

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 18th September, 1907.

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

Prayers.

### POLITICAL SITUATION.

#### STATEMENT BY THE PREMIER.

*Land Taxation rejected by the Council.  
Parliament to be Prorogued.*

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I desire to make a statement to the House. No doubt it is within the knowledge of the hon. members of this House that last evening the Legislative Council again rejected the land taxation proposals of the Government, notwithstanding that these proposals had received practically the unanimous approval of members of this House. On the first occasion, last session, the Land Tax Assessment Bill was carried on the voices; and on the last occasion, in this session, it was carried with an overwhelming majority, there being only four dissentients to the proposal. It is hardly necessary for me to dwell on the gravity of the constitutional aspect raised by the action taken in interfering with the provisions proposed to be made for the purpose of providing funds for the Government's developmental policy. In the first place, I would point out that Ministers are responsible to this House, and that only by an adverse vote of this House can they be called upon to resign. Although the consent of both Houses is indispensable to give legal effect and validity to financial as well as to other measures, the sole right rests with the Assembly of originating all measures of this description. This principle was established in England as long ago as 1678, when the Commons passed a resolution which declared that—

“All aids and supplies and aids to His Majesty in Parliament are the sole

gift of the Commons, and all Bills for the granting of any such aids ought to begin with the Commons, and that it is the undoubted and sole right of the Commons to direct, limit, and appoint in such Bills the ends, purposes, considerations, conditions, limitations, and qualifications of such grants, which ought not to be changed or altered by the House of Lords.”

Since that date, proceedings between the two Houses in England have strictly been in accordance with this resolution. The control of the public finances rests with the House of Commons as a constitutional right; they are presumed to be the best judges of the financial position of the State, its obligations and requirements. The same practice prevails here, and in this House are vested the same rights as are vested in the British House of Commons. It must be apparent that special revenue must be raised to carry out the large public works which are proposed to be undertaken at the present time, such for instance as the Port Hedland-Marble Bar Railway, the Mount Magnet-Black Range Railway, the Fremantle Graving Dock, the Narrogin-Wickepin Railway, and many other railways that have been approved and projected; and the Government in this instance have asked for nothing unreasonable, and resent the unwarrantable stand taken by another place, which is tantamount to a refusal of supplies. Whatever may be the outcome of this trouble, whatever cost the country may be put to, whatever loss the State may suffer in consequence, I wish to emphatically place the responsibility on the shoulders of those members of another place who have rejected the fiscal policy of the Government, and the expressed desire of the people's House. [General applause.] I recognise the difficulty of dealing with such a situation, where the members of the Legislative Assembly can be penalised by the action of others who cannot be sent to their electors. At the same time, it is impossible that we can tamely submit to an act which reverses the relationships of the two Houses, revolutionises the Constitution, and places the Assembly and the Ministers of its approval at the

mercy of the Second Chamber, whose functions should rather be that of a House of review than that of a Chamber where the fiscal policy of a Government may be dictated. It is impossible to consider the vote of last night as anything but a rebuff to this Chamber ; and having considered the matter with a full sense of the responsibility attached to my office, and realising that my first duty was to preserve the honour and dignity of the Government and the Assembly, I lost no time last evening in waiting on His Excellency the Governor, and unreservedly placing in his hands the resignation of myself and my colleagues. I have received this morning an intimation from His Excellency that he is unwilling to accept my resignation, he being of opinion that the Government retain the confidence of this House. [Government applause.] In response to my request His Excellency also declined to grant a dissolution, as he considered that so long as there was a reasonable possibility of a constitutional solution of the difficulty, he did not feel justified in taking such action as would undoubtedly result in a serious dislocation of the business of the country, and that there appeared to be a reasonable expectation that the Legislative Council would accept the expressed wishes of the Legislative Assembly if again submitted to them. Under the circumstances I feel it incumbent on me to fall in with His Excellency's wishes, but at my request he has consented to prorogue Parliament to-morrow for a brief period, when the taxation proposals will be again submitted. I move—

*That the House do now adjourn.*

Mr. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill) : Have I permission, Mr. Speaker, to make a few remarks?

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Mr. BATH: With a great deal that has been said by the Premier I can agree. I can agree, so far as he has stated, that the action of the Legislative Council is a rebuff to the Legislative Assembly; because whatever may be the opinions of the Legislative Council as to whether the Government at present in power have

received a mandate from the country to impose a measure of land values taxation or not, in every proposal dealing with the consolidated revenues of this State and the carrying on of the financial undertakings of this community, there can be no possible shadow of doubt that what the Assembly have decided on, especially in regard to financial proposals and the question of taxation, is purely and simply a prerogative of this Assembly, and therefore a right to be jealously and sincerely guarded by us. As to the manner in which the Premier and his colleagues have dealt with the question, I differ. I think in the first place that it cannot be said that there was any difference of opinion between the opposing sides of the House, and the Premier and his colleagues therefore took a perfectly secure course in tendering their resignations, recognising that if His Excellency the Governor acted in consonance with all constitutional precedents, here and elsewhere, he could not accept their resignations with a view to taking the only alternative, that of sending for the leader of the party on this (Opposition) side of the House. But there is one other alternative, one that is perfectly consonant with the honour and dignity of this Assembly; and that is for the Premier, representing his colleagues, to make some insistence upon his right to appeal to the electors of the State upon this issue. I consider that it is the only honourable alternative left to him, and I do not in any sense regard it as a penalty on honourable members of this Assembly. We should rather regard it as an opportunity to be seized than as imposing any inconvenience on us, to go to the people of this State and ask that our hands should be strengthened in regard to this matter of our right to impose taxation; and I am satisfied that if such an appeal were made, the verdict of the people of this State would be in the direction of strengthening the hands of the members of this Assembly as against another place. Therefore I hope the Premier will reconsider his proposal in regard to a prorogation, and will take what I consider to be the only honourable course, the only one consonant with the dignity of

this Assembly; that at the earliest opportunity he will insist on giving to the electors an opportunity of having a voice in the matter, and on appealing to them to give their verdict on this important issue.

Mr. J. C. G. FOULKES rose to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot permit any other member to speak. A motion for adjournment is not debatable; but it is a courtesy due to the Premier and to the Leader of the Opposition to allow them to make statements. The question is "That the House do now adjourn."

Question put, and negatived on the voices.

Division called for on the Ministerial side, and taken with the following result:—

Ayes	28
Noes	17
Majority for	11

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Barnett	Mr. Angwin
Mr. Brebber	Mr. Bath
Mr. H. Brown	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Butcher	Mr. T. L. Brown
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Collier
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Heilmann
Mr. Davies	Mr. Holman
Mr. Draper	Mr. Horan
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Hudson
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Stuart
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Layman	Mr. Walker
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Ware
Mr. Male	Mr. Troy (Teller).
Mr. Mitchell	
Mr. Monger	
Mr. N. J. Moore	
Mr. S. F. Moore	
Mr. Piesse	
Mr. Price	
Mr. Stone	
Mr. Veryard	
Mr. A. J. Wilson	
Mr. F. Wilson	
Mr. Gordon (Teller).	

Question thus passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at 4.47 o'clock, until the next day at 4.30 p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Thursday, 19th September, 1907.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

### ASSENT TO BILLS (2).

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR entered the Chamber at 4.30 o'clock, and commanded the attendance of members of the Legislative Assembly, who accordingly arrived with their Speaker.

HIS EXCELLENCY gave assent to the following Bills, in addition to Bills assented to previously:—5. "An Act to amend the Collie-Narrogin Railway Act, 1901." 6. "An Act to authorise the construction of a railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar."

### PROROGATION.

HIS EXCELLENCY, in closing the Session of Parliament, was pleased to speak as follows:—

*Mr. President and Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council—*

*Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly—*

I have to thank you for the earnest attention which you have given to your public duties, and regret that the labours of the Session have been brought to an abrupt and unexpected termination.

In view of the rejection by the Legislative Council of a Bill providing for the imposition of Taxation on the Unimproved Value of Land, my Advisers deemed it to be their duty to tender