

**Legislative Council,***Thursday, 25th August, 1898.*

Return ordered: Goldfields Land Sales and Municipal Grants—Bankruptcy Act Amendment Bill; Select Committee's Report—Public Education Bill; Postponement—Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Amendment Bill, second reading—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the chair at 4.30 clock, p.m.

**PRAYERS.****RETURN: GOLDFIELDS LAND SALES AND MUNICIPAL GRANTS.**

HON. H. G. PARSONS again formally moved, "That a return be laid upon the table of the House,—1. Showing the total amount received by the Government to date as the proceeds of land sales, including town lots and residence areas, at Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, and the Boulder. 2. The amount granted to the aforesaid municipalities in respect of subsidies, including all grants to health boards, progress committees, and adjacent roads boards."

Put and passed.

**BANKRUPTCY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.****SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.**

HON. A. B. KIDSON brought up the report of the Select Committee on this Bill.

Report read, and ordered to be printed.

**PUBLIC EDUCATION BILL.****POSTPONEMENT.**

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell) moved that the consideration of the Education Bill in Committee be postponed until the next Tuesday.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: This Bill had been before hon. members quite long enough for it to be now allowed to go into Committee. There was nothing else on the Notice Paper for hon. members to do, and, had it been made known on the previous day that it was not intended to go on with this Bill, members who resided at a distance could have gone home, and thus saved a day. Hon. members should go on with the work on the Notice Paper.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: There was a very thin House.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The thin House was not the fault of members who were present. If other members were not present, it was their own fault, and there was no reason why certain hon. members should leave their private business to come here for the convenience of others who did not choose to attend the sittings on Thursdays.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The consideration of the Bill in Committee should be adjourned, because there was no measure before the House second in importance to that dealing with education.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: That was so.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: And in a thin House it was undesirable to proceed with the measure, or it might meet with the same fate as did the Jury Bill on the previous evening. Certain members present did not propose remaining in the House for a length of time this evening.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It had been thought there would be no sitting.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The night threatened to be stormy, and, as hon. members had been attending very well lately, it would be as well to postpone the consideration of the Bill until there was a larger attendance.

HON. A. P. MATHESON supported the motion for postponement, because, in his opinion, there ought to be a pretty full House when the Education Bill was discussed. He had sympathy with Mr. Whitcombe, because it was absurd for gentlemen to be sent here to represent the country, and yet not attend at the hours fixed for business.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Members travelled 300 or 400 miles to attend the sittings of the House, and then had to waste a day for the benefit of two or three members.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It was most unfortunate that members should have to remain week after week in town over Thursday. If there was a general understanding that there should be no sitting on the Thursdays, or that the sittings should last only ten minutes or half an hour, members could go away and attend to their own business. He was anxious to go to the goldfields, but the Thursday sittings made the time at his disposal too short to pay such a visit at a week-end.

He was prepared to sacrifice his time and attend to his duties as a member of this House, if other members attended to their duty; but he strongly protested against the way in which business was shirked, sometimes at half-past six, and, as to-day, even before that time.

HON. W. T. LOTON, sympathising with members who had come from a distance, said it was a pity that, before the House adjourned on the previous night, it was not decided to adjourn until Tuesday. Owing to an unfortunate occurrence there was a count-out, or otherwise the House would have adjourned until Tuesday. He had no personal objection to going on, but it would be advisable that there should be a full House when the Education Bill was under discussion.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The trouble was that if we went on when there was not a full House, there was a liability to have the debate over again. It was understood on the previous night that there was only to be a formal sitting this evening.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: While in accord with the motion, he could not agree that the House was too thin to go on with the business, because there were fourteen members present now. If we had to wait until every member was present we would have to wait a long time. He sympathised with Mr. Whitcombe, who was most attentive to his duties.

THE PRESIDENT said he must agree with the remarks which had fallen from Mr. Whitcombe. It was unfair to country members that they did not receive notification that it was not intended to go on with the Bill this evening. He heard the adjournment discussed last evening, and he understood there was to be merely a formal sitting to-night, and he made his arrangements accordingly. As to the remark that there were only a few members present, the average number of members present at a sitting was 16 or 17, so that there was not a small House this evening.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: When this motion was made there were only seven members present. He had not purposed to adjourn this Bill before he came into the House this evening, but owing to the thinness of the House at the beginning he had thought it advisable to

adjourn this Bill. He sympathised with Mr. Whitcombe in this matter, and, like him, was always in his place, even while he had been a non-official member of the House; and he was bound to be in his place always now. It was rather rough on members to have to remain here when others went away, and some members did go away without giving notice that they were going. He was not aware, until it was too late last night, that so many members had gone away. The Education Bill was of such importance that it was necessary to have as full a House as possible to debate it in Committee.

Motion put and passed, and the Order of the Day postponed accordingly.

#### WINES, BEER, AND SPIRIT SALE AMENDMENT BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I propose shortly to move the second reading of this Bill, and to explain the effect of it, and then to adjourn the Committee stage until Thursday next. Mr. Stone has given notice of some amendments, so as to amend the Act generally. I will not deal with these amendments now. By section 17 of the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act Amendment Act 1893, no person of the female sex, except she be the widow of a publican, can hold a license. It is now sought to extend that Act to any person of the female sex who, being of the age of thirty years or more, is a widow or a married woman living apart or divorced from her husband. Following in the trend of modern legislation, there can be not the slightest objection to allowing a woman living apart from her husband to hold a license. If a woman lives apart from her husband and, under the Bill now before the House—if it becomes law—obtains a divorce, she is precluded from holding a hotel license. The anomaly of the law must be seen. If she is the wife of a publican and that publican dies, she can hold a license, but if she is the wife of a licensed publican and that licensed publican chooses to desert her, she cannot hold a license. If he dies it places her in a better position. If a licensed publican is guilty of misconduct and his wife deserts him, she cannot hold a license. Hon. members can see

the anomaly. There can be no objection whatever to such an amendment as proposed in this Bill. The measure has been dealt with in another place, and it has been passed without opposition, having received the support of the Government. Mr. Stone has given notice that, when in Committee, he intends to add other clauses to this Bill, not with reference to the object for which the Bill has been brought forward.

**THE PRESIDENT:** No notice has been given of amendments.

**HON. R. S. HAYNES:** I understand that Mr. Stone has given notice. In moving the second reading, I do not bind myself to support any amendment brought in. I advocate the passing of this Bill as it is introduced, but I do not propose to say at this stage whether I shall advocate other clauses which might be introduced. I intend to ask the House to postpone the Committee stage until Thursday next.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE:** I must say that personally I object to this Bill, in view of the transactions of this House within the last few days. The Bill is peculiarly uncalled for. Although Mr. Haynes is an advocate of the measure which has been brought in dealing with the law to extend the rights of women, it would have been better on his part if he had waited until the House had affirmed the proposal to give women further powers than they have at the present time. Until women have the powers sought to be given to them by another Bill now under the consideration of this House, it would be better to wait, so that those who are opposed to giving a woman her moral rights shall not commit themselves to extending her legal or business rights. The principle is bad. If most members are of the opinion that a woman should not have any moral rights further than she possesses now, they cannot commit themselves to any further legal rights.

**HON. R. S. HAYNES:** They can if they like.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE:** But is it inconsistent with the principle. I think it would be better to postpone this Bill until after the other Bill, to which I have referred, has been disposed of.

**HON. R. S. HAYNES:** This Bill will not be dealt with in Committee until the other Bill has been voted upon.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE:** But the principle of this Bill will be affirmed tonight. Until members are prepared to give equitable rights to women, I do not see how they can extend the provisions of the Wines, Beer and Spirit Act to women who are living under the control of their husbands or outside of that control. I do not see how this House can possibly recommend that a person divorced from her husband shall be qualified to hold a license until they have passed the Bill before them, giving divorce on reasonable grounds. I think the hon. member would do well to withdraw this Bill or postpone the decision upon it until the Divorce Bill has been dealt with.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 5.0 p.m. until the next Tuesday.

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### Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 25th August, 1898.

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Paper presented—Question: Cash Debit Balance of last financial year; further reply to question—Question: Treasury Bills, Particulars of Issue—Customs and Excise Duties: Revision of Tariff; debate on policy; items revised; Division on cattle duty; progress reported on item 14, cheese—Adjournment.

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The SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.