

# Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 17th September, 1906.

	PAGE
Questions: Sewage Filter Beds, Papers ...	1459
Agricultural Railways, as to a Commission ...	1459
Motion: Goldfields Water Supply, to be self-supporting ...	1459
Bills: Workers' Compensation Act Amendment, as to postponing the Committee stage ...	1465
Land Tax Assessment, 2a, debate resumed, division, negatived ...	1466

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

Prayers.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary : By-laws of the municipalities of Boulder, Kanowna, Menzies, and Perth ; Accounts for the year ended June 30th, 1907, and balance-sheet to that date, together with Auditor General's report thereon ; Papers ordered on motion by Hon. M. L. Moss as to certain oil contracts entered into by the Railway Department.

## QUESTION—SEWAGE FILTER BEDS, PAPERS.

Hon. J. W. WRIGHT asked the Colonial Secretary, without notice : When is it intended to lay on the table the papers containing the correspondence between Mr. Davies and the Government re the filters at Burswood Island?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I am not certain that they are not laid on the table.

Hon. J. W. WRIGHT : I have looked three or four times and have asked the Clerk, and they have not been tabled.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I will make inquiries and let the hon. member know to-morrow.

## QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL RAILWAYS, AS TO A COMMISSION.

Hon. J. W. WRIGHT asked the Colonial Secretary : 1, Has the Government considered the resolution of this House, passed on August 28th, in favour of the

appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the construction of the Goomalling - Dowerin, Wagin - Dumbleyung, and Katanning-Kojonup Railways ; also to inquire into the working of the Railway System generally ? 2, If so, when will the Commission be appointed ? 3, If not, when will the matter be considered, and what are the reasons for the delay that has taken place in dealing with the resolution of this House on so important a subject ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied : The matter is now receiving the consideration of the Government, and a decision will be arrived at without undue delay.

## MOTION—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY.

To be Self-supporting.

Hon. W. PATRICK moved—

"That in the opinion of this House the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme should provide sufficient revenue to meet cost of administration, interest, and sinking fund."

He said : It will be in the recollection of hon. members that on several occasions I have criticised adversely the administration of this department. I referred to it particularly when speaking on the Land Tax Assessment Bill last session, when I drew attention to the fact, the well known fact—or rather not too well-known I am afraid, for I have found on many occasions when travelling on the railways that a great many otherwise intelligent people are under the impression that this goldfields scheme has been paying its way—that for the financial year ended 30th June, 1906, the loss of £78,000 was experienced in connection with the working. This is a considerable sum of money. I was more than astonished when I read the report for the financial year ended 30th June, 1907, to find that, instead of there being some improvement as the result of the increase of 88,000,000 gallons sold, there was a farther loss of £6,571 as compared with the previous financial year. I considered it my duty to put the

following question to the Colonial Secretary on the 29th August :—

"In view of the increasing loss on the working of the Goldfields Water Supply, as disclosed in the report for the financial year 1906-7, is it the intention of the Government to take early steps to administer the scheme on a system less burdensome to the State?" The reply given by the Colonial Secretary was as follows :—

"The Government is of opinion that the scheme is now being administered in the best interests of the State as a whole. Exclusive of the supplies to Midland Junction, Guildford, and the agricultural districts, about 75 per cent. of the water supplied is used for industrial purposes. In framing prices due consideration has been given to the presence of large supplies of salt water at many of the mines which would be used for treatment purposes if rates were too high, and to the necessity of encouraging the working of low grade propositions. The reason that the returns do not suffice to pay the sinking fund on the main capital is not due to defective administration, but to the fact that the scheme was designed to deliver nearly 150 per cent. more water than has proved requisite by actual experience."

I was not at all satisfied with this reply. I am of opinion personally, and I hope to get a considerable amount of support from members, that this scheme is not being administered in the best interests of the State to which it is immediately much whether it is even being administered in the best interests of that portion of the State to which it is immediately applicable. From the statement in the last portion of the Colonial Secretary's reply that "the reason that the returns do not suffice to pay the sinking fund on the main capital is not due to defective administration but to the fact that the scheme was designed to deliver nearly 150 per cent. more water than has proved requisite by actual experience," one would assume that as the consumption increased the revenue, I mean the effective, the profitable revenue should also have increased. Unfortunately, that has not

been the case up to the present. The consumption for the financial year ended 30th June, 1905, was 510,000,000 gallons; for the year ended 30th June, 1906, it was 600,000,000 gallons; and for the year ended 30th June, 1907, it was 688,000,000 gallons. That is to say, there was an increase in each year of about 90,000,000 gallons on the year preceding. The gross revenue for the first year mentioned was £142,000; for the second year, £159,000; and for last year £167,000. This shows a considerable increase of revenue, but unfortunately the result was not a considerable increase in profit, which, after all, is the main thing in administering a business of any kind. In connection with the increased consumption, there is one thing very noticeable; that is that while for the year ended 30th June, 1906, the consumption was 90,000,000 gallons in excess of the previous year, the revenue was £18,000 more, while for last year with an increase in consumption of 88,000,000 gallons, the revenue was only £7,771 more. That is to say, although the consumption in the one case was 90,000,000 gallons and in the other case 88,000,000 gallons, the extra revenue in one case was £18,000, and in the other just over £7,700. This question is unfortunately to many a dry subject, for it must bristle with figures, but the whole thing is a financial consideration. I quote these figures to show that the increase in consumption does not necessarily, so far as the working of this scheme is concerned, result in an increase in revenue.

*Hon. J. T. Glowrey*: Have the new lines been charged to capital account or revenue?

*Hon. W. PATRICK*: I will refer to that later on, for it is a very important matter which I do not intend to forget. It was never intended when this scheme was inaugurated that the people of the State should pay anything towards its working. When Sir John Forrest introduced the scheme in 1896, though I speak from memory, I know that he, in another place, used words to the effect that "This scheme is a business proposition, and is bound to pay." Speaking in the same place in 1898, on the construction

Bill. Mr. A. E. Morgans, at that time a supporter of Sir John Forrest, stated that in his opinion the scheme would not result in any addition to the debt of the State, because the goldfields people would pay for the water. He continued in that strain with the object of persuading the House, and the Bill was passed. When the Bill was introduced to this House by the then Colonial Secretary, Hon. G. Randell, he used some such words as these: "I believe there will be obtained for the water a price which, without being vexatious or burdensome, will result in a sum sufficient to liquidate the debt." So it is quite evident that the Parliament of this country, when this scheme was launched, were under the impression, and passed a Bill under the impression, that the scheme would pay. I would remark in passing, the scheme is called a national scheme. So far as I can see, the only national feature about it is the national obligation or national burden. The scheme is certainly not national in the sense that it benefits the State as a whole, any more than every other industry carried on in the State benefits the State as a whole, but not in the sense of rendering any eleemosynary aid to any particular part of the State or to any particular industry. This scheme particularly benefits one part of the State.

*Hon. J. T. Glourey:* What about the rabbit-proof fence?

*Hon. W. PATRICK:* I have never been a supporter of the rabbit-proof fence scheme, but I understand the Government are making a charge of £25 per mile for those portions of the fence that adjoin stations; and after all, though the expenditure has been great, it has been a mere bagatelle compared with the cost of this scheme. When supplying water, the Government have not been in the habit of treating other portions of the country in the same unbusinesslike manner as the portions served by this scheme. Take the Murchison, for instance. A few years ago a small scheme was instituted for the towns of Cue and Day Dawn. It also is a pumping scheme, and the works were constructed by the Government. After it was finished the

Government formed a water district, handed over the scheme to a board which they nominated, debited the capital cost to the board, and said, "There you are; you have to strike a sufficient rate and must pay a sufficient price for your water, to realise interest and sinking fund," a 3 per cent. sinking fund like that of the Coolgardie Water Scheme. And the people of Cue and Day Dawn have been paying interest and sinking fund, and are only too glad to do so, as it is but right that people should pay for what they get. [*Hon. J. A. Thomson:* Geraldton will have to do the same.] Undoubtedly. Comparing the Cue-Day Dawn scheme and the Coolgardie scheme we find that one serves a comparatively poor portion of the State and the other a very rich portion; and I cannot help saying that the contrast between the conduct of the small scheme and the great puts me in mind of the scriptural saying, "For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath." The departmental report for 1907, commenting on the rise and fall in revenue, states that with the exception of the Golden Mile there has been a considerable falling off in the revenue from all the mining centres. The Golden Mile returned an increased revenue of about £5,000, and all other places, such as Southern Cross, Kanowna, Coolgardie, and Bonnie Vale, showed considerable decreases. And the revenue from the Railway Department also shows a decrease of £1,300 odd. The report states that the railway contribution shows a decrease of £3,000 odd, but that figure is arrived at in the following manner, for what reason I do not know. The department have divided into two sections the railway contribution for last year—the receipts for water supplied east of Mundaring are deducted from the receipts for the previous year, and the remainder is called a decrease. But the department received several thousand pounds from the railways for water supplied in the neighbourhood of Midland Junction and other places; and adding this sum, the actual loss of revenue from the railways is £1,300 odd. But if this scheme simply supplied water to

the mines, I should say little about it so long as there was any attempt to work it properly. The serious aspect, however, is observable in the administration when the water is supplied for what are called general purposes. With the exception of Boulder, which in respect of general services showed an increase of between £2,000 and £3,000, all the other places, including Kalgoorlie, showed a decline. Even Kalgoorlie showed a decline of some £446.

*Hon. J. T. Glowrey* : Was that for the past year ?

*Hon. W. PATRICK* : Yes.

*Hon. J. T. Glowrey* : The circumstances were exceptional.

*Hon. W. PATRICK* : No matter what the cause may have been, that is the actual result. In reference to domestic consumption I should like to read some extracts from the reports for 1906 and 1907. The 1906 report, page 7, states :—

"The reduction to the ordinary householder, however, has not, as is popularly supposed, induced a compensating increase of consumption. For the purpose of a direct, unmistakable comparison of the effect of the reduction in price for excess water, for domestic services, to 4s. during the year, a minute examination has been made of the whole of the ordinary services in the Kalgoorlie district that were metered during the two half-years ending 30th June 1905 and 1906 respectively. The experience in these services (in number over 1,100) is that an increased consumption of only 2,570,000 over the output of 12,370,000 gallons in 1904-5 was attained, and that an actual loss to our revenue of over £300 resulted."

I should like members to know that, for it is quite evident that although the department reduced the rate to 4s. per thousand gallons there was but a slight increase in the consumption, and the result was a financial loss. (I may say that for the same service the people of Cue and Day Dawn pay 10s. We pay that ; we are not made a present of it.) But notwithstanding that, the policy of the department for the last financial year was to reduce the price still farther, and

the report of 1907 states in reference to this matter :—

"At the beginning of the year a special price of 2s. 6d. per thousand was quoted to householders on the goldfields using more than 5,000 gallons excess consumption beyond the quantity they were entitled to in consideration of the rate paid. This should undoubtedly have the effect of inducing a still farther use of the water on garden plots, but, owing no doubt in a great measure to the extra rainfall, the figures for the past year are disappointing, the total household consumption in Kalgoorlie and Boulder being 53 millions as against 55 millions in the previous year."

So we can easily understand that a scheme conducted on lines of that sort cannot very well pay. There is one peculiar remark in the latest report, showing that there is a glimmering of common sense, though they do not appear to use it, in the minds of those conducting this scheme. In reference to some of the small subsidiary schemes they have been inaugurating in connection with the main line, such as the 40-mile branch line to supply Beverley, York, and Newcastle, the department say :—

"A revenue of 10 per cent. is assured in each case before the work is authorised by Cabinet, and in this respect the department is unfairly subjected to criticism at the hands of many of the settlers who do not seem to realise that we are commissioned by the Government to conduct our operations as a business and are consequently not at liberty to spend large sums of money on non-productive agricultural mains in order to develop the country."

That, it appears to me, is somewhat different from the conduct of the department in relation to the main portion of the scheme. There is a passage also in the last report in reference to irrigation :—

"There being reason to believe that at a price of 9d. per thousand Mundaring water could be profitably utilised for the growth of lucerne and other crops in summer in irrigated plots, the Hon.

Mr. Price has recently arranged, in conjunction with the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture, for a series of experiments to be conducted in the Northam district by medium of certain enterprising agriculturists willing to give the business a trial. Operations will not be commenced until the close of the wet season, and the results should be interesting. As the cost of pumping to Northam is about 3d. per thousand the sale of a quantity of water for irrigation at 9d. would be profitable to the State."

The assumption here is that the cost of pumping water is the main item of expense; for the report says that at 9d., when it costs only 3d. to pump, the supply will be profitable to the State. As a matter of fact, the ordinary operating expenses for last year were £64,928, while of this amount the cost of pumping was only £22,063, and I may add that the latter sum included a reserve fund of £1,000; so that the pumping cost being £21,000, and the operating expenses £64,000, the operating expenses alone cost 9d. per thousand gallons. At any rate, if it is possible to supply water at 9d. per thousand when the cost of the total output, 688 million gallons, averages over 7s., what a tremendous sum some of this water must cost when some of it can be produced at a profit of 9d. per thousand gallons? I have read these different extracts from the report for the purpose of explaining what follows. As I say, the income for 1905 was £141,067, for 1906 it was £159,425, and for 1907 it was £167,146. For the £18,000 extra revenue received in 1906 over 1905 the Government spent, in addition to ordinary expenditure, the sum of £69,000 on capital expenditure, that is an addition to the supplementary capital. Last year, in order to obtain the revenue of £7,721 over the preceding year, the operating expenses cost £9,300 more, and they spent additional capital of over £20,000, involving thousands in interest and sinking fund, and the only result of the increased revenue was that the difference between the revenue and expenditure was £84,570 or £6,570 worse than the preceding year. That is to say we sold 88 millions gallons

more water and lost £84,570 by the transaction. That is a fair financial way of putting it.

*Hon. R. F. Skoll*: Irrespective of wear and tear.

*Hon. W. PATRICK*: No, I shall deal with that feature later on. I do not intend to weary the House with this subject. It is a dry subject, but it is very important so far as the State is concerned, and I think it should be thoroughly ventilated. I do not believe, after talking with intelligent men in different parts of the State, that the average citizen of this country knows anything whatever about this scheme. Why last year we paid a sum of money that would be equal to the interest on two millions capital, which would construct I do not know how many miles of railway. The worst feature in connection with this scheme so far as I can see is the outlook for the future. There can be no doubt whatever, so far as we can judge, of the efforts made by the department to improve the scheme, to encourage little schemes that cost a great deal of money with microscopic results along the line, that it is thoroughly seized with the fact that two million gallons per day is the most which will be required by the present consumers of the water. I think it is better to go entirely by the reports issued by the department, and the greatest trouble we will have in future is likely to arise according to these reports in connection with the main conduit. The engineer reported last year: "From now forth it may be expected that the cost of maintaining the main conduit will be an annually increasing one." To show that the department was thoroughly alive to the fact, they included in the operating expenses for the year and also this year—at least I should judge so—a reserve fund of £11,000; thus I understand there is a reserve fund of £2,000 laid aside for renewals in connection with the pumping operations, and a fund of £20,000 in connection with the main. That appears to be a substantial sum of money, but £10,000 will be of no use to keep that conduit in repair, judging by the experience of last year and judging:

by the engineer's reports. In the report for 1907 occurs the following paragraph "Up to date a total length of 69 chains." But I will first read a previous paragraph to give an idea of the cost of the maintenance of this main from Mundaring to Kalgoorlie. It is bearing on the paragraph which I read about the increasing expenditure over the previous year. The paragraph is, "As anticipated the expenditure on the maintenance of a thirty-inch main shows a considerable increase. It has been at the rate of £40 5s. 2d. per mile of main, the total for the year being £14,151 as against £7,838 for last year, an increase of 80 per cent." An expenditure of £40 per mile would lead one to suppose that it is something that needed to be done to the whole of the main, but the report follows on, "Up to date the total length of 69 chains has been completely uncovered, recoated, wrapped with jute cloth and then recovered; and a length of 514 chains, or nearly  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles has been uncovered and left standing open on account of the corrosive nature of the soil." In other words they spent over £14,000 on the maintenance of this main and they repaired less than a mile and exposed  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles to see if anything was going wrong. See what that means. It must mean that a large proportion of that £14,000 was spent on that 69 chains. Multiply that by the total length of the main and it will amount to more than the original cost of the scheme. In the following paragraph of the report we have the reason why this came about. It says:—

"Corrosion is also going on inside of the pipe, and the usual nodules are being formed on the inner surface of the metal. This is evident from the steady increase in the friction throughout the line. This increase is on some parts of the line more rapid than was originally anticipated, and the very high efficiency so far obtained from the pumping machinery will not be maintained much longer at some stations without a considerable outlay to meet the changed conditions. Where pipes have been removed, and the interior has been inspected, the nodules observed

have been rather less numerous than the rise in friction indicated. It is most probable that internal corrosion is going on more rapidly in some portions of the main than in others. This is no doubt due to the coating being better on some pipes than on others."

Now this is due to the coating being done badly originally. One of the main things in connection with a great water scheme is to see that the coating of pipes of this nature is properly done. If so the pipes may last for a generation without corrosion, but here when our scheme is in the initiatory stage we have the spectacle of £14,000 being spent in repairing a small portion of the main. So the chances are, judging from the Government reports, that there will be an enormous expenditure in keeping this main in repair in years to come. Taking all these things into consideration, it seems to me that it will be as well to consider whether there is not some way out of this difficulty. It is quite evident that the people who are consuming this water from the goldfields water scheme will not use more than two million gallons per day. The pumping capacity of the scheme is five million gallons per day, but that by no means is the capacity of the scheme, and that is where a great deal of nonsense is talked in connection with this scheme. The people talk about the five millions being the limit. They forget that it is the limit of the 30-inch main and of the pumping apparatus to drive the water. Now what is the limit of the reservoir? In the latest report for 1907 the engineer states that the water reached the lowest level which it has reached since first filled, namely 4ft. 9in. below the height of the weir. That was on the 12th May last and at that time there was impounded in the reservoir 3,810 million gallons of water—that was at the end of the summer and it was a fairly dry summer, although it might not be the driest. Now here is the position, that after the water required had been taken out of the reservoir there was left in the reservoir 3,810 million gallons, or sufficient to supply 10 million gallons per day for six months in the driest portion of the year—that was when the reservoir was at its lowest dur-

ing the year—and it would still leave about 2,000 million gallons in the reservoir. Surely there is sufficient business capacity in this State, sufficient engineering ability to make some use of this water, because even supposing it had gone down that 2,000 million gallons it would have supplied another six months at the rate of 10 million gallons per day without the reservoir being emptied. But within six weeks of the lowest point being reached that reservoir was running over. That was on the 3rd June. Last year 7,000 million gallons went over the weir into the sea. Supposing the weir is left in its present condition, it requires no engineering ability, it requires but the rudiments of arithmetic to tell us that when you have so many thousand million gallons of water you can use it if you have a market. I do not blame this Government particularly. I am speaking as a citizen of Western Australia in the interests of the State as a whole, and as a citizen I do not care a brass farthing whether it pleases or displeases any Government. I believe any business man if he owned this scheme would never think of allowing this miniature Niagara to run away into the sea when there is a market for the water. Supposing no additions were made to the weir, there is sufficient water there to supply ten million gallons a day for some years to come. In time to come Perth will be a city of some importance with a population of a quarter of a million of people. There will be no difficulty in raising the wall of the weir to a sufficient height to supply the population of a quarter of a million, besides giving an ample supply of water for the goldfields. It seems to me that we are supplying little villages. According to the report they have constructed forty miles of main. I remember the time when that would have been considered an engineering feat carrying water forty miles to Newcastle and Beverley, thinking it is going to pay. How will it pay? People will use the water, of course. They will use one thousand gallons when there are ten million gallons going to waste. The only bit of daylight I can see in this matter is that the

water can be used to supply the city of Perth. And I do not believe, if the people of this State fully apprehended the fact that they are losing £80,000 a year by the scheme, that any Government would dare to allow the present condition of things to last for one day longer.

Hon. J. A. THOMSON (Central) : I second the motion.

On motion by *Hon. J. T. Glowrey*, debate adjourned.

## BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

*As to Postponement.*

Order read for the Committee stage.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved—

*That the order of the day be postponed.*

Hon. R. F. SHOLL (North) : This was continually being done. The Government fixed the order of the business on the Notice Paper, and then when the House was sitting moved the adjournment of certain orders. It suited the Government sometimes to do that, when other measures were coming on. This procedure ought not to be sanctioned by the House. When business appeared on the Notice Paper it should be taken unless special reason were given for the postponement. It was a dangerous principle to deviate from the Notice Paper without special reason. Often measures would be carried when members did not anticipate them coming on. There was a counting of heads when a measure like the Land Tax Assessment Bill was due ; and it might suit the Government to telegraph to certain members to come to town and vote for the measure. Others might be away finding that this particular business was not early on the Notice Paper. He would vote against the postponement of this business as a protest against the action taken.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) : The reason for the postponement of the order was to allow certain amendments to appear on the Notice Paper. He understood it was likely that some farther amendments

would be proposed to this Bill, and he had moved the postponement to enable members to have the amendments before them. The remarks of Mr. Sholl were unwarranted, for the Minister in this House should be enabled to arrange or change the business as he thought necessary.

Question passed, order postponed.

## BILL—LAND TAX ASSESSMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 12th September.

Hon. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan) : It was not my intention to have spoken so early in the debate, but as no one else rose to move the adjournment to the debate and there was the probability of a division being taken without any discussion—[*Hon. J. W. Hackett*: No.]—that was my impression that a division would have been taken straight away, I may be wrong—but as no one else came forward to move the adjournment (I should have preferred to speak later) I did so. The Colonial Secretary in introducing the Bill contented himself with a brief reference to the events that transpired during the last session, and thought it was unnecessary, as the debates on that occasion were so fresh in the memory of members, to go into the details as he did on the previous occasion. I propose to follow such an admirable example set by the member, and it is not my desire to speak lengthily on this debate. The arguments have been given, as far as they possibly can be given, and to go over the same ground would be wearisome to members, and I feel certain would not be convincing—whatever arguments are used on either side would not be convincing. Members have probably made up their minds how they are going to vote on this question. That does not hinder other members, and I know there are some, going carefully into the question and placing their views, and the circumstances that have arisen, before members, and we shall most likely have a full discussion on this very important measure; not important as re-

gards the amount of the tax which it is expected by the Government will be raised, but because of the principle and the new departure in the history of the State as far as the Government is concerned at any rate. For we have already land taxation by roads boards and municipalities, and if we are to have a tax probably that is the direction it should take. That is a matter of opinion I do not propose to dwell on now. The position taken up by the House on the last occasion—a strong one—was that members thought there was no necessity for the tax in the then circumstances of the State. If that argument was good and valid on that occasion, it is intensified very considerably in the change of the circumstances of the State which have taken place since. My own view is that the Government hardly realise what may be the result of this taxation in the country at large. A good many believe it will have a serious and bad effect on the natural industries of the State and will also have a bad effect as far as the towns are concerned. The tax will fall upon a portion of the people only, and a very small portion, hence we may distinguish it as a class tax. Class taxation is always objected to in almost any country. If you have to levy a tax you must apply that tax as far as you possibly can to the community at large, but here the Government have selected a tax which will bear heavily on a number of people who have been some of the best citizens of the State, men who have been saving and investing their savings in the purchase of lands in the State, and in the building of homes on those lands, thus providing considerable employment for labour of many descriptions in the State. That is an argument that has not struck the Government very forcibly on this question; that is a side of the question they have not carefully considered. My own knowledge of the circumstances of the city of Perth is such that it enables me to say that this tax will affect a number of people in poor circumstances. People who have borrowed for the purpose of erecting houses in which to dwell or to let to others will feel the tax as a farther burden which they have to



bear in addition to the local taxation which has become pretty severe under circumstances to which I do not wish to give great prominence, in some of the towns and it is undesirable to increase the burdens pressing on the owners of property. If it can be arranged, but the Government do not seem inclined to make it, that the tax should be on unimproved land it would meet with the concurrence of a great number of people. If it were advanced as one of the reasons for adopting this form of taxation that it would help to compel owners of large estates to subdivide them, and put them up for sale, there might be something in it, but that cannot be carried into effect to any large extent. That there are a number of large estates here which ought to be subdivided, the owners to be compelled to subdivide and place them in the market, so that other persons may cultivate or build on them is quite a mistaken notion which emanates from New South Wales, where I believe there are a number of large estates. That cry has been taken up in this State to some extent—by the Government in one direction, and by the Political Labour Party in another—that because of large estates held by a few owners and utilised by them for their own advantage and not for the advantage of the country, there should be a land tax. But the argument does not apply to this State; at any rate, it does not apply to Perth and the adjacent towns. As I have said, this is a class tax, and therefore it is objectionable because many of the people of the State will not be touched by the tax. The Bill contains a clause which prevents the owner of a property passing the tax on to a tenant; but anyone who understands the position will know that it would be impossible for an owner to pass on the tax with rents decreasing weekly—and when a house becomes empty in Perth it is fairly difficult to find a tenant. Members must bear in mind that whether the ground be vacant or the house tenantless, the tax still goes on; and, unlike municipal taxation, there are to be no reductions. The full amount of the assessment is to be collected—three-farthings or three-halfpence in the pound, as the

case may be; whereas under municipal taxation a reduction of 20 per cent. is made in respect of rates paid before a given date, which may be utilised towards repairs and improvements. Many house-owners find great difficulty in making both ends meet, difficulty in finding interest payable on mortgages when money has been borrowed for buildings. In this respect, though the amount of the tax may in no specific instance be large, still it is objectionable from the point of view that it will be a burden on such persons. Then as to policy, we have repeatedly announced, and especially during the term of the late Agent General, that this is a State in which immigrants would find no land tax. That inducement has been held out to many present-day settlers on our lands; and therefore it would to some extent be a breach of faith with those who have taken up land here believing they would be exempt from taxation of this description. Another reason why the Government should not impose a land tax at present is that the roads boards are awakening to the necessity of levying rates for local purposes, and are taxing the people in country districts, so that it is undesirable another burden should be imposed on them unnecessarily. It has been argued, I believe successfully, and will be argued again during this debate, that there is no absolute necessity for farther taxation at present, that the circumstances in which the Government find themselves can be met by other means; and an argument in support of this was furnished this afternoon, when it was shown that in the administration of the Coolgardie Water Scheme we are losing at the rate of £80,000 a year. That goes to show the necessity for the Government to carefully consider the position in every phase, before imposing farther taxation, to see whether they can make the accounts of the country balance without resorting to this undesirable, and I think unjust and inexpedient, form of taxation. [*Hon. J. W. Hackett*: And unpleasant.] No one would object to taxation in the State or in a municipality, if it were felt there was necessity for it and that the money was going to be properly and economic-

ally used. [*Hon. J. W. Hackett* : I find it very unpleasant.] I do not think anyone having a proper regard for the city in which he lives, and feeling that rating or taxation is reasonable, would oppose it. So far as I am concerned, I do not find it unpleasant, but rather a pleasure, to pay rates to the City Council, when I know the administration of the city's affairs is being conducted in a proper way. I am sorry to say I do not think they are being so conducted at present. I believe our local governing bodies have become demoralised by the system which this and other Governments have adopted of extravagant borrowing. I have always raised my voice against a borrowing-and-spending policy. I believe hundreds of thousands of pounds have been wasted in this country, for the reason that the money being borrowed, its expenditure has not pressed heavily on the conscience, if they had one, of the Ministry of the day ; and so they did not provide for the proper and economical surveillance of works they were carrying out. That policy of Governments has had its effect on the public bodies of the State, who are following on the same lines : they have come to believe that nothing can be done without borrowing money. We have an instance of this just now in the City Council, in what they are attempting to do. Members know what I am referring to, and I need not particularise. I should like to see the rate-payers' affairs better controlled, and to this end would be glad to see my honourable friend (Mr. Loton) again in the City Council, taking care that proper and economical methods should be adopted in the administration of the city's affairs. It is a fact that local governing bodies are becoming demoralised by the expensive and often unwarranted borrowing policy adopted by the present and past Governments. I believe this anxiety on the part of the Government to borrow will yet land us farther into debt, until by and by nearly the whole of our revenue will be absorbed in the payment of interest and sinking fund, without any corresponding advantage to the State as a whole. I believe, as do

many other members, that we should do what we can for the development of the State, but we should do it in the proper way. We are not doing so, nor have we been doing so during the time we have been borrowing money largely. Last session it was suggested that the subsidies to local governing bodies might be reduced considerably, and I am pleased to see that the Government propose to reduce these subsidies by about £20,000 this year. I believe this is a step in the right direction, as members will understand from what I have said. The Government of the day are beset by deputations from here, there, and everywhere, asking assistance for this thing or the other ; some of the things asked for being unnecessary, and most of them I think are simply extravagances. Anyone who thinks the matter over will agree that if these things are desirable, those desiring them should supply the funds. That condition as to supplying the funds would have a wholesome effect on the schemes they favour. It is well to have those nice things which have been given in various parts of the State, and I should rejoice to see them had the money wherewith they were obtained come from the pockets of those who have reaped advantage from them, rather than appeal to the Government for funds, because to a certain extent these grants are sops. We find Ministers travelling through the country promising many things, telling the people what they are going to do, and asking for support for their land taxation proposals ; thereby encouraging the people in this system, which has become prevalent not only in our State but in others. Such a practice is utterly contrary to good government, and contrary to what is to be found in other countries of the world. Another reason why we should refuse to support this taxation at present is that by refraining we should enable the Government to say to those seeking Government assistance, "No ; we are limited as to our revenue, and you must provide these things for yourselves." That would check a system which must result only in demoralising the people, and taking away the self-reliance and self-

respect that should animate our citizens. I may here refer to a speech delivered by the Attorney General during a recent election, in which the Government moved heaven and earth to secure the election of their *protégé* because he had given up his own opinions on this question and adopted those of the Government. The Attorney General on that occasion spoke of the land tax as a good tax based on proper principles, and that he would not substitute for it an income tax, for under the latter a man would be taxed for his possession of brains and energy. I have already stated that those who would be taxed under this Bill are those who have settled the country and devoted time, ability, and often toiled long hours in the development of the country. Hence the Attorney General furnished us with a splendid argument against the Bill, that may be applied in the direction we wish, namely that while the Bill is in favour of the man with brains and ability, it taxes the man who by energy in assisting to develop the country and by willingness to invest his money in landed estate shows that he has faith in the future of the State by helping forward its progress in every direction. I do not think that can be disputed. Men who by their thrift and enterprise have invested money in the erection of houses in the city, in the purchase of farms in the country, or in the establishment of industries, are those whom Parliament should help in every possible way. But what does this tax do? It discourages persons from investing, it discourages settlement, it presses on those progressive people, and is in every respect objectionable. There are still some exemption clauses disfiguring the Bill. I see no reason why leases on the goldfields should be exempted from this taxation. I put it to members representing the goldfields province that they should ask themselves whether they are justified in giving their support to the Government on this question of taxation, because it happens that it does not affect, except to a very small degree, the goldfields districts of the country. [*Hon. J. T. Glowrey*: The goldfields have no desire to be exempt; for they are willing to pay.] Only to

a very minor extent, and the hon. member knows that. Mining tenements are exempt, but I only throw this argument out by the way. In regard to the Government having received a mandate from the people as to this question of taxation, it has been stated by several Ministers and others, they maintained it at election meetings and mentioned it in Speeches of the Governor that a mandate from the people had been received on the question. What has taken place at elections cannot be looked upon as a mandate from the people, and as a matter of fact the Government have received no mandate during the present session of Parliament to introduce the land tax. [*Hon. J. T. Glowrey*: What about the Northam election?] When the Bill was before the House last session expression was given to the view, and I repeat it now, that the proper course for the Government to adopt was to make the question of land taxation a part of their platform at the next elections, which I think take place next year. If this were done they would be able to ascertain the feeling of the country. With regard to the Northam election, I put a very different interpretation upon the result of that election from that of the Leader of this House when introducing the Bill. I consider that that election was a great defeat for the hon. member sitting on the opposite side of the House and for the policy of the Government. The hon. member is present in the House and I cannot get away from that fact, and I know which way his vote will go on this question. [*The Colonial Secretary*: You cannot call 900 votes to 600 votes a defeat.] You take credit for what does not belong to you, and in business transactions that is considered dishonest. Recently I spoke to a man who is strongly in favour of the land tax, and I asked his opinion about the Northam election. He said he considered it to be a considerable defeat for the Government. The Colonial Secretary might take the flattering unctious to his heart that it is not a defeat, but that is the opinion of the country generally, notwithstanding what the *West Australian* tells us. Let us analyse the voting that took place at the election. At Northam

the votes numbered 199 for Mr. Throssell, and 92 for Mr. Wilding, giving a majority of 107 for the former. At Irish-town, where the hon. member's influence is pretty strong, he had a majority of 11; at Meckering his majority was 17; at Jennapullin 23, and at Goomalling 18, making a total majority of 176 in those places. The other part of the constituency went dead against him, and it was in those places that the hon. member's influence was not so great. I do not blame the Northam people for voting for him; if I had lived there and had not a very strong feeling against the tax I should have voted for him, but it is his personal influence there and what he has done for that part of the district which induced people to vote for him, irrespective of the land tax. There is no doubt that in a great majority of the districts in that division the feeling was largely against the imposition of this taxation. [*The Colonial Secretary*: What about the 300 votes for Watts.] We need not reckon them. Here was a young man opposed to the hon. member, who was unknown, who came forward at the last moment, when the hon. member did something which I will not stigmatise by a bad term, and contested the election, and was only 17 votes behind the successful candidate. In all the districts other than those I have mentioned, he received a large number of supporters, except at Beverley. There is a significant matter in connection with the vote cast at Newcastle where Mr. Wilding obtained a majority, although Mr. Throssell was very well known there. It is a curious thing that shortly afterwards the Government tried to deprive the Newcastle people of one train a day. They took a train away from them and thus robbed them of the opportunity of sending their produce to the goldfields for sale. I do not want to insinuate there was any wrong motive or any "spoils to the victors." [*The Colonial Secretary*: If not, why do you mention it?] It is public property, having been published in the papers. There is one train a day there now, and I mentioned the significant fact to which I have referred in order to show the inconsistency of members in

helping the producer on the one hand and, on the other hand in depriving him of the opportunity of conveying his produce to market. [*Hon. J. W. Hackett*: But they still have one train a day.] Yes; but at a time when it does not suit them. The hon. member knows well, for it has appeared in his paper, although perhaps he may not read all that appears there, how disastrous it would be in the interests of this State. I am against the policy which has been adopted by the present Government and by other Governments in connection with the provision of railway facilities for the people. I am in sympathy with them in their endeavour to give what assistance they can to the people of this State in a reasonable way, although I think much of it is misguided, and certainly we gather from the speech of the Hon. Mr. Patrick that it is not on business lines they are proceeding. I believe some of the irons they put into the fire will burn them pretty severely. It would have been wise for the Government, instead of introducing the measure this session, to wait for the general elections, and then get a mandate from the country. I am quite sure this House would be willing to obey that mandate implicitly. [*Hon. J. W. Hackett*: And the country would stagnate in the meantime.] It would not do that, and never has done that. There have been little set-backs from time to time, but the general condition of affairs has been one of progress. This has always been the case since I have been here, and that is for a good many years. [*Hon. J. W. Hackett*: There were 10 years of absolute stagnation.] Never has there been such. With all our resources it is not likely that we are going to encumber the State with an immense debt, which will, as I have said, in the near future, if they continue in their present course, absorb nearly the whole revenue of the State. Especially does this remark apply when we see that the railway revenue is decreasing to a somewhat alarming extent, as appears from the reports which were published in the Press to-day. It behoves the Government, if they have any concern for the future advantages and proper advancement of

the State, to reconsider their position and adopt a means—and I believe there are many methods that can be adopted—of assisting progress without resorting to increased taxation. The taxation of the State is heavy enough already and any attempt to increase it will be an increased burden on the people and will most likely drive many from our shores. If we remain, as I hope we may not, in the Federation, a reduction will have to be made in the expenses of carrying on the Government, and it will be absolutely necessary to diminish the number of members in the House and the amount of the emolument to members. I hope we may see a way out of Federation, and thus remove the possibility of trouble and loss, which looms before us. We are fortunate that we are not a part of the United States of America. We are a Commonwealth it is true, but we have the King to fall back upon and the Government of England, and when persons talk in a strain which I certainly deplore, about a revolution, it should be remembered that no trouble of that description can come about. People have written to the papers saying that we cannot dissolve our partnership without a revolution, but I beg to differ from that. I believe that if our case is properly stated and if we adopt a strong resolution on the question—it should be adopted somewhat unanimously for it cannot be expected to be altogether unanimous—there will be a way out of this difficulty in which we have unfortunately got, some of us against our wills. I believe that the King and the Government would never allow a ship of war from the other States of the Commonwealth to fire a shot upon our shores. They will prevent the Eastern States from doing anything of that kind, and we may dismiss that question from our view altogether. I am perhaps wandering somewhat from the question before the House, but it is intimately connected with it, for if it were not for our connection with Federation there would not be the slightest need—and I believe the Government realise it—to impose farther taxation. Let me impress on the Government that they are taxing the wrong people when they tax

those who are contributing to the advancement and progress of the State, and by placing burdens on them which should not be borne by them alone.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE (South-East) : Naturally I do not approach this question with any great pleasure, the more so on account of my having occupied the position last session of a supporter of the Bill. *Hansard* credited me, and members can read it for themselves, with many statements made in support of the tax, but it also credited me with the following statements which I then made and which I wish to record on this present occasion. They were: 1, I do not love the tax; 2, Let us try the experiment for twelve months, and if it is found to be oppressive I shall not be found supporting it this time next year; 3, I am prepared to give the tax one year's trial. This shows that I was not altogether warmly attached to the tax. In fact I repeatedly said on many public occasions that I did not like it. I want to say this year, and I want *Hansard* to report it, that I object to the tax, I believe the proposition is a bad one, and I am not prepared to give it one hour's trial. I have not come to this decision without giving the matter very serious thought. At the time I supported the tax I was blindfolded, as it were, by a want-of-revenue bandage tied tightly round my eyes, and I may say that that bandage was kept very wet indeed. As I said just now, when I supported this measure a bandage was across my vision. The argument which induced me to support the Bill on that occasion was the want of revenue; but I have discovered as other members have discovered, that there are other means of augmenting the revenue, principally in the direction of economy, as I shall endeavour to point out in my remarks. *Hansard* records what I have said in favour of this form of taxation, and also contains a few remarks of mine which may be said to be not altogether favourable to it; therefore members have the opportunity, if they wish, of perusing and ascertaining for themselves the reasons which actuated me to support the Bill last year. I now

propose to make an explanation, and in doing so will deal only with what was done in this House. When the Bill came to us from another place, it did not commend itself to me in its entirety nor to my colleagues, for we find that two efforts were made to remove those features to which I personally objected. When dealing with Clause 11, Subclause 4, the exemption clause, members will recollect that two amendments were moved and supported with arguments by the Colonial Secretary, and were approved by the House, but were struck out when the exemption clause was finally put as amended. It is my intention to read an extract from *Hansard* in this connection, for I feel it necessary to do so, as it will to a large extent justify my attitude on this Bill. *Hansard* says:—

“The Colonial Secretary moved an amendment in Subclause 4 (Clause 11), that after the word ‘contract’ the words ‘or from the date of survey in the case of land not surveyed before the date of contract’ be inserted.”

He proceeded to use these words:—

“In the past, surveys got so much behind that in some cases the contract might take place a year or two before the survey, and those waiting could not take possession of the land until it was surveyed. In practice, the applicants would not be getting the five-years’ exemption, if the clause were passed as it stood. The Lands Department were now, however, well up with the surveys, and it was possible that in the future the survey would be ahead of the contract; the land would perhaps be surveyed six or twelve months before it was selected.

“Hon. M. L. Moss: The clause should be struck out.

“Hon. R. F. Sholl: Certain legislation was coming along later on, and one would like to know how this amendment would be affected by it.

“The Colonial Secretary: What legislation?

“Hon. R. F. Sholl: The Land Bill.

“The Colonial Secretary: There was no connection.

“Amendment put and passed.”

It is important that I should draw attention to this, because this is one of the reasons why I supported the Bill, and the amendment which the Colonial Secretary then moved was intended to remove my objection, and it was a very serious objection as applied to conditional purchase holders. That amendment being passed, the Colonial Secretary proceeded to move a farther amendment:—

“That the following words after ‘contract,’ in Subclause 4, line 5, be struck out: ‘But such exemption shall only apply to taxpayers who prove to the satisfaction of the Treasurer that they do not hold legally or equitably more than one thousand acres.’”

Speaking on that amendment last year, he said it was intended to give all conditional purchasers exemption for five years; that under the Act they could take up more than 1,000 acres, they could now take up 2,000 acres, and he wished to strike out the words referred to so that the exemption would apply to all conditional purchasers, and not only to the men who took up 1,000 acres. Those were his words last year and I only hope he is of the same opinion this year. The amendment was passed on that occasion, but afterwards I regret to say the subclause was struck out, and with that subclause struck out my support of the Bill ceased, and I did not say another word in support of it. The clause as amended would have read thus:—

“All lands held under contract or from the date of survey in the case of land not surveyed before the date of contract for conditional purchase made before or after the commencement of this Act under the Land Act 1893 or any amendment thereof, are exempted from assessment for taxation under this Act and for the term of five years from the date of contract.”

If the clause had been agreed to in that form, it would have amended the Bill in the direction I desired; and holding the views I did:—

*The Colonial Secretary:* By those amendments in Clause 11, were all your objections to the Bill removed?

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: Not at all. The hon. member knows my objections.

The position I occupy to-day is the modified position I should have occupied on that occasion, were it not that I wished to see the revenue raised because the State was so far behind in its finances. The Premier took upon himself, when he received my letter of resignation, to make a statement to the Press as reported in the following words:—

*“Statement by the Premier.—Mr. Moore added that he had received a letter from Mr. Piesse in which the reasons for the action (resignation) were given. The principal one was that he could not see his way to continue to support the proposed tax on unimproved land values in the form in which it applied to agriculturists.”*

The Premier might have given that a little more fully. I intend to give it from a copy of the letter I wrote to the Premier, in order that members of this House may understand clearly the position. This is what I said in my letter of resignation:—

*“My main reason for resigning is because I cannot see my way to continue to support the proposed land tax in its present form, more particularly so as applied to the agriculturist, be he fruit-grower or farmer. Recent developments have strengthened my previous convictions that all C.P. holders or other holders of land under the land regulations should have at least ten years’ exemption—the time allowed by the Land Act in which to perform their improvements. As you know, I have previously sought to have this privilege inserted in the Bill, but without success; and I am farther of opinion that this privilege should be made to apply to all small holders who purchase unimproved lands from holders of large estates who have subdivided. In each case the initial difficulties are the same; both have to develop the lands; and provided progressive improvements are carried out as laid out in the amending Land Act passed last session, both should be treated in the same manner by the State. There is no other fair way out of the difficulty. If the State is successful in getting the larger holding*

*in one man’s possession divided into smaller holdings in the possession of many men, it will have done its duty. The fact is that the only tax in this line justifiable at the present time is purely and simply a tax on unimproved land, and that only for the purposes of development. Our people already pay more tax per head of the population than any other State of Australasia, and their local taxes are heavier also; so we should look to other channels for revenue, and the one that presents itself to my mind as the most open for the purpose is the channel of economy as applied to the State Departments, particularly the Railways. In this department alone the Commissioner himself publicly admits that he could save a quarter of a million per annum if allowed to work the railways on the same lines as those adopted in Queensland.”*

This statement was verified by the then Commissioner of Railways. I could not believe it at the time, but I saw him shortly afterwards, and in conversation with me he named some £5,000 more than he had stated at the time to the deputation. In my letter to the Premier I went on to say:—

*“There is the land tax income three times over; and if it is not there, then it cannot be wrung from the settlers on the land with my consent. I have an opportunity not possessed by any other member of the Ministry of knowing the trials and privations of the men on the land. I know their difficulties so well that I cannot longer be a party to the imposition of any tax that will add to those troubles. When Parliament meets again, I must have a free hand to fight the battles of my constituents in I hope a more successful manner than I can fight them as a Minister of the Crown.”*

That is what I wrote to the Premier, and as he made a short reference to it in his statement to the Press, I have had no hesitation on this occasion in reading a fuller statement in regard to the matter, for the information of this House. Now this being the position, how could I longer remain an Honorary Minister in the

Moore Government? I have said I could not do so; and I did what any man should do under those circumstances, I resigned. With regard to the tax itself, I am more than ever convinced that it is premature at the present time, that the country does not want it, in spite of what has been said by the Colonial Secretary, whose remarks in moving the second reading I was not present to hear. Now in regard to the election to fill the vacancy in the representation in the East Province, I will tell members what brought the present member into this House. I am sorry the hon. member (Hon. G. Throssell) suffers from an affliction which prevents him from hearing my remarks on this occasion; but he will be able to read them fully in the *Hansard* report. Turning to the Northam newspaper, it contained a special advertisement addressed to the electors of the East Province in the following words:—

"Listen to common sense. — York Railway Extension, now in hand, costs £41,300; Goomalling-Dowerin, recently finished, cost £16,000; Goomalling now asking for a farther 30 miles, £30,000; Newcastle-Bolgart line, promised, will cost £50,000; Beverley wants a line costing probably £30,000." This is the sort of thing those electors are led to believe they will get by returning the hon. member to this House:—

"All these lines are necessary, and I am in favour of their construction. The Government also proposed reduced freights on produce and every encouragement to farmers. The amount of land tax derivable from the agricultural lands of the State will not exceed £20,000 per annum."

That statement is mixed up; for as a matter of fact nobody knows what amount this taxation will realise. The Government are taking the roads boards valuations for the first year as the basis of their estimate, but they do not really know what the taxation will amount to. This electoral advertisement winds up with these words:—

"I have thought it all out. Trust me, and we shall win now as we did in the old days. Remember also I am a large land-holder."

At 6.15, the President left the Chair.  
At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE (continuing): I was remarking before the adjournment that the recent election in the East Province, in the return of Mr. Throssell, did not convey the direct opinion of that district. The hon. gentleman in one of his placards at Northam stated:—

"The whole cost of the land tax on lands of the State does not exceed £20,000 yearly, and of this Northam's share would be about £1,000. Goomalling Extension alone will cost £30,000, which means increase of town trade, encouragement of manufactures and work for the unemployed. Why should we not help such a policy?"

That is what brought the hon. gent. here — Northam's greed, and the extension of these spur lines. I want to make one more remark in respect to this matter. The hon. gentleman said distinctly at Northam and in his placards that the proportion to be borne by the five districts he named, five of the most important districts in Western Australia, would not exceed £5,000. If those rich portions of the State are not going to contribute more than this the tax will fall heavily on the other farmers in the State. I maintain that if the Government gave the hon. member these figures they are wrong: they did influence a certain number of electors of the East Province unduly. I now wish to talk of the effect this tax is going to have if this Council passes it; and in doing that I wish to dwell for one or two moments on the history of our land settlement. I have only one or two remarks to make upon that, but I hope they will convey to hon. members how unwise it is to bring in a tax of this kind at this period. The State contains 624,588,800 acres, and we have alienated or in process of alienation 12,575,902 acres, leaving 612,012,898 acres we have still to dispose of. I am dealing with these figures to show that there is any amount of land available yet. Since 1829, when we started to sell these lands, it has taken 78 years to dispose of 12,575,902 acres, and the most remarkable thing is that, small as the area



is compared with the area of the State, we have disposed of 6,615,106 acres since 1900; that is, more than half of the land alienated or in course of alienation has been disposed of within the last seven and a half years, and we have disposed of it in this period as follows:—309,804 acres in 1900; 351,999 acres in 1901; 550,630 acres in 1902; 1,045,371 acres in 1903; 1,362,941 acres in 1904; 1,235,424 acres in 1905; 911,948 in 1905-6, and 846,989 in 1906-7. We have been encouraging these people to settle on our land by telling them that there was no land tax. I saw one placard that was issued in England and posted in conspicuous places, and the portion that referred to there being no land tax here was in larger letters than the rest of the notice. I say it is very unfair to these people we have encouraged to come here in this way to impose this tax at this period of their existence; and as more than half our settlement has taken place since 1900, also seeing we have been so long in disposing of the other half of our lands, it is very bad indeed to have a check upon that settlement, as we will assuredly have, by the threat of imposing a land tax. I have not had time to get all the comparative figures; but comparing the month of July, 1907, with the month of July, 1906, we find that the total area settled in 1906 was 64,060 acres, as against 38,476 acres in July of this year, showing an immense falling off. Living amongst these new settlers I am in a position to know that it is nothing less than the threat of the land tax that has retarded settlement. I again draw members' attention to the fact that we have 612,012,898 acres still to dispose of, and it cannot be said we have no country. If it can be said truthfully, then heaven help Western Australia; but I know we have millions of acres that can be settled yet, and it is unwise indeed to attempt to tax these settlers in their efforts to turn the useless waste into good country. [Interjection by *Hon. J. T. Glowrey*.] Yes; I said lots of things last year, and I am sorry for them too. [*Hon. J. W. Hackett*: That is the worst of being a Minister.] The fact remains that we have these millions still to be disposed of,

and I suppose that there are a few million acres in addition to those I have enumerated that have been disposed of under conditions of improvement. Some weeks ago I asked this House to authorise a return showing what these conditional purchase holders owe the State to-day. I anticipate when that return is forthcoming, if it ever be, that it will be shown that these settlers owe the State at least two millions of money. I believe I am under the figures when I say that; and I do not believe there is any member here who has the opportunity I have to know the process these settlers have to go through in settling their lands. Mr. Maley will admit he has not the opportunity I have. I know their position exactly. I know they have been encouraged to go on these lands without capital; I know hundreds of such cases, and I know that before these men can get their titles, with the payment to the Crown and the responsibility for improvements, they will spend at least nine millions of money in developing that country. Here again I am under in my figures, because anyone knowing anything about farming will know that no man can stop at an expenditure of 30s. an acre, including purchase money; and when one considers that a great proportion of the area taken up prior to 1900 was under conditions of improvements and is included in this 12,575,902 acres, one can realise the great burden these people have taken on their shoulders. A man will need to take up at least 2,000 acres of land if he goes a little way out, and if he is fortunate enough to get it at 10s. an acre he will have to pay an annual rental of £50. Then he pays half the cost of survey. If he is fortunate to get the 2,000 acres in two leases, that will be £16 10s. This is what he will pay in one year. He will also have to pay £1 on his application for the two leases. As soon as his application is approved and before he can do a single thing on the land, he is liable to roads board taxation to the amount of £10 8s. 4d. if the roads board go to the full rate they can impose, that of 2½d. Most of them go to 1½d. Anyway, the settler is liable for that amount.

Then he has a wheel tax to pay which at the very least will amount to £2, for any settler living any way out would have to have vehicles on which he would have to pay that amount of tax. Then this person would become liable to £6 5s. 6d. as a land tax. He certainly can get down as low as £3 2s. 3d. if he carries out the improvements, but he has not time in which to do that. Then we have before us a Health Bill, which is now being considered by a select committee, whereby a  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. tax on the unimproved value of land can be imposed. I draw attention to this because that Bill will cover all the settled country or it can be made to cover it. The position that man is in is that he is liable for an expenditure of £89 16s. 4d. In addition to that he has to carry burdens imposed through the customs, and he carries exceptional burdens at this period because most of his goods will come through the customs, for he cannot produce anything at this period. If we have this other tax his position will become unbearable. I want to show what a settler coming from England, representing a number of other settlers, thinks of the imposition of this tax. Writing to me under date May 4th, 1907—I am sorry I cannot read the letter right through but the rules of the House prevent my dealing with other subjects—he says :—

“As to the desirability of a land tax at this distance and our knowledge of the colony puts us out of court, simply because we cannot judge, but there should be at any rate some justice and common sense in its application. The old settler who has successfully negotiated the first difficulties of settlement might not be greatly troubled or inconvenienced by a small or even a graduated tax, but as you point out those who are fighting the battle of reclaiming scrub and making waste lands profitable, these certainly deserve some relief at any rate during the fight.”

So that members may understand, I may say that this settler had before him a copy of the *West Australian* of a certain date giving my reasons for resigning from the Ministry. He goes on to say :—

“These people for the most part no doubt are under the thumb of the store-

keepers and implement sellers, and while they are making strong efforts to live and pay their way and thus become a permanent benefit to the State, did not ought to be called upon to bear farther burdens, which might easily be the extra feather to break their backs.”

Then he deals with the railway freights, and to conclude he says :—

“To wind up, on our arrival out in your country we shall thoroughly compare the varying conditions of the different States and that State which offers the best advantage gets our settlement. This on the face of it is a small thing, but what I wish to particularly point out is this, that there must be many more like-minded, and that they too will thoroughly consider the situation before finally settling, and whilst any State can afford to disregard say a half-dozen settlers, it cannot afford to disregard 20 or 30 families who desire only fair treatment. Therefore I thank you for the position you have taken up by resigning your office as Honorary Minister of the Moore Government, as by so doing you call special attention to what are real grievances to the new comer.”

That is what this settler thinks. And this gentleman in a private letter to me says that he represents three or four families who are coming over here. None of the other States imposed a tax at a similar period in their history. Take South Australia for instance. In the year 1892 I travelled through that country, spending six or eight weeks there, and I noticed what splendid roads they had, and in one instance I understand the Government borrowed £300,000 with which to make the roads for these settlers. They made good roads for the people and taxed them but to such an extent that they were able to bear the tax. That tax is very light to-day, not more than  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in the pound. The South Australian farmers residing in my district say that the tax is very light indeed and the values are taken very low for the purposes of assessment. Before leaving this subject I want members to remember that the people on the land have in every instance to win all the money I have mentioned, to carry out the

development and to pay the taxes, from the land. It is therefore our duty to encourage them in every way and not impose more taxes on them. The Premier when in the other States—I like quoting the Premier because he is sound always in his views, and if he had carried out his policy he would have had the country going ahead twice as well as it is to-day, but he had his boyhood's dream, and he ought to have treated that dream as we do treat dreams and allowed it to remain in oblivion—is reported to have said:—

“Again it must be remembered that we have easily the highest taxes per head in the Commonwealth.”

Then he quoted these figures: Victoria, £2 19s. 2d.; South Australia, £2 16s.; Western Australia, £5 1s. 5d. The Premier knew what he was talking about and these figures go broadcast throughout the world. The fact remains that we are the heaviest taxed people in Australia to-day, yet the Government seek to impose farther taxation. That is the strongest argument against the tax. Then there is another burden in the sinking fund. The Premier stated in his policy speech at Bunbury, and I think he has stated it since in Parliament, that the amount of the sinking fund now reaches the sum of £20,000 per month. I am speaking principally as an agriculturist, for there are so many in the House representing towns, and speaking as one representing an agricultural community I say this burden is very unfair indeed. This sinking fund represents 18s. 6d. per head of the population and the people in the agricultural districts have to carry the extra burden of developing their lands in the adverse circumstances of to-day and to compete with men in the other States who do not pay a sinking fund tax at all. It is about time we faced the matter in a business-like manner. We do not want any of this humbug about having made an agreement and sticking to it. How did the other States deal with this matter of sinking fund? They passed a Bill when the burden became inconvenient and left off paying the sinking fund. The Agent General speaking recently in England said that the accumulated sinking fund of Western Aus-

tralia in January, 1906 was £1,163,000, while for the rest of Australia the sinking fund was £1,300,000; and I venture to state that to-day our sinking fund is equal to that paid by the remainder of Australia; for we have paid enough since to bring the amount considerably over £1,300,000. This sum has been raised by a small population of a quarter of a million, while the remaining population of Australia has only paid £1,300,000. We should place our people on the same footing as that enjoyed by people in the other States. I do not want to go back on our agreement, but we should make the redemption period a longer one. We can extend that period. The Premier has pointed out that if the Commonwealth do a certain thing, under the conditions that he referred to, we can make the sinking fund at once only £90,000 per annum. Why could we not do this ourselves? Why ask the Commonwealth to do it? We can legislate for our own sinking fund surely. Why cannot we prolong the time for the payment of the sinking fund, making the annual payment much less? The Premier pointed out that the sinking fund represented six per cent. of the revenue. Supposing we made it three per cent. of the revenue, making the agreement term longer, the burden would be much lighter and we should practically save more than £40,000 above the sum expected from the land tax. I do not see what prevents us facing this matter in a business-like fashion. If we do not do so, it will be impossible for our people, our manufacturers, our artisans and farmers to carry on and compete with people in the other States with their greater advantages. The position is a very serious one. The Premier in his policy speech stated that—

“In the Eastern States they have, speaking broadly, no sinking fund at all. Now we do not want to go to that extreme, but at present we are at the other. We want a redemption system which will extinguish our debts in time but not at such a rate as to strangle us in the process.”

That is what is happening to-day. We are extinguishing our debts at such a

rate that it is strangling us in the process. The Premier says :—

“By this means we would be relieved of a large portion of our present burden, which I estimate would be reduced from £230,000 to £90,000 for the first year, until it would reach in the year 1934, £170,000 per annum.”

That would be considerably below what we are paying to-day. Why cannot we do that without waiting for Commonwealth assistance? What on earth is there to stop Parliament from doing it at once? We have a magnificent State, quite as good as any of the others. They have raised their loan moneys without such sinking fund. I do not say I should go so far as they; but I do say, make the sinking fund as light as possible to the people, and extend the redemption period. Before I leave this part of the subject I wish to read three or four lines of a speech made in England, within the last twelve months, by Sir John Madden, Chief Justice of Victoria. Speaking of Western Australia he said :—

“This magnificent State, however, is no source of apprehension to itself or anyone else. Her vast and scarcely touched mineral wealth alone would make the overdraft of half the greatest countries in the world safe.”

That is without doubt the position. A gentleman of his standing, a man who has thought things out well, has put clearly and exactly the position which Western Australia occupies to-day. I say, with such an asset behind us, why should we go on, as the Premier said, strangling ourselves in the process of paying off our debts? I trust there will be no more humbug about this thing. Members rise up in righteous indignation and say, “We will not have this sinking fund interfered with. We have had a beginning with it, and it must be continued.” Business men would not continue such a method if they found it was taking away their assets. We are, as it were, tying up our talent in a napkin and leaving it lying idle in England, when it might be used to improve our estate. The poor little percentage we get by way of interest for our sinking-fund investments is nothing compared with the

profit we might realise were the money used here to improve our assets.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett* : What would be the effect in England if your plan were announced?

*Hon. C. A. PIESSE* : What does it matter, considering the paltry amount we owe the British creditor? We are not going back on our agreement; we are only extending the redemption period.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett* : That is practically repudiation.

*Hon. C. A. PIESSE* : How can it be repudiation?

*Hon. W. T. Loton* : You would first have to consult the stock-holders.

*Hon. C. A. PIESSE* : Does anyone mean to say that the money was lent to us purely and simply on our promise to create a sinking fund? No; it was lent to us on the security of this fine State that Sir John Madden spoke about. It was lent on the value of our lands; and they are more valuable to-day than they ever were previously. I say, our circumstances are such that any business man who would let his business continue to-day on similar lines, when he could make fresh arrangements and would not make them, would be regarded as being a hundred years behind the times. We are going to pay every shilling of our debt when it becomes due. It is simply childish to talk about asking permission of the stockholder to make a change. We will pay when the debt is due, no doubt. And what does it matter to him how we get the money, so long as we pay him? It is time we were relieved of this enormous burden of £230,000 per annum. Let the Government use the undoubted ability they possess to investigate this matter, instead of worrying us with this confounded dream of an additional burden to the people on the soil. The deficit is not much after all. Certainly it is unpleasant to have it; but, as I have pointed out in the public Press, there is no real deficit, because when we can make deductions from our revenue to pay off our debts we are entitled to take credit for moneys so used. What has happened with the deficits of the other States? The Treasurer stated the other day that the accumulated unliquidated deficits of

the Australian States were as follow, on the 30th June, 1906 :—New South Wales, £1,814,000, 22s. per head of population ; Queensland, £1,130,000, 41s. per head ; Victoria, £1,459,000, 22s. per head ; Western Australia, £208,000, 16s. per head. In these circumstances we have nothing to fear. The Treasurer went on to say :—

“ These deficits in the other States do not, it is true, appear on the balance sheets, because they are covered by Treasury bills issued from time to time, the proceeds of which are utilised to extinguish the deficits temporarily, until funds are raised by increased revenue.”

Why cannot we do the same, instead of parading to the world our deficit ? No. It suits the Government to make capital out of this paltry deficit. Many a business house has been almost as far behind, and has recovered without difficulty. I would suggest that we meet the falling revenue by spending less. In one sense the revenue is not falling ; it is as large to-day as ever it was. So far as the people are concerned it is larger. But it is the expenditure that is greater than before. I say, spend less. Let us have a saving in every possible department. [*Member* : Would you stop all public works ?] What are you spending, for instance, on new public buildings ? I noticed recently what the Treasurer stated on the question of public buildings :—

“ Five years ago, with only two-thirds of our present population, we were able to expend £273,000 out of revenue on these works. Last year we could only expend £193,000. Sorry as I would be to see that amount reduced, I may at once say we will have no other course but to cut down this item unless we can get increased revenue.”

I say, cut it down. We could save in that manner £60,000. The hon. member says, Would you stop all public works ? Yes ; I should stop all public works sooner than see the people of the country have the hearts wrung out of them to pay this monstrous land tax. It is a brutal shame to overwork men, women and children to pay this tax. Look at the women who go into the country slaving, while

their sisters are riding in comfort in city trams. I say it would not matter if half the houses in Perth were empty, provided that in the emptying process the poor souls in the agricultural districts were not ruined. The city will recover itself if the country prospers. Population will come back to the towns. The day of prosperity will return ; but in the meantime we are ruining the people who create the prosperity of the towns. On what are our towns built up but on the prosperity of the back country ? The Government can thus, by reducing the expenditure on public buildings, save if not £60,000, a portion of that sum. Again, look at the railways. The Premier says, “ The Queensland railways show a working cost of 3s. 0½d. against our 5s. 6d. Surely there must be a medium between 3s. 0½d. and 5s. 6d. ? ” We should find out how low that medium can be, by cutting down the expenses of our railways. Put the Coolgardie Water Scheme on a more reproductive footing. Mr. Patriek deserves the warmest thanks of the House for the manner in which he brought forward his motion to-night—not as a matter of the goldfields against the coast, as Mr. Glowrey interjected and made it appear by referring to the rabbit-proof fence. It is time we had done with that sort of thing.

*Hon. J. T. Glowrey* : I ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement. I never made use of those words.

The PRESIDENT : What was the statement ?

*Hon. J. T. Glowrey* : I am said to have made a remark selling the goldfields against the coast.

*Hon. C. A. PIESSE* : The statement I made was that we did not want, in discussing this Coolgardie Water Scheme, an undertaking affected by this tax, to set the goldfields against the coast, as Mr. Glowrey attempted to do by referring to the rabbit-proof fence as an instance in which the pastoral and agricultural districts were receiving a benefit.

The PRESIDENT : I do not think that is out of order.

*Hon. C. A. PIESSE* : I take it the people of the goldfields will regard this water scheme as a business proposition,

if they are the sensible people I believe them to be. They will probably read what Mr. Patriek has said, and will appreciate his valuable suggestions. Why should not that scheme be made a paying concern, by connecting it at once with this city? There is no reason on earth why it should not be connected with the Perth water supply. But no; the Government will borrow more money to push on an unnecessary work. The proposed Perth scheme can wait; the site selected can be kept in reserve; and no one will hear with greater pleasure than the goldfields people that the project for utilising surplus water from Mundaring should make this a partly paying scheme. There is no disputing the hard figures which the hon. member quoted. The goldfields people know the Mundaring scheme has cost this State a large sum. I do not go to the extreme of saying that the whole scheme should be made a paying concern; but let us make it so far a paying concern that we shall not lose more than £40,000 a year by it. That will effect in one act a saving within £20,000 of the sum proposed to be raised by the land tax. I will refer to the position of Mildura. I was there in 1892, and in face of a somewhat similar difficulty caused by the wear of machinery and pumping, the price of the water was raised from 10s. an acre to £1. to meet the case. The same difficulty exists to-day in regard to the Coolgardie scheme. It is time we raised the price of the water. And while we have a chance of making the scheme pay by connecting it with the city, we are criminals if we neglect the opportunity.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett* : Why not spread the water over the Eastern districts and the goldfields?

*Hon. C. A. PIESSE* : There are not enough people to make that proposition payable. It would not pay to put down forty miles of piping to supply a place like Beverley. The Government can practise a thousand little economies in various departments. Thousands of pounds are going to waste in useless telegrams, useless odds and ends which, like a little leak, can sink a great ship. The departments have got into the old careless

style of management, and they continue to spend the State's money regardless of economy. A business house would use this golden opportunity for setting the house in order. The Government have the opportunity; and if they would overhaul the departments and get as near to bedrock as possible in the matter of expenditure, they would be doing good for the country. I trust the Bill will not pass. To one other matter I must refer. If it does pass we shall have to take out of the Roads Act the right to tax the unimproved values, otherwise we shall straightway bar settlement. We shall have to bind down the roads boards to taxing on the annual values only. This will be in a sense a retrograde step. Those bodies are doing useful work, although taxpayers in some districts have to bear a heavier burden than they can carry. It is a retrograde step, but it must occur should this tax become law. The people cannot bear a tax of 2½d. from the roads board and 1½d. from the State, in addition to all the other taxes which they have to pay. As to this excuse about forcing large estates on the market it is quite absurd. I think the least said about that the better considering all the millions of acres of Crown lands which are available and can be taken up and made profitable by working. Considering this fact there is no reason for the outcry against the few large estates. Here is a State of over 600,000,000 acres of land still to be availed of, yet people are howling about a few estates, some of them waterlogged and would be of no use if they were cut up. The only effect of this cry is to make it appear that plenty of country is not available for settlement. If this Bill passes its second reading, and I sincerely trust it will not, I want a provision made in the Committee stage to meet the Midland settlers. These men are fighting the same battles as the settlers on Crown lands, and in the same trying circumstances, or even more trying circumstances, for they are paying a higher price for the land—land which is just as much unimproved as the Crown lands. I also want a better interpretation placed on the term "improved

values." There are several other matters to which I have referred in the course of my speech, but I will not deal farther with them at the present, and it will be better to talk upon them when the Committee stage is reached. [*Hon. J. W. Hackett* : Will we ever get to that stage ?] Some day perhaps, if the hon. gentleman has his way. In all these circumstances, and considering that this Council is directly representative of the landed interest of this State, I consider it is their duty to throw out the Bill.

*Hon. J. T. GLOWERY (South)* : I desire to say a few words on this very important measure now before the House. The question has already been very carefully debated, and I am sure the speeches made by hon. members last session are fresh in the memory of most hon. members now in the Chamber. The question of land taxation is not by any means a new one. It is not even new to us, because it has been before the country for some considerable time past. It is a principle that has been adopted in all the other States with the exception of Queensland, and I believe that in that State even a Land Tax Bill is now before the Legislature. The Bills in the various States vary ; but we are now considering more the principle of land taxation than the details of a Bill. If the House accepts the principle of land taxation it will be the duty of hon. members—and I am sure they will be fully alive to their responsibility—to make that Bill as fair as possible in order to suit the requirements of the State. I differ somewhat from the *Hon. Mr. Randell*, who said he always felt a pleasure in paying taxes. None of us like taxation of any kind. In my opinion it is always distasteful and is generally opposed in the strongest possible manner. I think we have a very good example of that in this Chamber at the present time. Still it often happens that we have to take something which we do not like. I am not going to refer in full to the remarks of the *Hon. Mr. Piesse* ; but it seems to me that many of the statements made by him this evening are at complete variance with those he uttered in this Chamber less than 12

months ago. There is no doubt that he, and every member will agree with me in this, is quite honest in the opinion he has expressed this evening ; but it appears somewhat strange that not only the *Hon. Mr. Piesse*, but also many of his constituents, seem to have taken grave exception to the imposition of the land tax now, although a little less than 12 months ago they took but little exception to the proposal.

*Hon. C. A. Piesse* : On a point of order. The hon. member has stated that my constituents never raised an objection to the proposal last year. I want to state that in only one place in my province did they approve of this tax.

The PRESIDENT : That is not a point of order ; it is a personal explanation.

*Hon. J. T. GLOWREY* : I may have misquoted the hon. member when I said there was no opposition on the part of his constituents. I think he referred to farmers and I withdraw that part of my statement, for I desire by no means to do him an injustice. When this Bill was introduced 12 months ago there was to my mind a very strong case made out for the imposition of this tax. It was very well supported indeed by the *Hon. Mr. Piesse*, who made out really the strongest case in favour of the Bill that was uttered during the debate. If that tax was necessary 12 months ago, undoubtedly there is a necessity for it at the present time. We must have farther revenue, notwithstanding the many economies that have been effected during the last year and the many others that are proposed. If we are going to carry out our public works policy it is absolutely essential that the Government of this State should have farther revenue. If on the other hand we are going to adopt a policy suggested by the *Hon. Mr. Piesse*—to stop all public works and go in for a drastic system of economy—then possibly the Government may be able to do without the land tax. In this State, which is one full of resources and a young country, the people are not going to support anything of that kind. The State is not going to stand still.

*Hon. C. A. Piesse* : The hon. gentleman is misrepresenting me. I did not say that all public works should be stopped. I

said "ease them a little." I object to his misstatements.

Hon. J. T. GLOWREY: I have no desire to misrepresent the hon. member, but that was the opinion I gained from his remarks. He has made use of words, or some one else has, doubting the mandate from the electors of the East Province. I consider that that election, right in the midst of an agricultural and pastoral district, a district which would be as much affected by the tax as any other province in Western Australia—[*Hon. C. A. Piesse*: Not a bit of it!—was significant of the feeling of the people, for the vote in favour of the land tax was about 900 to 600. That is in a district where almost every voter would come under the influence of the tax, and that surely is a sufficient mandate to satisfy any hon. member. In my opinion, if this House should decide to reject the measure, members will be taking a very serious responsibility upon themselves. If members will consider for a moment the works that are proposed—some now passed and others suggested—they will realise what it means. I see from the notice paper of another place that there is a Bill down for the construction of a dock at Fremantle. I am told that the work will cost over quarter of a million. In addition to that there are railways down for construction. There is the Coolgardie-Norseman railway, which has already been authorised by Parliament, and which will cost something over £180,000; also the Bridgetown-Wilgarup line to cost about £25,000; the Busselton-Lower Blackwood line to cost over £30,000; the Mount Magnet-Black Range railway to cost £140,000; the Narrogin-Wickepin railway to cost £33,000, and the Newcastle-Bolgart railway to cost over £40,000. These figures are all approximate. Then there is the Pinjarra-Marinup railway to cost £25,000; the Upper Chapman line to cost £40,000; and the Port Hedland-Marble Bar line to cost £225,000.

*Hon. C. Somers*: Will they all be stopped?

Hon. J. T. GLOWREY: The hon. member will have the opportunity later on of expressing his views.

*Hon. C. Sommers*: It is a question I am asking you and a very simple one.

Hon. J. T. GLOWREY: I am not answering questions now. The hon. member will have an opportunity of expressing his opinion, as I am trying to express mine. If my ideas are not intelligible to the hon. member all I can say is I am sorry. Put all these figures together and you will find that they total up a little over one million of money. [*Hon. J. W. Wright*: How much of it was voted last session?] Only a portion of the Norseman railway. I am not prepared to say definitely, however, as I have not the figures. At all events all the works are not done; some have not yet been taken in hand and I presume the money is not raised to carry out all the works. I made a remark a few minutes ago to the effect that hon. members in rejecting this measure will in my opinion at least be taking a very serious responsibility on themselves, because it may mean that these works may be delayed. It is possible that they may be delayed for a very considerable time. The hon. member does not know that any more than I do. I do not say it will do so; but in my opinion, if it does, the blame will without doubt be cast upon this Chamber. That is why I repeat that if members reject this measure they will be undertaking a serious responsibility. Many statements have been made during this debate—I am sorry to have so frequently to refer to the hon. member's speech; but he made many statements not supported by figures and not borne out by facts. I fail to see how the imposition of this tax will seriously affect the farmer, in whose behalf Mr. Piesse spoke so strongly. We have been told only this evening that the farming industry is in a flourishing condition, that its prospects were never better in the history of Western Australia—the crops are good, grass growing well, stock looking in excellent condition. And we have almost daily requests for lines of railway from nearly every part of the country. If these railways are justified, and I am sure many of them are, I venture to say that the farmers would willingly submit to the imposition of reasonable taxation, as this is, if by that means they could



secure railway facilities. I shall not farther take up the time of the House. Nothing I or any other member may say will have the slightest effect when the division bell rings.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	12
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	2

AYES.	NOES.
Hon. G. Bellingham	Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. S. J. Haynes
Hon. J. D. Connolly	Hon. W. Kingsmill
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. T. Lofton
Hon. J. T. Glowrey	Hon. W. Malet
Hon. J. W. Hackett	Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. J. W. Langsford	Hon. M. L. Moss
Hon. W. Patrick	Hon. E. W. Peasefather
Hon. G. Throssell	Hon. G. Randell
Hon. J. A. Thomson	Hon. R. F. Sholl
(Teller).	Hon. C. Sommers
	Hon. C. A. Piesse
	(Teller).

Question thus negatived; the Bill rejected.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8.43 o'clock, until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th September, 1907.

	PAGE
Papers: Goldfields Water Supply Report, an	
Explanation .....	1483
Questions: Railway Duplications, Cost .....	1483
Surveyors' Licenses Cancelled .....	1484
Bills: Government Railways Act Amendment, 1A. 1484	
Electoral, Com. resumed, Clauses 40 to 45	
(claims, etc.), progress .....	1484

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

Prayers.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, By-laws of the Municipalities of Boulder, Kanowna, Menzies, and Perth.

By the Minister for Works: 1, Goldfields Water Supply Administration—Accounts to 30th June, 1907. 2, Overflow of Water from Mundaring Reservoir—Return moved for by Mr. Butcher.

*Goldfields Water Supply.*—The Minister for Works, in presenting the Report of the Goldfields Water Supply Administration, said: In this Report the Auditor General makes the following remarks:—

"Under Section 104 accounts have to be made up and audited twice every year, and then transmitted to the Governor. The usual statements were not furnished to me on the 31st December, 1906; the books, however, were examined. From information received from the Secretary of the Administration it was found that it had been decided by the Minister to have the accounts made out yearly in future, namely, on 30th June. In my opinion the action is a wise one, as it saves considerable work both of the staff of the Administration and the Audit; but as it was contrary to law, I suggested that the Minister should make a statement to Parliament, and then, if concurred in, there would be no need for farther remarks by me. It is understood that the Minister intends to take the first opportunity of doing this."

The half-yearly statement of accounts as provided by the Act occurs when the whole of the staff is inordinately busy over the issue of rate notices. After consultation with the Auditor General, he has suggested that the statement of accounts should not be made, and that I should make an explanation to this House; this being the usual practice in other States where a technical breach of the Act is committed.

## QUESTION—RAILWAY DUPLICATIONS, COST.

Mr. STONE asked the Minister for Railways: Will the Government obtain the consent of Parliament in future for the expenditure of sums of money exceeding £500 on duplicating or deviating railway lines before authorising such.