

tax articles that are luxuries, and relieve those that are necessities. It does seem strange that an increased duty on imported clothing is proposed in the Bill, but I suppose it is done for the purpose of getting sufficient revenue. We find silks, satins, and so on, charged at 15 per cent.—in the same category as cheap slop clothing. I think silks and satins, even in the piece, may be regarded as luxuries, and charged at a higher rate. Some hon. members appear to have had briefs on behalf of certain manufacturers. The hon. member for York has usually got a brief, in this way, from some one or other; and the best thing the Government can do will be to employ the hon. member as an assistant Attorney General. I do not know whether those hon. members who hold these briefs are employed in any way, but one hon. member does the work most ably, and I am not surprised at his being asked to come forward in this capacity. Some hon. members have briefs, not only for others, but for themselves.

MR. A. FORREST: That is a grave charge against members of the House.

MR. LEFROY: As regards tobacco, it is one of the articles that produce a large revenue, and I hope the day will come when it will not be necessary for local manufacturers to pay 2s. a pound for tobacco leaf, but that it will be grown in the colony, as I know it can be grown, and it is wonderful that some persons do not try it. I have seen it growing here luxuriantly, and apparently without much trouble, and I think there is a great opening here for persons who understand the production of tobacco leaf, there being a manufactory in the place. In reducing the duty on tea, which represents a considerable revenue, I am afraid the Government have had to put the difference on other things. I think tea would bear an increase better than some other articles that are increased in the Bill; and it is an anomaly that the best quality of tea should pay only the same duty as inferior qualities. Some hon. members object to military uniforms being admitted free, but if the local tailors cannot make uniforms properly, they must be imported, and we know that our soldiers must be made to look smart and attractive. It is a wise thing to reduce the duty on perambulators, as proposed in the Bill. In

committee I shall support amendments for reducing the duties on the necessities of life, although it will be difficult to make any large alterations, because the Government must obtain sufficient revenue.

On the motion of MR. HARPER, the debate was adjourned until Monday, the 18th September.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 18 minutes past 10 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 14th September, 1893.

Kensington Lane Closure Bill: committee—Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act Amendment Bill: second reading; adjourned debate—Fremantle Water Supply Bill: first reading—Loan Bill, 1893: first reading—Aborigines Protection Board: proposed abolition of—Greenbushes Tinfield: proposed lease to Mr. Reid—Engine Sparks Fire Prevention Bill: second reading—Federal Council: Increase of Representatives to—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at half-past four o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

KENSINGTON LANE CLOSURE BILL. IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2.—“Closure of Kensington Lane”:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): On the second reading of this Bill hon. members referred to the drain which has been constructed by the Commissioner of Railways. I believe that the drain is a cemented one, and the effect of its construction is that the drainage which ran in from the sides is now held back. I understand from the Commissioner of Railways that this matter

was brought under the notice of the Legislative Assembly by the Mayor of Perth and other members interested in the welfare of the city, and that the assurance he gave on the subject was perfectly satisfactory to them, and he hopes that a similar assurance will satisfy this House. He proposes, I believe, to make certain entrances into the side of the drain by which the water, which is now held back, can get in.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: Is the level higher than that of the old drain?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): I do not think so.

THE HON. H. ANSTEY: The grievance, in this case, is a real one. I have been to the locality myself, and I found two individuals pumping the water out of their cellars, which were full to the top. I asked if they had to perform the operation every day, and the reply of one of them was, "Yes, every time we want to get any beer."

THE HON. R. W. HARDEY: I can also vouch for the truth of what has been said. Only this afternoon I saw the drain, which was built up to within three feet of the level of the ground, and on the outer side of it the water was nearly up to the top, while inside there were only three inches of water. Two or three men were working at the drain, trying to drive a hole through the cement, so that the outside water could get in. I think that if there were openings made at different points the evil might be overcome.

Clause agreed to.

The remaining clauses were agreed to, and the Bill reported.

WINES, BEER, AND SPIRIT SALE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I must preface my remarks on the second reading of this Bill by expressing my hearty concurrence with the object of the measure. There is no doubt that what are called bogus clubs, or drinking clubs, are a late introduction into this colony. The business of these establishments is principally to sell liquor for the benefit of the individual who calls himself the proprietor, apart from the restrictions imposed by the law on licensed houses. The conse-

quence is that not only have grave abuses sprung up in many districts, but the legitimate business of the licensed person is prejudiced and the country is deprived of a certain amount of revenue. But, sir, we must be careful that in legislating against one abuse we do not create another, and, although we may wish to root out the bogus clubs, we should be specially careful that we do not inflict a heavy blow on the *bonâ fide* and well conducted clubs. Having looked through the details of this Bill, I am inclined to believe that they will press severely on some clubs of a legitimate character, and which fill an admitted want in the community. I am not going to sing the praises of clubs; but I will just draw the attention of the House to the fact that clubs are institutions peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon race. They date back to the civilised history of that race, and generally they are peculiarly adapted to the temperament of Englishmen. They are formed for all kinds of purposes, and this Bill runs over the best of them generally. It says that a club shall mean "a number of persons associated together for social, literary, political, sporting, or other lawful purposes." That seems to me to be a very fair definition.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): That is the proposed amendment.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I am aware of that, and I do not think we need trouble ourselves with anything but the amendments we see on the paper. So that we may the more easily understand the amendments, my hon. friend, with a care I am sure is appreciated in this House, has had them incorporated in a new Bill, which is now before us, and I have no hesitation in saying that it is a vast improvement on the one which came to us from another place. So superior is the new Bill that I am taking it for granted that it will be adopted. Most Englishmen would not know they were such unless they had their club. Every member of this House, I believe, belongs to some club or other, and indeed life in this country would not be even so endurable as it is if these institutions were destroyed. It seems to me, however, that this Bill, even if passed in its much improved form, will press very hardly on some clubs, for unless they are able to conform to the provisions of the second

clause, and are able to obtain a certificate, the members will be unable to consume any liquor upon the club premises, without exposing themselves to conviction, summarily, and to a fine of a sum not exceeding £50. Unless a club does consist of 50 members in Perth and Fremantle, and 30 members outside these towns, and the other provisions of the Bill are complied with, it is clear that no liquor can be consumed on the club premises. When I first came to this town I was invited to become a member of a whist club, and I joined it with the greatest pleasure. As far as I remember, that club consisted of only 12 or 14 persons, and this seems to be a useful number for such a club to be composed of. According to this Bill, this club could not exist unless the members were content to refresh themselves with nothing stronger than lemonade or cold tea, or some other kind of non-intoxicating beverage. But we know that members of such clubs do not drink these things, and if, after this Bill passes, they consume anything else, they will render themselves liable to prosecution, and subject themselves to a penalty, with all the disgrace attached to it. I hope this House will consider how far the general object of this Bill, which is to suppress bogus clubs, can be given effect to without playing altogether into the hands of the publican. As it is now, it seems to me to be much more a publican's measure than anything else. There are many clubs which cannot get 50 members. There is, for instance, a Natural History Club, which has no quarters at present, but, if it continues to thrive, no doubt it will possess them in time. There are also other admirable clubs, created for various purposes, which have no quarters of their own, and which cannot, under this Bill, continue to exist unless they forbid among the members the drinking of any kind of liquor, for the mere consuming of it will render them liable to prosecution. As things are now, Perth is very poorly supplied with clubs. In Adelaide there are at least four clubs for every one here, and they are all established for lawful purposes. There is a chess club there (and I am glad to say that a similar club has been recently established in Perth); there is a cribbage club (I believe there is not one here); in short, you

can hardly mention any lawful rational and social amusement which has not its club. Again, if the provisions of this Bill are given effect to, a most admirable institution—the Masonic Club—must cease to exist. That club belongs to one of the lodges of Freemasonry—the Lodge of St. John—and all the members of the lodge are *ipso facto* members of the club also. The members of other lodges are also allowed to come in and become members of the club on payment of an entrance fee and subscription; but, as I say, under this Bill that club will be completely wiped out. Unless, therefore, we wish to play into the hands of the publican, by forcing the smaller clubs to have their quarters at an hotel, several of the conditions contained in this Bill must be modified. I believe my friend the Colonial Secretary has no desire to hurry the Bill through the House, and we shall, therefore, have time to consider any alterations we may deem advisable; but I must say that, if many of the provisions are not found to be capable of alteration, I shall feel compelled to vote against the third reading.

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE: I concur generally with what the Hon. Mr. Hackett has said. The necessity of this Bill arises purely from the default of the magistrates in not saying what a club is. It is not a difficult thing to define. Any two or more Government clerks who may choose to live together, and pay their liquor bill out of a common fund, may be termed a club, and if they like to ask a friend to their quarters, and entertain him out of the common fund, they are acting within their rights. There have, however, been several bogus clubs started, and, if the magistrates had not been weak-kneed, there would have been convictions, and the matter would have been settled by appeal to the Supreme Court, if necessary; but the magistrates, because the rascals who have started these clubs have chosen to call them clubs, have accepted them as such, and hence the necessity for this Bill. The test as to an institution being a club or not is whether the proceeds of the sale of liquor go to the members. A man cannot start a club and say to everyone, "Walk in and have a drink, and I'll keep the money." If he does, it becomes sly-

grog selling. In connection with this House we have a club. We have a few bottles of liquor, which members pay for at the bar as they require it, but the man who sells it does not get the profits—they go to replace the store. This Bill arises from a wish to define the indefinable, and to repress an evil which is not an evil, but which will soon become one if great care is not taken. To my mind, this is purely and simply a publican's Bill, and we shall, under it, be introducing a new sort of publichouse. We are going to prevent any number of gentlemen combining together, and having a common cellar, and compel them, if they wish to become associated with one another for any particular object, to seek the public-house as a place where they can meet. I shall vote against the whole of the first part of this Bill.

THE HON. H. ANSTEY: I had an opportunity of talking over the question of bogus clubs with one of the best Resident Magistrates in the country, and he told me he had no difficulty in dealing with them. He gave me an instance in which the proprietor of the club provided everything without any reference to the members, and he said that as the matter was put to him he would have allowed it to pass as a club had he not been wide awake and made inquiries. He found, however, what the true case was when he caused the accounts to be produced. He said he saw no difficulty under the present law of dealing with bogus clubs.

THE HON. E. T. HOOLEY: It seems to me that something must be done to meet the growing evil of bogus clubs, and, as far as I can see, the Bill, as the Colonial Secretary proposes to amend it, will meet the case fairly well. It is said that under this Bill one person could not invite another to his house for the purpose of having, say, a game of whist, and give him a little refreshment.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: That would not be a club.

THE HON. E. T. HOOLEY: The Natural History Society, which has been referred to, is not a club. I belong to it, and I have no knowledge of any intention to form it into a club, and if there were there would be no difficulty in obtaining a certificate, as there are over 50 members. With reference to the Masonic Club, there may be some hardship; but, perhaps,

some exception might be made in its favour. I shall support the Bill.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: With regard to the question of bogus clubs, I, like every other right-thinking man, would be glad to see such institutions suppressed; but I do think this Bill will work a hardship on some *bond fide* clubs, and especially on the Masonic Club. The St. John's Lodge has had a club for many years, and all moneys paid have gone to the upkeep. There is no entrance fee payable by the members of the St. John's Lodge, all members of the lodge being considered members of the club as well, and therefore this Bill could not be complied with. There are other clubs, I believe, in the same position, and it seems to me to be very hard to suddenly wipe them out of existence.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

FREMANTLE WATER SUPPLY BILL.

This Bill was received from the Legislative Assembly, and was read a first time.

LOAN BILL, 1893.

This Bill was received from the Legislative Assembly, and was read a first time.

ABORIGINES PROTECTION BOARD— PROPOSED ABOLITION OF.

The Order of the Day for the consideration of the following Message from the Legislative Assembly was read:—

Message No. 20.

Mr. President,

The Legislative Assembly having this day agreed to the following resolution,—
“That in view of the humane and considerate treatment of the aborigines by the people of the colony, it is desirable, in the opinion of this House, to abolish the Aborigines Protection Board as at present constituted,” transmits the same to the Legislative Council for its concurrence.

JAS. G. LEE STEERE,

Speaker.

Legislative Assembly Chamber, Perth,
7th September, 1893.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON moved,
“That the Council concurs in the reso-

"lution, agreed to by the Legislative Assembly, respecting the abolition of "the Aborigines Protection Board." He said: At the time when we were seeking to obtain Responsible Government for this colony, considerable stress was laid on the necessity of this Board by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and we were informed that unless we agreed to its formation the Royal Assent would not be given to the Constitution Bill. I was a member of the Legislative Council at the time, and, in common with many others, felt indignant that we should have a Board of this character thrust upon us. There was an absolute majority of members opposed to it, all of whom looked upon the Secretary of State's proposal as a reproach to the colony and her people. Since the establishment of the Board, I do not know that any very great amount of good has been done by it; and even what little has been accomplished could not have been done without the aid of the Government, through their police and their magistracy. I quite agree with the Premier when he says: "If the Aborigines Board is unnecessary, and without means or machinery to adequately do the work entrusted to it, and if its existence is at the same time distasteful to the community, what reason is there for its continuance?" Again, Sir John Forrest says: "I assert that the Board has no power to protect the aborigines, for it has no special means of gaining information as to what is going on, and it has no executive power to enforce its views or wishes." In paragraph 8 of his minute to the Governor, of 11th May, 1893, the Premier says: "I can assure His Lordship that the reliance he seems to place in the ability and energy of a Board meeting twice a month, in Perth, with one paid secretary, and one paid inspector, to look after the interests of the aborigines scattered along 3,000 miles of coast line, and extending hundreds of miles into the interior, is quite misplaced. They have not the knowledge or the means to do it. It would require a large, well arranged, and expensive organisation to do the work, and the only organisation competent to do it in this colony is the Government, with its magistrates, medical officers, and police stationed in every district." With all this I entirely

agree. Besides this the Board has never been popular, and under all circumstances I think it would be as well that it were abolished. I move the resolution.

THE HON. G. RANDELL seconded the motion.

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE: I should be sorry to see a motion of this kind dealt with hastily, and I think we have hardly had time to properly consider it. Only yesterday the Board had a communication from Mr. Straker, who is their emissary at the North, and it would be as well, I think, if this could be laid before the House. If we postponed the consideration of the motion for a short time, hon. members might also have an opportunity of perusing other papers in possession of the Board. In fact I think they should be read before the Board is condemned. I may point out that the present Board is merely a continuation of another Board, and it seems rather hard to have it spoken of, by those who do not like it, in the way they do. I shall move that the discussion on the subject be postponed for a week in order that members may, in the meantime, learn what the Board is doing.

THE HON. J. G. H. AMHERST: I have great pleasure in supporting the motion for adjournment in this matter, although I feel with the Hon. Mr. Congdon that this is a Board which, before long, must be done away with. If we have an adjournment, however, we can read over all the papers on the subject, and then come prepared to discuss the matter in all its aspects.

Question—That the debate be adjourned—put and passed.

GREENBUSHES TINFIELDS—PROPOSED LEASE TO MR. REID.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): The following is the Message from the Legislative Assembly on this subject: The Legislative Assembly having this day agreed to the following Resolution—"That the Government be empowered to enter into an agreement with Mr. J. S. Reid upon the basis of his proposals with reference to the leasing of 1,000 acres of land at Greenbushes Tinfeld, presents the same to the Legislative Council for its concurrence." The proposal referred to will be found in Parlia-

mentary Paper No. 19, which I will read for the information of hon. members. It is dated 14th August, 1893, and proceeds:

The Hon. Commissioner of Crown Lands, Perth.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit, for your consideration, the following proposal:—I beg to apply for the lease of 1,000 acres of land in the Greenbushes Tinfield, as per plan attached, for a period of 21 years, on the understated terms and conditions:—1. To pay the present rental fixed by the Regulations of 5s. per acre per annum, such rental to commence from January 1st, 1894. 2. Within two years from the said date, I undertake to spend or cause to be expended in connection with such lease, a sum not less than £20,000, such expenditure to include cost and erection of machinery on main and subsidiary pipe-lines, races, sluices, tanks and dams, tramways, and all works which may be deemed necessary by me for proving and working such lease. 3. That I agree to commence the said expenditure prior to July 1st, 1894. 4. That if the said rent is not paid before January 1st, 1894, and the contemplated work is not commenced by July 1st in that year, the said concession shall be forfeited to the Government. 5. That the said concession will not interfere with the rights of the holders of existing leases or licenses upon the Greenbushes Tinfield or any part of it. 6. In regard to the labour conditions, wisely inserted in the ordinary mineral leases, I have the honour to point out that my scheme involves an expenditure of extraordinary magnitude, never provided for or contemplated in such leases; and that the essential conditions of expenditure involved in the terms of the concession for which I am now applying should be allowed by you to take the place of such labour conditions, in order to make the concession of any value to me. The heavy expenditure involved and guaranteed is in itself a surety that a large amount of labour will be employed, but the process and methods will not necessitate the distribution of that labour in the manner contemplated by the Regulations. In conclusion, I confidently recommend this application to your favourable consideration and that of your Government, feeling assured that you will recognise in it a means of speedily imparting vitality to one of the many valuable but hitherto partly neglected resources of your colony.

I have, &c.,
(Sd.) J. S. REID.

In the memorandum by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, which is appended to the paper, it will be seen that the acceptance of the proposal is recommended; but the Commissioner points out that it would be almost impossible to bring the matter within the purview of the existing regulations. The Commissioner also points out that he has recently had Mr. Brazil

employed to report on the question of water supply at the fields, and that that gentleman estimates that the cost involved would amount to at least £20,000. Although I do not pretend to be an expert in tin mining, I believe a great deal depends upon a proper water supply. I am informed that those who are now working the fields are only carrying on in a small way, because they are dependent on the natural water supply. To work on a large scale needs an artificial water supply, and to obtain such means the expenditure of a large sum of money. The question for us to consider is whether the country shall undertake the work, or whether we shall allow a gentleman like Mr. Reid to take the risk of the speculation. I cannot but think it is advisable for us to leave him to expend the money rather than the Government. After Mr. Reid has spent £20,000 in providing a water supply, it is obvious, in order that he may work the 1,000 acres successfully, that he must employ a considerable amount of labour. If we find that this scheme proves successful no doubt other capitalists will be induced to spend their money in a similar way, to the great benefit not only of the Southern districts, but also in the interests of the colony at large. I, therefore, heartily commend this proposal to the favourable consideration of the House. While the Eastern and Northern portions of the colony have their gold-fields, I trust that in a short time we shall find the Southern districts, with their good agricultural land, providing an export in the shape of quantities of tin, and also that in a short time they will add to this a further means of wealth in the export of coal. I move that the resolution of the Legislative Assembly be concurred in.

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE: The acceptance of this resolution does not, I take it, preclude the House from discussing matters of detail.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): You can discuss all the details.

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE: We have not them before us.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): The hon. member will find them all in Paper No. 19, which has been handed round.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I must say I am not much in love with these pro-

posals, for it is my belief the country would be better off by multiplying the number of occupiers and settlers than by concentrating the development of our resources in the hands of a few monopolists. In the case of the tinfelds, the success attained has been greater than either Mr. Brazier or the Government Geologist has given us to understand. While I do not in the least impeach the accuracy of their statements, I know more has been done than is stated in the telegrams they have sent to the Commissioner of Crown Lands. From an authority, who spent some time in investigating what was going on on the tinfelds, I learn that some 200 men are engaged on working the tin. Further, I am informed that these men have devised a way of working, under which they are succeeding very well. They stack the dirt during the dry season, and wash it when the rain comes, and in this way they are enabled to make good wages. Still, we cannot deny the fact that a large portion of the field is unworked, and cannot be without the application of machinery, and the consequent expenditure of a large sum of money. Whether portions of the field are to be worked by sluices, or by the construction of dams, or by means of a tramway to carry the dirt to the water, it is obvious that a great deal of outlay must be entailed, which the Government will not for some time, at any rate, be in a position to provide. In these circumstances, Mr. Reid comes forward, and offers to spend £20,000, which is £20 per acre on the concession he asks for. In consideration of its being granted to him, he undertakes to keep the works continually going. In his supplementary proposal, he states that he does not wish to interfere with those who are now engaged upon the work of tin-mining in and about the area he asks for, and, under these circumstances, I do not feel prepared to object to the proposal. I notice that Mr. Reid has also assented to the terms that he shall keep at least 50 men employed; and although this is not the full complement required by the regulations, still, considering the amount which is to be expended in connection with the concession is so large, we may feel satisfied that all the labour necessary will be employed in order to make the undertaking a profitable one. As I have said,

under all the circumstances, I shall be disposed to give my concurrence to the motion.

THE HON. J. G. H. AMHERST: My hon. friend Mr. Hackett says that much has already been done in a small way on this field; but in my opinion we shall have very much more done if we go into the matter on a large scale. The population on the field has been gradually dwindling down, and most of the companies which were formed have broken up, and the consequence is that a valuable industry is in a languishing condition. There is now great need of capital, and I believe that if this proposal is assented to, not only shall we have the money of the gentlemen in question expended, but we shall also have other capitalists putting their money in the venture, to the great advantage and benefit not only of the district concerned, but of the colony generally.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: I have much pleasure in supporting the proposition, for it must tend to develop the tin-mining industry far more rapidly than by the small way things have been done since the discovery of the field. I hope, however, that the rights of those now there will be preserved, and this, I believe, the gentleman concerned has no objection to.

THE HON. H. ANSTEY: I think this a very important proposal. Although it is true that parties of two or three men have been able to make good livings, yet the process employed is so slow that the industry can never become a great one. I have spent a considerable time in the centre of the tin-mining industry in Cornwall, and, therefore, I know perhaps more about this kind of work than most hon. members. In the first place, a plentiful supply of water is essential to the proper development of tin mines, whether alluvial or lode. I cannot see any hope of developing these fields except by some such scheme as that proposed by Mr. Reid, and although I shall support the proposal, I should like, before assenting to it, to see a map showing the proposed area, and the trend of the lode. I shall, therefore, move that the debate be adjourned.

Question.—That the debate be adjourned until the next sitting of the House—put and passed.

ENGINE SPARKS FIRE PREVENTION
BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): This is the remains of a little Bill which was introduced by the Government in the Legislative Assembly. That House handed it over to the tender mercies of a select committee, and it was considerably altered, and in its altered shape it comes to this House. I have no doubt that hon. members are aware that when locomotives travel over grassy country they become the means of doing much damage by the distribution of sparks. In the summer time, especially, the smallest spark is sufficient to cause a fire, which may spread for many miles, and do much damage before it is stopped. Under these circumstances, in consequence of the pressure brought by hon. members of another place on the Government, it was thought advisable to compel all persons who used locomotives to carry and use what are known as spark arresters, and maintain them in good order. I understand that several of these contrivances have been patented, some of which are very effective for the purpose intended; but unless compelled by law to use them, the proprietors of locomotives will not adopt them, because they interfere with the draught, and thus cause inconvenience in the working of the engine. It is now intended to compel their use, and also to provide for the use of a steam jet in the ash-pan. The turning of live ashes on to the line is almost equally as dangerous as the sparks, inasmuch as when let loose they blow on to the grass, and start fires. By this Bill, those using engines will have to apply the steam jet to the coals in the ash-pans before turning them on to the line. The various clauses of the Bill provide for these things, and certain sections of the Shortening Ordinance are adopted, which refer to the recovery of penalties. That is the whole Bill, and I trust it will have a good effect. I move that it be read a second time.

Question put and passed.

FEDERAL COUNCIL—INCREASE OF
REPRESENTATIVES TO.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): I have no doubt that, although it is very little spoken of, hon. members are aware that we do possess a

Federal Council. It is a body which meets every two years in Tasmania, in the summer time, when certain hon. members of the various Legislatures are enabled to enjoy themselves in the charmed city of Hobart for a fortnight or so. It was established by an Act of the Imperial Parliament, which provided that all the colonies might join it. Two of them, however—New South Wales and South Australia—have not as yet entered it, but, notwithstanding, the Council has from time to time met and passed some useful measures. One of them was of particular importance to this colony, inasmuch as it dealt with the Pearl Shell Fisheries question. At the present time the number of members to the Council is limited to two for colonies having Responsible Government and one for colonies not possessing that form of Government, such as Fiji. At the last session the member representing Fiji did not attend, and consequently the number of members present was only eight. With one member in the chair, only seven are left, and this is a very small number to have such important powers entrusted to. I cannot but think that such an audience must damn oratory on the part of anyone who is inclined to indulge in such, for the chances are that out of the seven three or four would repair to the refreshment room when an hon. member commenced his address. Besides this, we cannot fail to see that so small a number of members cannot command the respect or influence which such a Council should do. It is, therefore, proposed that the number of members shall be increased to five instead of two for each of the colonies, and this, it is hoped, will add dignity, importance, and influence to the Council and to its debates, and probably New South Wales and South Australia will, as the result of the increased numbers, join the Council, and then we shall have all the colonies of Australia joined and represented in the Council. I look upon this Federal Council as the forerunner of a federal Australia. We know there have been movements from time to time to further this important object. Two years ago we had a Convention, which some of the members of this House attended and took important parts in the proceedings; but so far that has led to no result, and I cannot but think there is

more chance of bringing about a United Australia by extending this Council than by the holding of Conventions. Probably some hon. members are more acquainted with the subject than I am, and they may be able to further enlighten us upon the subject. It will, no doubt, be said by some that the increase of members will increase the cost of the representation of this colony. This will not be denied; but hon. members of this House, and of the Assembly, when they take their walks abroad on behalf of the colony are, as a rule, economical, and, therefore, the question of expenditure will make very little material difference. I move that the words "Legislative Council" be inserted in the blanks in first and eighteenth lines of Message No. 22 from the Legislative Assembly (*vide* Council Minutes, 1893, p. 73).

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I rise to second the motion of my hon. friend; but I may as well preface my remarks by stating I do not believe the Federal Council is of any use except for the two purposes which I shall mention; nor do I think it will be of any greater use from the fact that the number of members will be increased. Nevertheless I trust this proposal will be agreed to, because to some extent it follows the lines of a resolution carried by the old Legislative Council in 1839. By that resolution it was proposed that there should be an increase in the number of members proportionate to the population of the different colonies. Colonies under 100,000 were to have two members, colonies under 300,000 four members, colonies under 700,000 five members, and over that number six members. The principal reason, however, why I am prepared to accept this resolution, is because it may possibly be a step in bringing about a federated Australia—that great ideal in which West Australians, in common with the people of the other colonies, are looking forward to. It will, I think, tend to keep the federal spirit alive. It will, in other words, keep the lamp of the federal spirit brightly burning, and secondly, it will afford five of the worthiest gentlemen in the colony an opportunity of having an enjoyable and refreshing holiday. I have said I do not believe altogether in the Federal Council, and I will give my reasons: one is that the Council does nothing,

not for want of members, but for want of business, and such is inherent in its constitution. Last session the total quantity of work, besides agreeing to a resolution of this kind, was to pass a Bill of five clauses—the Garrison Discipline Bill—and, but for the pleasures behind (the meeting being held in Tasmania in the heat of the summer), I believe it would die. The reason why there is no business is that it has no executive power, and no means of raising money. It may pass voluminous laws; but it cannot enforce one of them. It may declare that it is necessary to garrison the whole of Australia, but it cannot raise a sixpence for its own ordinary expenses, let alone enough money to carry out such an object as I have named. Under these circumstances the increase in the number of members is hardly likely to do away with its fundamental weakness; nevertheless, as I say, it is worth while doing something to keep the federal spirit alive, besides affording an opportunity for the statesmen and politicians of the various colonies to periodically meet together. I shall, therefore, support the motion of my hon. friend.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 6.5 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Monday, 18th September, at 8 o'clock p.m.