industry, and to say that while the farmer can take nothing out of the ground without putting something in, all the time increasing the value of the national asset, the miner and the timber-cutter are taking away the national asset.

MR. PURKISS: Are they not bringing capital into the country?

MR. DIAMOND: I was careful to say that I was not making this remark with a view to disparaging the other industry, but simply to show the value to this or any other State of its natural industries. Much has been said about the heavy rate per head of the food duties in this State; and the whole tone of the remarks of the advocates for the abolition of those duties means that the duties increase the cost of living because they are heavy. Now none of these advocates has taken the trouble to dissect those duties. We are told our duties average £6 10s. per head, and are the highest in Australia. Those who say so entirely lose sight of the fact that an enormous sum out of the total duties paid represents duties on mining machinery, tramcar material, and goods of that sort, which duties do not affect the cost of living one penny. We cannot divide up the amount of duties paid on mining machinery, tramcar materials, etc., when we wish to find how much the people are paying on food duties.

MR. PURKISS: But the figures for the other States include the machinery of which you speak.

MR. DIAMOND: The importation of mining machinery to the other States is a mere fleabite compared with that to this State. In one day I paid on behalf of one company £2,363 in duties. The comparisons have not been fairly made by the food duty abolitionists. Some allowance should be made for the fact I have stated, and for the extremely high percentage of male adults in this State.

MR. TAYLOR: The gold-mining industry has to pay heavy taxation.

MR. DIAMOND: While the consumption of spirits, and of narcotics such as tobacco, is very great per head, proper allowance must be made for the fact that

we have in this State so many more of the people who consume those products—so many more male adults than other States possess in proportion to population. And no comparison of the rate per head of duties in this State can possibly be fair until we allow for our high percentage of male adults. I am not an advocate of high duties; and I think the Commonwealth Parliament will probably reduce some of the duties in the future. But so far, the Commonwealth Tariff seems to be fair; and in our present position, and looking at the position of other States, I consider it will be simply madness for us to reduce our revenue, in any case at the present juncture. In reference to the effect these protective duties had on South Australia, I shall mention one interesting fact. The district of Mount Gambier, which is now and has for some years past been one of the greatest potato-growing districts in Australia, was practically deserted when the Tariff Reduction Association of South Australia succeeded in getting the duties imposed. There was an exodus of farmers from that part of South Australia to Victoria; and they actually formed practically a new settlement in the western district of that colony, and virtually created a township. What was the result? Within a few years after the imposition of duties on potatoes and the other natural products, the whole of the land deserted by those farmers was occupied, mostly by the people who had gone away and had since come back and taken up their land; and so great was the influx that the price of land in the volcanic country around Mount Gambier was as high as £60 per acre. I do not regard that as desirable, but mention it in illustration. The price of potatoes in the western district of Victoria, in which Warrnambool is situated, and in Mount Gambier across the border in South Australia, is frequently so low that it does not pay to grow the crop; and to put this right a large distillery was started at Mount Gambier about 20 years ago, and that takes up the surplus potato crop when the product is low in price. I do not approve of spirits being made out of potatoes: I am only stating facts. [MR. HASTIE: Why not state them?] The member for West Perth referred to our revenue of four millions when he was talking about the food

duties. Anyone not knowing the facts would suppose there were four million pounds worth of food duties; but what he referred to was the entire revenue of the country, and in that he included railway revenue, which I respectfully submit, as I have before submitted and will again submit, is not State revenue at all. The word revenue is in that respect misapplied, and is simply ridiculous.

MR. PURKISS: It is so applied in the other States.

MR. DIAMOND: What the other States do does not concern practical business men, or men of sense: for if we are to begin to follow the example of the Eastern States in the past, the sooner we shut up shop the better.

MR. HASTIE: Then why ask us to follow the Victorian example?

THE PREMIER: Because some examples are good to follow.

MR. DIAMOND: One member (Mr. Moran) spoke as an Australian protectionist; then he distinctly opposed certain of the food duties in this country; so that what is good for Australia, according to the member for West Perth, is not good for Western Australia. This sort of logic will not have much effect on members of the House. In conclusion, I say, having made a pledge to my constituents and being still of the same opinion, and not seeing any reason why I should alter my opinion, I shall vote against the amendment.

On motion by MR. TAYLOR, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:30 o'clock, until the next day.