

ally by the almost prohibitive duty imposed on machinery.

(c.) That the agricultural and pastoral industries will also be very prejudicially affected by the increased duties on commodities necessary therefor.

(d.) That many of the other industries of this State may be compelled to curtail if not to suspend operations.

(e.) That the purchasing power of wages will be diminished, avenues of labour will be closed, the number of our unemployed will be increased, and both workers and tradesmen in our midst must severely suffer.

We leave it to the Representatives of this State in your House to indicate in detail the items which will produce the results above mentioned.

We desire to remind you that we represent a State which forms an integral part of the Commonwealth and covers more than one-third of the total area of the combined States of Australia. A large portion of our State territory is at present undeveloped, and its future progress depends largely on the increase of population and the expansion of its industries.

Respectfully we record our protest against a tariff so calculated to injure Western Australia which has already made so many and such great sacrifices in the interest of Australian nationhood.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved—

*That the Address to the members of the Senate and House of Representatives, in the form recommended by the joint committee, be agreed to; and that Mr. President be authorised, in conjunction with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, to present same to His Excellency the Governor, with a request that it be forwarded through the proper channel to the members of the Senate and House of Representatives.*

Question put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT, ONE WEEK.

At 7.40 o'clock, the House adjourned to Tuesday, 10th September.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 29th August, 1907.

	Page
Questions: Pastoral Leases ... ..	1186
Loan Offer ... ..	1186
Leave of Absence ... ..	1187
Bill: Land/Tax Assessment, 2 <sup>nd</sup> concluded ... ..	1187
Federal New Tariff, Joint Committee's form of Resonance reported, debated, adopted	1224

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

Prayers.

### QUESTION—PASTORAL LEASE.

Mr. H. BROWN asked the Minister for Lands : 1, On what date was Pastoral Lease No. 423/97 granted? 2, Name and address of applicant for lease? 3, On what date was lease 423/97 cancelled, and reason for cancellation? 4, On what date was lease 423/97 reinstated, and reasons for such reinstatement? 5, What amount of rent has been paid on lease 423/97 since first issued? 6, Has the applicant for lease 423/97 effected any improvement since lease was granted; if so, what do improvements consist of? 7, has the applicant for lease 423/97 at any time grazed stock thereon; if so, state class of stock, month and year when grazed, number of stock, and in whose charge were such stock while being grazed on lease 423/97?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied : 1, 18th July, 1905. 2, Andrew Barr, care of G. R. Barr, Doodlakine. 3, 1st February, 1907; non-payment of rent. 4, 2nd August, 1907. At request of the Official Receiver in Bankruptcy to enable him to effect a sale then pending. 5, £1 4s. 6d.; but £62 10s. was previously paid on same land under a different number. 6 and 7, The District Inspector will be asked to endeavour to obtain the information desired, but particulars of this nature are never recorded in the Department.

### QUESTION—LOAN OFFER.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Treasurer: 1, Was the Government offered £250,000 on loan from an Australian financial in-

stitution with branch offices in this State? 2. If so, on what terms? 3. Has the Government refused the offer? 4. If so, for what reasons?

The TREASURER replied: To all four questions, No.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by *Mr. S. F. Moore*, leave of absence for one month granted to the member for Roebourne (*Dr. Hicks*), on the ground of ill health.

### BILL—LAND TAX ASSESSMENT.

#### *Machinery Measure.*

Debate resumed from the 20th August.

*Mr. P. STONE* (Greenough): For several reasons I support the land tax; first, on account of the unsatisfactory state of our finances. We have lost control of our customs tariff, and have no means of assisting the Treasurer except by a direct tax; and although most people dislike a land tax or any other direct tax, we must face the difficulty and see what is best to be done. This tax will not only assist the Treasurer, but will have the effect of breaking up large estates which are a drawback to settlement, and will thus enable our people to settle on the land in this State instead of going away to settle elsewhere. There is a cry for retrenchment in all Government departments, to enable the Treasurer to make ends meet; and I do not know of any better means of making good the deficit and employing our people than a land tax, which I think should be coupled with an income tax. By itself a land tax seems to me a class tax. For these reasons I will support the Bill; but when in Committee I hope the measure will be so treated that it will not bear unduly on an estate in proportion to its size merely. Many an estate may be worth £100,000 and may be mortgaged for £20,000 or £25,000. I take it the valuation of such an estate will be its actual value less the amount of the mortgage. [*Mr. Foulkes*: The Bill does not so provide.] I do not say it does; but that is provided in the Land Tax Acts of South

Australia and other countries, and I think it is only fair and reasonable. If an estate is mortgaged to a bank, the bank has to pay dividend duty on the interest collected; therefore the valuation of the estate for taxing purposes should be its value less the amount secured by mortgage.

*Mr. W. J. BUTCHER* (Gascoyne): It is somewhat regrettable that I have not come prepared to continue this debate; but I presume the Government are anxious to close it without farther delay, and for this reason I think it right that I should voice my objections now. It is needless for me to say I am strongly opposed not to this measure only as drafted but opposed on principle to a land tax. I am strongly opposed at the present time to any kind of land taxation. I am still more strongly opposed to a land tax on unimproved values. If we are to have a land tax on any principle at all, I should not be so very hostile to a measure which would tax severely unimproved lands. Such a tax would in any country, certainly in this, have the effect of bringing into use large areas of land which are now in a state of nature; and I am sorry to say some of the lands to which I allude have been held by their owners for the last 20 or 30, perhaps 50 years, and are still unimproved. And these are not the lands which we are about to tax on an unimproved value basis. I sincerely regret that the Government did not take the hint given them last year, when this measure was being discussed in this House. The representatives of the people in this Parliament clearly indicated then that they were not in favour of a land tax in any form. In spite of the warning given them on that occasion, the Government come down with the same measure, which they wish to force through the Legislature. I say the people of Western Australia have already entered their protest against taxing the unimproved values of land, and I can show conclusively that my statement is correct. If members will carry their minds back to two or three years ago, when the present Oppo-

sition (Labour Party) were in power, they will remember that at the next general election the people of Western Australia gave their vote against the Labour platform which everyone admits and knows has as its first plank the imposition of a land tax? That, however, is a true land tax, and not the one the Government are bringing forward which is neither fish, fowl, nor even decent red herring. It is clearly understood that a land tax on unimproved values is the first plank of the Labour platform. I know for a positive fact that all the people living in the country who owned land and who were likely to be affected by the tax, voted against the Labour Party at the last elections for that reason. The result of this was that they sent back to Parliament a large majority opposed to the Labour platform; but immediately that majority come to the House they use their power to adopt the first plank of the Labour platform. A Government who do that are out of sympathy with the people of the State. The measure before the House is not in the true interests of the people, and the Government who propose it do not represent the people. [*The Treasurer*: You should vote to put them out.] My vote will not keep the Government in power on this land tax question. That is a plank I will never agree to. I am sorry to think that the Government are going to get this tax through the House by intimidation. It is nothing short of that. They are securing the support of members on this side of the House by the threat that if they are defeated on this tax a dissolution must follow. They are getting the support of men who were sent here to oppose that very principle, because those members will not do otherwise than support the land tax, as they are afraid to go to the people to test the question.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a reflection on members which should not be made.

*The Treasurer*: When did we threaten it?

Mr. BUTCHER: I have had it said to me on many occasions by Ministers that if they are defeated on the land tax, there will be a dissolution. I give this to the House as it was given to me. If it

were not meant for a threat, I regret what I have said. The members who are supporting the Government on the tax are out of sympathy with the people who sent them to Parliament. There are members on this side of the House who, when before their constituents, will abuse the Government and everyone connected with it because of the land tax, but when they come to this House they are as mild and weak as possible, in fact as weak as water.

Mr. Gordon: Like you at the last elections.

Mr. BUTCHER: They know this measure is contrary to the best interests of their constituents. I cannot speak too strongly on this measure and regret that the Government should have brought it down.

Mr. Gordon: You are one of the noble four.

Mr. BUTCHER: My constituents sent me here six years ago as an independent member. [*Mr. Gordon*: What about the last elections?] I have always been an independent member of this House, and will be so long as I am here. I will support the Government when I think they are right, and will oppose them when I think they are wrong, even though it brings me before my constituents. Recently when an election was being held in connection with one of the provinces, we heard of Ministers going into the country and assisting a candidate to secure his return. The principal issue of that election was the land tax, and we heard of Ministers getting up on the platform in the country and saying, "You need not be afraid of the land tax for you will not be affected; it is the people in the towns who will be affected, and you need not be afraid of it at all." In support of this argument they produced a number of tabulated statements showing how the farming community would fare. Now we have members of the Ministry assisting a candidate for this House who is seeking to be returned for a city constituency. They do not use the arguments in this case which they did when they were in the country, but they say to the people of the city, "You need not be afraid of the land tax, it will not

hurt the people in the towns, it is directed against the people with large estates, and we are going to burst up those estates." Those are the arguments they use in the towns. Surely the people will not be gulled in this way, but will have sufficient sense to know what the result of this tax is to be. It will not be a case of £60,000, which we are told will result from the tax, but I am sure it will be as much as £150,000 which the people will have to pay. The tax will not only affect the townspeople but the country people as well. It is unjust for the Government to go on the platform and misrepresent to the people the effect of the tax. [Mr. Holman : Did they read any telegrams?] No doubt they read very many telegrams. I think one was read out to the farmers in the country which said that when the Government saved £50,000 by economies through dismissing guards on the railways, the amount would be used towards the reduction of freights and rates on the railways. When this telegram was read there was an election on at the time, and the statement was made with the object of trying to assist the return of the candidate in whose interests Ministers were speaking. [Mr. Bath : The Treasurer in introducing the Bill said the taxation would reduce the deficit.] The candidate who was returned for the country province would be out of touch with every member of that province when he supported the land tax. [Mr. Gordon : How did he get in?] I will tell you how he got in. The people who lived in the principal centres of that province were the only ones who were given an opportunity of voting. There were hundreds of landowners who would have voted against the tax had they not been disfranchised. Did anyone ever know of a more immoral action than allowing only eight days between the day of nomination and that of election? Where is the consistency when we know that for the West Perth election a period of one month is being allowed? Why is it that in a huge province embracing some thousands of miles, and long distances between the polling stations, only eight days are allowed? I have met numbers of men since that

election who have told me they did not know an election was being held until a candidate had been returned. That is how the successful candidate was returned. [The Attorney General : Whom do you blame?] I blame the Government, and I may say at once that I am willing to have general elections again and will welcome them. I should be pleased to see an election within a month. If I have to go to my constituents I will tell them I opposed the Moore Government purely and simply on the land tax question, and they can then deal with me as they wish. I hope some of my friends representing agricultural constituencies will act similarly. If they support the tax their electors will deal with them. If the Government find it impossible to make ends meet with the present revenue, there are other ways, as I indicated when dealing with this Bill last session, of either economising or of increasing the revenue. I hold that this country should be managed on the same lines as a private person manages either his private life or his business. If the expenditure exceeds the revenue then the first thing to do is to reduce the expenditure. Sufficient economies are not being exercised to justify Parliament at this juncture in placing an extra burden of taxation on the people. It has been said it is necessary to raise farther taxation because we have not the handling of the revenue we had some years ago ; it having been lost owing to Federation and the disappearance of the sliding scale. That burden which the people have had placed upon them falls equally on the whole community. To make up that loss we are going to put the responsibility and burden upon the shoulders of a small section of the State. I believe the Government become indignant if you call this a class tax. I consider it is nothing but that. I have suggested that the subsidies granted to the roads boards should be done away with. I know more about the roads boards than a good many members, and I can say the expenditure on a great many of them is nothing short of a disgrace. Large sums of money are wasted in the administration of these boards throughout the whole State. I do not

say for one moment that the boards should not be assisted or subsidised in some way, but it should be in the direction of granting special votes for specific purposes. The boards should be allowed to raise local taxation to do the balance of the work. I believe the same argument applies to municipal grants, and an enormous amount of money is wasted in the municipalities. They over-assess their values for the purpose of increasing the rate with the one object of obtaining the subsidy from the Government.

*The Minister for Works* : Who did that ?

Mr. BUTCHER : It is done in several municipalities, and I defy the Minister to deny it.

*The Minister for Works* : I have proved that to be incorrect.

Mr. BUTCHER : I make that statement advisedly. The municipalities increase their rates and assess their values so highly for the purpose of raising enormous revenue with no other object than to "huddle" the Government down in the form of a subsidy.

*The Minister for Works* : Do they inflate values ?

Mr. BUTCHER : Yes. And I know of values placed on properties in this State which are far in excess of the sum which would be received if the properties were sold.

*The Minister for Works* : There is a right of appeal.

Mr. BUTCHER : I am perfectly aware of that, but it is an appeal from Cæsar to Cæsar : that is about what it means. Then again, as showing how the land tax will affect settlers, I may point out that there are a number of people settled on the Midland Railway Company's concession who, I am given to understand, will not secure the benefit of the exemptions proposed by the Government. [Interjection by the *Attorney General*.] I am glad to hear I am wrong in this, and that all Midland settlers will come under the exemptions wherever their selections may be. I hope that even at this eleventh hour the Government will see they are not doing altogether the just thing towards the settlers in this State in introducing this taxation : that they will see the error

of their ways and withdraw the Bill. I express that hope with the idea of tendering the Government good advice, though I do not suppose they will follow it. We are building railways into the agricultural districts with the object of opening up the country for encouraging settlement, and on the other hand we are introducing taxation of a character which must become a burden on the settler and make his living on the land an absolute impossibility. I know people now settled on the land who are unable to meet their ordinary obligations to the storekeepers. I know for a positive fact of settlers on the land who cannot pay their legitimate accounts ; of others who are living on kangaroo and opossum and never see such things as milk and butter from one week's end to the other. There are families of four and five persons living in this way, having scarcely the necessaries of life. They now find it almost impossible to live on the land under present conditions ; and yet we propose to make their living on the land, if not absolutely impossible, at least more unbearable than hitherto. If we must have a land tax the Government should show conclusively that it is required for revenue purposes. And farther, any land tax imposed must be such as will affect everyone similarly. That is the only form under which I can agree to this measure. [*Mr. Bolton* : That is a tax without exemptions?] It is my intention to oppose this Bill clause by clause from the beginning to the very end.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. N. Keenan) : It is a matter for regret that the debate so far as it has proceeded shows that in reviewing a measure of this character one cannot shake oneself free from personal considerations. I do not say that the hon. member who has just sat down is more to blame in that respect than other members, but once the debate on such a subject as this takes a personal aspect, the effect of taxation on the pockets of the individual forms a far more conclusive argument in these cases than all the logic that may be brought to bear.

Mr. Holman : The pocket consideration was a conclusive argument against

the suggested reduction by £200 in Ministers' salaries.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : I am prepared to introduce that Bill even now.

*Mr. Holman* : But will you pay the amount back to the Treasury at the present time?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : Does the hon. member think £200 a year such an enormous amount?

*Mr. Holman* : It would make a pretty solid addition to the salaries of private members, anyhow.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : I have no desire of taking anything from the hon. member. I am pointing out, and I think I am justified in so doing, that when we hear opinions passed on this Land Tax Assessment Bill—and consequently on the Land Tax Bill which is to follow—these opinions are coloured largely by the effect the tax will have on the individual himself. If he is one on whom the tax will fall, he considers the tax something that should not legitimately or morally be put on him : but if he be not affected by the tax, he will recognise, as many members of this House who are large landowners have recognised, that this is a fit and proper form of taxation and absolutely necessary in the present state of the finances. We are asked by the member for Gascoyne (*Mr. Butcher*) to do a good thing, or rather the correct thing, by the settlers of this State. I can assure him, and I hope to point this out conclusively before I resume my seat, that it is absolutely necessary we raise revenue, and that this form of raising revenue is the most equitable we can put our hands on. Before touching on that phase of the matter, let me first draw the attention of the House to this fact. It has been again and again stated that this is something that has been sprung upon the country. The hon. member (*Mr. Butcher*) vouchsafed the information that the present Government took it, as something entirely novel, from the platform of the party sitting opposite. The member for Gascoyne was in the House when *Mr. (now Sir Walter) James* was Premier of the State : and I have taken the trouble to look up the address to

Parliament delivered by His Excellency the Governor at the commencement of the session just before the Labour Government was called into power. In that address the following passage occurs :—

“ A measure for the imposition of a tax upon unimproved land values and incomes, and upon totalisator receipts, will be submitted to recoup the deficiency caused by the reduction in revenue returned by the Commonwealth.”

*Mr. Butcher* : What was the result of that to the James Government?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : Does the hon. member wish to infer that it was because of that paragraph in the Governor's Speech that the James Government was turned out of power? That assertion cannot stand, because that Government was put out by a party pledged to support that particular form of taxation. I am pointing out that this is nothing novel, nothing in the nature of what the hon. member desires to paint it as, something entirely novel in the Government policy.

*Mr. Butcher* : I said you stole it from the platform of the Labour party.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : Exactly ; that we had stolen it from the Labour party. But, as I have shown, it was included in the policy of the James Government, of which the hon. member was a supporter, and as a Government we have inherited it by right of succession.

*Mr. BUTCHER* : I desire to put the hon. gentleman right. He accuses me of having belonged to the party that supported the James Government. I did not ; and just to put the Minister right, I may say I belonged to a party of four, known as the Independents, belonging neither to the James Party nor to the Labour Party.

*Mr. Bath* : As a matter of fact, you sat in Opposition to the James Government.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : If I have done the hon. member an injustice I desire to repair it. But there were then in the House two parties of con-

siderable numerical strength, the party that followed Mr. James and the party behind Mr. Daglish. The Independents were not strong numerically, and we do not know that anybody ever asked them to submit a policy to the country. [*Mr. Scaddan* : They held the balance of power.] True ; but they were not in a position to occupy the Treasury benches; and whether they supported the James Party or the Daglish Party, they were supporting a party which proposed to introduce a tax on the unimproved value of land.

*Mr. Bath* : No ; the James Government proposed only to tax large unimproved estates.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : Let me read the extract again ; the hon. member I think was not in the House when I read it just now. [Extract again read.]

*Mr. Bath* : When was that?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : 6th July, 1905.

*Mr. Scaddan* : Was that the year they were defeated?

*Mr. Taylor* : No ; they went out in 1904.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : In 1905.

*Mr. Taylor* : Mr. James was not in power in 1905 ; his Government was put out in 1904.

*Mr. Scaddan* : That is the Daglish Government's policy you are quoting.

Mr. SPEAKER : I must ask hon. members to maintain order.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : Hon. members will remember this much, that the James Government met Parliament and submitted a programme of the measures they intended bringing forward, had they been permitted to remain in office. I am not referring to what the James Government carried out, but what was intended to be carried out in that session, had the James Government retained office.

*Mr. Taylor* : Is that the Governor's Speech at the opening of the 1905 session?

*Mr. Scaddan* : What is the date of Hansard?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : 6th July, 1905.

*Mr. Taylor* : That speech was not delivered while Mr. James was Premier ; it was while Mr. Daglish was in office.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : It does not matter ; I have no desire to elaborate the point farther. What I want to make plain, apart from considerations of a jocular character, is that there was put before that country, not by Mr. Rason when he took office but before that time, the absolute necessity for replenishing our revenue, and it was pointed out that that could be done only by a tax on totalisator receipts and a tax on unimproved land values. When Mr. Rason appealed to the electors, he did not definitely set out the basis on which that taxation would be.

*Mr. Bath* : No ; and his Ministers opposed it, too. The member for Sussex, for instance.

*The Treasurer* : I did not.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : The member for Sussex can answer for himself. This much must be remembered, that in addition to the requirements then existing, the farther requirements of the State to-day necessitate close attention and greater consideration in regard to matters of this character. Surely if three years ago the State was on the point of financial trouble to the extent that it was pointed out as necessary by the James Government to replenish our resources, has not that necessity increased since then?

*Mr. Taylor* : I think the Minister is assuming too much for Sir Walter James. That policy was delivered two years ago.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : Let us then take it at two years. Is the argument at all weakened by that? If two years ago the requirements of the State were such that it was clearly a necessity to contemplate new sources of revenue, surely the hon. member will admit that that necessity has increased since then, and has now placed upon us the absolute duty, not the choice, of considering how we can raise farther revenue to meet the absolute requirements of the country.

*Mr. Butcher* : By reducing expenditure.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Let me deal with the possibility of reducing the expenditure. The Leader of the Opposition quoted some figures. I do not know whether they are absolutely accurate or not, but this much can be accepted as certain as regards the revenue to-day and five years ago, that while our requirements have increased by approximately 30 per cent., we have not now got the same amount of money to spend, and in addition we have to face the accumulated charges on the loans raised, and the interest on those loans; and yet we are asked to so retrench our expenditure as to keep within the four borders of our revenue. I say that in a country like Western Australia, if any man asserts that it is good for our future to cut off expenses absolutely necessary, and are proved to be necessary for the development of the country, merely for the purpose of squaring the ledger, he is giving what he knows, or ought to know, to be absolutely false advice.

Mr. Johnson: That is absolutely what you told the electors you would do, nevertheless.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. members knows perfectly well that—

Mr. Johnson: I know perfectly well how you won your election.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That was the state of affairs when Mr. Rason put forward his policy, and so far as I am personally concerned I say that I always recognised the position. Is it any good shutting our eyes to it? What is the real position to-day? We have to increase our revenue sufficiently to meet the deficit that stares us in the face, even if we economise to the greatest possible extent. I put this position before the country: We have on the one hand the responsibility, if we choose to take it, of cutting off every item of expenditure above the mere keeping the country alive, merely continuing in some inanimate state until some better times arrive, or are supposed to arrive. What is the result of that? The member for Gascoyne is aggrieved at some taxation that will be placed on him; but what would be the result if the country went

backward? What would be the result to every farmer? The farmer depends upon a market for his produce, and if that market ceased to-morrow he would find that the land he tills and cultivates would not be worth half what it is to-day? I say that the progress of the country is entirely wrapped up with the progress of those gentlemen on the soil, whether they be small holders cultivating small areas, or large holders with runs containing thousands of sheep. It is impossible for any man to contemplate stagnation without knowing, if he is a land holder, that the capital value of his land will depreciate ten times what it would be depreciated by the infliction of a land tax. There is no intention of using the weapon of the land tax for any purpose except a legitimate one. It is not used to crush the farmer as some members would lead us to believe, but it is used to promote the interests of the country; and in promoting the interest of the country we cannot but promote the interests of the farmer. I ask members to grasp this fact in the history of the State: We have passed the time when we can build up the future in the way other States have contrived to build up their prosperity. They had a free hand in erecting manufacturing industries which have subsequently grown to larger proportions. They were able by paths that cannot be trodden by us to work out to a certain extent a measure of success, but we are faced with the position that we have to take things as they are, and we know that we have no power, even if it were possible, to raise a single penny by indirect taxation.

Mr. Butcher: And you and other federalists are responsible for it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not here now to discuss federation. Surely the hon. member will allow me to discuss one point at a time. If the question of federation does arise I am prepared to answer for my share, and not only that but to ask the great majority of Parliament and the country to still support the system which was inaugurated when federation was established.



But that is wholly apart from this question. What I am asking now is that we should recognise the facts that exist, that we cannot raise a single penny by indirect taxation, and recognising that fact, that if we are to push the fortunes of the country we must push them in other directions and must raise revenue to achieve that success by direct taxation. I look to whatever Ministry is in power: I do not care whether it is the present Ministry, or our successors, or their successors again and again—whatever Ministry be in power, on the whole they will be imbued with the desire to serve the interests of the country, and if they address themselves to the question they will have to look to ports of export, for means of trade being carried, produced by the natural resources of the State, they will have to make ready markets for the future for our settlers, and they will have to provide for the encouragement of the other industries by making conditions as easy as possible for those engaged in them. To do that even in a mediocre degree will involve expenditure, and that expenditure can only be justified if that Ministry has the pluck to ask the country to give the money to meet it. It will be a pitiable sight indeed if any Ministry should allow the country to become involved in expenditure and not have the common honesty and decency to ask the country to give the money to meet that expenditure. I turn from that point of view to the criticism which has been addressed to this measure submitted to the House, and I desire first to deal with some matters of personal criticism. The member for Kanowna misunderstood, I feel sure, or misread the remarks of mine which he quoted in saying that I claimed that I had designed the exemption clauses. If the hon. member looks again at the extract he referred to he will find that what I did tell the Kalgoorlie audience I was addressing was that I had in a large measure a personal responsibility for the rebate clause, and I will at once deal with that rebate clause, and point out how that statement of mine was correct, and what is the exact meaning of it.

*Mr. Bath:* The hon. member read from a newspaper report.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think that if he reads from it again he will see that he misread it.

*Mr. Walker:* I did not understand it. As it is in *Hansard* so it was supplied to them from the source from which I read.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the hon. member gives me the newspaper I shall be glad to show how far it is correct. So far as I can recollect I did explain to the electors at Kalgoorlie that I supported the exemption clauses for the reason that I had promised to support them, but that I was personally responsible for the rebate clause; and now I desire to deal with that rebate clause. I do not know that any member opposite would combat the suggestion that if we create taxation of this character we should make its incidence the heavier on those who make no use of the land of which they stand possessed. It is a proposition there can be no dissent to. But if a man is a freeholder we cannot attempt to impose on him conditions without being guilty of an act of robbery of the very title we have given him. Therefore it would not be practicable to insert in this Bill a clause in which we directly state that the holder of land who makes no use of his land is to pay an increased tax because he makes no use of it; but it is a matter I perhaps somewhat egotistically point out as being ingenious, that we arrive at exactly the same result by doing what it is constitutional for us to do, by giving a bonus or rebate to the man who does make use of his land. Let me submit a small sum in arithmetic. Suppose that the tax is a penny, and that the man who makes no use of his land is to pay twice as much as the man who does. Then the position would be that the man who has made use of his land in accordance with some defined requirements set out in the Bill is to pay a penny, and the man who has not done so is to pay twopence. As I said before, there would be, I suppose, no possible exception to such a proposition if it were warranted; but what is the difference between saying that and saying that, in the first instance, the tax

is twopence, but that the man who is making use of his land is entitled to a rebate of a penny? Can any member distinguish between one and the other? If a member is in a position not to dissent to one, how can he dissent to the other? I think that only the grossest misconception has made any criticism possible of the proposal known as the rebate clause: only a complete misunderstanding of what its intent is and what its scope will be has justified any member of the community in taking exception to this clause. I say without hesitation that it is a wise and proper course to take. When speaking in Kalgoorlie I referred to the fact that the then member for Leonora, now Senator Lynch, referred to it as a clause that met with his strongest approval. I did so merely to show that at any rate he had given the subject some more attention than many of those who were critics of the clause, and that with close attention and study—

*Mr. Underwood*: It might have been through lack of attention.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I venture to think that on the whole Senator Lynch had more the gift of attention than the member for Pilbarra. However, that is a comparison I do not care to assert. I am perfectly satisfied that any reasonable member of the community, and any member of this House who gives this particular clause close attention, will feel that it is one he must support: because if there is anything we should do in this country it is that by every means in our power we should encourage those who make the best and most constant use of their opportunities, and we cannot do that when we are framing a tax of this character unless we include in that tax some benefit to be derived by those who use their lands as against those who make no use of them whatever. The member for Kanowna also said that the exemptions appearing in this Bill would benefit the large landholders. Let me draw attention to what those exemptions are. There are numbers of formal exemptions, such as land owned by or on behalf of the Crown, public roads and thoroughfares, public reserves, and so on, land held by any

person or society, occupied by a hospital, lands held as mining tenements, and lands vested in trustees for show and scientific purposes; but here are the exemptions referred to by the hon. member:—

“All lands, the unimproved value of which does not exceed £50, are exempted from assessment for taxation under this Act.”

Those lands are within the municipalities. Does that come within the description of a large landholder, the man who holds land up to a value of £50? Surely the hon. member must have an extraordinary narrow limit to his definition of a large landholder when he states that such a holder is a large landholder. I have not a close knowledge of land values in this State, but I venture to say that if I went out to the suburbs to a block of land held by a man who is just earning his daily bread, I would find that its value would be £50. That is what I anticipate would be the value of small allotments on which the working people of the State are generally found. The second exemption is:—

“All lands outside the boundaries of any municipality used solely or principally for agricultural, horticultural, pastoral or grazing purposes, or for two or more of such purposes, the unimproved value of which does not exceed £1,000, shall be assessed after deducting the sum of £250.”

*Mr. Scaddan*: But in the case of city lands we do not deduct the first £50 if the value is over £50.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No.

*Mr. Scaddan*: Did you tell them that in West Perth?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I believe that some of the hon. member's party are going to West Perth to ask the people there to vote for the anti-taxer. [*Mr. Bath*: No.] I understand, from good information, that is the position which is being taken up quietly and unostentatiously in order to get votes for the man who is opposed to the Government. The statement was made to me by a man in whom I have implicit confidence. He is an honourable man, and I believe he would be the last to make such a statement if it were not warranted. However, I am not discussing the tactics of

any party in this House, and if the hon. member had not asked me about it I would have had nothing to say on the question. Is it reasonable for the member for Kanowna to say that an exemption up to £250—for that is the full amount I am now dealing with, outside of municipalities—is one that will benefit large landowners? Remember it is not £250 where the land is used for residential purposes, but only in relation to land principally used for agricultural, horticultural, pastoral, or grazing purposes. Is it reasonable to say that a man who owns land worth £250 and utilises it for such purposes is a large landowner? [*Mr. Bath*: They arrange their lands to meet the exemptions.] If the hon. member has read the Bill he must be aware that the exemptions will not avail a man who has an equitable interest in any other block of land. If a man is interested in a number of blocks they are all taken as one for the purposes of taxation. Because a man has several blocks valued at £250 each he cannot escape taxation. It is impossible to say that every precaution has not been taken to prevent unfair evasions of the tax. Clause 11 dealing with the exemptions also sets out that all lands held under contract for conditional purchase made before or after the commencement of the Act under the Land Act 1895, or any amendment thereof, are exempted from assessment for taxation under this Act for the term of five years from the date of contract, 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 1,000 acres. It would be absurd to describe a man who takes up 1,000 acres, which is the total amount of land he is equitably or directly interested in, as a large landowner. There is not a man going on the land to-day who would not look upon a parcel of that character as being only barely sufficient for the possibilities of the industry. We all know this much, that the effect of the administration of the Land Act shows us that those who go on the land take up a good deal more than a thousand acres. I am not taking the case of a rich man,

but a man who has no resources except his muscles and his brains.

*Mr. Scaddan*: What about taking up land for horticultural purposes? You do not want a thousand acres for that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the hon. member has had experience of horticulture he will know that any man who invests in a block of that size in country which would bring about good results from horticulture would become hopelessly bankrupt. The land suitable for horticulture is not that which is taken up in parcels of a thousand acres, but in very small blocks. I am not going to attempt however to give a lecture on horticulture or agriculture. The exemptions in the Bill are only calculated to benefit the very small holders of land. In the towns the exemptions only benefit the man of the artisan class, who has a small block of land on which he has erected his home, while in the country it is only the man with the smallest parcel of land who is to be exempted. For that reason, if for no other, it must be apparent that in assenting to these exemptions, however much we may otherwise object to them, we are doing something which cannot possibly benefit ourselves. Is it possible to imagine that when you do something that cannot in any way benefit your own pockets, or the pockets of those who may be described as your main supporters, you are acting in a manner other than that which you believe to be best in the interests of the State. Some three months before I took office I spoke at Kalgoorlie exactly in this strain. I pointed out that if a man came to me with a proposition which on examination I found to be clearly for his own benefit, I would be disinclined to agree to it. In such a case, especially if my own views were hostile, I would hold out against the proposition and look upon it as requiring careful examination; but when the proposition is not for his own benefit but because he is convinced that it will be to the benefit of the State, then it is clearly a matter for careful consideration. In such a case where one feels that the convictions of the proposer are genuine, we have no

right to set up our own opinions in order to combat them.

to set up our own opinions in order to combat them.

*Mr. Bath :* You had to support the exemptions before you came into the Ministry.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : I draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that long before the Government was formed, at a time when the late Government was in the zenith of its strength, when no one thought of the possibility of a dissolution before the expiration of the parliamentary life, I spoke to my electors on the land question. I think it was in the year 1905.

*Mr. Bath :* Why, you did it long ago, in the year 1905.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : Will the hon. member suggest that when I spoke on that question I could have any idea of subsequent events?

*Mr. Bath :* Yes.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : Before the Rason Government went out of power?

*Mr. Bath :* Yes; you knew what you could force them to do.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : In making that statement, the hon. member is stating what he knows to be absolutely without foundation, and I say it is absolutely and entirely incorrect. I regret that the Standing Orders do not allow me to say more about it. It is a miserable statement to come from a man, as he must know there is no scintilla even of suggestion that it is correct.

*Mr. Bath :* You would have been on the Opposition cross-benches if it had not come off.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : From an inner meanness that knows everything bad of everyone else and nothing good of anyone, the hon. member says these things. I am not going to argue with an hon. member who will descend to say everything evil of everybody else, without any justification whatever for it. A member who represents—I should regret to say what he represents, because it is something of which no one can be proud. If you find, as we are doing in this case, a proposition put forward which is not

of advantage to those of us who advocate it, then you are bound to give it consideration, such as you will be bound to give to a proposal which could not be traced to any personal influences. When you find a man interested in the land saying "We will bear the burden because it is for the good of the country, but we ask you to exempt others of a class not sufficiently strong to be able to bear it," I ask the House to say that the opinions of those representatives of the people and those people themselves deserve favourable consideration. I have nothing farther to say at this stage, except that the only choice that lies before us is to support whatever Government are in power by giving them revenue and enabling them to carry out a bold, forward policy. The alternative to that is entering into a policy of cheeseparing at all costs, and throwing out of work a number of men whom we have known to have done useful work in the State for a long time, and allow the country to drift back into the state we found it in some 10 or 15 years ago.

[*Mr. Bolton :* It is only a paltry £60,00.] Although that is the sum, when in addition to that there are economies effected which are not conducted in the scandalously "closing-down" manner suggested here to-night, we can hope to balance our ledger. If that does not balance the ledger, then I am prepared personally to say that we must balance it by some means or other. The hon. member must allow that what we should do is to make a step in the direction of reducing as far as we can legitimately, without strangling the country, our expenditure, and fill up the gap and only that gap by taxation. I would ask hon. members who have some care for the future of their State to considerately recognise that if they assist the Government by giving the means to ensure the safety of the State, they will do the very best possible thing for themselves and for the country, and prevent Western Australia from drifting back into the state it was 10 years ago. At the present time the value of land is forty or fifty times what it was some 10 years ago. [*Mr. H. Brown :* It is

worth less.] The hon. member must have had an extraordinary experience of land values. If we drift back to what I found existing in Perth when I came here, it will mean that a block of land can be bought in Hay Street for a price that is now paid for a block in Subiaco. Does the hon. member want affairs to drift back into the state they were before he came here? [*Mr. H. Brown*: The Savings Bank securities are not worth half the amount put on them.] Although the hon. member would be the last to wish the country to drift back, he would be forced to that result by depriving the Government of the advantage of those resources without which it is impossible for them to carry out necessary works, and secure success in the future.

*Mr. H. BROWN* (Perth): As during last session my intention this session is to oppose this Bill not only on the second reading but all through committee, and, if necessary, on the third reading as well. It is the most iniquitous measure that has ever been enforced on the people of Western Australia. While we are advertising our lands in the old country and also in the Eastern States with the idea of getting people to come here to settle, we are going to tax the land which they will take up. How can we expect people in the old country to come these thousands of miles to Western Australia when they can get almost as liberal land laws in Canada? Is it a good policy to advertise to the world that we are introducing immigrants here, and when we get them here, to tax them? Only a year or two ago we were asking farmers in England to come out here and take up free farms, for which there would be free surveys and no land tax; and I believe that you can now find in the office of the Agent-General in London the words "free surveys" and "no land tax" crossed out in the circulars in red ink. It is a most unwise course to adopt if we want to make Western Australia forge ahead, especially as a land tax will only realise the insignificant sum of £60,000. It is also pitiable to find that this State

should be taxed to raise such a small amount. Is it fair or just to those representing town constituencies to find Ministers of the Crown representing to their constituents that they will not bear the tax, but that the major portion will be raised in the cities and towns of Western Australia? We also find on the Government side of the House gentlemen absolutely pledged against the land tax, yet voting for it. We have the pitiable spectacle of the member for Northam who was one of the stoutest opponents of a land tax—can anything be more degrading to politicians—going into the House and telling members that he is against a land tax, but that as a supporter of the Ministry he is compelled to vote for it. Then we have that memorable letter to the constituents of the Busselton district. There was a meeting of protest held in the Busselton district against the imposition of this land tax.

*The Treasurer*: There was no such meeting. You are quite wrong.

*Mr. H. BROWN*: The Treasurer wrote to his constituents or to the roads boards of his district stating, "You need not worry yourselves about this taxation, for it will affect you so little. We are going to get the bulk of the money from the cities and towns in Western Australia." We find that the policy of the Government is to open up the country, and the major portion of the money to be received from the tax is to be spent in so-called country districts of the State. According to the deal of this expenditure, although Perth and Fremantle will have to find the bulk of the money, is to be spent with the fixed intention of diverting trade. The Collie-Narrogin line was practically built for the diversion of that trade. The member for Murray (*Mr. McLarty*) in speaking of the Murrumbidgee line said it would serve a certain district and ultimately join the Great Southern Railway. A meeting was held in Bunbury to protest to the Premier that this line would divert a portion of the traffic from the Great Southern Railway, and to ask whether he would do his best to block it.

*The Minister for Works*: What happened?

Mr. H. BROWN: We have a promise of a survey of that line, but perhaps that is as far as it will go. The way in which the tax will affect the city and country land is very different. There are two distinct features. We hear it said that this is a tax to burst up large estates. If that were so I would be in favour of it entirely, but I do not believe in taxation on the unimproved land values. If the Government were to bring down a tax on the unimproved lands and tax the land within five miles of the main trunk lines of the State, there would then be no necessity for spur lines to be constructed for the next ten years to come, if the tax will make every person improve his estate. In spite of the Attorney General's remark that land values in the city are not lower than they have been for years past, I say if it were possible to improve every vacant block of land in the city for business purposes or for erecting villas, shops or cottages, that would depreciate the value of city properties at least by one half. Put the same expenditure on country lands and we should find that it would not only improve one person's land but his neighbour's, and give a very fair return for the expenditure of the money. But the contrary effect is felt in the city of Perth, because you are forced to expend money to get a return, and the result is absolutely nil. It is well-known to members that there are 500 or 600 empty houses at the present time in the city of Perth, and I believe the same state of affairs exists in the majority of towns in Western Australia. Very few members in the House have any knowledge of what the effect of the tax will be in the city of Perth and suburbs. Some years ago when I was mayor of Perth, for the purpose of rating on the unimproved land values, I obtained a return from my treasurer at that time, and we found that to raise the same revenue that we were raising then on the annual values we would have to rate the unimproved lands at one penny and eleventh-sixteenths in the pound to get the same revenue. If on the unimproved land value the Government propose to raise a tax of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound, that will be equivalent to a rate of 1s. 3d. on the present annual

value. In no part of the world does a national tax approach a local tax. We know in the towns of the State for developmental purposes large sums of money have been spent and obtained on loan for which the people are taxed very heavily, and there is the same cry in the country districts. I venture to say that there is hardly one roads board that has a loan rate on its books, and very few of the country municipalities. They have been assisted more than liberally by Governments in the past. I say some greater form of local government should be given to the roads boards and municipalities to tax themselves, because we find in the past the greatest persons to clamour were those who got the largest amount of money from the Government, especially those particular districts that may be represented by the Ministers in power at the time. I think I mentioned in my speech of last session that in Bunbury, the district represented by the Premier, for every pound given by the Government in that district the huge sum of 3d. was raised by the local residents. An almost similar state of affairs exists in Busselton.

*The Minister for Works:* That is inaccurate.

Mr. H. BROWN: I challenge the Minister for Works to deny that and to produce a return of the amount raised by the roads boards districts of Busselton and Bunbury to refute the statement I have made.

*The Minister for Works:* Twenty-six and eightpence for every £100.

Mr. H. BROWN: The roads board district of Bunbury raised 3d. for every pound the Government gave them in subsidy, and the Busselton roads board raised 5d.

*The Minister for Works:* I say it is incorrect.

*The Treasurer:* There is no such roads board.

Mr. H. BROWN: I forget the name, but it is the roads board adjoining the municipality of Busselton. These are facts. For every 15s. given by the Government to Perth one pound was raised by the local residents, and I say the sooner this patronage is taken away and

a fixed subsidy given to country districts the better for the State. We have heard that the sum of £60,000 is to be raised by the infliction of the land tax, and I am certain the major portion of that amount will be expended in its collection. If we look, and I am referring to days gone by, at the majority of the district roads boards in the State, they did not rate at all but existed on the subsidies obtained from the Government of £200 and upwards. What pertained in these times was that with the exception of the salary paid to the secretary, from £5 to £10 a year, all the money was expended on the roads. The meetings of the board were held at the nearest farm house, and practically every farthing of the subsidy was expended on the roads. But what did we find? These roads boards were threatened that if they did not rate themselves their subsidies would be taken from them.

*The Minister for Works* : What board are you referring to now?

Mr. H. BROWN : I am referring to the majority of the boards. If the Minister for Works will lay on the table of the House the return of the rates which is in his office, we shall find that in a majority of the roads boards of the State the cost of administration and the collection of the rate amounts to more than these boards receive.

*The Minister for Works* : That is ridiculous.

Mr. H. BROWN : It is not ridiculous. I challenge the Minister to place on the table of the House a return showing the amount of the rates raised by these roads boards. I say the cost of administration and collection would be shown to be more than the amount received. Large sums have been taken out of the revenue of the State to make up for administration. We have a case in point in the municipality of Subiaco. There the rates amount to about £800 and the salaries of two of the officials, the town clerk and the health inspector, come to over £400. Over 50 per cent. in that municipality goes away in administration. I asked for a return recently to show the way in which the subsidies have been administered in this State, and more

particularly in the district represented by the honorary Minister (Hon. J. Mitchell). I made the statement last session, and I repeat it again, that for the year before last the requirements of the municipality of Northam could have been met by a 9d. rate, which would have entitled that municipality to a subsidy of about £500, but owing to the liberal subsidies granted by the Government the municipality raised the full rate of 1s. 6d. and obtained the sum of £2,500, for which they received from the Government the huge sum of over £3,000, making for that year alone a sum of £2,500 that they were not legitimately entitled to. The same thing applied more glaringly to the municipality of Fremantle—I mean Fremantle proper. They, with malice aforethought, reduced their health rate from threepence to a penny in the pound. They charged the major portion of their health rate direct to general revenue, thereby obtaining from £1,200 to £1,500 a year more by way of subsidy than they were justly entitled to receive from the Government. I will call by a mild name their action in reference to the fire brigade, when the proceeds obtained from a concert were reckoned as money raised for the brigade by the council, in respect of which money the municipality were entitled to a pound-for-pound Government subsidy. I say the sooner the auditing of such accounts is made by Government auditors the better for this State. [*Mr. Angwin* : What has this to do with the land tax?] I am showing that if we are to be taxed to raise revenue to be given back in sops to municipalities and roads boards, it will be better to wipe out these subsidies altogether, and let us rely on local rating. We find that even New South Wales, with her rich lands, cannot afford double taxation in the shape of a land tax and roads-boards rates. Last year a Shires Council Bill was introduced in the New South Wales Parliament. One clause provided that the shires should rate themselves, if I remember rightly, at not less than a penny nor more than twopence in the pound, and the next clause provided that so soon as they rated themselves for local purposes the land tax

ceased to operate. In New South Wales, I may add, there are no municipal subsidies; nevertheless the Government are very generous. They say to the municipalities, "We shall not give you any subsidies, but we shall allow you to rate our railways for local purposes." When we brag of the profits we make on many of our railways, we should remember they are not run on business lines. They run through large portions of the State, occupy huge areas of land on which they do not pay a penny by way of municipal or roads-board rate. If it is fair to take such charges into consideration on British railways, it is fair to consider them here. The member for Wellington (Mr. Hayward) interjects that the British railways are owned by private companies. But does he know how many thousand pounds Perth has lost within the last seven years owing to the huge land resumptions in the heart of the city.

*Mr. Angwin*: Shift the railway out of Perth.

*Mr. H. BROWN*: Yes; take it away.

*The Premier*: Put it on the other side of the river.

*Mr. H. BROWN*: Take it to Fremantle. I should like to add that the English railway companies, before considering they have made any profits, must allow for the local rates. For instance, on the London and North-Western Railway the amount paid in rates exceeds £200,000 in one year. Anyone opposed to the land tax is asked, "What would you substitute for it?" Last night I obtained from the Premier the statement that the gold mined in the State will increase the revenue by a sum of at least £5,000 or £6,000. Then we in Perth are taxed for the upkeep of our local water scheme, but we find from the departmental report that in addition to paying for our local supply we are taxed to make up a deficit of over £81,000 a year for the water supply of the goldfields. [*Mr. Scaddan*: What about your museums and observatories?] They are built especially for goldfields visitors; and last year we added a monkey-house which will possibly be equally attractive to those visitors. The Goldfields Water Scheme shows a deficit of £81,000 a year.

yet water is supplied for some purposes on the goldfields at 2s. per thousand gallons. Is that fair or just, when the same department finds it impossible to supply water for less than 1s. 6d. at Perth, where it is delivered by gravitation; yet the State is prepared to pump water 400 miles and supply it for practically 33 and a third per cent. more than the Perth price.

*The Minister for Works*: What is the average charge on the goldfields?

*Mr. H. BROWN*: About 4s. or 5s. at the outside.

*The Minister for Works*: You know the reason for the specially low charge.

*Mr. H. BROWN*: I do not wish to deprecate the lowest charge on the fields; but I mention the average charge, and if I am incorrect I ask the Minister for Works to contradict me. The average charge on the goldfields is double the charge on the coast; and is it fair, when a certain charge is made for water which gravitates 12 or 14 miles, to pump it 400 miles uphill and to supply it at twice that charge? Another saving I may mention can be effected in our railways. I know well it would not be fair or just to turn adrift a lot of railway employees at the present time. But we find that the Railway Department of South Australia, with only 100 miles of railway more than we possess, can hand over for the year ending the 30th June 1907, after paying all expenses, the huge sum of three-quarters of a million to the State revenue. In view of that, surely some saving, not in the wages of the men but in the traffic or some other branch, can be effected here. If a State whose railways are practically on the same basis can hand that three-quarters of a million to the general revenue, surely a paltry sum of £60,000, such as is expected to be raised by the land tax, can be easily saved on the railways of Western Australia.

*The Minister for Mines*: Our railways show a ten times better record for the past ten years than is shown by those of South Australia.

*Mr. Gull*: Is the South Australian return in cash, or is it like our surplus here?



Mr. H. BROWN: I am quoting returns telegraphed some few days ago to the Perth newspapers. What will be the effect and what is now the effect of the land tax on the value of securities in the city of Perth? The country should know the detrimental effect the tax will have on the deposits of our Government Savings Bank investors.

*The Premier:* Do you say the tax will affect the Savings Bank deposits?

Mr. H. BROWN: I say the Government Savings Bank has, I believe, lent some thousands of pounds on first mortgage on securities in Perth and in other towns of Western Australia; I know of two of those securities within the past week that have depreciated by nearly 50 per cent.

*The Premier:* Depreciated by 50 per cent. in a week?

Mr. H. BROWN: Within the past week. I know of one security mortgaged to the Savings Bank for £1,000; and when that money was advanced the Government of the day would not lend unless the security was valued at twice the sum to be advanced.

*The Premier:* Three-fifths.

Mr. H. BROWN: Double at that time. That particular security, which I know well, consists of a two-storeyed dwelling in Perth, built at a cost of £1,500, and a cottage adjoining which cost over £200. The land should now be worth £500, and the amount advanced by the Government of the day was £1,000 at six per cent.

*The Premier:* The depreciation is the effect of the Federal tariff.

Mr. H. BROWN: The equity of redemption was sold last week for £250. Another property was mortgaged to the savings bank for £2,500, and represented at the time of the loan a sum of £5,000. A person has bought it owing to its adjoining his other property, and that was the only reason for the purchase. He purchased the equity of that land for £200. In addition to the land tax promised by the Government our local corporation have promised the citizens of Perth a rate for a new town hall; we are promised also another luxury in the shape of a rate for a pavilion on one of the re-

serves, and we are promised a lighting rate as soon as the new electric light system is introduced. [*Mr. Angwin:* That has nothing to do with the Government.] But it shows with what the city will be burdened. We are promised a land tax also; on the top of that we are threatened with a Federal land tax; and last but not least, we have the high Federal tariff we were recently discussing. I say that within the next few years the rates in Perth at least will exceed 6s. 8d. in the pound. But do we find in this Bill any exemption of the man who has borrowed heavily from private mortgagees, or from the Government Savings Bank? None whatever. And the mortgagee gets off clear every time, while the unfortunate owner, who will be struggling on with empty premises, high rates, and high cost of living, will be absolutely ruined in the city of Perth.

*The Premier:* Does not the same argument apply to municipal taxation?

Mr. H. BROWN: I think the municipal corporations have practically a prior right to these mortgaged securities, which are after all the security of the municipal debenture-holders. And the state of affairs may be gauged by a review of the position of the Perth corporation, which over a week ago had an overdraft of £11,000 on general account, while the health account was overdrawn by £3,000. Already we hear the mayor threatening that if ratepayers do not pay their rates he will levy distress. If they are unable to pay their local taxation is it reasonable to think they will be able to pay the land tax? The bulk of the land in my own constituency is let on lease to the tenants, and those struggling tradesmen who are highly rated and are at present unable to pay their rates—are they any better able to pay the Government a land tax ranging from £10 or £50 or £60? I say the tax will mean absolute ruin to the majority of the ratepayers in this city. How little the Bill was considered we know full well. Originally the Bill provided a 50 per cent. exemption for improved lands, and we know that in Perth it is impossible to put on land valued at £400

improvements equal to £200 ; so the proposal was found to be absurd, and now all lands the unimproved value of which does not exceed £50 are to be exempt.

At 6.15, *the Speaker* left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Mr. H. BROWN (continuing) : I was showing the inequitable tax this will be on the towns and cities of the State compared with the country districts. Surely if an exemption of £250 is good enough for the country districts, it should apply to the towns. One knows that in the country districts with 250 acres of land a certain amount of improvement would practically bring in a living for the owner, whereas if that amount of improvement were put on city lands the owner would not get a return from it at all. We know from their speeches that those members representing country districts contend that the towns will bear the brunt of the tax. The member for Swan, speaking on the Address-in-Reply last year, said :—

“I am prepared to accept the proposal of the Government and to advocate and support a tax on unimproved values. I say on unimproved values because it will tax practically every man in this country, whether tenant or owner, and my friends in the city will pay very much the larger proportion of it.”

He called them his “friends in the city.” How can any member of the House representing a city or town constituency vote for such an inequitable tax ? I will make bold to say there is not a member representing any of the Perth electorates who will benefit by the £50 exemption proposed by the Government. I speak with knowledge, having been connected with roads boards. I find there is great difficulty indeed in obtaining the present local roads board taxation. In the Perth road district, and it is just the same with others, they have cart and dog taxes, and in addition to that a water tax, which scores do not get benefit from, and a health rate for which no service is ren-

dered. Now they are threatened with a local land tax, on top of that a Federal land tax. Already within three or four miles of the Perth town half the value of the land is absolutely exceeded by the arrears of rates owing on some blocks. I made a few remarks before the tea adjournment with reference to the unequal distribution of subsidies and the small sums raised by various country districts. As far as I have seen it is “spoils to the victors,” and subsidies for those who are prepared to sink their principles and vote for the party. The member for Murray (Mr. McLarty) has spoken to his constituents against a land tax ; the Honorary Minister has also spoken against it.

*The Honorary Minister* : Where did I speak against it ?

Mr. H. BROWN : I am quoting from *Hansard* from memory ; the Honorary Minister distinctly said in his concluding remarks on the land tax : “I am absolutely against it, yet I will have to vote for it.” There is nothing more degrading than for any member of this House to absolutely vote against his conscience.

*Mr. Johnson* : That is so. Simply for a portfolio.

Mr. H. BROWN : And an honorary one at that. Do the members for Williams (Mr. Cowcher), Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse), and Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) absolutely believe in the tax ; or the member for Irwin (Mr. S. F. Moore) ; and though city members are prepared to support the Government, can they, seeing the way this tax is going to affect them and knowing the disastrous effect it is going to have on the city, vote for this Bill ? I admit we need revenue, but until all these savings in administration are effected I think it is inadvisable to go in at present for farther taxation. To show the inequitable distribution of the various roads board subsidies and to show that those who gave most loyal support to the Government were those who got—I will not say bribes, but the greatest sops for their support, I will give some figures. I say by the way that had it not been for the Attorney General we would not have had any land tax during the regime of the present Government. It

was absolutely his price for joining the Ministry that we should have a land tax. The figures I quoted last session in regard to the unequal distribution of roads board subsidies were absolutely correct, and I have had an opportunity during the tea adjournment of turning them up again. I find that the road district of Bunbury collected rates to the enormous extent of £23 10s. 8d.

*The Premier* : I paid more than that myself; you are wrong there.

Mr. H. BROWN : The amount granted by the Government for that year was £965.

*The Minister for Works* : What year was that?

Mr. H. BROWN : It was in 1904-5. The Bunbury Suburban District raised £60 and received the astounding sum of £1,388 by way of Government subsidy. In Sussex, so ably represented by the Treasurer, who will I think go down very pleased to tell his constituents that the tax does not affect them at all or very little, the road district raised £70 and received from the Government £820. The member for Swan is also in favour of this particular land tax, knowing that the city will pay for it. The Swan road district raised £276, and received from the Government £1,473, and naturally the member for Swan is placated and is in favour of a tax that will raise money from the towns. We have a more glaring instance than this. The Canning road district raised £344, and was placated with a subsidy of £1,766. The member for Albany is another very loyal supporter of the Government. The Albany road district received £824 from the Government, and we can quite realise the hon. member's support when that district contributed nothing, did not even strike a rate.

*Hon. F. H. Piessé* : Those figures refer to the past years; it is not fair to quote them.

Mr. H. BROWN : I am speaking from my speech last year, when I argued as to the inequality of the subsidies given by the Government to the various roads boards.

*The Minister for Works* : By what Government? It was the Labour Government.

Mr. H. BROWN : I do not care which Government it was. We will see what they received at Fremantle. I pointed out earlier in the evening the fraud perpetrated at Fremantle by charging a portion of the health account to general revenue. In spite of that, £404 was raised in revenue by the Fremantle roads board, and a subsidy of £2,118 was paid by the Government. That very prosperous district of Katanning, where we hear that the settlers are doing so well, that the country is going ahead by leaps and bounds, that thousands of acres are being cultivated, and how well the district is able to bear this land tax, what favours they are receiving by having police courts, railway stations, and everything like that built—that district raised £189, and the subsidy was £1,419. I think we will find that very little land tax is coming from the mining town of Kalgoorlie; we know that the values of land there are particularly very little; yet we find that the Kalgoorlie road district raised £1,774, and received in subsidy the enormous sum of £4,238. [*Mr. Gordon* : That was in Johnson's time.] There is no member more against the land tax than the member for Irwin, and on looking at the figures regarding that roads district we find that whereas the Upper Irwin and the Irwin roads districts received £410 and over £400 respectively from the Government, those boards did not collect one penny in rates from the residents of the districts. [*The Minister for Mines* : What about the Perth board?] Next we turn to Beverley, which is a very rich agricultural district, and one of the oldest in the State. The roads board there collected £127 and received from the Government £855. There is also the very rich agricultural district of Toodyay, and the roads board there received in 1904-5 £1,306, and yet did not contribute one farthing to the revenue. We find every country constituency clamouring to the Government for grants for roads, bridges, railways, and various other works, and yet are not prepared to tax themselves at all. [*The Premier* :

And you will not let the Government tax them.] I am prepared to allow the Government to do so, but it must be in an equitable manner. Under the proposals in the new land tax the majority of country lands will be exempt from taxation altogether. The Government are trying to encourage settlers here while the Midland Railway Company are also doing their best to settle the Midland lands. Any settler who is prepared to go on the Midland Railway concession, and I am not speaking in favour of that company, will be forced to pay the tax from the outset, whereas any settler going on Government land will be exempt for the first five years. Therefore it will be seen that settlers on the Midland Railway concession will be severely handicapped as against the man who goes on Government land. The action taken by the Government in connection with the recent electioneering campaign at Northam was a mild form of political bribery, for we found the Minister for Mines telegraphing to Northam stating that the savings to be effected on railways would not go to the relief of the State, but of the persons who are using the railways. Again we have seen during the last few weeks the Government trying to make the Upper House a party House, and this action is greatly to be deprecated. In addition the stand they are taking now in connection with the West Perth election is a peculiar one. Both the candidates are prepared to give loyal support to the Government, like I do myself in all matters with the exception of this land tax; but the candidate who is the selected nominee of the National Political League, to which the Premier and the Colonial Secretary belong, is not being supported by those Ministers simply because of one small and very unimportant item in his programme. I am prepared to make any sacrifice rather than that the land tax should be brought into existence in this State. We know that retrenchment must come, not particularly retrenchment of labour but also in connection with the working of the various departments. We see by the programme of the Government that they are prepared to reduce their own salaries—at all events this is according

to the Governor's speech of last session. I will assist them in their very laudable desire and, with the object of endeavouring to make both ends meet, I intend to move this session for the abolition of payment of members. [Mr. Taylor: Abolish payment of Ministers' salaries also?] No, I would pay them for the work they do. I desire to plead with the misguided members for the city and suburbs to assist me in fighting the land tax, and to vote against it if a division is taken on the question. I know the member for North Perth is prepared to support the Bill so long as he gets his £50 exemption. But I will tell him and the members of his constituency, that there is no single block of land in North Perth that will be exempt under the £50 clause. I desire to make in this matter an appeal to the members representing the Perth constituencies. With regard to the Fremantle electorates, however, although I should like to appeal for their support as well, I know that, owing to the heavy subsidies and bonuses given to Fremantle—the port seems to rule the State—we have no earthly hope of gaining a vote from them. I therefore entreat the members of the city constituencies to vote as their conscience dictates, and if they do this after hearing the speeches of Ministers and of their supporters and realising the inequality of the tax, they will agree with me that it is an iniquitous and very unfair one, and one that at the present time is altogether uncalled for. My intention is to vote on every occasion against this Bill, even to the third reading.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE (Katanning) : If the discussions in this House with regard to a proposed land tax are to be continued much longer, it is likely we will never have a land tax at all, for this is the fourth occasion on which I have had an opportunity of speaking on the question. [Mr. Johnson : Have you had a different opinion each time ?] I am not going to plead guilty to that accusation. On a previous occasion the hon. member charged me with perhaps having less objection to the land tax each time I spoke. I cannot give my support to land taxation as a principle. It happens on occa-

sions that Governments, whose responsibilities we all recognise, find it necessary for the purpose of carrying on their financial obligations to raise revenue; and the project now put forward by the Government is said to be necessary owing to that reason. Those who have watched the history of the proposed land tax will, I think, agree with me that in the first instance it was intended that the tax should be levied with the object of causing the unimproved lands of the State to be developed. That reason, however, was given up later on, for it was found it would be impossible under our present legal standing to enforce it. In regard to land taxation, I have always been in accord with the taxation of lands for the purposes of bringing them under cultivation or development. Of course I only refer to the taxation of unimproved lands. With regard to the proposals of the Government I have said on a previous occasion that I considered them to be premature. However, great changes have taken place in regard to the finances of the country, and the Government are evidently still impressed with the necessity for raising revenue. These representations, however, have not appealed to the people in the country districts, who still fear that the taxation proposals will press heavily on them. In my opinion the imposition of the tax will act as a deterrent to new settlement; not that it would create very great hardships to those going on the land, for provision is made for them in the exemption clauses, but owing to the fact that previously to the introduction of this Bill promises were made that there would be no land taxation; in fact that was definitely stated to intending settlers. The discussion on the land tax question has now been going on for some two years, and therefore some of the ideas which previously existed with regard to the unlikelihood of land taxation, have become dissipated, and the position of the people in the country is now somewhat different from what it was when the proposals were first brought forward. The exemption clauses, and especially that portion which relates to the first five years after which a selection has been taken up, have become widely known. I

know that members of the Opposition have taken strong exception to the exemptions, and have given reasons why they intend to oppose the Bill if the exemptions are proceeded with.

*Mr. Scaddan* : Who said they would do this ?

*Hon. F. H. PIESSE* : The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mount Margaret.

*Mr. Scaddan* : That is hardly correct.

*Hon. F. H. PIESSE* : If the words can be taken to represent the meaning they intended to convey, I conclude that was the statement they made. More especially do I refer to the member for Mount Margaret.

*Mr. Scaddan* : All he said was that there would be justification for opposing the measure.

*Hon. F. H. PIESSE* : I have already stated that the first object in introducing a tax was to compel owners to make improvements on their property; but now it is proposed that the tax should be imposed in order to obtain money for revenue purposes. Certain reductions are provided for improvements, and those who are not improving their lands will have to pay double the rate as compared with those who have improved their properties. I think it would have been a good thing if the Bill had been passed in order to carry out the original object, but I am not in accord with the present proposal. I consider the present proposal premature, because land settlement is now in its initiatory stages. The member for Perth has pointed out that the tax would inflict great hardship on the towns, and especially the municipalities of Perth and Fremantle. We who are looking at this matter from the agricultural standpoint feel that the cities benefit greatly by the improvement of the lands, and although we are not anxious to see additional taxation in the cities any more than we are in regard to our own lands, still I think we must admit that if the burden is heavier upon the cities than in the country it should be so, because the former benefit by the development of the land by agricultural or horticultural pursuits. They also benefit owing to

the development of the mining industry. The proposal to impose a tax, although perhaps in its incidence the tax may not be a very heavy burden on the people, and nothing like so heavy as some expect, is creating great unrest in the minds of the people in the country districts. And notwithstanding the fact that one may argue with them and reason with them, and put before them all the benefits that may be derived from obtaining revenue by this means for opening up the country by roads and railways, still it seems to them that anything in the way of land taxation savours somewhat of collecting money that they can ill afford to pay. We have the principle of land taxation agreed to in our Roads Boards Act and our Municipal Acts. I may say since the initiation of that method, proposed by the Government some time ago, of increased taxation under the Roads Board Act, the roads boards as a whole—I may say without any exception, though some have not raised as much as others—have responded very regularly by large contributions to the requests made to them for farther help in that direction. Allusion has been made by the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown) to the collections made in the year 1904-5, and by way of comparison he gave the amounts received by the roads boards and the amount of subsidy granted by the Government. In my own district, and I speak of that because I know something of the rates collected for the past year, for the previous year something under £500 was raised—but last year £800 was the amount received. That is a creditable contribution. Eight hundred pounds was raised in rates, and the subsidy paid was £1,200 for last year. But for the first year the municipality showed a somewhat creditable collection: they raised £38 per £100 contributed by the State. This year the contribution will be in excess of that, probably over £50. So they are recognising their responsibilities; and they would have preferred the methods they have adopted rather than a general land tax system. It would have been more acceptable to them, controlling as they do their own

affairs. Recognising as they do their responsibility, they have liberally raised their taxation, in the two instances I have quoted from ½d. to 1½d.

*Mr. Bath:* What about the valuations?

*Hon. F. H. PIESSE:* The valuations have been increased. In some of the districts the funds fell with the valuations, but recent valuations have been very equitably appraised and have been carried out on lines which I think will stand the test of the State assessors. The roads boards are thoroughly recognising their responsibilities in that direction. In one district adjoining my own although they have raised their rates to 1d. in the pound they have had their valuations increased. They have taken some upon the Government valuation and not allowed for poison leases, nothing under the rates for third-class land—that is, 3s. 9d. for third-class land, 6s. 6d. for second-class land, and for first-class land 10s. or whatever the land has been sold at under the new regulations. At present that is taken as the valuation. Later on, as the conditions of the district improve, we shall see farther improvement in the direction of assessing the values at a higher rate. Perhaps the local authorities—I speak more particularly for the people whom I know best, and their methods—would have preferred to continue that system rather than have a general system of taxation adopted, believing that to be more economic. It would enable the boards, with the permission given by Parliament, to raise sufficient money for their own requirements to open up roads, except in special cases where bridges have to be built, then special votes from Parliament should be made. They have agreed to a gradual reduction of the subsidy. This is a suggestion I made myself on both occasions when I spoke before, to make up for the loss of revenue sustained. The boards themselves know they cannot expect to have the large grants which have been paid regularly or annually in the past. They know they must become more self-supporting, and naturally they see the necessity of doing something from a local standpoint to help themselves. With the two taxes on them they feel the burden

greater than they should be called on to bear; hence the reason why they are strongly opposed to the land tax proposals of the Government. The building of railways is a material factor in the development of these districts; and I think if you consulted all the men able to pay and who are naturally interested in the welfare of a district they would offer no objection to contributing to assist in the building of the lines. But we must not forget that lines of railway constructed through a district are not wholly for the benefit of that district, but are for the benefit of the State as a whole. As I have already mentioned, it is by the efforts of men on the gold-fields and on the agricultural and pastoral lands that we see our cities grow up. There we see people centralised, and we see manufactories started, some of which have not progressed as we would like to have seen. But the people are assisting in developing the national wealth, and they look for the building up of these large centres. Consequently, the State should share the burdens, and so far the State has shared the burden in bearing the interest on the lines constructed. Non-paying lines at the present time will become paying propositions, and will open up vast districts which are not opened up at the present time. We can understand why people in country districts are anxious to maintain their own taxation. If a general tax became the law of the country, these people certainly think the local taxation should not be exacted. If the other taxes also are collected, let there be a tax and they will pay it; but they believe it would be more economical to collect the tax themselves than under the system now proposed. All the Government expect to receive from this tax is £60,000 on 1½d. in the pound valuation. My opinion is that the tax will reach a much larger sum than £60,000; it will be much in excess of that amount. There has to be taken into consideration the cost of making the valuation and the cost of collection. And the evidence which is before us in the experience of the Eastern States in regard to this matter shows that the cost of collection is heavy, and

in many instances has reached as high as 30 per cent.

*The Premier* : Where is that ?

Hon. F. H. PIESSE : In South Australia it is nearly 30 per cent. A new department will be brought into being, and the State will have to bear the cost of administering that department.

*Mr. Bath* : It will be costly under this Act.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE : That is a matter which, if the Bill reaches the Committee stage, can be remedied. We are looking forward to the advice of others who have had experience, and we wish to make the Bill work as easily as possible under the conditions. With these facts before us, the people who are determined in their objection, and with the people who recognise the claims which are upon them and the justice of having to pay their due proportion and fair share of the upkeep of the country, and their own rates, feel that they are already doing sufficient in that direction. That is the reason why they have such a strong objection to these land taxation proposals, particularly in the agricultural districts. The Premier has already told us, and we have heard it from other members, that where the tax has been explained in certain agricultural centres the people have recognised the justice of the tax. But I fear there are a great many who are not in accord with the expressed opinion of some other centres; and in scattered districts it is difficult to convince the people that the tax will not be a burden, especially in a district which has only just commenced settlement. The exemptions will be of benefit admittedly to a man holding under 1,000 acres; but much of the land taken up in some localities is of such a nature that 1,000 acres will not be sufficient to live upon. Therefore, these people will not be benefited, as they will have to take up more than 1,000 acres, and therefore will not benefit by the exemptions. I understand the Government intend to introduce a new Roads Board Bill this session dealing with the administration of roads boards. I shall be glad to welcome such a measure. In my opinion there is evident necessity for the introduction

of a Bill on reforming lines, a measure in keeping with the altered conditions of the country since the old Bill was introduced and passed in the Parliament of this State. There will be the advantage of having a moderate system built up on the shire system of Victoria and other States, which will be applicable to the people of the country districts. It seems to me that in such a Bill provision could be made for the collection of the land tax. Many of the roads boards would be able to collect sufficient taxation for the upkeep of the roads in their district.

*Mr. Bath* : If they gave a liberal franchise I would be agreeable to let them have the tax altogether.

*Hon. F. H. PIESSE* : That is a question we have to consider. As one who on their behalf has advocated their claims and put forward their objections, as an old member of the House, and as a member of one of the longest Governments that controlled the destinies of this country, I recognise the necessity for revenue, and I find it difficult in many cases to assimilate my own ideas with those of the settlers in many respects, because of the necessity which I know there is for raising revenue. However, I feel we should recognise the views of these people who are particularly affected because of course they know where the shoe pinches. And it is only the people situated in these districts, labouring as they do under untoward circumstances, with the hardships they have to put up with, living in such humble circumstances, starting on the land, who practically have nothing, who no doubt fear the imposition of other taxes on them; hence the reason why they are desirous that the tax should not be imposed. Consequently I recognise, notwithstanding the justice of every portion of the community contributing its fair share to the upkeep of the country, that in their case there are special claims for consideration; and if there can be some method adopted by which farther exemption would be allowed, I feel that they would be justly entitled to it, having already under local government conditions raised money for local requirements. Although so much has been said against

the opposition of the towns, that they feel the imposition and the chafing nature of such a tax, yet they cannot feel the impost equally with those men who are just starting in new country. In regard to the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mt. Margaret (*Mr. Taylor*) the other night, I would like to say at this stage that I stand here entirely independent in regard to this matter. Threatening may be very good for some members; they may be influenced by statements of what will happen; but such statements cannot turn me aside from the course I feel bound to take. I know the business of the country must be carried on. I know the strong objection of the people of my own locality to extra taxation; and I recognise their just claims and just objections. But I feel also that there is cast upon us and upon me especially the duty of doing my best to preserve stable government. [*Mr. Walker* : Is this stable Government?] Yes; this is stable Government. In recent years we have had enough changes. I know the opinions of my friends in Opposition. I know they are entirely in accord with this taxation proposal, though I admit they are opposed to exemption; and there is no doubt in my mind that if they were in power they would introduce a similar Bill, not perhaps on exactly the same lines, but on lines which would impose heavier obligations on the people. Knowing the position of this country, the condition of its finances and the necessity for obtaining additional revenue, I prefer to support the present Government rather than to take any other course in regard to this measure. I rely on Ministers' sense of justice and on the justice of the House to deal with the Bill later on in Committee, when I will propose in some of the clauses alterations of which due notice will be given. [*Mr. Bolton* : Increased exemptions?] Yes. Feeling as I do that we can make these alterations, and knowing the opinion of the majority of members, I am certain we are not likely to gain any advantage by voting against the Government. [*Mr. Walker* : If you voted against the Government there



would be a dissolution.] That would mean only a revival of this very taxation, admittedly under different conditions. Knowing that the country, with the exception of the agricultural centres, is largely in favour of extra taxation of some sort, I cannot see that any change in the *personnel* of this Parliament would be effected by an appeal to the country on this question.

*Mr. Angwin:* You are afraid there would be a change in the *personnel*.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: If I thought there would be, I should be almost inclined to make the appeal.

*Mr. Bath:* Let us have a try.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: Perhaps Opposition members are like the man who wanted to fight and asked someone to hold him back. The appeal to the country might come too suddenly, before we were all prepared for it. I think everyone will agree that I do not fear the result of an appeal to the country. If it be the will of my constituents that I should retire, I should retire with the best possible grace. But I hope we shall have an opportunity for at least another year or two, whatever other time may be determined, to carry on without any dislocation of the business of the country. We have before us the tariff question and the question of the deficit; and in these circumstances, though many of the constituencies are in a great measure opposed to this Bill, I feel it is in their interests and in the interests of the country to support those who now control our destinies, rather than to seek the dissolution which has been suggested by the Opposition, and which the Opposition pray may not come about. Notwithstanding this, I agree with the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher), although the hon. member spoke perhaps, rather heatedly to-night. [*Mr. Butcher:* No; he did not.] Knowing him as I do, counting him among my most valued friends, looking on him as one of the men best fitted to develop this country, I am sure it is not because of the effect of this tax on himself that he objects to its imposition. He, I am sure, would be quite ready to pay his share, as I should be to pay mine, because I believe we should all contribute to carry

on the affairs of the country. At the same time, I should have rejoiced if the Government had seen their way to abandon their taxation proposal at this stage; and if my friends in Opposition feel they are so firmly pledged to a land tax, and that it is an absolute necessity for the country, I should prefer them to introduce it at a later stage rather than have it passed at the present time. In these circumstances it is my intention not to offer farther opposition to the Bill, excepting to deal with it in Committee, if it reaches that stage.

Mr. H. E. BOLTON (North Fremantle): I am satisfied that all the arguments that can be brought forward by the forces for and against the measure have been used; and if there are no arguments left for one to use, it is at least open to a member to earn one distinction—the record for brevity. I have inside and outside this Chamber shown that I am a strong advocate of a tax on unimproved land values. I am as strong on that as ever, and am as bitterly opposed to any exemption clauses or rebate clauses.

*Mr. Gordon:* Did you always oppose exemption?

Mr. BOLTON: I always opposed exemption; and let me say, the hon. member's interjection is easily answered. When he speaks on this question he will quote from *Hansard* my speech when I was elected to this House to support the Daglish Ministry. He will there read, if he can read, that I then advocated the two hundred pounds exemption which I had already advocated on the public platform. Since that time I have on the public platform advocated no exemption, and I am prepared to stick to that policy, and to do my utmost to knock out the exemption clauses in this Bill. Perhaps the most forcible arguments used in favour of the Bill were those of the Attorney General; but his arguments in favour of the exemption clauses were decidedly weak. [*Mr. Bath:* Just as weak as they used to be strong against them.] I can well understand that the Minister no more believes in the exemption clauses than the Treasurer believes in land taxa-

tion. Again, some good strong arguments against the Bill were used by at least one member who is prepared to support it. That fact is instructive to members who have not been educated on the question of taxing unimproved land values. The Attorney General remarked that the demands on the Treasury are now thirty per cent. higher than they were some two years ago—[*The Attorney General*: Five years ago.] I stand corrected—and that there is less money to meet them; and in the same breath he says the Government propose to raise £60,000 to meet demands on the Treasury that have increased by thirty per cent. Yet the Opposition are prepared to assist the Government to raise more than £60,000 if they will accept the Bill without exemption. The Government have had one cry since they introduced this measure—that they must have revenue, owing to the loss of our customs duties; yet they are not prepared to go the whole hog and impose this tax without exemption. It will cost no more or very little more to collect with than without exemption. [*Mr. Butcher*: Much less.] I am reminded by an opponent of the measure that the tax will cost even less to collect without exemption. Still, I have heard that gentleman say that even he would support the tax if it were made equitable and free from exemption. It does seem absurd for the Government to raise the cry that they must have revenue, and yet to refuse an offer to support the Bill if the exemptions are struck out. The Attorney General concluded by appealing to members to consider the State. I say, how can they better consider the State than by adopting this measure without exemption? The argument used by I think nearly all Ministers is that the poor working man with his block worth £50 will be exempt; but I would remind the House that it is not the poor working man with his block who is objecting to the tax.

*Mr. Bath*: Anyhow, he will have to pay taxation in some other form to make up the deficit.

*Mr. BOLTON*: Quite so; but in regard to the direct land tax, the poor man with his small block has made no com-

plaint whatever, and is quite prepared to pay. It is not from him that the outcry proceeds. I can almost say that it is not the poor struggling farmers who ask for the £250 exemption. They are gradually being educated on the question, and many of them are prepared to pay the tax. It seems to me to be a good argument for some members that they are protecting the poor working man and the poor farmer; yet these people whom members wish to protect are not grumbling at all or kicking up any fuss. I cannot say I am surprised at the member for Kataning (*Hon. F. H. Piesse*). Somehow I thought at the outset of his remarks he would wind up by saying he hated the sight of the Bill, just as he did on the three previous occasions. He wishes the Government would at the last moment withdraw the Bill; at the same time, he will support it. I know that the hon. member hoped that the Government would not introduce it this session. That may account for his remarks, made since Parliament prorogued last session, against land values taxation. But when he finds the Government are determined to proceed with the measure, he has shown some reason to support it. That reason may be accepted by his constituents. Perhaps for the benefit of the Chamber it is to be hoped his constituents will accept his explanation. He is generally and rightly considered throughout the State as an opponent of the measure. But since I have been in the House I have never seen him record his vote against land values taxation, though I have heard him make some strong speeches against the principle. I did not expect him to come to any other conclusion than that he would support the Government. I say I am entirely opposed to the exemption and rebate clauses, and will do my utmost to have them deleted, for they cannot well be amended.

The PREMIER (*Hon. N. J. Moore*): After the many speeches we have had on the Bill, I do not know that it is possible for me to say anything very new, except to refer to the fact that it was part of the policy of the Daglish Government to impose a tax on unimproved land values, with an exemption of £400. That policy

was enunciated by Mr. Daglish in his speech at Subiaco, reported in the Press on the 24th August, 1904.

*Mr. Angwin* : I have here a report of a speech by the present Minister for Works. He says that the Daglish Government did not propose any exemption.

The PREMIER : I have here a report of Mr. Daglish's policy speech, and I think it is admitted on all hands that he intended to provide an exemption of £400. He said :—

"It is the intention to introduce a Bill for a tax on unimproved values, the application to be general; the value, not area, to be the basis of the tax; exemption, £1,000; the tax to graduate; additional impost on absentee owners."

Now what is the difference between that Bill and the present Bill?

*Mr. Scaddan* : That has nothing to do with it. Where is Mr. Daglish now? He is following the present Government.

The PREMIER : I take it that the members of his Cabinet endorsed the proposal he made on that occasion. The only difference between his Bill and the Bill now introduced is that we propose an exemption of £250 as against the exemption of £400 Mr. Daglish proposed. At the same time we have introduced the principle of imposing an additional 50 per cent. on absentee landholders. The principle of exemptions has been embodied in the speech of every Premier in connection with the taxation on land values. It is all very well for people to say that it is a new thing. We hear on every platform that this question was never before the country; but when I was elected, portion of the policy I supported was a tax on unimproved land values with limited exemptions to genuine selectors. I had the honour of seconding the Address-in-Reply on that occasion, and if members look up the debate on the Address-in-Reply on that occasion, they will find that my words are absolutely correct.

*Mr. Bath* : Read the policy speech of Mr. James.

The PREMIER : I am quoting from the Governor's Speech on that occasion,

the first Governor's speech delivered in these buildings. Members can easily look up *Hansard* to confirm my remarks.

*Mr. Bath* : You look up the Attorney General's criticism.

The PREMIER : The Attorney General by virtue of his associations has become qualified to express an opinion whether exemptions are necessary or not. When he was on the goldfields he had not the opportunity of going among the agriculturists and watching the struggling settler in his pioneer days; and if more members would travel about like the Attorney General has they also would become converts to exemptions. [Numerous interjections.]

*Mr. SPEAKER* : I would ask members to give the hon. member a patient hearing. It is a very important subject and we cannot hear the Premier with so much interjecting.

The PREMIER : The Treasurer has dealt with the question from the financial point of view, and has emphasised the need for extra revenue. Members on both sides of the House must recognise that this is so. Some of the bitterest opponents of a land tax are those who will derive most benefit from the loan recently passed to develop the different parts of our State. We obtained authority from Parliament last year to raise two and a-half millions of money, and when the money is raised it will mean that we will have to provide something like £112,000 per annum for interest and sinking fund—[*Mr. Bath* : Hear, hear]—yet many of these people who on the one hand wait on Ministers asking for grants for roads, the construction of railways, the development of the North-West, the opening up of harbours, etc., are strongest against the land tax. It is not the small people on the land who are opposing it. We have heard a lot about the struggling farmer; but every time the Bill is explained properly to a country audience, no difficulty is found in converting the farmers to a tax on land values. Exception has been taken to the attitude of the Government in regard to the election in the East Province. The Government would

not have been worth their salt if they had not taken their part in endeavouring to secure the return of the gentleman who was returned and who was pledged to tax unimproved land values.

*Mr. Scaddan:* He has changed his opinions. He opposed the land tax previously.

The PREMIER: Never mind what he said previously. You have altered your opinions. You favoured exemptions at one time and now you do not. Mr. Throssell has had reason to change. He speaks now from a statesman's point of view; last year he spoke from the point of view of the private individual, from the point of view of his own pocket. He had the honesty to tell the people, before nomination day, he was in favour of a tax on unimproved land values. If he had kept his tongue quiet he would have been returned unopposed. We must give him credit for being honest. An old man, at his age he might easily have kept his tongue quiet and been returned unopposed; but no, he would rather face the electors and fight this question than be returned unopposed. He explained to me the secret of his conversion. Some few weeks before the election he waited as a member of a deputation on the Treasurer, who received it in my absence, and asked for an extension of the railway from Goomalling. It would cost about £30,000 to £40,000. Returning to his home, in the solitude of the railway carriage it occurred to him that he had been guilty of a most extraordinary action; he realised that in making application to the Treasurer for this expenditure he was asking for something like £40,000, which would mean that in this particular district alone the Government would be spending something like £2,000 a year in interest and sinking fund, whereas the district as a matter of fact was contributing very little indeed to the revenue of the State. A little later on when he had come out as a candidate he determined that he would make a full explanation to his constituents, and as a result his constituents returned him at the head of the poll. [*Mr. Angwin:* By an overwhelming majority?] He would have had an overwhelming majority if he had

received the votes cast for Mr. Watts, and which would otherwise have been cast for Mr. Throssell.

*Labour member:* Question. You cannot say that.

*Mr. Johnson:* They would sooner cut off their hands than vote for Mr. Throssell.

The PREMIER: Do not run away with that idea. I say Mr. Throssell would have received that extra 300 votes. That is where I blame my friends opposite. We were asking for a clear-cut issue to see whether the country would support this taxation; but instead of allowing a clear-cut issue between the taxer and the anti-taxer, we found the Labour Party putting up Mr. Watts with a view to rejecting Mr. Throssell and thereby embarrassing the Government in the passage of the Land Tax Bill through the Legislative Council.

*Mr. Bath:* Mr. Throssell on behalf of Mr. Mitchell opposed Mr. Watts when he was a candidate at the last general elections.

The PREMIER: I say that in the meantime Mr. Throssell has been converted. That was twelve months ago.

*Mr. Johnson:* We are giving you a clear-cut issue in West Perth.

The PREMIER: The Government were taken to task to-night by the member for Perth in regard to the West Perth election. Do hon. members want the Government to sit still? Would not they be the first to criticise the Government if Ministers had not come forward to support one supporting their policy? [*Labour Member:* We do not blame you.] Anyone would despise the Government that would be afraid to come out of their shells and support a principle they have advocated. The two objects of this taxation are to raise additional revenue and to force persons holding unimproved land to sell it or improve it. From persons holding unimproved land the most strenuous opposition is being received; and as I explained when last I talked on this measure in this House, they are the descendants of those who acquired land on very easy terms indeed. As I pointed out on that occasion, many persons possess land

from the simple fact that their parents happened to come into the State bringing a little money with them. Certain land was allotted for location duties. A man was able to take up 40 acres for every £3 he brought into the State. Not only was it considered value in money but in kind. If a man brought in a piano worth £250 he was entitled to acquire about 2,000 acres of land. Some of the largest areas of the land held unimproved were given to different people in this way. There is an estate well known to the member for Murray; it is known as the Peel Estate, containing 250,000 acres. It is practically to-day what it was in 1832, when it was acquired. I do not suppose that £1,000 has been spent on it. There is not a single thing done on it. The owners of this estate cannot secure any rebate; they will have to pay the full 1½d. in the pound, and it will mean they must either sell or subdivide the land. That is what we want. That land is within 50 miles of Perth.

*Mr. Angwin* : It is worth about 6s. an acre.

The PREMIER : I do not know what the value of the land is.

*Mr. A. J. Wilson* : That is one large estate; how many more are there?

The PREMIER : I have a list of all areas in the State over 5,000 acres. I will only mention one or two I happen to know; but the list is available to any member who wishes to peruse it. There is Wellington Location 1, containing 103,000 acres. That was also acquired in the same way. Not only were large areas of land acquired in this way, but thousands of acres were jumped, not a penny being paid for them, a possessory title being obtained. I could not help remarking, when travelling on the South-Western Railway the other day, a large area for which a possessory title was obtained after 10 years' occupancy, and not a single thing has been done on the land. The timber has not even been ringbarked. That is another instance where the tax will have a good effect.

*Mr. Bolton* : Why give that man exemption?

The PREMIER : He does not get any exemption. That was an argument put

up the other night, that the exemptions would be of value to the big man. The position is that any man with property worth over £1,000 gets no exemption. The only exemption is for conditional purchase holders for the first five years and for ordinary freeholders for £250 up to £1,000. If the property is worth more than £1,000 the owner does not receive the exemption of £250. So in these instances where these large areas are held they will not reap any value from exemptions. On the Collie-Narrogin Railway there are five or six large blocks between Darkan and Williams. The owners will either have to sell, or improve them. By virtue of the construction of the railway an increased value has been given to these blocks, and they will have to pay on the unearned increment given by virtue of the construction of the railway. The consequence is that, while they might have been able to hold the land before the advent of the railway at a very nominal rate, now the railway is there they will have to sell or improve the land so as to bring in more revenue with which to pay the tax. With regard to exemptions, I would like to quote what is done in some of the Eastern States to show that we are not singular in this respect. New Zealand, as we know, was the first State to take up this question of land taxation. It was Mr. Ballance who first introduced the system of a graduated tax on unimproved land. The same arguments he used in introducing his measure apply here, and I can only quote from his speech:—

“The country was paying enormous sums of money every year for interest on the loans which had made the railways, roads, and other public works, and had added unearned increment to the lands that had been sold for a ‘mess of pottage.’”

The same principle applies to an equal extent in Western Australia. When Premier in 1891, Mr. Ballance said:—

“The first plank in the Liberal platform must be the land question. (1) Revenue requires extra taxation; (2) the time has come when the landowners of the colony should pay their share of the cost of Government; (3) a gradu-

ated tax is necessary to break up monopolies."

Under the New South Wales Act, and the member for Kanowna knows it well, they have exemptions up to £240. The tax is one penny in the pound and only one exemption is allowed to any one person or company. In Victoria there is no land tax, but it is more a tax on pastoral lands; it is a tax of  $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. on capital value with exemptions on estates up to £2,500. The tax only applies to rural lands of over an area of 640 acres. In South Australia, where the conditions are somewhat similar to those in Western Australia, they have a land tax of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound on unimproved values, with an additional  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound on all over £5,000, absentees having to pay 20 per cent. over the ordinary rates. In Tasmania there is a progressive form of land tax without exemption, and it ranges from  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound upwards. The revenue received last year from the tax was £54,000. In New Zealand there is a progressive land tax on unimproved values on all land valued at £5,000 and upwards; absentees being taxed 50 per cent. above the schedule rates. In addition there is an ordinary land tax, the amount of which is fixed annually by a Rating Act. [Mr. Johnson: They are altering their system now.] I believe they are. There is one matter I would refer to before I conclude, and that is in regard to the statement made that we would lose £30,000 by exemptions. I understood the Leader of the Opposition to say he had quoted from a speech I made last year, when I said that was the amount that would be lost by the exemptions. I cannot find any report of that speech although I have looked for it. I have however gone into the question and have found out actually what these exemptions will mean. As to the exemptions on all rural lands to the value of £250, the total value of those lands is £1,256,385, while as to the £50 exemption in municipalities, the total value of those lands is a little short of £500,000. Worked out at  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in the pound the exemptions would represent—roads district exemptions £5,024, municipalities exemptions £1,844; a total of

£6,868, and not £30,000 as stated by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Scaddan: That is assuming they would all receive the rebate.

The PREMIER: This refers to properties of under £50 value in municipalities, and under £250 value outside.

Mr. Bath: Your figures are based on a three-farthing rate.

The PREMIER: That is so. I do not think it is necessary at this stage to give the details of the amounts that will be collected in the various districts, but I will let the House know them when the Committee stage is reached. Notwithstanding what the hon. member for Gascoyne has said as to the terrible nature of the tax, and the great sum that will have to be paid by the people in various parts of the State, so far as his constituency is concerned I may inform him that in the district controlled by the Carnarvon roads board—[Mr. Butcher: I was not thinking of my constituency]—the amount to be paid on the tax will total the magnificent sum of £56; consequently the people there will not have very much to complain of. [Mr. Taylor: What about Bunbury?] The Bunbury municipality will contribute £564 under the tax. We have heard a good deal from the member for Perth as to the amounts that have been contributed by various municipalities and roads boards. I would point out to the hon. member, however, that the grants which were made by the Government to those municipalities and roads boards were made at a time when the present Opposition were in power. In conclusion I desire to say that this is a most equitable form of taxation, and that notwithstanding what hon. members opposite say I think they will be found voting for the measure.

Mr. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont): During the progress of the debate, taunts have been levelled at landowners in the House for opposing the land tax, and it has been said the opposition to the Bill is due to the fact that the opponents to the tax are interested, and are thinking only of their own pecuniary interests. I consider that a most unfair remark to make. It is just as unfair as if a land-

owner were to taunt a person who owned no land because he was supporting the land tax. There are many members of the House who own large quantities of land, and I only wish that all members were in the same fortunate position. The Premier has pointed out that the construction of the new agricultural railways has considerably enhanced the value of the land in the vicinity of those railways. I quite agree with the Premier in that, but he and his colleagues and the House must remember that these railways have been run out into districts which, in a large majority of instances, are not privately owned, and that therefore the benefits accruing from the railways are gained, not by the individual, but by the Government themselves. The Premier has said that a great many landowners are in the vicinity of these new railways; but the benefits that accrue to them are comparatively small as against those that are gained by the Government. By reason of the fact that these railways are run out into those districts previously unoccupied, the Government have been able to sell a large quantity of land which would never have been taken up had it not been for the railways. Take the last two or three agricultural railways, namely the Wagin to Dumbleyung, Katanning to Kojonup, and Donnybrook along the Upper Preston Valley. If they had not been constructed, the land situated at the termini of these lines would not have been sold for many years to come. [*Mr. Angwin*: They are sheep runs.] A great deal of the land is not even used for that, owing to the fact that the country is so far from the railways. The lands have been lying idle for all these years and have been absolutely valueless; now, owing to the railways the Government have been able to sell them at 10s. per acre. I have listened with care to the speeches made by the members of the Opposition concerning the tax. I remember that during last session they welcomed the tax with the greatest cordiality, but this session, for some reason or other, they view it with the gravest suspicion, and we have had threats from some of the members of the Opposition that they will oppose the measure. I admit that I

viewed the land tax proposal of the Government with great doubt and hesitation and in fact hostility. I considered that it was too suddenly sprung on Parliament and the people of this country. I remember very well when Sir Walter James went before the country, he did not make land taxation a plank in his platform. I believe he said at that time that he was considering the question of imposing land taxation, but I never heard him say definitely that he would do so. [*Mr. Bath*: He proposed to tax the big estates.] That is a very different thing altogether. I believe the reason Sir Walter James would not definitely pledge himself, and in this he was right, was because the financial position of the State was quite different from what it is to-day. I remember in my own district when I was electioneering, on only one occasion was I asked what I thought of land values taxation. I remember distinctly that in answer to the question I said it all depended upon circumstances. It depended entirely upon the financial position of the State at the time it was proposed to impose the tax. There are members on the Opposition side of the House who have for years past been desirous to impose this taxation; they wish to bring it about regardless of the financial conditions of the State. At a time when the Treasury was overflowing, when there was plenty of money coming in, when we were all prosperous, even in those days when there was no necessity whatever to impose a tax, many of these members were crying out loudly for it. Many people are prone to impose taxation whether it is necessary or not. They may have prejudices against a certain class and are carried away by those prejudices. I regret to say that in many cases it is on account of this that they desire to impose a class tax which will affect those against whom they are so prejudiced. They are carried away by their principles apart altogether from the financial situation of the State. The reason for their advocacy of taxation is not so much for the purpose of raising farther revenue as for other considerations. The Opposition have changed their opinions as to

advising humble members like myself. Last year they viewed with considerable disapproval the attitude I took up with regard to land taxation. I admit I viewed land taxation with a great deal of disfavour because I considered it had been suddenly sprung on the people of the country, and I preferred adopting a cautious attitude, hoping to see our financial position improve, and that there would be no necessity to impose this taxation.

*Mr. Bath* : How do you know it now ?

*Mr. FOULKES* : One great fact that weighed with me was, that at that time I was extremely dissatisfied with the railway administration of the Government. I considered there was an enormous waste of money going on in the Railway Department and I repeatedly mentioned that fact, and now it has been shown that was the condition of affairs : I was quite right in what I said ; there is room for a great deal, I will not say retrenchment, but careful and economic management of our railways. We have been most lavish during the last few years in carrying out railway works that should not have been carried out. I need only mention the Fremantle railway station ; imagine spending £80,000 on a railway station at Fremantle. If such a proposal were brought forward to-day to expend £80,000 on a railway station in the State, there is not a member in the House who would support it. That money has been spent since the commencement of these works—I am subject to correction on that point—but I believe the construction of the Fremantle railway station commenced three years ago, and we have had at least three different Ministers of Railways and not one Minister, judging from the result, has tried or in any way given evidence of an attempt that he has tried to see that the railways are managed in a proper manner. All the Ministers in charge of the railways have said they have no power over the railways, as under the Railways Act which has been passed the sole control of the railways is vested in the Commissioner. What I blame these three Ministers for is that

they have sat like logs of wood in their chairs, and done nothing to protest against the excessive expense incurred in connection with the railways.

*The Treasurer* : The present Minister cut down that work a lot.

*Mr. FOULKES* : I am glad to hear that he did ; the expense should have been stopped at the commencement. I am dealing with that work because it occurs to my mind at this moment, and it is a pleasure to me to hear that the various Ministers advocate that this Land Tax Bill should be passed, while they themselves, that is these three Ministers, are responsible for the land taxation proposals. If the railways had been better and more closely looked after during the past three years I assert that our finances would now be in a much better position. I am not a railway expert. I am judging of the facts as they appear. We know now a considerable amount of saving is going on in the Railway Department ; we do not hear to-day of large sums of money being spent on railway stations like £70,000 or £80,000, because we cannot afford it.

*Mr. Bolton* : You are dismissing railway servants by thousands.

*Mr. FOULKES* : I am sorry they are being dismissed. The reason of the dismissal of railway servants is that the railways have been so badly managed in the past that it is necessary to dispense with the services of many men. We have not such a large sum of money like £80,000 to waste on railway stations. If the money had been devoted in building new railways in opening up districts, many of the men retrenched to-day would still be in the railway service. It is no good wasting money on works unless they bring something in, and a railway station, a building of that character does not increase the traffic; bricks and mortar do not bring in revenue; what we want to do is to spend as much money as we can in developing the country. Members on the Opposition side have appealed, judging from their speeches, to myself and other members, urging us to vote against the land tax.

*Mr. Bath* : Define your position.



Mr. FOULKES: I am trying to do that, and I can assure you what has been of great assistance in helping me to define my position with regard to this Bill is the fact that members opposite announced in the House their intention—and judging by the various planks of the Labour platform announced here during the last seven years at least it is correct—that if they come into power they will not hesitate to impose a land tax.

Mr. Scaddan: Unadulterated.

Mr. FOULKES: No one will be spared under it.

Mr. Bath: The incidence will be fair all round.

Mr. FOULKES: Unfortunately it will be the Leader of the Opposition who will decide what is fair all round. If it were left me to decide what was fair all round it would be different from what the Leader of the Opposition thinks. On many Labour platforms, and by many Labour people we hear continual attacks, I regret to say, against owners of land. I am quite certain the Labour Party will not hesitate if they have power, and if they cross over to the Government side and come back with a fair working majority I feel certain—

Mr. Holman: The country will go ahead.

Mr. FOULKES: We heard at one time something about “marking time,” that was the main plank of the Labour Government. I believe the Leader of the party at one time did not say anything about a land tax being such a necessity as “marking time.” There have been threats by the Labour Party that they will impose land taxation. I do not know if it will be more liberal on owners of land. I would like to know that from the Leader of the Opposition, will he deal more liberally with landowners in the country than the present Government?

Mr. Bath: More fair.

Mr. FOULKES: I would like to have something more definite.

Mr. Bath: More just.

Mr. FOULKES: That is so vague; one would like to have a more definite statement. The Treasurer is in charge of the Bill and I would like to make one

appeal to him. To a certain extent this tax is a great leap in the dark. We must realise the fact that at present our State owing to the Federal tariff is not in such a satisfactory condition as we would like it to be, and additional taxation of this type will certainly affect a great number of people in this State. There are a number of people in this State who are afraid of additional taxation. This is not the time when the people of the State are fitted to stand taxation. Some years ago, if we had a proposal to levy this tax the proposal would have been received with far great equanimity and far less alarm than it is to-day, because in those days people were better off than they are to-day. The suggestion I make to the Treasurer is whether it is advisable to reduce the tax from 1½d. to 1d. in the pound. If we were to do that I believe the people would view it with far less hostility than they do now. It is estimated that this taxation will be the means of raising something like £60,000; it is hard indeed to say what it will realise; I believe myself it will realise much more. It is for that reason I recommend the Treasurer to see whether he cannot afford to agree to the tax being reduced from 1½d. to 1d. I feel constrained to vote for the second reading of the Bill, because I feel certain if members sitting in Opposition came into power, judging from their utterances, they will not hesitate to impose legislation more stringent than that imposed by the Bill before the House.

Mr. J. P. McLARTY (Murray): When this Bill was before the House last session I supported it and gave my vote for it and I mean to do so again, although in doing so I am not at all sure I am in accord with the opinions of the majority of my constituents. Still I recognise we cannot keep asking the State for railways and for money for the development of agriculture, and a deficit looming large in front of us, and the public servants being dismissed. Looking at all that, we cannot refuse to put our hands in our pockets and assist the government to be carried on; at the same time I regret that it is necessary to bring forward the measure.

It seems that only £60,000 will be raised by the tax, and with our enormous territory and small population, and seeing that we are trying to encourage population it is to be regretted that we have to resort to land taxation. When the Leader of the Opposition addressed a meeting in the Queen's Hall he seemed to highly approve of this measure, and said that he would give it his support. At that time he seemed inclined to give it his blessing, now he seems to be prepared to damn it with bell, book, and candle.

*Mr. Bath* : I am prepared to do that now without exemptions.

*Mr. McLARTY* : One of his reasons was that the time was opportune and the people were prosperous. I deny both statements. I consider the time most inopportune, and I know the people are not prosperous. [*Mr. Bath* : I did not say that.] I think I read that in the newspaper report. The eastern districts are enjoying a good season, I know there are fair average crops, and if there is anything in wheat-growing, probably the farmers will do fairly well. But in the south-western districts with which I am particularly acquainted, the people are not at all prosperous.

*Mr. Bath* : The Treasurer accused me of belittling the country by saying that things were bad. Now you complain that I said the country was prosperous.

*Mr. McLARTY* : In the South-West we have to avoid wheat-growing, and to engage in fruit and vine-growing, vegetable-growing, and dairying. Only a small percentage of the population is engaged with orchards and vineyards, and if the fruit fly and other pests leave them alone, possibly they may knock along; but it does not pay to grow vegetables. I know a man living only three miles from my residence at Pinjarra, who sent a ton of choice vegetables to Perth, and thought when he received a reply that the letter contained a nice cheque; but when he opened it he found a twopenny stamp. I read the other day that at Capel a farmer sent four tons of potatoes to the Perth market, when potatoes were supposed to fetch £8 per ton; and he received in exchange an

order on a Perth firm for 8d., and he had to pay 2d. to get it cashed. As to dairying, people are giving up dairying in my part of the country on account of the poisonous zamia palms. People cannot turn out their stock. [*Mr. Scaddan* : Then what is the good of the State dairy cows?] I know a poor man who had seven cows, and five of them died in the last month. Another man lost ten bullocks from the same cause. People in that district are engaging in sheep-breeding; for the losses through palm poisoning are so heavy that it does not pay them to keep cattle. Within the last four years, in the place where I reside, I have destroyed the palms on 2,000 acres at a cost of £1,000. But the land tax will not assist us to continue that sort of enterprise; in fact, whatever amount is raised by the land tax, there will be so much less to spend on the soil. Again, the roads boards are raising their rates. In my district most of the boards rate at 3d. in the pound, and people are being summoned for rates unpaid. The people are not obstinate and will not pay, but they really cannot pay. There are people on the land who never see a bit of butcher's meat from one year's end to another. My sympathies go out entirely to the man on the land. We heard much a short time ago about eight hours work and an 8s. wage and a living wage for certain workmen; but what would members think of a man working 14 or 15 hours a day for nothing at all but the miserable pittance that he draws from the soil? While on the subject of roads boards I wish to contradict a statement made by the member for Perth (*Mr. H. Brown*), who says that the expense of collecting the rates exceeds the amount collected. In my district the board collected £525 this year, and received a Government subsidy of £350, and the only cost of collection was £60 salary to a clerk and 5 per cent. on the £525, a total of £86 5s. There were no other expenses of collection. On account of the poverty of the men on the soil, and knowing they cannot afford to pay a heavy tax, I will support the exemptions in the Bill. I will support the Bill

simply because of the state of our finances. It is our necessity, and not my will, that compels me to vote for the Bill. In any case, I do not think it is a very statesmanlike measure. The Attorney General said some members could not see beyond what would affect their own pockets; but that is not the case with me. Any small income I have is principally derived from property in Perth; the tax will hit me pretty hard, although I am supporting the measure. But as the member for Gascoyne has said, there was a threat of a dissolution. A threat of a dissolution will not affect me; I shall not alter my opinion in the slightest under a threat of that kind. I will not fall on my stomach and eat dirt, anyway. It seems to me the Government may well say to-night, "Save us from our friends." Ministers remind me of Actæon, the man who was worried by his own dogs. Actæon, if I remember rightly, was rude enough to watch Diana bathing; and though I do not suppose the Ministry would be so naughty as to do that, still, I think they are much in the position of Actæon, in being worried by their own dogs.

The TREASURER (Hon. F. Wilson): I regretted to hear the last speaker detailing the misfortunes of some settlers on the land in his district. I am afraid he has heard only the bad side of the question; at any rate, he has given illustrations of none but those who have failed. I have a vivid recollection of a tale by a settler in my district, told me the other day, directly contrary to those the hon. member has narrated. This settler is 40 miles from a railway, and is tilling, I suppose, some 40 or 50, perhaps 70 acres of land; and he finds he is able to cart his milk 40 miles to the factory and sell it at a profit; he has been able to cart potatoes 40 miles to the railway at Busselton, despatch them thence to the goldfields, and have a very handsome return. He told me he averaged over £6 per ton for his crop last season. [Mr. Bath: Some of the produce agents need watching.] Exactly. He said he was dealing, he was happy to say, with honest agents on the goldfields, and his produce

returned him a very substantial profit. He had just recently invested in several dairy cows, so that he might sell cream to the butter factory. He thought we were perfectly justified in asking settlers to bear a fair portion of State taxation. It appears to me that if we try to find reasons for opposing such taxation, we can easily find them. Any member can take exception to taxation. Perhaps he may do so justly; but as a rule the argument amounts to the fact that he objects to pay for the ordinary facilities provided by the Government; and I fail to see why anyone should oppose this method of taxation unless he can prove that it is unnecessary, or that it is unjust in its incidence; and if he can prove either one or the other, then his position may be justified. But to oppose it simply because he objects to taxation in any shape or form is not fair, unless he is prepared to submit some alternative method of improving the state of our finances. [Mr. A. J. Wilson: An income tax would do that.] Perfectly true; but is an income tax preferable to a land tax? It may be in the hon. member's opinion, but it is not in the opinion of a majority of our people. I take it there is no form of taxation anyone can suggest that is more abhorrent to the people than an income tax. I remember the agitations against it in the old country, and similar agitations in the Eastern States. In New South Wales a land tax was proposed as a fair and equitable means of raising revenue. The land tax was rejected, and next session the Government brought in a land and income tax, not because a land tax was unfair apart from an income tax, but because they found that a year had gone by, and they needed more revenue and were therefore obliged to add an income tax to the land tax to make good the deficit. That was the position in New South Wales, and it might very easily have been the position here; but I hope we shall be able, with the assistance of the £60,000 we anticipate from the tax this year, to balance our finances. I cannot say just yet whether we shall succeed, as the figures have not been prepared. The member

for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) was somewhat strong in his denunciations of the Government, and he took it on himself to say we were in this matter acting contrary to the will of the people, and I understood him to say we had not the confidence of the people. I at once join issue with him, and say we are not acting contrary to the will of the people. We may, and always shall be, acting contrary to the will of a section of the community, in any direct taxation we may propose; but surely the election the other day in the East Province shows conclusively that the majority of people are not against this proposal of the Government. The hon. member seemed to denounce Ministers for assisting the cause of one of the candidates.

*Mr. Butcher:* I complained that a majority of the electors in that province had not an opportunity of casting their votes.

The TREASURER: Then whose fault was it that they had not? I join issue again, and say the majority had the opportunity of casting their votes if they liked to do so. So far as the Government know, no one who had a right to vote and liked to exercise the franchise was prevented from doing so. The people in that agricultural district voted on a question put fairly and squarely before them; and no matter how some of them dislike the tax, they have decided that the Government is justified in asking the country to contribute thus to the revenue; and to show their approval of the proposal those electors returned the candidate who supported the Government. Surely that is direct evidence that the statement of the hon. member that people are against the action of the Government is incorrect. I take it that it is an endorsement of the policy of the Government. I also wish to point out that if we are going to develop this country, giving the facilities of transit we are endeavouring to provide right throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia, we must have money. If we cannot get sufficient revenue from indirect taxation that is returned to us by the Commonwealth, we must go to the people and ask them to give us the

deficiency in the shape of direct taxation such as we are proposing. Otherwise we come to the position that we should not be justified in projecting the large works which we have projected for the benefit of the country. And for the hon. member to lecture the Government for entering on projects that are not of a business-like nature, is past fairness. We are quite open to criticism, but the hon. member should be just in his criticism of the Government in reducing the cost of administration. He says that the proper business method is to reduce expenditure when we cannot meet the deficit; but when introducing the Budget I told hon. members that I had made an estimate, but that if I could not meet it by revenue the proper course would be for Ministers to reduce expenditure as far as possible to meet the revenue. Have we not done so?

*Mr. Bath:* No; you put the expenditure on to loan moneys.

The TREASURER: We did nothing of the sort. We found that as the year went by our revenue did not meet the estimate by the sum of £100,000 in round figures, and we cut down our expenditure by £102,000. Did not that show that we had already taken these steps which the hon. member says is the course to pursue instead of advocating a land tax? We are continuing in those steps day by day. All through last year we watched the position carefully, and wherever it was possible to economise we endeavoured to make the revenue meet the expenditure; and so we intend to do during the current financial year. The hon. member was most pessimistic in his utterances as to the effect this tax will have on the settlers. He spoke of the burden it would be on the settlers, and he said life would practically become impossible for them. I want to point out in connection with that matter that the same cry was raised in the Eastern States of the Commonwealth when land taxation was proposed, yet we find to-day that land settlement has gone on there apace, just as much as before, and that land taxation has been no detriment to land settlement in the Eastern States. Are we going to believe that something which has been directly the

opposite in the Eastern States is going to take place here?

*Mr. Butcher* : The land tax in New Zealand was introduced when there was need for land : such as is not the position in Western Australia.

The TREASURER : I do not know. They have a fair amount of Crown lands at present which I see they are going to open up and sell. Some parts are to be made permanent reserves, and some are to be thrown open for sale, and the tax was introduced at least 12 years ago. [*Mr. Bath* : It was in 1891.] That was 16 years ago. I think the member for Gascoyne must be incorrect so far as that is concerned. The member for Perth made it a great point that we should not attempt to bring immigrants and settlers to our lands while we are suggesting the imposition of a land tax. The other States have all done the same thing. They have always been bringing out settlers for their land; they are doing it to-day; yet they have this land tax. Why should it be wrong for us to do something which it has been the custom to do right throughout Australasia and New Zealand? After all is said and done, is it any undue hardship if a settler comes here and receives all the advantages and benefits of free land in the first instance, the assistance the Agricultural Bank gives him enabling him to go on the land with practically nothing, and the facilities of transit which we propose and which we are giving in the shape of the railways we are constructing—is it too much to ask that man when he gets all these advantages that he cannot get in other parts of the British Empire to contribute some small percentage of land tax to the general revenue of the State? I take it these people will be the last to object; and if we are going to advance that as a solid argument, what right have we to put additional Customs taxation on these people here? The Federal Government have put a tariff on which is going to increase the cost of living to these people to a considerable extent, yet who would gainsay the right of the Federal Government to put on taxation of that description if the needs of the Commonwealth and the States

require it? I may point out that the accusation of the member for Perth that it is unfair to bring immigrants out and then indulge in taxation is wrong, fallacious, has no bottom to it because anyone who throws in his lot with us here must be prepared to bear a fair proportion of the burden of taxation to carry on the affairs of the State. The hon. member leads us to believe that the fact of having some empty houses in Perth and the towns is due to the imposition of a land tax. We have had empty houses in Perth and the larger towns for the last three years, and we have been getting a few more I am sorry to say, but it is not all due to the people leaving the State or the towns. If it were due to people leaving the city and going to the country I would welcome it, but we must remember that when we have a town 12 or 15 year old, as Perth is, we must have empty houses. We have a better class of house being built and the rents of the better houses are being lowered, so that people who have been occupying inferior houses have moved into the better class of houses. Thus we have the empty house. That is the history of towns in all portions of the British Empire. The hon. member referred, as he thought very scathingly, to a list of roads boards and stated that they had not taxed themselves and that the Government had granted them subsidies in the shape of sops. The hon. member was very emphatic in regard to the electorates of Bunbury and Sussex, making it apparent that his speech and his charges were directed against the members of the present Ministry. I wish to point out the unfairness of this again. When he was quoting he was using figures for the year 1904-5, when we were not in power but our friends opposite had the reins of Government. Yet the hon. member uses this as an argument that the Government are not justified in suggesting the land tax before the House. Such arguments are not going to hold any weight with members of this House; certainly not with any of the electors in any portion of Western Australia. We have had the charge from time to time, and it has been emphasised by the member for Perth and others, that the cities

are to carry the major portion of this taxation. [*Mr. H. Brown* : You said that to your constituents.] Certainly I said that the larger portion would be borne by the towns, and in that statement I included the chief town of my own electorate, Busselton, because it has to bear its portion with the other towns of Western Australia. [*Mr. H. Brown* : Not £20.] If the hon. member would only try to be accurate it would be much better, and he would carry much more weight. But hon. members have the figures attached to the Bill. If they work it out they will find that the 42 municipalities of the State will pay £32,526, and that the roads boards, 72 in number embracing agriculturalists, horticulturalists and pastoralists, will pay £27,547, making a total of £60,073. Will hon. members say that it is an unfair division? Members have only to think of the population of the cities to say at once, if they think for ten minutes, that it seems to be a very fair distribution of the land tax suggested by the Government. The municipalities have the population; Perth must necessarily bear the larger portion of a tax of this description; but Perth is not asked to bear anything unduly out of proportion, because it has the people, it has the values due to the people being in the town, and therefore we are entitled to ask the people in the city to bear their fair share, and we are asking nothing more from them than a fair share of the contribution towards this impost. To say that because there are such things as roads board rates and municipal rates to pay, the Government should not ask these people to contribute to the State revenue is absurd. It amounts to this. We all know that municipal rates are put on to benefit the individuals residing in the municipality. The municipal rate is a collective contribution of a body of people to do something for the benefit of those people, and those people only, for the individual in the majority of cases. The municipality puts a rate on me for instance, in order that I may have a road and footpath past my house, in order that I may have certain sanitary

services rendered or my rubbish carried away. It is work that I would of necessity have to do myself, but the municipality can do it much more cheaply, because anything can be done collectively more cheaply. It is the same with roads board taxation; but it is different with the State. The State needs revenue that it may balance the revenue, yet the hon. member would have us in our sane senses believe that we have no right to ask the city people to contribute towards the wants of the State because they are carrying out certain services for their own individual benefit, either individually or collectively. The arguments that have been advanced against this form of taxation are simply absurd; unless the hon. member can show that the finances of the country do not necessitate it. I think I have listened very carefully to every speech made this evening, and I have yet to learn where any member has tried to show that the finances do not require some additional revenue in order to balance the ledger. Taking that as being correct, I fail to see where the opposition can come from. It is idle for members to say that they are going to oppose the land tax and appeal to the people who are always ready to oppose anything as being some little burden on themselves. It is idle to raise that cry, because I am quite certain that the common sense of the House and the people will realise we are only asking for what is fair and for what is absolutely necessary in the interests of the whole community. I wish to refer briefly in conclusion to the cost of collection. The member for Katanning has said that in South Australia it is about 20 per cent.; but that is incorrect so far as the information at my disposal goes. Members will see in the draft report of the Treasury examiner, who visited all the other States, that he has set down the cost of collection of the combined land and income tax in South Australia at 6.3 per cent. In New Zealand it is much less, and in other States it varies from something like 2½ per cent. in Victoria to 8 per cent. I think hon. members will agree that I am justified in estimating

the cost of collection, at any rate for this year when we have to take to a large extent the valuations of public bodies, such as roads boards and municipalities, at 5 per cent. I am prepared to make the definite statement that the cost of collection will not exceed 5 per cent. this year. It goes without saying if we are to develop our country, and the development of this great country must go on—if railways are to be constructed, and railways must be constructed far and wide if we are to develop our country—if our industries, agricultural, pastoral and mining, are to be encouraged and assisted as they must be, then the land owners of this State, realising that they have something which is obtaining an increased value by every hundred pounds we spend in the way of opening up the country by building railways and roads, realising that they are getting an increased value on the land by every man who locates himself near them, be content, and are content I feel sure, to contribute this small impost we are making by the Bill, the second reading of which is being debated to-night.

Question put, and passed on the voices; one "No" heard.

## FEDERAL NEW TARIFF, A REMONSTRANCE.

### *Joint Committee's Report.*

The PREMIER: I beg to present the report of the committee appointed in conjunction with another place to draw up a remonstrance on behalf of the State, against the imposition of the proposed Federal Tariff. This is in accordance with the resolution passed by this House on Tuesday last.

Report received, and read by the Clerk Assistant as follows:—

### *Address.*

To the President (or Speaker) and Members.—We, the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of the State of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, in pursuance of a resolution passed by our respective Houses

on the 27th and 28th instant, which is as follows—

"That in the opinion of this House the proposed Federal Tariff would most injuriously affect the primary industries of Western Australia, and would subject the State to a period of depression fraught with the gravest danger to her existence"—

venture respectfully to address you with the object of bringing under your notice that the new tariff, if passed in its present form, will operate most harshly upon the people, the commerce, and industries of this State.

We are convinced—

(a.) That the ordinary requirements of the people, including many articles of food and clothing, will be made dearer either by the added duty or by the enhanced price which the vendors will be enabled to impose.

(b.) That a great many industries of this State will suffer most materially by the almost prohibitive duty imposed on machinery.

(c.) That the agricultural and pastoral industries will also be very prejudicially affected by the increased duties on commodities necessary therefor.

(d.) That many of the other industries of this State may be compelled to curtail if not to suspend operations.

(e.) That the purchasing power of wages will be diminished, avenues of labour will be closed, and the number of our unemployed will be increased, and both workers and tradesmen in our midst must severely suffer.

We leave it to the representatives of this State in your Houses to indicate in detail the items which will produce the results above mentioned. We desire to remind you that we represent a State which forms an integral part of the Commonwealth and covers more than one-third of the total area of the combined States of Australia.

A large portion of our State territory is at present undeveloped, and its future progress depends largely on the increase of population and the expansion of its industries.

Respectfully we record our protest against a tariff so calculated to injure Western Australia which has already made so many and such great sacrifices in the interest of Australian nationhood."

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The PREMIER: I move—

*That the protest to the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Commonwealth, in the form recommended by the committee, be agreed to; and that the Speaker be authorised, in conjunction with the President of the Legislative Council, to present the same to His Excellency the Governor, with the request that he forward it through the proper channel to the Senate and House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Commonwealth.*

Mr. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): In regard to this remonstrance which has been drawn up by the joint committee appointed by both Houses, I may say that I was appointed a member of the committee, but the time fixed for the meeting was inconvenient for me, as I had another meeting to attend to. [Mr. Holman: That is the reason they fixed it for that hour.] I do not say that for one moment, for the time was fixed by the Legislative Council; but I had a previous meeting which lasted till 4.30 o'clock, and therefore I was unable to be present. In view of the draftsmanship of the remonstrance and the statements contained therein, I am afraid it would have been useless for me to have been present, because I would have dissented most strongly from the statements contained therein. The remonstrance even goes farther than the resolution which was carried by hon. members. I objected then to this House making any remonstrance to the Federal Parliament or Federal Government, unless we were prepared to go into the matter and make that remonstrance as the result of investigation on the subject. Without that investigation and on the strength of statements which have been conclusively proved to be altogether incorrect, we passed a general resolution which in no

sense was the result of well-considered thought of the tariff. If the House had said "We will go into the matter and see whether the tariff is injurious and whether we can point out the injuries to the Federal Parliament," I would have been prepared to agree to it, for that would have been the common-sense method, and it would have commended itself to all members whatever be their feelings on one policy or another. But on the strength of the resolution which we passed, to draw up a remonstrance which commits us to a number of general prophecies and statements as to what will happen in the future, without one word of substantiation, without any basis whatever, either in the resolution carried by this House or the Council, not based on arguments advanced in favour of the motion, and without any basis in the remonstrance as drawn up, is only to make ourselves look ridiculous in the eyes of the Federal Parliament. If the Federal Government or Federal Parliament received from this House any representations courteously made, based on an intimate study of the tariff in its relations to Western Australia, they would be received with equal courtesy and with that consideration to which they would be entitled. But when, instead of doing that, we send to them a document of the nature of this one and, without any foundation whatever, commit ourselves to a number of prophecies, the only reply that can possibly be made is, "What on earth justifies them in sending this? Where are arguments advanced in its favour? Where is there evidence of discussion and analysis of the tariff to substantiate the items in the report?" For my part, I think it is contrary to the dignity of this Assembly to send such a message, and I intend to oppose the motion.

Mr. W. C. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to this remonstrance. I do not think anything whatever was said in the motion moved by the Premier with regard to the salaries of Federal legislators. [Mr. Scaddan: That is not mentioned in this report either.] I



understood it was. There was nothing brought before this Chamber to justify anything like the remonstrance which is included in that report. As to the cost of living and as to the detrimental effect the tariff will have on the industries of this State, I may say that certainly it was pointed out that some industries would be affected detrimentally, but the remonstrance refers to every industry in the State. I only hope that members will not allow themselves to be made to look so foolish as they will be if a copy of the resolution is sent to the Federal Parliament. I am very pleased to hear from the Leader of the Opposition that he took no part in drawing up such a remonstrance, for it will make us the laughing stock of the whole world. Members have no right to interfere with this question or to interfere with any action which has been taken by the Federal Parliament. At the last Federal elections the present member for Fremantle in the House of Representatives (Mr. Hedges) said in the course of his campaign that he was a staunch protectionist, and was prepared to go "the whole hog." What right have we to criticise that member of the Federal Parliament and tell him what he should do, considering the fact that the people who sent him to that Parliament have given him authority by their votes to support protection every time? I maintain that we should conserve the rights of the people but we have no right to interfere with the Federal Parliament.

Mr. J. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): I too must enter my protest against the remonstrance as drawn up by the joint committee. My strong objection to it is on this ground: in discussing the resolution the other night it was clearly understood that Western Australia was affected mostly from the fact that we would receive a great quantity of our goods passing through the customs from the Eastern States instead of from abroad. In view of that fact we should lose something from the customs revenue, but the remonstrance does not touch on that at all. It is pointed out to the Federal Parliament that the tariff will injuriously

affect the industries of the State and not the State itself. How it will affect the industries of our State our Federal members know or ought to know. It is not part of the duty of this Parliament to dictate to the members from this State as to how they should consider the Federal tariff. When it will injuriously affect the State from a State standpoint then is time for us to remonstrate with the Federal Parliament. But this report does not touch on that point at all; it says that this tariff is going to affect the cost of living, clothing, *etcetera*, and it goes on in that strain. I contend it will have no such effect but it will have the effect of building up industries, perhaps not in Perth, but that is merely a parochial standpoint, and unless it does anything from a State standpoint I shall be no party to it. It will make us look ridiculous and the Government are holding themselves up to such a position, and they deserve to be ridiculed. I am sure the public will not agree to the remonstrance from this point of view.

*The Premier*: They would agree to something a bit stronger.

Mr. SCADDAN: Then let it be worded in a sensible manner. If the Premier is satisfied we will lose something, that is a reason why the motion is moved in this Parliament, because we shall lose something from the revenue, but why not say that in the remonstrance? That is what I want to know, and what the Federal Parliament will want to know, not these misstatements, that is as far as I can get under the Standing Orders. I would like to say something stronger, and I would outside.

*The Premier*: It was drawn up by a committee of both Houses.

Mr. SCADDAN: But what sort of a committee?

*The Premier*: A representative committee.

Mr. SCADDAN: There were two members on this side of the House strongly in favour of the motion tabled by the Premier; no opportunity has been given to members who were opposed to it of being on the committee.

*The Premier*: The Leader of the Opposition was nominated by myself.

Mr. SCADDAN: But why were not the names submitted to the House. The member for Kanowna was on the committee, but we know how he spoke in this House; the member for Subiaco was on the committee, and we know his feelings on the point. All shades of opinion should have been represented on the committee.

*The Premier:* There were two Opposition members on the committee.

Mr. SCADDAN: I hope an opportunity will be given, or at least be taken by somebody to acquaint the Federal members from this State of the true position of affairs, and not allow absolute misstatements to be made. It is a monstrous thing to ask His Excellency the Governor to send a misleading statement of that kind. It is unfair to that gentleman, and it will make members of this House absolutely ridiculous in the eyes of the public. I heard to-day that this statement was drawn up before the committee sat, so that there should be no waste of time. That is objectionable. [*Member:* They took no evidence.] No; a few biased members sat together and sent this along for us to consider; they had no figures before them; I doubt if any one of them had seen Mr. Owen's figures. This is a parochial statement. Half of them are secessionists. I will not be a party to sending this statement to Melbourne. The committee found themselves in a difficulty; they could not reach the Federal Parliament by any other means. They recognised they had no Federal members. Sir John Forrest had left the Government, so they had to send the document through His Excellency, who will forward it to the Governor-General—I hope he will not take any notice of it—and he is to send it to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. That is the only course they have to take. The committee got themselves into a difficulty and found that was the only course to adopt. I take up the position that if we have to remonstrate with the Federal Parliament we have members there to do that.

*The Premier:* The members are referred to in the document.

Mr. SCADDAN: I do not think they will thank us for a statement of that kind. I will not be a party to sending this statement, and I hope members of the House will not allow it to go as being the opinion of this House. I am opposed to it.

Mr. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Pilbarra): We discussed this matter the other night, and I have no intention of discussing it again, but I would like to enter my protest against the petition as drawn up. A mass of hysterical exaggeration of that description can only meet with the contempt it deserves when it gets before the Federal Parliament. I would like to say that unless that Parliament treats the document with contempt I shall be more of a secessionist than I have been in my life. I reckon that if they do not treat it with contumely and contempt they are not as good as I took them to be. I feel convinced that the committee who drew up the petition purposely worded it in the way they did so as to get a rebuff. They have worded it, in my opinion, not with a desire to alter the tariff but to create ill-feeling against the Federal Government. I just wish to enter my protest and state that as far as I am concerned I feel this Parliament is certainly losing some of that little bit of dignity it previously had.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford): I would like to know, before I vote on the motion, where the joint committee got their information from. I presume the committee waited until the meeting in the Perth Town Hall had taken place, and took from that source assertions and statements which were made by some of the interested importers at that meeting, irresponsible persons, and the committee have taken arguments from persons who addressed that meeting and supported the motions. I would point out to the Premier and the other members of the joint committee that only one side of the question was put at the meeting in the town hall. The other side of the question was pooh-poohed by paid repre-

sentatives, no doubt, of the importers in Perth. It is a remarkable thing that there was no manufacturer present at the meeting. Why was not a representative of Foy and Gibson present?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is a little wide of the motion.

Mr. JOHNSON: The motion proposes to adopt the report which I am criticising.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is dealing with the town hall meeting, which has nothing to do with the subject.

Mr. JOHNSON: I would like—

Mr. SPEAKER: I want to keep the hon. member as closely as I can to the point.

Mr. JOHNSON: I want to know my position before I proceed. I am criticising the report read by the Clerk Assistant. Am I in order in doing that?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes; but the hon. member is going outside the scope of the motion in dealing with the town hall meeting. The hon. member can refer in a casual manner to anything, but cannot deal with a subject which does not concern the business before the House.

Mr. JOHNSON: I assume, and I am justified in assuming, that the only evidence the joint committee had on which to draw up that report was the report of the town hall meeting. They called for no evidence; they have nothing to justify them except that town hall meeting; and in order to protect the House from making I was about to say fools of its members, I wish to point out to members that we have had nothing worthy of being considered evidence in support of the conclusions arrived at by the committee, or in support of the resolutions passed at the town hall meeting. Up to date we have had only one side of the question stated, and there has been no opportunity for an expression of opinion by those who are inclined to think, with some members who spoke in this House the other night, that the tariff will not be the burden on Western Australia that a lot of interested importers would like us to believe, but that on the

other hand it will be good for Australia generally, and that if we desire to build up an Australian nation we must have a tariff on lines somewhat similar to those of the Federal Government proposal. Consequently we have not had the matter considered by the public, nor have we had it properly considered by the committee. What right have the committee to come to these conclusions? Who told them of the alleged facts they put forward? Because the Premier tells me the tariff will do this and that, I am not obliged to swallow all he says, or to imagine that because Mr. Owen draws him up a set of figures those figures are conclusive. [Mr. Underwood: They are wrong on the face of them.] I wish to make the position clear. Up to date we have had no evidence at all in support of the conclusions arrived at by the committee. If we have no evidence, we ought not to submit to the Federal Parliament an assertion which if investigated by them must be found to be absolutely unsound. Members of this Assembly, supposed to be a responsible body, are called on to pass a resolution and forward it to the Federal Parliament, a resolution that will make us appear absolutely ridiculous. I appeal to members not to make this Assembly the laughing-stock of Australia; for unquestionably we cannot substantiate the conclusions arrived at by the committee. While those interested in importing rather than in building up here or in the other States Australian industries can make statements which we must regard as irresponsible, we can disregard such statements as the utterances of interested persons. But statements coming from this Assembly are supposed to be correct, and our conclusions are supposed to be arrived at after mature consideration and thorough investigation. In this matter we have had no mature consideration and no thorough investigation; consequently I appeal to members not to make this Assembly a laughing-stock, but rather to defeat this motion and to leave the question in the able hands of our representatives, who will see that Western Aus-

tralia is protected against any injustice.

*Motion to Adjourn.*

Mr. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison) : I move the adjournment of the debate. I consider we should have copies of this remonstrance before us, to see exactly what we are dealing with.

Mr. Johnson : Every member should get a copy.

Motion (adjournment) put, and a division taken with the following results :—

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	24

Majority against .. 9

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Barnett
Mr. Bath	Mr. Brebber
Mr. Bolton	Mr. H. Brown
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Davies
Mr. Holman	Mr. Eddy
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Stuart	Mr. Gull
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Underwood	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Walker	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Ware	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Heitmann (Teller).	Mr. Male
	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. N. J. Moore
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Verrard
	Mr. A. J. Wilson
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Layman (Teller).

Motion thus negatived ; debate continued.

Mr. Johnson : Should I be in order in moving an amendment to the effect that the report be printed and distributed amongst members ?

Mr. Speaker : The hon. member can negative the motion before the House.

Mr. Bolton : We do not know what the motion is.

Mr. Speaker : The report has been presented by the committee appointed for the purpose. The motion now before the House is that an address be presented through the proper channel to the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Commonwealth.

*Debate.*

Mr. G. TAYLOR : (Mount Margaret) : I desire as briefly as possible to enter my protest against passing this motion. When introducing the motion the Premier should at least have taken the House into his confidence, showing some reasons why these conclusions were arrived at, and what evidence was taken by the Committee and then the House might have been more favourably impressed by the motion. While I have no desire to go beyond the scope of the motion, I want to say something with regard to the meetings held recently dealing with the Federal tariff. So far as I can gather, the meeting in Perth was most one-sided, and in my opinion there is no proof there that the Premier can advance for the committee arriving at the conclusions in this remonstrance. I am not going to be a party to sending to the Federal Parliament a message from this House without having read it. It is absurd to send something which goes far beyond the resolution carried in this House at Tuesday's sitting. So far as the workers are concerned, I will read a resolution carried by a body of workmen on the goldfields to give in some measure the Federal members of Parliament and Sir William Lyne, the Acting Prime Minister, an idea of what men, not those working for wages but small leaseholders, think of the tariff. This resolution was carried at Murrin Murrin. It is not in my electorate, but I could read a wire which the miners at Laverton sent to Sir William Lyne, congratulating him and his Government on the tariff submitted to Parliament. This is a paragraph from a newspaper :—

"A well-attended meeting of the Murrin Miners' Union was held in the union room on Sunday night, 25th August, being called for the purpose of dealing with the tariff, and the following resolution was carried without a single dissident :—'Please accept congratulations of Murrin Miners' Union for yourself and Ministry for the introduction of high protective tariff, and assure you of our hearty approval'—which was sent along to the Acting Prime Minister, Sir W. Lyne."

*The Minister for Mines:* How many would be present at that meeting?

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member knows how many would be there if he were addressing a meeting. It is a flourishing little centre. A large number of men are working there, and they are an active and energetic people and thoroughly understand what they are doing. They called the meeting specially to consider the tariff, and that is the decision they arrived at. Seeing that bonafide workers on the goldfields are supporting the tariff it is a justification for asking for farther consideration of the remonstrance it is proposed to despatch. I contend that the meeting in the town hall was not a representative meeting of the people of Perth. People opposed to the free-traders and importers were howled down and not allowed to speak; when genuine workers got on the platform to speak they were howled down, though they themselves brought articles of all descriptions on the platform and held them up. I do not know where the joint committee got their information to put into this document to send to the Federal Houses, but I want to be fair to the Government. The Government had nothing to do with regulating the time of the meeting this afternoon; that matter rested with another Chamber. When a message requesting a joint committee is sent from one House to another, the House receiving the message, if it appoints a committee to sit jointly with the committee from the other House, appoints the time and place of meeting. I want to remove any stigma that I know was unwittingly thrown on the Government in that particular. But who were the members from this side of the House on that committee? One was a friend of the importer, the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) who was present at the meeting in the town hall; another was an anti-federalist, the member for Kanowna. [*Mr. Walker:* That is wrong.] The hon. member always speaks against Federation. The other was the Leader of the Opposition, who was unable to attend, and judging from his utterances he I am sure, if he were present, would have opposed the

document as drawn up. I am pleased the hon. member has saved himself from disgrace through being absent while this document was being approved of. The resolution we approved in this House dealt with the primary industries, but we find that food and wearing apparel are dealt with in this remonstrance. I hope the Premier will give the House and the country a fair chance, before forcing it down our throats, to see at least a type-written copy of the remonstrance, so that we may study it. There is no burning desire to send it along; the Federal tariff will not be passed just yet awhile.

*The Premier:* The resolution carried in the House gave power to the committee to send it along.

Mr. TAYLOR: There was a hitch; there was a desire to send it through a more powerful channel, and it is necessary to know what it is desired to send through that channel in order to prevent ourselves appearing silly in the eyes of the public. I hope the Government will not use their majority to force this through to-night. I hope they will adjourn the debate, and enable us to peruse a copy of the remonstrance.

Mr. J. A. S. STUART (Leonora): I have no desire to indulge in verbosity, in this somewhat squalid position. I feel inclined to take up the position John Bright took up at the time of the Crimean war. He was of opinion that he should protest; but seeing that the people were like the swine that rushed down the steep into the sea because they were possessed of an evil spirit and nothing would turn them, he did not do so. I think that is about what is happening in Western Australia to-day. John Bright admitted that he should protest against the Crimean war; but he admitted also it was no good doing so. I venture to forecast that the time will come, if we send this remonstrance, when we will be just as ashamed of it as Australia was of the frenzy that actuated her at the time of the Boer war. Some of us did not take part in that frenzy, and pointed out that the time would come when Australia would be sorry for what she did. I duplicate that prophecy now, and I say the time will come when this Parliament will be just

as ashamed of this remonstrance as Australia was at the time it took part in the Boer war. I heard the discussion the other night but took no part in it for the same reason that actuated John Bright at the time of the Crimean war; but I was of opinion that sufficient ballast would come along to steady the minds of members in the action they were taking. I thought that if this remonstrance were to be sent over, there might have been included in it some facts and tabulated figures that would if considered strengthen the hands of the men whom we have sent to the Eastern States to represent us in the Federal Parliament. I have every confidence that, when the tariff is being discussed in the Federal Parliament, the men we sent there will see the crudities and injustices will be toned down. I will not be a party to insult those members by sending over a raw, crude remonstrance like this, and I will take an opportunity, if this is carried, to remove from their minds any idea that the remonstrance is indicative of the real feeling in this State. We cannot be proud of the meetings that are being held in connection with the tariff. I did not altogether approve of the resolution passed by some of my constituents at Murrin Murrin, for I think they were going as far away in one direction in supporting the tariff as the manufacturers, a certain section of the Press, and others here are going in opposition to it. I do not want to reflect on the joint committee responsible for the remonstrance, but I think they went a little beyond the authority they received from this Chamber. They have introduced certain bald, unconvincing statements that will bring discredit and disrepute upon us. I shall make it widely known to the people whom we sent to the Federal Parliament that we have no confidence in this remonstrance.

Mr. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison): Not only do I protest against the remonstrance being sent over, but I also protest against the action of the Government in trying to force the matter through the House at a moment's notice.

We have sent down to us two or three pages of closely typewritten stuff—I do not know what other name will suit it. This was read out by the Clerk Assistant, and we are asked to carry it without a moment's consideration. In my opinion, the only good point about it is the excellent manner in which the Clerk Assistant read the twaddle to which we had to listen. The agitation against the tariff has been to a great extent brought about by a few importers who have taken the opportunity of robbing the consumers by palming off on them at advanced rates the extra stocks which they had in hand, and who are trying by making a big row to prevent the consumers from ascertaining that they are being robbed. The merchants and importers all had large stocks in hand in Western Australia, but the moment the tariff was introduced they raised their prices, and many of them absolutely robbed the people by selling at advanced prices goods which are not imported from overseas, but which are Australian products, and therefore were not affected by the tariff. We are asked to pass a resolution at a moment's notice without hardly knowing what the report contains. We cannot even get a sight of this miserable document. It is a disgrace that we should be called upon to pass a motion like this which will redound to the discredit of this Parliament so long as it exists. I do not agree in detail with the tariff placed before the Federal Parliament. There are some matters requiring rectification, but we have good men in the Federal Parliament, as good as any in this Assembly, who will see that Western Australia does not suffer from the anomalies. One member of the Federal Parliament has been alluded to because he voted against the increase of salaries. I would like to ask that member what he is doing with his employees on the Coolgardie-Norseman railway construction work now going on. He is making them work for 4s. 6d. a day. If we were robbing men like that we could also do without an increase of salary. A large number of people in the back country favour a protective tariff. I have received many letters on the ques-

tion, and the following extract shows the strain in which they are written:—

"There are some of them grumbling over the tariff but there are a lot of good Australian protectionists, myself and others included, who say 'Good luck to Bill Lyne.' We have to pay a little more but it is for the good of our country. I hope all protectionists barrack for the tariff."

That is the general opinion of people in the back country. In my opinion had the importers and retailers acted as fair and honest men, instead of crying out with their mouths and robbing people with their hands, there would not have been the outcry against the tariff. So far as sending this resolution to the Federal Parliament is concerned, I disclaim responsibility. We have not had a fair opportunity of dealing with the question. We do not even know what is going to be sent over and it is just as well for many of us that we do not. This phase of the question has to be considered, that though it has been said that the Government were not responsible for the absence of the Leader of the Opposition from the meeting, I am of this opinion, that considering the fact that the members of the committee only sat for a quarter of an hour, and as it would have been impossible for them to have written out this lengthy report in that time, the report was drawn up and typewritten before the meeting was held. [*Mr. Scaddan* : They do not deny it either.] I think we are going too far, and members should be given an opportunity of discussing the question. I therefore move—

*That the report be printed and distributed.*

Mr. SPEAKER : I cannot accept that amendment. The hon. member can vote against the motion. I would point out, although it is perhaps hardly necessary, that this report is the finding of the committee which this House authorised to frame a report and bring up to the House.

*Mr. Holman* : Would it be in order to move "that all words after 'members' be struck out, for the purpose of inserting the words 'and be printed and distributed' ?"

Mr. SPEAKER : That would merely serve to negative the motion, and cannot be moved.

Mr. E. E. HEITMANN (Cue) : I wish to enter my protest against this remonstrance being sent. In the first place, I was against the committee being appointed, for it seems to me most extraordinary that after the tariff has been discussed and studied for some twelve months, by I suppose the pick of the Federal Parliament, and has then been considered in Cabinet, we should have a committee to sit for ten minutes and say that those reports were wrong. This seems to me altogether ridiculous ; and I believe with the member for Mt. Leonora (*Mr. Stuart*) that the proposed remonstrance will bring ridicule on this Assembly. The prime movers in this matter are like a lot of children crying for the moon.

Mr. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco) : As one of the members of the joint committee, I desire to say a few words. First, I wish to correct the member for Mt. Margaret (*Mr. Taylor*), who alluded to me as one of a gang of importers. I am sorry to say I am not even an individual importer.

*Mr. Taylor* : I did not say "a gang." I said you were one of the gallant importers.

Mr. DAGLISH : It is not the prefixing adjective to which I object, but the word "importer." I wish to say I was present on Tuesday night at a meeting in the town hall, to discuss a question altogether apart from the tariff, and had arranged to be at that meeting before any tariff discussion had been mooted. At the same time, I do not mean to imply that I was out of sympathy with the discussion which ensued on the tariff. That, however, is somewhat beside the question of this motion. In this debate I have listened very carefully to try to discover the precise objection of members to the report of the joint committee.

*Mr. Bolton* : We have not seen the report.

Mr. DAGLISH : I can understand that objection, and it is reasonable.

*Mr. Bath* : My objection is to the unsubstantiated statements made, without any evidence, by the committee.

*Mr. DAGLISH* : That is another objection I intend to mention, that there are statements made without any evidence submitted. I desire to say, however, that the joint committee which drew up this report was appointed for a specific purpose, by resolution in each House. The committee had no authority to take evidence. It was appointed in this House after a motion for the appointment of a committee to take evidence had been negatived. The present committee was appointed solely to frame a remonstrance. That, I believe, was the wording of the motion appointing them. The Leader of the Opposition knows perfectly well that the committee was not authorised by the terms of the motion to take any evidence whatever.

*Mr. Bath* : My idea was, they should have got as near accuracy as they could get.

*Mr. DAGLISH* : The hon. member is now altering his accusation. He admits, I take it, that the committee had no power to take evidence.

*Mr. Bath* : I did not talk about evidence.

*Mr. DAGLISH* : Does the hon. member admit the committee had no power to take evidence ? I wish to find out precisely what are the objections to the action of this committee.

*Mr. Bath* : My objection was to the predictions for which the committee has no ground, and to statements which there is nothing to substantiate.

*Mr. DAGLISH* : The Leader of the Opposition admits he made a definite objection that the committee had brought up statements without evidence. I ask him definitely to admit or definitely to deny my statement that the committee had no power to take evidence, and was not appointed to take evidence.

*Mr. Bath* : The committee should have had the evidence of truth before it.

*Mr. DAGLISH* : The hon. member might at least be fair in his criticisms. He has made a criticism which by his silence he admits is unfair.

*Mr. Bath* : I do not.

*Mr. DAGLISH* : He may as well openly admit that. He admits the committee had no power to take evidence.

*Mr. Bath* : Well, on what was it to frame a remonstrance ?

*Mr. DAGLISH* : I am coming to that, but I wish the hon. member to be fair and candid in this matter. The committee was appointed to frame a remonstrance on a definite motion passed by this House. The only groundwork the committee had for framing the remonstrance was the very strong and definite resolution—

"That in the opinion of this House the proposed Federal Tariff would most injuriously affect the primary industries of Western Australia, and would subject the State to a period of depression fraught with the gravest dangers to her existence."

Now the remonstrance that the committee has framed is not nearly so far-reaching, not nearly so serious or so pronounced, as the terms of the resolution.

*Mr. Angwin* : The resolution is bad.

*Mr. DAGLISH* : The resolution may have been bad or good ; this is not the time to discuss the resolution which was passed at a previous sitting. The committee had an instruction to enlarge or elaborate the resolution, to give fuller particulars than the resolution could give, and to put them in the form of a remonstrance to the Federal Parliament.

*Mr. Bath* : You say the remonstrance is based on the resolution. You say "We are convinced," meaning your own convictions or alleged convictions.

*Mr. DAGLISH* : Then we come to these alleged convictions. The first is "That the ordinary requirements of the people, including many articles of food and clothing, will be made dearer either by the added duty or by the enhanced prices which the vendors will be able to charge."

*Mr. Taylor* : You are prophets.

*Mr. DAGLISH* : The hon. member will perhaps admit that this is not the first tariff that has been imposed in the world, is not even the first tariff im-



posed in Australia; and the operation of this tariff, it may fairly be presumed, will not be different from the operation of preceding tariffs. The operation of preceding tariffs has invariably resulted, at all events at the outset, in raising the price of any article on which a new duty was imposed. Is it asserted that the operation of this tariff will be different; that an increased duty on woollen goods will not raise the price of woollen goods to the consumer?

*Mr. Underwood:* Yes; that is held by many greater thinkers than you.

*Mr. DAGLISH:* Well, I not only deny the hon. member's statement, but I submit to the House the proposition that the intention in imposing a duty is to enable the local producer to compete on more favourable terms with the importer; and the duty is imposed for the purpose of raising the price of the imported article, in order that the locally-produced article may compete.

*Mr. Scaddan:* May have a bigger scope.

*Mr. DAGLISH:* The duty must necessarily raise the price, if it is to enable the local article more successfully to compete. I am quite willing to concede that in the course of time internal competition, improved machinery, and other circumstances may so operate as again to result in a reduction of the price; but the initial effect of an increased duty must be an increase of price to the consumer.

*Mr. Angwin:* That is throughout Australia, not only in Western Australia.

*Mr. DAGLISH:* I am not dealing with the operation of this tariff except in Australia.

*Mr. Scaddan:* This is a Western Australian remonstrance.

*Mr. DAGLISH:* Exactly; and Western Australia will get all the disadvantage of the enhanced duties.

*Mr. Scaddan:* In what way?

*Mr. DAGLISH:* By the consumers having to pay them; and the hon. member knows well that Western Australia is not likely to get the advantage

of the new industries which the protective duties may build up. It is clearly enough stated in this remonstrance. Any objection on my part to the tariff is not on free-trade lines; it is quite the reverse, because I want to see Western Australia get the benefit of any protection that is going; and it is solely because of the fact that I am anxious to secure protection for Western Australia that I am opposed to Western Australia being the dumping ground for goods made elsewhere, whether within the Empire or elsewhere, or within the Commonwealth or outside. I have justified the statement contained in the first clause of this remonstrance, that there will be enhanced prices. Members may limit in their utterances the time over which those enhanced prices will apply.

*Mr. Bath:* Yet you say this is going to be a dumping ground.

*Mr. DAGLISH:* Because here where the market is comparatively small there are few manufactures that could be successfully established, especially against the operation of large industrial establishments already existing in the Eastern States, which have sufficient capital behind them to practically force out of competition the small and struggling Western Australian manufactures. At the proper time I could give the hon. member concrete instances to justify that statement.

*Mr. Bath:* But they have to put them in cheaply to do that.

*Mr. DAGLISH:* That is not so; because cheapness as compared with the imported article from England with the duty added is altogether different from cheapness as compared with the article manufactured in Western Australia. The Western Australian article may with its added tariff be able to compete with the English article, but will be in no way advantaged in the competition with its most serious competitor, that is the Eastern manufacturer. I do not desire to drift into an argument that is somewhat foreign to what I started to set out, that is that the first clause of this remon-

strance is justified in fact. Then there is the other point, that the first statement in this remonstrance is justified by the terms of the resolution passed the night before last, because the terms of that resolution were so wide that they said the tariff would subject this State to a period of depression fraught with the gravest danger to her interests.

*Mr. Hudson :* Wipe her off the face of the earth ?

*Mr. DAGLISH :* The hon. member may not agree with the terms of the motion. He had the opportunity of discussing it on a previous occasion. The second article in this statement and the third both relate to our primary industries, and are therefore in the admission of all members, within the terms of the resolution passed on Tuesday. The next item in our statement is that many of the other industries in this State may be compelled to curtail, even to suspend, operations. That relates purely to town industries.

*Mr. Scaddan :* Does that relate to primary industries ?

*Mr. DAGLISH :* Undoubtedly ; it would surely be impossible that this State should be in the gravest danger to her existence without there being a danger that all industries in the State may be compelled to curtail, even suspend, operations. Members cannot complain that this clause is outside the scope of the resolution to which they agreed, and which was really their direction to the committee. Then the last clause in regard to the purchasing power of wages is really governed by those which preceded.

*Mr. Bath :* What about the unemployed, and that sort of thing.

*Mr. DAGLISH :* It all must suffer from the previous facts I have already dealt with. There has been one other statement made in this debate that perhaps needs answering, that is that this report was framed before the committee met. I desire to give that a straight-out denial. This report was not framed before the committee met, but was framed at the committee meeting, and after a considerable amount of discussion. The

statement was therefore rather unfair. I do not know who was aimed at.

*Mr. Scaddan :* Is the remonstrance in the form it was when you met, or was it amended by the committee ?

*Mr. DAGLISH :* The hon. member is entirely wrong in his assertion that this report was framed before the committee met. There were suggestions brought forward by the Premier, and suggestions brought forward by every member of that committee I think—at all events by a majority of the members of that committee—which are embodied in this report.

*Mr. Bolton :* Is it better than the statement proposed by the Premier himself ?

*The Premier :* It is absolutely different.

*Mr. DAGLISH :* Members are aware that it is absolutely necessary that in a committee of this sort some members of the committee should bring forward the groundwork for the discussion of a report. In this particular instance the report is in no way a report submitted by the Premier or any other member.

*Mr. Scaddan :* Very much milder, I suppose.

*Mr. DAGLISH :* I do not know what the hon. member means by being milder. It is certainly different, and it received that amount of deliberation from the committee which its importance and the nature of the instructions from this House required the committee to give it.

*Mr. H. E. BOLTON (North Fremantle) :* I thought the hon. member before he sat down would deal with another objection I raised. The principal protest I have is that I have not received a copy of this address to the Federal Houses ; and I protest against being made a party to giving power to send this address to the Federal Parliament, because I have not seen a copy of it. So strongly do I feel on this point that I am bound to express myself in these words—I regret very much that any good the committee could have done for Western Australia will now be nullified on this account. The address might have gone forward as a protest, without any

serious opposition from both Houses ; but now the action of the Government has led to a little feeling, through members being refused copies and being refused the adjournment that was asked for. I refuse to be a party to sending this address without seeing a copy of it, and I shall take steps to inform the Federal members from this State that I was no party to this address, that I was asked to vote without having an opportunity of seeing it. That is the position I take up, and I much regret it, because I thought the committee might have done some good. Now the address will go to the Federal Parliament as a party question. It will be seen that some were for it and some against it, and that party feeling was shown.

Mr. HOLMAN : Before the question is put, I should like the Speaker's ruling on the motion before the House. I would like to draw attention to Standing Order 178, which says :—

“A question having been proposed may be amended by leaving out certain words only, by leaving out certain words in order to insert or add other words, or by inserting or adding words.”

I moved that certain words be left out and others added. Is this a different motion from those referred to in the Standing Order ?

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member is in order. When I told him a few minutes ago that I could not accept his amendment, I was mistaken. I find by this Standing Order he has the power to move an amendment. I cannot see, however, what effect this amendment will have on the proposal before the House.

Mr. C. A. HUDSON (Dundas) : I desire before the debate is closed to repeat something of what I said the other night, to the effect that this House is not dignified in the position that it has taken up in offering a remonstrance to a higher authority, and I say this House would not accept a remonstrance from any other body of persons in any part of Australia. I admit the motion, no matter what argument is brought forward to-night in op-

position, will be carried directly. Those who have considered this matter have taken it purely as a party question and will vote accordingly. It is our duty to offer a remonstrance ourselves to such a procedure in our House, and I for one decidedly object to it. With regard to the document which we complain was not supplied to us earlier, it was not until a protest was made that the document was supplied and we have not had time to consider it. Now the Premier told us that he went to the conference to-day with an entirely different set of views, and evidently they were overruled.

*The Premier* : I did not say anything of the kind.

Mr. HUDSON : I took down the Premier's words. They were, “Not one clause the same as what I took down.” That is exactly what the Premier said, and I took down his words.

*The Premier* : That is not what you said, though.

Mr. HUDSON : I say when the committee themselves were not really unanimous about it, we certainly should have had some idea of what they were going to do. The only other point I wish to mention is that this is either a protest against protection by free-traders, because the remonstrance will apply equally to the old tariff as it does to the tariff it is proposed to object to. This remonstrance would apply equally to any tariff that was ever brought down, because it could be said in the same general terms that the tariff would affect the people of the particular country in which it was brought down. All the terms are general ; there is nothing specific ; they have only this meaning. The document is to be sent out from this House as a distinct statement that this House is convinced and confirmed in the opinion that free-trade is the best proposition for Western Australia, and that we should have free-trade. This is play-into the hands of the free-traders of the Commonwealth Parliament, which was not intended by the House when we passed the resolution. The only other interpretation is that those who support the motion do so for the express purpose

of seeking a quarrel with the Commonwealth Parliament. The persons who want secession desire a quarrel; they want something to hang their arguments on to secede from the Commonwealth; and they are doing it in this sinister manner, and not coming out openly in a proper and straightforward manner. This House will not lend itself to such a proposition, and we should emphasise our protest to the utmost.

*Mr. Bath:* Question!

*Mr. T. WALKER (Kanowna):* I can quite understand the Leader of the Opposition wanting the question put, after everybody has spoken from his view. I am astonished at the unfairness with which the Leader of the Opposition and other members on this side have treated members of the committee. Let me say it was not by my own will I was put on that committee, I did not seek it; I even suggested, when I was asked if I would go on that I should be left off. The hon. member (*Mr. Scaddan*) asked why were certain people put on? The names were submitted to the House and the member for Ivanhoe was present when he heard the names proposed from the Chair; why had he not the courage to propose that I or *Mr. Daglish* be left off?

*Mr. Scaddan:* After the ballot was taken.

*Mr. WALKER:* The names were proposed from the Chair; there was no ballot, it was a free and open motion, and every member in the House was at liberty to object to or propose someone else: to enlarge the committee, to diminish it, to omit a member or get a new one on. Not a word then, but now after the opportunity has gone and the scene is past, is it a fair way to deal with any question, insinuating dishonourable conduct from the beginning and making me a party to it? That is not fair, and if that be a specimen of the fairness with which this subject is to be considered, then we can see what weight is to be attached to the emphatic protest against this proposal. One word about the Leader of the Opposition. He knew when he was proposed last night that he had to attend the meeting; why

did he not allow himself then to be substituted by another.

*Mr. Bath:* I did not know when the committee meeting was to be held.

*Mr. WALKER:* It was announced from the Chair last night or before—I may be wrong here—that a certain committee of members in another place had been appointed; their names were given to the House, and the time of the first meeting was announced by *Mr. Speaker*.

*Mr. Bath:* The Premier rang me up to-day, but it was too late.

*Mr. WALKER:* There was an opportunity; it was announced from the Chair.

*Mr. Bath:* At half-past eleven last night.

*Mr. WALKER:* The hon. member could have allowed himself to be substituted by someone else. I am only speaking of the unfairness exhibited to those who were on the committee.

*Mr. Holman:* Be fair now.

*Mr. WALKER:* I am fair.

*Mr. Holman:* You are not to the Leader of the Opposition.

*Mr. WALKER:* I am fair. He now makes a reproach on the conduct of those who were members of that committee, when he being appointed to that committee could either himself have attended or (if he could not attend) could have notified this House of his inability and have been substituted by another member.

*Mr. Scaddan:* Is it a liberty to criticise the committee's report?

*Mr. WALKER:* It is no liberty; but the inference from the insinuation is that this was a packed committee composed of persons who were biased and who were incapable of judging the question fairly. That was the insinuation.

*Mr. Bath:* I did not say that.

*Mr. WALKER:* I acquit the hon. member of that, for it was the member for Ivanhoe who made the insinuation.

*Mr. Scaddan:* Well, and if I did?

*Mr. WALKER:* If you did, you were most unfair and unjust, for there was no justification for it.

*Mr. Scaddan:* You are unfair in using the words you have.

Mr. WALKER: Maybe, but it was because I had a barking dog behind me all the time.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask the member for Ivanhoe to control himself. I meant to speak to him two or three times during the evening. He has interjected most frequently, but I have only called "Order" from the Chair. When such conduct is persisted in, I intend to rise, make the member speaking sit down, and insist on obtaining order.

Mr. Scaddan: In regard to the present controversy I stated that the committee were appointed principally from the supporters of the resolution. If there is an insinuation about that remark, I will withdraw it. I did not say it was a packed committee, but that the members were anti-federalists.

Mr. WALKER: Is that fair to me? I stated that I was a federalist and a protectionist, but that I wanted fair protection to Western Australia and fair federation for this State—not all the blessings and glories and privileges and advantages to the other States, and none to us. That was my position in attending this committee. It has been stated that we will be making ourselves ridiculous by sending a remonstrance from this House; but it is too late to argue that now. The resolution that dominated this remonstrance was passed, and the committee had simply to carry out the instructions of this House to the best of their ability. Perhaps it was not done in such a manner as some members would have done it, but I believe it was done to the best of the ability of everyone present. It has been objected that this House had no right to interfere in the matter. This House is a part of the Commonwealth, and it is the duty of the House to keep in touch with the Commonwealth Parliament. We have to keep in touch with the machinery of the Constitution to which we are subject, for it is the Constitution that governs the powers of this House. It is provided in the Constitution that—

"Every power of the Parliament of a Colony which has become or becomes a State shall, unless it is by this Con-

stitution exclusively vested in the Parliament of the Commonwealth or withdrawn from the Parliament of the State, continue as at the establishment of the Commonwealth or as at the admission or establishment of the State as the case may be. Every law in force in a Colony which has become or becomes a State and relating to any matter within the powers of the Parliament of the Commonwealth shall, subject to this Constitution, continue in force in the State."

Mr. Angwin: The right of this House to deal with the tariff is taken away.

Mr. WALKER: Yes; but the Constitution does not take away the right of petitioning, remonstrating, or appealing. That power is always admitted. It is the most ancient of the rights of people or collections of people or public bodies, and it is respected by the Commonwealth. Clause 118 of the Constitution Act says:—

"Full faith and credit shall be given throughout the Commonwealth to the laws, the public Acts, and records and judicial proceedings of every State."

Every Act of Parliament of every State is recognised. It is the most ancient privilege of every public body and individual to petition to a higher authority. I will not argue this point specially to-night, but what I am arguing is this, that we as a committee had nothing else to do but to frame in the best language we could the resolution carried by the Assembly. There is nothing expressed in this remonstrance but what was authorised by what was passed in the House. We may have been bad draftsmen, we may not have framed the remonstrance in the language some members would have liked; some members may have preferred that we should have dotted our "i's" or have crossed our "t's" or put in a full stop or comma in places where they do not appear; but this remonstrance is not the work of any one man, and perhaps it is not in the language that all would have preferred, but it is the product of the draftsmen who were authorised to act by the resolution carried in the House. The remonstrance prepared by the

committee does not condemn absolutely the imposition of the tariff but proposes that there should be a reconsideration. It does not go against the protective spirit of the Commonwealth, but what it does say is that the tariff now before the Federal Parliament carries with it all the injuries set forth in that remonstrance. That is what it does. [*Mr. Ingwin* : That is questionable.] The House said so, and as the House said so we had not the power to revise their decision. We could not make the House say something which they did not say. We had to do our best to express what the majority in the House had decided upon. We could do no more ; the remonstrance expresses the way we carried out the duty. If members will look at the remonstrance they will see that it simply deals with the tariff as it stands and intimates the necessity for some alteration. It says "We venture respectfully to address you with the object of bringing under your notice that the new tariff if passed in its present form will have the following result." There is no suggestion that the Federal Parliament should adopt a tariff which would give us disproportionate benefits to anyone else. It states that the tariff as it stands is all in favour of the Eastern States as against this State, and if it is passed will work the evils which are set forth. I could go on for two hours referring in detail to the various reasons given and provide substance in fact for each one, and I can guarantee that, although there may be contained in the language used some slight appearance of exaggeration, still there is a substratum of fact behind every reason which can be adduced by evidence. I believe that every item in this remonstrance can be proved by a direct appeal to evidence. What I am justified in doing now is to show that in this report the committee did nothing but translate into other language what the House had instructed them to do. The committee had no power to do otherwise. They could not alter the reasons or add to them ; they could not misrepresent anything decided by this House. Their instructions were specific, they had to draw up a remonstrance on the resolution ad-

opted by the House, and that is what has been done.

*Mr. A. J. Wilson* : You were given power to send the remonstrance without referring to the House at all.

*Mr. WALKER* : The hon. member is quite right in saying that. The House could have been avoided, but there was no intention of doing that. The only point that I have any objection to raise about is that we did not provide copies of the remonstrance for hon. members. It was for this reason that I voted for the adjournment of the debate, although I recognise the urgency of getting the remonstrance sent away quickly, if at all. I would have preferred hon. members to have had a copy of this remonstrance in their hands at an early part of the evening.

*Mr. Scaddan* : It would have done away with all this frenzy.

*Mr. WALKER* : There would have been no frenzy at all, if members had seen the remonstrance and read it carefully. In such circumstances there would have been less of that hysteria which appears to me to be as bad on this Opposition side of the House as in any place I ever saw.

*Mr. Holman* : An attack of "nerves."

*Mr. WALKER* : The hon. member need not talk of that. He is at times a good example of the result of an attack of nerves. However, I do not wish to be drawn aside by irrelevancies. I wish to impress on the House that the committee have as far as possible done their duty ; and for what ? It has been insinuated, for the purpose of creating friction in the Commonwealth. No ; but to endeavour as far as possible to induce the Commonwealth Parliament to modify the tariff ; and everybody knows that if we are to do this we must use somewhat forcible and striking language ; that instead of saying "Please do this," we must as far as possible make out a case, and must do it briefly, for we cannot go into details without republishing the whole of the tariff ; therefore we must put our case in general terms

*Mr. Stuart* : To try to bluff the Federal Parliament.

*Mr. WALKER* : As the hon. member tries occasionally to bluff ; as he would

like to bluff me, but he cannot. I say it was the duty of the committee to make the remonstrance as forcible as was possible, having regard to the brevity consistent with a remonstrance of this kind. And the remonstrance is respectful to the Federal Parliament and respectful to the individual members of that Parliament. Our Federal representatives are recognised in the remonstrance. It has been left to them to give such details of the effects of this tariff as they may see fit to give. We have not professed to dictate to them, but have given them the opportunity of speaking for us. But it was our duty as a Parliament, feeling that we represent this State, and imagining at least that we have some knowledge of the effect of the tariff on the people of this State, in their interest to make as dignified a protest as was possible against the imposition of the tariff in its present form; and for the life of me I cannot see any crime in that. It is impossible for me to imagine that we have committed any treason against the Commonwealth Parliament by asking them to reconsider the incidence of the tariff as it falls upon this State. That is what we have done; that is all we ask for; and to make this a crime shows that there are people who occasionally, under the stress of excitement, are not capable of taking a calm and dispassionate view of circumstances such as these.

Mr. A. J. WILSON (Forrest): Personally I cannot understand the attitude of some members in regard to this remonstrance. It has been alleged that the Parliament of Western Australia have no right to interfere in a matter directly under the control of the Commonwealth Parliament, and that we ought to leave these questions, the whole interest of Western Australia, in the hands of our Federal representatives. I venture to think that those people now in Western Australia, including members of this Parliament, are in a better position to understand exactly how the proposed tariff will operate on the community generally, on individuals and on our industries. At all events I venture to assert that the members of the Parliament

of Western Australia are quite as closely in touch with the interests of the people of Western Australia as are our eleven Federal representatives. That being so, we are surely entitled to express our opinion, as we come so closely in contact with the people. Surely any opinion expressed by the Parliament of this State is entitled to carry more weight and to be more highly respected than even the opinion of the Federal representatives themselves. I say therefore we are justified in making this remonstrance. In using the language in which the remonstrance is couched, the committee is reflecting the tone of most of the speeches delivered in the House when the matter was discussed, the speeches of the members who voted for the remonstrance. Every line of the remonstrance we are asked to adopt is amply and completely justified by those speeches, and will prove to be in keeping with actual developments, unless there is some alteration in the Federal tariff. In the interests of the people of Western Australia we are justified in making this protest; and the protest is not one whit too emphatic, for we have a perfect right to point out to the Commonwealth Parliament that we in Western Australia are so situated that our isolation and the stage of our development justify special consideration in any tariff which may engage the attention of the Federal Legislature.

The PREMIER (in reply as mover): I have little to say, except that I think the remonstrance is respectful in tone, and that it embodies the wishes of the majority of the House as expressed in the resolution passed on Tuesday evening. Certainly it is not nearly so strong as the resolution, and it seems to me it contains no reflection whatever on the Western Australian members of the Federal Parliament. It expressly states that—

“We leave it to the representatives of this State in your House to indicate in detail the items which will produce the results above mentioned.”

I maintain that will have the effect of strengthening the hands of our representatives. And in support of some of the contentions used it will not be out of

place, if time permits, to make a quotation from the *Brisbane Worker* referring to this very tariff:—

"This tariff, therefore, is equivalent to a heavy reduction in wages. How long will it take the unions to win back the three to five shillings a week thus knocked off the pay of every working man?"

That is a labour paper.

*Mr. Bath*: The *Perth Daily News* quotes it.

*Mr. Holman*: You ought to quote a lot more of what the *Worker* writes.

The PREMIER: I have no doubt it would educate me in a manner the hon. member would like. I can but say that as the remonstrance is respectful in tone and does not go outside the scope of the resolution passed, I cannot see why it should be objectionable.

Question put, and passed on the voices.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11.29 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 3rd September, 1907.*

	PAGE
Election Return, West Perth ... ..	1241
Questions: Railway Engine-cleaners Retrenched	1241
Railway Running-Shed, Fremantle ... ..	1242
Railways Fencing ... ..	1242
Bills: Land Tax (to impose a tax), 1 <sup>st</sup> . ... ..	1242
Sale of Government Property Bill, 1 <sup>st</sup> . ... ..	1242
Vaccination Act Amendment, 3 <sup>rd</sup> . ... ..	1242
Marriage Act Amendment, 2 <sup>nd</sup> . moved ... ..	1242
Land Tax Assessment, Com. reported ... ..	1243

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

Prayers.

#### ELECTION RETURN—WEST PERTH.

The Clerk announced the return of writ for the election of a member for West Perth, in the place of Mr. F. Illingworth (resigned); showing that Mr. Thomas Percy Draper had been duly elected.

*Mr. Draper* took the oath and subscribed the roll.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

*By the Minister for Mines*: 1, Return of Exemptions granted under the Mining Act for the year ended 30th June, 1907. 2, Wiluna State Battery, Papers re. 3, Register of Accidents on Mines. A return was asked for dealing with accidents in mines. I thought I would bring the office register, and members can peruse it, so that I may have it back shortly.

*By the Premier*: 1, Return of Inspections under Factories and Early Closing Acts.

*By the Minister for Works*: 1, By-laws of Plantagenet Roads Board. 2, By-laws of Upper Irwin Roads Board. 3, Geraldton Harbour Works—Report and Plans of Sir John Coode.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY ENGINE-CLEANERS RETRENCHED.

*Mr. JOHNSON* asked the Minister for Railways: 1, How many locomotive engine-cleaners have been put off through retrenchment during the last six months? 2, What proportion of the total number of cleaners employed six months ago does this represent? 3, What percentage of railway employees of all grades have been retrenched during the last six months, including cleaners? 4, Why is the percentage of cleaners so much in excess of the percentage of all grades? 5, What is the alleged economy being effected by the retrenchment of the cleaners? 6, Is the Minister aware that at some sheds engines are not being cleaned at all, and that they are suffering considerable damage to the motion and wearing parts in consequence, rendering a much larger consumption of oil necessary? 7, Is it the intention of the Government that