

contracts are accepted no less than 50 per cent. below the estimate. It is known to the district surveyor, and other practical men, that the contract cannot possibly be carried out by the contractors whose tenders have been accepted. The result is that, in nine cases out of ten, where the contracts are accepted at 50 per cent. lower than the estimates of local officers, the unfortunate workmen are not paid. I think that the Secretary for Public Works should see that some system is introduced whereby contractors should be compelled to pay their workmen. The matter is of great importance, and it is growing in intensity.

Mr. PRICE (Gloucester) [11.6]: I would point out to the Secretary for Mines and Agriculture that a considerable number of men are kept out of their mines owing to the defective state of the mining law. It might be advisable to adopt the suggestion of the hon. member for Braidwood, and to bring into existence a committee to inquire into the mining laws. I would like to point out that great inconvenience is caused at Port Stephens, and also in my electorate, through the want of a resident magistrate. Persons interested in court business are at present compelled to travel 40 or 50 miles. I have already referred the matter to the Department of Justice.

Mr. S. SMITH (Bathurst), Secretary for Mines and Agriculture: I desire to state that the representations made will receive due consideration.

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [11.9]: In reply to the hon. member for Monaro I can only say that the matter to which he has referred has been engaging my attention for a considerable time. But there is great difficulty in the way of entirely correcting it. I have, as far as possible, guarded the interests of the working men. But as long as men will trust the contractors week after week without receiving their pay they will run the risk of the employer not being able to pay them. It has been the rule of the department for years before my time when wages are due to a man, for the man to write to the department and say so. Then any moneys due to the contractors would be stopped until all wages were paid. I will do all I can to prevent any cause of complaint on this score.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 11.10 p.m.

[Mr. Miller.

## Legislative Council.

Thursday, 15 August, 1895.

The Premier and the Council—Butler Conspiracy Case—Land and Income Tax Proposals—Chairman of Committees—Sessional Committees—Sessional Orders—Leave of Absence—No-liability Mining Companies Act—Repeal Bill—Lieutenant-Governor's Speech: Address in Reply—Adjournment.

The PRESIDENT took the chair.

### THE PREMIER AND THE COUNCIL.

The Hon. W. H. PIGOTT asked the VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL,—Did the hon. the Premier (Mr. Reid), as reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of the 18th July last, while addressing a public meeting in Sydney, on the 17th July, state with reference to the Legislative Council of the colony, "That it is a rotten and corrupt House"?

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: With regard to the question the hon. member has put, I am only able to say at present that I have not yet received any answer to be read to the House, and so far as my own personal knowledge is concerned I have just the same amount of information as other hon. members have, namely, what has been stated in the public newspapers. I have read a good deal of the speeches delivered, and I am sorry to say that I have seen things said on both sides which I thought would have been better unsaid, and which were to be regretted afterwards.

The Hon. W. H. PIGOTT: If I cannot get a better answer than that which I have now received I shall give notice of a motion on the subject. I want to give the hon. the Vice-President of the Executive Council and the Premier a full opportunity of making any explanation with regard to this matter. If the Vice-President of the Executive Council requests me to postpone the question I will do so. If he intends to stick to the answer which he has given I shall give notice of a motion.

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: I cannot promise anything. I am not supplied with any official answer on the subject, and I know no more than the hon. member knows. I have not seen the Premier.

The Hon. W. H. PIGOTT: Then I give notice that I will move on the next sitting day —

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR: I think it would be much better to give fresh notice of the question for Wednesday next. Then it would be clearly understood that, if an answer is not definitely given, other action will be taken. The hon. member may make it impossible for a certain course to be taken if he puts that notice on the paper. The Attorney-General is not here at present. The hon. member should give notice of the question for Wednesday next, with the understanding that it will then be pressed.

The Hon. W. H. PIGOTT: Although I have not been treated with due courtesy in reference to this matter; nevertheless, at the suggestion of the hon. and learned member, Mr. R. E. O'Connor, I will give fresh notice of the question for Wednesday next, when I shall expect a clear and definite answer.

The Hon. J. M. CREED: The House will expect it; it is not a matter affecting the hon. member only.

#### BUTLER CONSPIRACY CASE.

The Hon. J. DAVIES asked the VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL,—In view of the decision in the Butler conspiracy case, is it the intention of the Government to release prisoner Johnson, brother of Mrs. Butler, now undergoing sentence for perjury, arising out of the divorce proceedings of Butler *versus* Butler?

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN answered,—The papers in this matter are now under reference to the Chief Justice, and upon receipt of his report a decision will be come to as to what further steps, if any, shall be taken in the matter, which is receiving every consideration.

#### LAND AND INCOME TAX PROPOSALS.

The Hon. J. DAVIES asked the VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL,—What is the total number of persons employed temporarily and otherwise in connection with the land and income tax proposals of the Government, and what is the total amount of salaries and other expenses paid in connection therewith up to date?

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN answered,—I shall be glad if the hon. member will move for a return embracing the information he desires.

#### CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

*Resolved* (on motion by the Hon. Dr. GARRAN):

That the Hon. Archibald Hamilton Jacob be Chairman of Committees of the whole House, and shall hold office until his successor shall be appointed.

The Hon. A. H. JACOB: Mr. President, this motion having been taken as a formal motion, and the hon. the Vice-President of the Executive Council not having been able to carry out the usual practice of saying a few words, the necessity does not devolve upon me of returning thanks to him for the remarks which it is usual to make on this occasion with regard to the position which I have held so long. This is one more occasion of a great many of a similar nature on which I have had to return thanks in this House for being elected to the honorable position of Chairman of Committees. I shall not weary the House by repeating the language which I have felt it my duty on former occasions to use in returning thanks for my appointment to this position. I shall content myself by thanking the House for the high compliment they have paid me, and assuring hon. members that I shall in the future act, as I have done in the past, without fear or favour in the discharge of my duties in the chair.

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: I did intend to say a few words in moving this motion, but, as it was taken as a formal motion, I thought I was prevented from doing so.

The Hon. A. H. JACOB: Then I feel grateful to the hon. and learned member for the remarks which it was his intention to make.

#### SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

The following motions by the Hon. Dr. Garran, appointing sessional committees, were passed:—

##### STANDING ORDERS.

That the Standing Orders Committee for the present session consist of the following members, namely:—The President, Mr. Want, Mr. Pilcher, Mr. Cox, Mr. Jacob, Dr. MacLaurin, Mr. R. E. O'Connor, Dr. Norton, and the mover, with leave to sit during any adjournment, and authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Assembly.

##### LIBRARY.

That the Library Committee of this House for the present session consist of the following members, namely:—The President, Mr. Creed, Mr. R.

Kater, Mr. King, Dr. Norton, Mr. Jacob, Dr. MacLaurin, Mr. Humphery, Dr. Cullen, and the mover, with leave to sit during any adjournment, and authority to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Assembly, in accordance with the resolution of 7th August, 1862.

#### PRINTING.

That the Printing Committee for the present session consist of the following members, namely:—Mr. Hill, Mr. Creed, Mr. Vickery, Mr. Jacob, Mr. Hoskins, Mr. Webb, Mr. Greville, and the mover, with the following duties and powers, and to whom shall be referred all petitions presented to the House and all papers laid upon the table as returns to addresses or orders of this House. It shall be the duty of such committee to report from time to time which of the petitions and papers referred to them ought, in their opinion, to be printed, and whether in full or in abstract; and it shall be in the power of the committee to order such petitions or papers, or abstracts thereof, to be prepared for press by the clerk in attendance upon such committee.

#### REFRESHMENT-ROOM.

That the Refreshment-room Committee of this House for the present session consist of the following members, namely:—Mr. Greville, Mr. Trickett, Mr. W. R. Campbell, Mr. Davies, Mr. Mosés, Mr. Thornton, Mr. Jacob, Mr. White, Mr. Hill, and the mover, with leave to sit during any adjournment, and authority to act in matters of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Assembly.

#### SESSIONAL ORDERS.

The following sessional orders were passed (on motion by the Hon. Dr. Garran):—

#### SITTING DAYS.

That, unless otherwise ordered, this House shall meet for the despatch of business at 4 o'clock p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays in each week.

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

That, on Wednesday in each week, Government business take precedence of all other business.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

*Resolved* (on motion by the Hon. A. H. JACOB):

That leave of absence for one month be granted to the Hon. Edward Combes on account of ill-health.

#### NO-LIABILITY MINING COMPANIES BILL.

Bill presented by the Hon. F. T. Humphery, and read the first time.

#### LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH : ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Debate resumed (from 14th August, *vide* page 43) on motion by the Hon. S. E. Lees:—

That the following address be presented to the Lieutenant-Governor, in reply to the speech which his Excellency has been pleased to make to both houses of Parliament, namely:—

*To His Excellency the Honorable SIR FREDERICK MATTHEW DARLEY, Knight, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of New South Wales and its Dependencies.*

May it please your Excellency:

We, her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative Council of New South Wales in Parliament assembled, desire to express our thanks for your Excellency's speech, and to assure you of our unfeigned attachment to her most gracious Majesty's throne and person.

We recognise the great importance of the subjects to which our attention is to be invited, and we promise to give our best consideration to the various measures when submitted.

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR: It is not my intention to traverse the whole of the ground which is covered by the Lieutenant-Governor's speech, nor would I have risen to address the House upon a motion which, after all, can only end in a unanimous vote, were it not for the Attorney-General's observations last evening as to the position in which this House stands with regard to the result of the late general election. We are accustomed in this House to hear false and distorted views in regard to these matters stated by persons outside the House, and sometimes that mistake has been made by persons of no authority inside the House; but when a statement of that kind comes from the Attorney-General I think it is the duty of every member to express any views that he may have upon the matter, in order to put before the House and the country the true position which we occupy in regard to the result of the general election. I am sure that there is no man here who will deny that the Constitution under which we live puts this House under the obligation of submitting to the will of the people in regard to any matter upon which that will has been clearly and definitely expressed. Whatever may be the powers which the Constitution gives us, these powers must always be used in the light of the spirit of the Constitution, and that spirit is that it is a constitution under which the people must rule; under which

the real power must come from the electors ; under which this House has handed over to it certain functions—functions of revision, of initiation, and of taking a most important part in legislation. It has always been recognised that when the country has expressed itself clearly and definitely on any matter of policy, it is the duty of this House to give way. I, and many other hon. members who have spoken, do not dissent for one moment from that doctrine. We admit that where the country has definitely spoken on a matter of policy, however much we may personally dissent from the view which has been taken, it is our duty to bow to its will. But in regard to the particular matter I am about to refer to, the real question for this House to consider is, what has been the verdict of the country, in respect of what has the country spoken out, and what is the question of policy which we feel ourselves impelled by reason of the principles I have mentioned to assent to? I take it that side by side with the principle that we are bound to bow to the will of the people when it is deliberately expressed, is another compliance with which we cannot escape from, and that is, that the country has placed us here in a position to do justice to every man in the community. That is a duty which we cannot shirk or evade, and except in so far as we are bound by the opinion of the country upon matters of policy, we cannot evade the duty of seeing that every measure which comes before the House is of an equitable, just, and reasonable character—of a character which will conduce to the prosperity and happiness of the whole of this community. And if we were to give up that portion of our duty in obedience to any clamour or false notions of expediency, we should only be neglecting one of the highest duties which have been placed upon us by the Constitution. Therefore, it is for this House to consider what the matter is in regard to which the country has spoken out, and the limits of the expression of opinion which the Government are now relying upon in the introduction of their measures. Immeasurably the most important portions of this speech are those which refer to the financial proposals of the Government. They involve matters which for the last twelve months have kept this country in a state of turmoil—matters which for the last twelve months

have prevented the ordinary recovery of the country from the consequences of the late crisis ; matters, the non-settlement of which has disorganised the whole business of the country. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that the House should consider, and that the country should know the proper position which this House is entitled, and is bound to take up, under the circumstances. I quite admit that the Attorney-General last evening was correct in stating that many hon. members challenged the Government to go to the country upon their policy of the imposition of a land-tax. There is no question about it, that in this House many hon. members, myself amongst the number, denied that we were bound to pass a bill which we regarded as iniquitous and unjust in its provisions, because the country had given the Government a mandate to pass it. We denied then that the country had spoken out on the question of land taxation. The Government affirmed that it had, and the only way of settling that question between us was an appeal to the country. Whether the appeal was upon that question ; whether the appeal was conducted in a fair way upon that question ; or whether that issue was not clouded, I will not say whether designedly or not, with every circumstance of prejudice, of unfair suggestion and unfair comment, which could possibly surround it, I do not want to say now. But I do say that every hon. member who watched the progress of the elections must have seen that, although what the country was asked to express an opinion about in the first instance was the financial policy of the Government, that very soon drifted into a policy of indiscriminate attack and abuse of members of this House. We live, of course, under an electoral system in which you cannot expect to have accurate and definite results in regard to an expression of opinion, and it is impossible, I suppose, in any general election to get a definite expression of opinion on any question of policy. Questions of policy are so interlaced and associated with personalities and with other matters affecting the position of politicians that it is really impossible to get a definite answer ; but I think we are bound to admit that, for all practical purposes, the country has spoken out on the issue of land-taxation, notwithstanding the manner in which

it was submitted. It may have been put before the country in an unfair manner ; but at the same time I think we are bound to take it that the country has definitely spoken out on that question. If it has not spoken out on the question of land taxation, in what way can we get that expression of opinion ? I regret personally that the country has so far misjudged the real position, has so far misunderstood the nature of the financial proposals of the Government, that it has come to that conclusion ; but at the same time, we live under a constitution in which to ignore time after time the definite opinion of the country, clearly expressed, would be to bring about a revolution. Therefore, however much we may regret it, I do not think that, as reasonable men, this House can escape from the conclusion that the country has spoken out in regard to the principle of land taxation ; but I altogether deny that the country has spoken out in regard to any of the details of the measure ; and I altogether deny that it has spoken out in any way in regard to the particular detail which is involved in the question of exemptions. In order to find out whether the country has spoken out on the matter, we must see what was the issue placed before it. Let us also remember this : that the machinery for placing issues before the country at a general election is not suitable for the discussion of details. You cannot get an expression of opinion upon matters of detail. You can only get an expression of opinion upon matters of policy. You can, under a system of referendum, have the expression of the opinion of the country on matters of detail. You submit the whole of a bill and every part of it, and you get an expression of opinion then ; but in a general election you cannot expect that, and you get no more than an expression of opinion as to the policy which underlies a particular measure. What was the policy, put before the country, in regard to land taxation and free-trade ? The Premier, when he went to the country over a year ago—in July, 1884—did so upon a manifesto which placed free-trade and land taxation in the forefront of his programme. That policy was discussed from one end of the country to the other, and the Premier neither then nor at any other time before the introduction of his bill, placed the principles of this measure in any way upon

[*The Hon. R. E. O'Connor.*

exemptions. It was simply a bill for the imposition of land taxation in order to enable the country to be relieved of the imposition of customs duties. It was a land-tax as a complement for the customs taxation which would inaugurate a system of free trade. The Premier was returned to Parliament, and he introduced a measure in pursuance of that policy. That measure was introduced into the Assembly in November, 1894. Hon. members will remember that when it was laid upon the table of the House it was a bill without exemptions. It was a bill brought up in pursuance of the manifesto of the Premier to the country ; it was a bill brought up in pursuance of the Governor's speech ; it was the deliberate and definitely expressed policy of the Government, and it contained no exemption. What was the history of the introduction of the exemption ? It appeared that after the bill had been before the country from November until the following March, it was a land-tax bill without exemptions ; but in the course of the debates in Committee a supporter of the Government, Mr. Moore, moved an exemption of £500. Even then the Premier did not at once take it up ; but after a little while, seeing what was the opinion of the House upon the matter, he supported the motion, and after a number of amendments had been moved for increasing and diminishing the amount of the exemption, at last, as a compromise, he carried an amendment in his own bill making the exemption £475. That is the history of how the exemption came into the bill ; and I would ask any man, not only a member of this House, but any fair-minded man, who looks at the matter, whether or not it can be reasonably contended that the exemption, which was not mentioned in the Premier's policy to the country before he came into office, and which came into the bill in this way, can be regarded by him in any way as a definite portion of the principle of his land-tax ? Let me call attention to another circumstance which I am sure will have very great weight with this House. We find that after this bill had been introduced, the Vice-President of the Executive Council, who was not then a member of the Ministry, but who occupied a very distinguished position in the Economic Association, read a very able and careful

paper before that institution. That paper was referred to last night by the hon. and learned member, Dr. MacLaurin. The Vice-President of the Executive Council on that occasion expressed himself as being quite unable to understand the existence of exemptions in a land-tax, except on the theory that they were intended as a political dodge. I have a very high respect for the integrity, consistency, and ability of the hon. and learned member, and I cannot believe that if this land-tax exemption were any portion of the principle of that measure, he would have joined the Government. I cannot believe that if he had regarded the land-tax exemption as anything more than an amendment which was made in the other House, and which might be struck out here—in other words, no portion of the principle of the measure, but simply an accidental amendment of it—he would have joined the Government. I refer to that in addition to the evident opinion of the Premier as showing that it is quite evident that none of these gentlemen could have regarded the exemption at that time as anything more than a matter of detail in the carrying out of the policy of land taxation. What is the next thing we have in the history of this measure? It passes the Assembly and comes here, and when it is in this House the Attorney-General himself, with the view of getting the matter through, suggests that the bill might go into Committee, and might be amended by striking out the exemptions.

The Hon. J. H. WANT : I beg the hon. and learned member's pardon !

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR : What the hon. and learned member said is on record, and will be remembered by every hon. member. The hon. and learned member will also remember this : that it was in consequence of a suggestion of that kind that the hon. and learned member, Sir Julian Salomons, actually took the President's opinion as to whether or not an amendment could be moved and carried omitting the exemption. I have referred to the Premier, who brought in the bill without any exemption. I have referred to the position of the hon. and learned member, Dr. Garrahan, and also to the position of the Attorney-General. Have any of them regarded the exemption as a matter of principle? If it was a matter

of principle, would they for one moment have consented to the introduction of the bill without it? Has not their conduct shown all through that they regarded the matter of the exemption as a thing which might be put in or left out to suit a particular purpose or occasion, but in no way concerning the policy of a land-tax itself? In addition to that, they would have in that course the support of experience in other countries. We have the experience of South Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania, in which this kind of legislation has been introduced. In none of these countries does an exemption obtain. In every one of those countries, if land is to be taxed, it is taxed all round.

The Hon. W. R. CAMPBELL : What about Victoria?

The Hon. J. H. WANT : There is an exemption of £2,000 there!

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR : The hon. member, Mr. W. R. Campbell, will remember that the land-tax of which he speaks in Victoria was not an ordinary land-tax for revenue purposes. A land-tax, however, was introduced with the object of bursting up the big estates; it was on country lands only, and it was for the definite purpose of breaking up the big estates. Therefore that is altogether out of the question. That is not a national land-tax for revenue purposes. It is not a national land-tax in the sense in which this tax is, nor in the sense in which the tax in South Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand is. If the hon. member will reflect for a moment he will see that his interruption really was not justified by the facts. I say, therefore, that the attitude the Premier took in introducing the bill, and which was evidently the view shared by the hon. and learned member, Dr. Garrahan, and the Attorney-General, had for its basis not only reason but precedent, had for its basis not only fairness and equity in the imposition of the tax in this country, but also the experience of the other colonies where this measure has been introduced and threshed out. When the matter came before this House it was opposed on various grounds, but principally upon the ground that it was a tax in itself of an oppressive, unfair, and unjust character, not only in regard to the exemptions, but in regard to a great many other matters. On all these grounds, in the opinion

of the majority of hon. members, the bill was one which should not be entertained. It was thrown out, and we had an appeal to the country. When the Government went to the country upon its financial policy they had it in their power to put any issue which they thought fit before it. They had it in their power to put it in their own way, and we may assume they put it in a way which would clearly, definitely, and comprehensively express the policy upon which they asked for an expression of the country's opinion. Let me say here that the policy of the Government is not to be gathered from the speeches of the Premier nor from the speeches of the members who supported him, nor from any of the inflammatory and fiery nonsense, which was spoken in regard to the Government policy, and the opposition to it and to the position of this House. I take the policy of the Government from the deliberate written manifesto of the Government itself. I take it from a document which is always supposed to be something in the nature of a state document. I admit that the literature of this production is not of the character which usually obtains in state documents. At the same time it is the way which the Government had of taking their policy to the country, and it is intended to be the definite and comprehensive expression of that policy. If hon. members will look at the Premier's manifesto in the daily press of the 8th July, they will find that all through that manifesto upon which they went to the country, and which is the basis of the appeal to the country, there is not one word about exemptions, and the policy of the bill is treated in itself from beginning to end as a continuation of the policy which the Premier announced when, as a private member, he was elected in July of the previous year. Now let me refer to passages, and the only passages in that address which bear on this matter. He begins by saying :

It was your generous confidence, twice given, that placed me at the head of the present Government. The policy I then proclaimed, which met with your emphatic approval, is the policy identified with the present Ministry and approved by a large majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly just dissolved.

That was a policy of land taxation without exemptions—that was simply a policy of free-trade and land taxation ; nothing was said about exemptions then.

[*The Hon. R. E. O'Connor.*]

The Hon. J. H. WANT : The exemption was in the bill then !

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR : The hon. and learned gentleman was not listening to what I was saying. I am referring to a paragraph in this address, and if the hon. and learned member did suppose that it was part of the policy of the Government, why was not something said about it in this manifesto ? I quite admit that the policy of exemptions may have been made use of—I quite admit that they were made use of in the way in which the hon. and learned member, Dr. Garran, before he joined the Government, predicted that they might be made use of, but that they were any portion of the policy deliberately stated here I absolutely deny. Now, let us come to the next paragraph :

The financial measures I introduced made provision for a genuine free-trade tariff, for a land-tax, and for an income-tax.

That is the only reference to the matter in that portion of the address. Now, we come down to the next reference to it, in which the question is definitely put :

We ask the electors of the colony to affirm again the policy of free-trade and direct taxation, which the nominee House has endeavoured to destroy. We also ask them to return men who will send up our bills again in their present shape.

The Hon. J. H. WANT : "Their present shape" !

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR : I will refer to their present shape in a moment. The final paragraph is this :

You have been surfeited in past times with brilliant political programmes. I do not propose at this time to indulge in a new one. My views on all the great questions of the day are the same as those which I put to you twelve months ago. The policy of the Government remains unchanged, and much of it would by this time have been translated into law but for the unreasoning hostility of the Legislative Council.

The Hon. C. G. HEYDON : Unreasonable !

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR : It reads like a cheap electioneering placard now, and I do not care about the language of it. What I am referring to is the portion of it which sets before the country the policy of the Government. The Attorney-General now gets hold of the expression, "We ask you to return men who will send up the bills again in their present shape." Is there one word in this long address by which my hon. and learned friend can get a peg to hang his hat upon except the ex-

pression "In their present shape." I ask the House whether it is not trifling with reasonable men to suppose that if these exemptions were any portion of the principle of land taxation they would not have been put in the forefront of it? Would it have been left to be conveyed by such an expression as "In their present shape," or would such an expression imply that the electors must return men who supported not only the principle but every line in the measure?

The Hon. C. E. PILCHER : That was addressed to men who had never read the bill!

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR : The hon. and learned gentleman's interjection reminds me of the impossibility there is in an appeal to the country, in a matter of this kind, of getting an expression of opinion on the details of the bill. The bill is not before the country. It is discussed in the House, and all that the country can possibly form their opinion about is the general principles which underlie the measure, and the general principles which underlay this measure were only those which were referred to, and whether there is an expression about the bills in their present shape or not, I defy any fair-minded man who reads that manifesto to say that the question of an exemption was ever put to the country as an issue in any way whatever. Hon. members who watched the progress of the elections will, I think, say that in no case was the exemption treated as being in any way a necessary part of the policy of the Government. It was, as I have said, used in many cases, but that it was any part of the policy as definitely expressed and upon which the opinion of the country was asked I altogether deny. Now, a house has been returned giving the Premier a majority, and I suppose it must be taken also as giving him an indorsement of his policy. An indorsement of his policy, I admit, has been given, which I am prepared, as far as I am concerned, loyally to follow to the extent to which the country has spoken upon it and upon the matters in regard to which the country has spoken; but I say for myself, and, I think, every hon. member who considers this for one moment will also say, that the country has given no mandate except in regard to the policy of free-trade and land taxation, and that the country has given no mandate which will compel

this House to put on one side its own opinions with regard to the justice and equity of the incidence of this taxation. Whether this land-tax which the country has approved of is to fall on a small portion of the community or the whole of it is a matter on which the country has not spoken; and it is a matter which this House is not only entitled to consider but which this House is bound to consider, whether in the interests of the whole community it is going to allow the whole of the land taxation to be placed on the shoulders of probably a little more than half of the landholders of the country.

The Hon. W. H. PIGOTT : A great deal less than that!

The Hon. H. C. DANGAR : One-fifth!

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR : The total holdings in the country are about 58,000, and the proposal is to impose the whole of this taxation on 28,000 of those holdings, making the average about £14 a holding. I say that that is a matter which we are not only bound to consider, but that we should be evading our duty if we did not consider it; and, therefore, in regard to the question of exemptions, which will, probably, be the most important matter which will be submitted to us this session, this House is entitled to take a clear and definite stand. It is entitled to say, "You have succeeded at the polls; you are entitled to your free-trade; we will not interfere with your proposals for the remission of duties; we will not interfere with your policy of land taxation or income taxation; we will not interfere with your policy even in regard to the amount which you choose to impose; but it is our duty to see that that policy is just and equitable in its incidence—it is our duty to see that it is not made a class tax of a most iniquitous character; it is our duty to see that every member of the community who owns land should bear his share of the burdens which are placed on land." That is the position which I feel this House has taken up, and in the taking up of which it will have a very large share of support in the country. What do we find is the opinion of the two newspapers which have been supporting the Government through thick and thin all through this election? They both, with no uncertain voice, express the opinion that exemptions are not a portion of the principle of this land-tax—that the Council are not



bound to pass the exemption by reason of the expression of the opinion of the country. Not only have the papers spoken out in that way, but the members of the Government will find that a very large number of members of the other House who believe in land taxation for its own sake only—the single-taxers—are altogether opposed to this exemption, because they look upon the land-tax, not only as a source of revenue, but also as having social and other benefits attached to it which cannot accrue, unless every person in the community who holds land feels the weight of them. There are also a very large number of members of the free-trade party—sane members of the free-trade party—who believe that even although it may be necessary to impose a land-tax for general purposes, it is not necessary, and not desirable, that that land-tax should be made unfair, unjust, and inequitable in its incidence; therefore, I say that this House in the position which it is entitled to take up, and is bound to take up, will have not only the support of reason and the principles of justice and true political expediency on its side, but also the leading newspapers which have been supporting the Government up to this time, and it will also have the support of a large number of the members of the Assembly who, for different reasons, are altogether against the imposition of this land-tax. Under these circumstances, the position which this House is likely to take up on this matter must be quite patent to the Government. They have had quite sufficient indications of it both in the press and in the House. I do not wish to say one word which might be taken in any way as prejudging the bill which the Government are going to send up to us. I am not saying one word which should be taken in any way as a threat as to any course which this House may take; but I think that if the hon. and learned member at the head of the Government is imbued with the feeling of patriotism and true statesmanship which ought to actuate him at the present moment, he will consider very carefully before he pledges himself to introduce this measure in a form which will make it impossible for this House to agree to it. He will very carefully consider what the consequences will be in delaying the passage of this much-needed measure—what the consequences will be

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to the country from keeping unsettled these questions which have agitated the country to its detriment for so long—and if he is wise he will consider to what extent he is bound by the verdict of the people to modify the measure as it came to us in the first instance. Surely it is to the interest of the whole country that this matter should be settled? Surely it is to the interest of the whole country that reasonable conduct should prevail, not only in this House, but also in the Cabinet councils of this country—not only in this House but also in the other Chamber, and in the mind of every person who has placed on him the high responsibility, in the interest of the whole country, of settling these vexed questions; and I say that if these matters are approached in the spirit of true statesmanship, the hon. and learned gentleman at the head of the Government will consider very carefully whether he would or would not be consulting the interests of the Government, as well as those of the country, if he were to introduce this measure in the form in which he originally announced the land-tax should take—the form in which he introduced it to the House, the form which the representatives of the Government in this House were willing it should take. If he looks at this matter, as I hope he will, in the spirit of true statesmanship, a course of that nature will probably lead him to introduce the measure in such a form that in the course of two or three weeks the whole of his financial policy will be carried. On the other hand, without wishing to predict anything that may happen here, or to say anything which could be construed in any way into a threat, I say that every man who looks about him and sees the current of public opinion outside, and the current of feeling in this House, must see that the proposed course of adhering blindly and immoderately to the particular form in which the measure was introduced in the first instance, may lead to a very protracted discussion, may lead to protracted delays, and may lead in the result it is difficult to say where. Surely the policy, under these circumstances, for a statesman who has the interests of the country at heart would be to take that course, which would preserve the principles he has fought for, and at the same time will enable those principles to be carried by giving up an incident

which has become attached, not by him, but by some outside cause to those principles—an incident, not only unjust in itself, which not only mars the completeness of the measure, but which, if carried into law, would produce a feeling of rankling injustice which the class taxed would probably never entirely recover from. I should have been willing that this matter should have passed without very much discussion; but it was the position which was taken up by the Attorney-General last evening in a speech which he made here, in which he stated his view of the situation to the House, which has made it incumbent on me to state what I think with regard to the position which the House occupies in the present crisis. I do not complain in any way of what the hon. and learned member said, or of the tone of it. It is impossible to be angry very long with the hon. and learned member. He is too genial. The hon. and learned member radiates geniality. It is impossible for any one to be out of temper with him. I am quite certain that if the hon. and learned member is only allowed to have his own way, and to talk to us in his own way, we shall very soon settle down in the happy and pleasant relations which characterised the House during the Land Bill debates which the hon. and learned member so ably piloted through this House. We shall settle down to those amicable relations which it is essential for the proper conduct of business should prevail, not only in this branch of the legislature, but also in the relations of one house to the other, and of the Government with both. I am sorry that I have occupied the House for such a length of time, but I thought that perhaps no harm would be done by expressing as moderately as possible an opinion which may not only be one's individual opinion, but may or may not be a forecast of possible events, and which may, I hope, have some influence in causing people to reflect, especially people in high places, as to the best thing to be done in the interests of the country in this very serious crisis of the national affairs.

The Hon. J. H. WANT: As a matter of personal explanation, I should like to say that it is not correct to say that I invited the cutting out of these exemptions. I have looked up *Hansard* this moment, and what I said was said in reply to my hon.

and learned friend, Sir Julian Salomons, when he asked for the ruling of the President as to whether the exemptions could be made as a matter of law not as a matter of policy. I said:

I think that my hon. and learned friend is somewhat in error in stating that I said the House could alter a tax from  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. to 1d., because I have not expressed an opinion on that point. But the hon. member, Mr. Jacob, suggested that it was impossible to destroy the exemption clause, and I replied that the House has always claimed the right to alter taxation proposals.

The Hon. A. H. JACOB: Read a little lower down!

The Hon. J. H. WANT: I will read it all. I said:

I heard what my hon. and learned friend said, but what I stated the other night was that this House had always insisted on its right to alter money bills.

The Hon. A. H. Jacob: Not in this direction!

The Hon. J. H. Want: The hon. member's argument was that inasmuch as a certain class were exempt from taxation under the bills if the Council knocked out the exemptions, they would be imposing taxation upon people upon whom no taxation is at present imposed. But I submit that if the hon. gentleman's contention is right we can alter and vary taxation bills without actually imposing fresh taxation —

The meaning of that is not that I would consent to it, but I pointed out that this House had claimed the right to do these things.

The Hon. A. H. JACOB: Not in the way of increasing taxation!

The Hon. J. H. WANT: I said that I did not express an opinion with regard to the cutting out of the exemptions.

The Hon. W. R. CAMPBELL: It is needless to say that we have all heard an able address from the hon. and learned member, Mr. R. E. O'Connor; we know his ability, but after all his words are only intended to fortify the Chamber in defying the expressed wishes of the people. As regards the exemption, I suppose I was one of the few who spoke on this question when it was before the House and when the whole bill was thrown under the table most ignominiously after a speech from the hon. and learned member, Dr. MacLaurin, and one or two others—there was hardly any discussion. The remarks of the hon. member, Mr. R. E. O'Connor, would have been proper when the bill came before us last session, and his proposals could have gone before the country showing that the Council did not object to the principle of a

land-tax or an income-tax, but objected to the details of it. That was not done. A question was asked whether the bill could be altered in Committee; but I maintain that that question ought not to have been put at that time, because we have nothing to do with the question of altering details in the House. That is a matter which should come before the Chairman in Committee. It was a very good question to put to induce members not to vote for the second reading of the bill, and that is who it was put. It misled a number of members of the House. The question was cleverly put by the hon. and learned member, Sir Julian Salomons, and it took well with the House, which threw out the bill. If the arguments which have been used by the hon. and learned member now had been used when the bill came before the House last session, there would now be no question whether the electors approved of the bill as it came before this House. I am sorry it was not done. It was a mistake, and I said so. I objected to the exemptions, and I said that I thought £200 a year was a sufficient limit for the exemption under the income-tax. It looked rather extraordinary that a house composed of paid members should fix the exemption at £300 a year—the amount of members' salaries. As regards a land-tax, I said that the small holders would be able to afford their 1d. in the £, and would not grumble to pay it. The Council, however, threw the bill out without discussing one matter in it. That was a mistake. Now we are going to get out of it by saying that the people have not decided in favour of exemptions. I do not think that any man can doubt that this principle has been decided by the people. There were a few members in the last Parliament who had the courage to maintain that the Council did what was right. Those members were—Sir Henry Parkes, Sir George Dibbs, Mr. Copeland, Mr. Ellis, and Mr. Martin, and now every one of those gentlemen is out of Parliament. I think that that is a very fair proof that the country took in clearly and concisely what they meant to do, and they gave the Government a decided majority. The hon. and learned member, Mr. R. E. O'Connor, never mentioned Victoria, and he wanted to make us believe that Victoria had no land-tax. He said that the tax was imposed there

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for the purpose of breaking up large estates, and that the principle of land taxation is not recognised in Victoria.

The Hon. F. T. HUMPHREY: The income-tax was passed, but the land-tax was rejected!

The Hon. W. R. CAMPBELL: The land-tax was imposed in Victoria fifteen years ago. The principle of land taxation has been acknowledged in every country in the world. Whether it is right or wrong, the people have decided against the majority of this Council, and I think we ought to bow to their decision. Of course we can get out of the decision of the people by saying that exemptions are not intended. That would give another chance, and we could put the country to still more trouble. What the protectionists want is to prevent free-trade from being established, and I cannot blame them for doing what they believe to be right; but in the Assembly the protectionists have already given up their opposition to the land-tax. Mr. O'Sullivan and other leading protectionists have said that they are satisfied to abide by the will of the people. There is one thing which I should like to ask the hon. and learned member, Mr. R. E. O'Connor, about. I see from the morning papers that whilst I was out of the Chamber last night the hon. and learned member made an allusion to me, evidently with the desire to discredit me by opprobrium and innuendo. It is not like the conduct of such a gentleman as we suppose the hon. and learned member to be to attack a man when he is out of the Chamber. The hon. and learned member said that I, during the election, had insulted and abused members of this Chamber.

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR: I never said anything of the sort!

The Hon. W. R. CAMPBELL: I said by innuendo. I will read how the interjection comes in. I am not such a Christian as to be willing to put up with a slap in the face and turn the other cheek. While the Attorney-General was speaking he denied absolutely the imputation that he, as a member of the House, had gone about electioneering, abusing and insulting other members of this Chamber. He said he had merely remarked that the House should be reformed, and that it was the intention of the Government to carry out the reform which was notified to the House

before the dissolution. Then the hon. and learned member, Mr. R. E. O'Connor, interjected that there was an election exhibit. Mr. Want said, "What do you mean?" Then the report says, "The Hon. R. E. O'Connor—Mr. Campbell." If the hon. and learned member, Mr. R. E. O'Connor, had had the decency which I gave him credit for, he would never have tried to hold me up to ridicule. It is not many years, since when the hon. and learned member introduced the Dibbs Income-tax Bill, I was one of the few men who gave him a cheer and helped him, irrespective of his party, because I believe in the principle, and the hon. and learned member himself at that time believed in the principle that some of the richer people should pay taxes.

AN HON. MEMBER: Was the bill carried?

THE HON. W. R. CAMPBELL: It was thrown out in a most ignominious way. Hon. members would not even allow an adjournment. I am sure the hon. and learned member will see the necessity for apologising to me for making the country believe that outside the House I ever said a word against the constitution or the members of the House. Not a single word did I ever utter on an electioneering platform against the House. I said that the House had done what was in its province to do, and what it thought it was right to do, but that I thought it was a foolish mistake. I deny most emphatically the statement that I insulted hon. members. I attended only two meetings in Sydney. I went to Mr. Reid's first meeting unknown and unasked. I know nothing of the Ministry, personally or privately. I have not exchanged six words with any members of the Government for six months. I was not asked to attend the meetings, and to say that I was an exhibit is a most contemptible way, behind a man's back, to try and ridicule him. I went to another meeting of Mr. Reid's unasked. Mr. R. E. O'Connor, who poses before the House as such a patriot, and such a rigid adherent to everything right and proper, ought to be ashamed of himself for trying to lead the country astray. He seems to think it is a laughing matter; at any rate, the people in the country know a little better than he does. The hon. and learned member is a very clever man, but he is led by a certain organisation. He follows the lead.

He does what he is told to do without an opinion of his own. That is the sort of man hon. members are led away by—a man who is able by specious argument to carry out whatever course he undertakes. I warn the country to beware of Mr. R. E. O'Connor. What these men do to-day they will recant to-morrow if they are ordered to do so. I am not going to put up with this sort of thing. I have been led a little off the track. There is only one parallel for this change of front on the part of Mr. R. E. O'Connor. It is not so very long ago that Mr. R. E. O'Connor and his party put the hatchet into Sir Henry Parkes, and would have got rid of him altogether: Yet you see them bringing out this poor old lion when he is done for, when he has passed the best days of his life, for party purposes. A more despicable thing was never done than to bring out a man like Sir Henry Parkes, who, if he were in his prime, would not be led away by any one of their specious arguments.

THE HON. R. E. O'CONNOR: I rise to order. I am very loath to deprive the House of a treat.

THE HON. SIR JULIAN SALOMONS: The theatre is not open until 7!

THE HON. R. E. O'CONNOR: But, at the same time, we must really keep our deliberations to something like the matter in hand, and I ask you, sir, to rule whether what the hon. member has been referring to has anything to do with the adoption of the address in reply.

THE HON. C. E. PILCHER: I hope, sir, that you will also rule that it is not within the province of any member, because he feels offended at some trifling remark made about himself—which no one in the colony will ever read—to heap insults upon a man who, through the whole history of this colony, has held prominent positions, and who, whether he be Premier or not, whether his intellect be impaired or not, would have made a figure for himself in any part of the world.

THE HON. W. R. CAMPBELL: I made no allusion to any one being decrepit. I spoke of Sir Henry Parkes as "the old lion," and I think I have a right to retaliate on Mr. R. E. O'Connor, who said unjustifiable things about me behind my back.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. member has quite exceeded the rules of debate. I felt

considerable hesitation about interfering with the hon. member, because the debate has been allowed to take such a wide range, and hon. members took the opportunity to expatiate in very lucid terms upon the different points in the speech, but I do think that the hon. member has exceeded the rules which should be observed in a debate of this kind. It is very much to be deprecated that hon. members should attack one another in this way, especially that they should speak of each other by name. It is entirely outside the pale of parliamentary practice to refer to a member by his name. It is usual for one member to refer to another member as the hon. member, Mr. So-and-so, and not as Mr. this or Mr. that. I hope that hon. members will show greater regard for that decorum which is due in all cases from one hon. member to another.

The Hon. W. R. CAMPBELL : I must apologise if I have injured the sensitiveness of the House, and I am sorry that I have transgressed the rules of debate. The hon. member, Mr. Trickett, disagreed entirely with the proposals of the Government.

The Hon. W. J. TRICKETT : No !

The Hon. W. R. CAMPBELL : It is only a short year ago since the hon. member moved the address in reply when Mr. Reid met the late Parliament, and if I recollect aright the programme of the Government was much the same then as it is now. It comprised a land-tax.

The Hon. W. J. TRICKETT : Without exemptions !

The Hon. W. R. CAMPBELL : That is the excuse given now for not voting with the Government. It comprised a land-tax and an income-tax, and the hon. member moved the address in reply to the Governor's opening speech. Surely a year afterwards he would concede the principle of a land-tax and an income-tax, because the exemptions, after all, are only details. The hon. member spoke about some person having to pay the tax over and over again, and about the double taxation of municipal lands. It seems to me that up to the exemption of £475 no person in a municipality would have to pay a double tax. The exemption is in favour of the residents of towns. I think that no hon. member who is in favour of land taxation should object to the proposal on that score. Surely

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a man who owns a property exceeding that value cannot grumble if he has to pay a little taxation, not that I am in favour of exemptions, but as a matter of argument I think the hon. member is wrong. Another reason why he opposes the proposals of the Government is because he says the Premier has abandoned his Local Government Bill, that at the first adverse vote he threw the bill to the winds. If hon. members will refer to the debate in *Hansard*, volume 77, they will see that Mr. Reid made it most clearly understood by the members of the Assembly, that if they should choose to put in one man one vote as regards property he would throw up the bill, and he pointed out that, in every country in which a land-tax is imposed for municipal purposes the plural vote obtains, as high as six votes in some places. He said that it was a monstrous thing that we should pass a bill providing that one man should exercise one vote only in respect of property. He had the whole of the labour party against him ; but still he stuck to his guns, and would have carried his measure as it stood but for the desertion of Sir George Dibbs for one and Sir Henry Parkes for another. In the first division Sir George Dibbs actually voted against the Government.

The Hon. J. H. WANT : The whole of the Opposition voted against us. They tricked us !

The Hon. W. R. CAMPBELL : When the second division was taken Sir George Dibbs left the Chamber, but Mr. Lyne said frankly, "I gave this vote because I wanted to defeat the Government !" Mr. Leven said practically the same thing. These men deserted their principles in order to get a catch vote against the Government. If these men are held up to us as legislators for admiration—well, it is not my idea of what an ex-minister should do. It was a monstrous thing to do. I have no doubt that Sir George Dibbs' defeat was due to his shilly-shallying in this matter, and with regard to Sir Henry Parkes I am sure he would never have done such a thing in his prime. He would never have gone out of the House when a local government bill was under consideration without discussing it, because he had advocated the passing of such a bill for years. I am sure that every man who will read the report of Mr. Reid's speech will exonerate him. It is the worst

thing I have ever known Sir George Dibbs to do. The hon. member, Mr. Davies, has also spoken in this debate. Of course the hon. member being such an aristocrat objects to what he calls the labour element. He said he would not be troubled with the labour element. I do not know where these hon. gentlemen get their conservative and aristocratic ideas. I suppose these ideas are acquired when we are put into this House—it makes lords of us. It is the funniest thing in the world to hear an hon. member say that he despises the labour element. Why, sir, we passed an act to enable these men to enter the Legislative Assembly, and I am sure that the effect of its operation has been very good. No man can say that the labour members have ever said or done a thing which they need be ashamed of. This House ought to be proud of having passed a measure which has brought such men into public prominence. I hail with satisfaction the advent of the labour element. I am glad that labour men are returned by large constituencies. These men will not do any harm.

The Hon. G. H. COX : Mr. President, what has this to do with the question under debate? Labour members should not be discussed here.

The Hon. J. H. WANT : My hon. friend, Mr. Davies, distinctly went into all these matters.

The Hon. G. H. COX : He ought to have been stopped !

The Hon. J. H. WANT : That is another thing. As the hon. member, Mr. Davies, was allowed some latitude in a debate of this kind, I submit that my hon. friend, Mr. W. R. Campbell, is perfectly entitled to reply to his remarks. I should have done so myself only that I did not consider it worthy of the Government taking notice of them. I avoided making any remarks of a personal character.

The Hon. C. E. PILCHER : Because one hon. member was allowed to digress from the subject before the House, that is no reason for justifying a similar digression on the part of another hon. member. If it is, I may start the discussion on some abstract proposition, and because, in a good-humoured way, nobody objects, you are afterwards to be told that there is to be a lot of discussion because I was not stopped.

The Hon. H. E. KATER : I would point out that if the hon. member is permitted to discuss the merits or demerits of the labour party, he can also go on to discuss the merits or demerits of the free traders and protectionists.

The PRESIDENT : I may state that the line of argument of the hon. member is not justified by the rules of Parliament. There can be no doubt that if a question of this kind is introduced, other hon. members will follow it. The hon. member is not in order in referring to the qualifications of the members of the other House of Parliament.

The Hon. W. R. CAMPBELL : The hon. member, Mr. Hoskins, predicts ruin to the selectors if the land-tax is passed in the form proposed ; but what will the tax amount to? Supposing a man has 40,000 acres, the tax of 1d. in the £ will only amount to about £200 a year.

The Hon. J. HOSKINS : But the unimproved value of the land may be more than £1 per acre !

The Hon. W. R. CAMPBELL : Surely to a man who has such a valuable property £200 will not be much, when he has a free custom-house. It is absurd to say that the country will be ruined, and that capital will be taken away. Will the people of England refuse to send their money to a free-trade port?

The Hon. J. HOSKINS : They will not pay income-tax in two countries !

The Hon. W. R. CAMPBELL : They will pay income-tax where they will make money. They will not take their money to England to get 2 per cent. when they can obtain 6 per cent. here. I trust that hon. members will pass the second reading of the measures foreshadowed by the Government, and that they will also pass them in detail. I may state in conclusion, that I cannot see why the Council should be abused so inordinately by certain people. We all know that this House has done great good to the country, and because we have kicked over the traces once, I do not see why we should be treated as we have been treated. I trust hon. members will not consider that I have said anything disgraceful, or anything of which I ought to be ashamed, for I certainly have not done so.

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR : As a matter of personal explanation, I desire to say

that I never intended to impute that the hon. member, Mr. W. R. Campbell, had been guilty of any such conduct, such as he assumes I imputed to him. I never said that the hon. member had been going about abusing this House, or anything to that effect. The way in which the incident arose was this: a little by-play was going on—and it is certainly a relief sometimes to have a little fun in the House—and some hon. member was alluding to the Attorney-General as having abused the Council. The Attorney-General said, "I was not the only person stumping the country," and I heard a voice say, "There was Mr. Campbell." I interjected, "The electioneering exhibit." I did not intend anything offensive by that expression. What I referred to was the fact that the hon. member was triumphantly pointed out by the Premier, and the Attorney-General, and other gentlemen, as the democratic councillor. I was only referring to that, and there was nothing offensive in it. The hon. member will at once understand that I would be the last person in the world who would accuse him of abusing the House, or of using any language that would cast a reflection upon it.

The Hon. W. R. CAMPBELL: I was rather shocked when I saw the remark in the newspaper. I was not present, and I thought the hon. and learned member would be the last person to say anything in disparagement of myself. I am very glad he has made the explanation.

The Hon. H. E. KATER: I should not have spoken upon the speech of his Excellency had it not been for the remarks which fell from the Attorney-General last night. Two or three hon. members stated last night that they intend to help him with the Land-tax Bill; but they will not vote for it if it contains certain exemptions. Thereupon the Attorney-General said, I will not say in a defiant manner, but in a downright way, "You will have to take the bill as it was sent to us before."

The Hon. J. H. WANT: I did not say it in that way at all. I said it will have to come up in the same way as it did before.

The Hon. H. E. KATER: I read it to mean that we should swallow the bill holus-bolus. I hope the Attorney-General did not mean anything of the sort. I hope he will point out that there is a chance that

the measure will come to this House in a different form from that in which it came before us on a previous occasion.

The Hon. J. H. WANT: There is no chance of that!

The Hon. H. E. KATER: Whether there is or not, I think the House ought not to be deterred from doing its duty. The question arises, "What is the duty of the House?" Of course the question of land and income tax has been before the electors, and they have returned the Ministry with a majority, and the question for us to decide is as to what is our duty with regard to the bill if it comes before us with exemptions. I shall assist the Attorney-General to pass the bill into law with one proviso, and that is the proviso that it shall have no exemptions. If it comes before us with exemptions I shall not assist him. I trust hon. members will state their opinions on the subject, not for the purpose of dictating to the Government, but in order that the country once and for all may know what the opinions of this House are. I have been told by a great many persons outside that we ought to have made it much more clear during the last Parliament that we disapproved of the exemptions, and that those exemptions were calculated to create a wrong incidence of taxation. The income-tax, of course, is another matter. If that measure comes before us with small exemptions I shall be tempted to vote for it; but if it comes up in the form in which it came up last session I shall give the Government no assistance. I trust that the Attorney-General who, I know, has a great deal of weight, will see whether it is not possible to bring up a land-tax bill without exemptions. I should like to read to the House a few remarks which fell from the hon. and learned member with regard to this subject:

*The Hon. A. H. Jacob: Not with exemptions!*

*The Hon. J. H. Want: Will the hon. member wait? I will come to the question of exemptions. The hon. member, Mr. Jacob, is one of those who have been claiming for ever so long that this House could do anything it liked with money bills.*

*The Hon. A. H. Jacob: Not a bit of it!*

*The Hon. J. H. Want: And to-night the hon. member is claiming that we cannot touch any exemptions. What sort of position is that to take up? I heard him say the other night, "You cannot impose taxes on the people." But hon. members are going to impose taxes on the people to-night.*

*The Hon. A. H. Jacob: No!*

[*The Hon. R. E. O'Connor.*]

*The Hon. J. H. Want* : You are, if you knock out this land-tax and impose customs duties on them, and my hon. friend who claimed the right to do what he liked with money bills can easily knock out the exemptions, and then see what the Government will do.

*The Hon. J. H. Want* : That is exactly right—not that I will consent to it, though!

*The Hon. H. E. KATER* : The hon. member did suggest it, and he put it into my head ; and I desire to say that when I rose I said :

The Attorney-General stated that this House has the power to strike out exemptions if it chooses. I hope that on that point my hon. friend, Mr. Jacob, will express his opinion, even though he should not speak to the bill. I think he will show conclusively that we have no such power. It struck me that if some hon. members think that we possess that power they may be induced to vote for the bill where otherwise they would not do so.

That showed my intention when the bill was before the House. It showed that I, for one, was ready to reconsider the matter if the exemptions were struck out ; but upon that point we were, checkmated. With regard to the question as to whether the electors understood the question of the exemptions or not, I may point out that one-fifth only of the landowners will be taxed if the exemption stands ; therefore, double that number will vote for the land-tax. Supposing the exemptions were to be £1,000 or £10,000. Every landowner who had not £10,000 worth of land would cheerfully vote for it. The bigger the exemption the more easy it is to pass a bill of this kind.

*The Hon. H. C. DANGAR* : The Vice-President of the Executive Council has proved all that !

*The Hon. H. E. KATER* : I am very glad the hon. and learned member has reminded me of that, because the fact that it has been proved by so distinguished an hon. and learned member only makes the matter more clear. Does not there come a time when, although the electors have declared in favour of a land-tax, this House should say, "We will have no injustice done"? Supposing the exemption were £5,000, should we stand by and see very few landowners pay the whole of the taxation of the country? No! There must come a time when the House could say, "In spite of the fact that the electors have decided in favour of a land-tax, we feel confident that they have done so without full

knowledge of what the exemptions are to be—not with a thorough and full knowledge of the exemptions." We must see fair play. Supposing that such a plan were initiated, that only men who were worth £20,000 were to be taxed, and they were to be taxed in such a manner that they would have to pay the whole taxation of the country, the electors would cheerfully vote for that. But ought we to stand by and see such an iniquity perpetrated? No; I say that this House must adhere to what it did before, and say, "Wait and consider this matter." If the whole matter had to be gone over again, I should vote exactly as I voted last time. What has this House done? This House simply said to the country, "We do not think you have quite made up your mind in this respect—we do not think you understand the bill—we do not think you see the iniquity of these exemptions, therefore, we shall vote against this bill, and give you time to reconsider it." That is what this House did, and what I conceive hon. members are here for. When I came into this Chamber I conceived that this was part of my duty, I still consider that it is part of my duty, and I shall consider that it is part of my duty to the end of time. Such being the case, what must this House do now? This House must always interpose and see that no unfairness is perpetrated, and if a bill exactly similar in regard to exemptions is sent up here, it will be the duty of this House to consider very seriously indeed whether it is going to allow a bill of that sort to go through, which hon. members will feel will perpetrate such an extreme hardship on a small section of the people, and which will, undoubtedly, be class legislation of the worst sort. It must be class legislation when you have exemptions. It does not matter whether the exemption is £10 or £10,000, it at once becomes class legislation. Of course, there is always the palliative to be applied—that the poor man will get off. Well, the poor man may get off, but if a land-tax is to be imposed, then each landowner in the country should pay his penny. If every landowner pays his penny, he will be interested in this House and in the welfare of the colony, and he will see that that penny is properly spent if possible. If once you begin to analyse the question of exemptions it opens up a very wide field ; therefore I will refrain from



doing so at this time. I simply reiterate that if the bill comes up here in a form which I think is right I will give the hon. and learned member every assistance, because I am convinced now that the electors wish for a land-tax, and I will willingly bow to that conviction; but if the bill comes up here in the same form, without exemptions, I will have nothing to do with it.

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: I will not detain the House many minutes, because, although remarks have been made which open up very important principles, I think that all those principles would be best discussed, not on a motion that can have no practical result, but when a bill involving those principles is before the House.

The Hon. H. E. KATER: I do not think so. Now is the time!

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: I look upon a debate of this kind as simply affording hon. members an opportunity to let off their bottled-up steam.

The Hon. A. H. JACOB: And let the Government know what is before them!

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: I have no bottled-up steam to let off, and will, therefore, not detain hon. members for any great length of time. I have been pleased to hear some hon. members say that this House must bow to the verdict of the people, and yet I must confess that some of the things that have been said by hon. gentlemen made me begin to doubt whether we were going to get any direct benefit from the election at all, because there seems to be so much dispute as to what the people have said. If hon. members thought that after a definite general election there would be no express statement of what the opinion of the people was, why did they clamour for a general election?

The Hon. J. HOSKINS: We did not!

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: Why, hon. members got up here and said, "We are more in touch with the people of the country on this question than the Legislative Assembly is."

The Hon. J. HOSKINS: Two or three members!

The Hon. J. H. WANT: The leaders!

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: If an appeal to the people is not to give a definite result what is the use of an appeal? The only comfort I can derive from the remarks of hon. members is that hon. gentlemen are

[*The Hon. H. E. Kater.*

clearly in favour of the referendum, and that if that proposal is put before them they will accept it.

The Hon. Sir JULIAN SALOMONS: No one has said so yet!

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: The hon. and learned member, Mr. R. E. O'Connor, said so this afternoon. He said that you cannot get a general expression of opinion on the details of a bill by a general election.

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR: I did not say that I approved of the referendum!

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: I understood the hon. and learned member to say that that was a justification for doubting the accuracy of the answer.

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR: I was contrasting the operation of the referendum with the operation of a general election with the view of showing that in one case it would be possible to give an affirmation of detail and that in the other it would not be possible, but I expressed no opinion about the referendum, and as far as the referendum proposed in the resolutions about the Council is concerned I think that that is utterly unworkable.

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: Practically the hon. and learned member admits all that I said. The last election was more in the nature of a referendum than any previous one, and the result was a verdict in support of the policy of the Government. The bill was definitely put before the people, and they were asked, "Will you support it or reject it?" The Lower House supported it, and the Upper House rejected it—which will you do?" Yet some hon. member express doubt as to what the people meant. If these doubts are justified the value of a general election is very little. You put the country to the expense of £50,000 or £60,000, and as soon as you come back here again you dispute as to what the people meant by the vote they gave. We cannot have a general election over every fresh bill, and still less over every clause. We must take the people's decisions in the gross, and on the whole. I should like to say a word or two in reply to the hon. and learned member, Dr. MacLaurin, who last night thought he had got me in a corner. I am sorry that on account of indisposition I had to leave the Chamber, and that therefore I did not hear his speech, because I always listen to him with pleasure; but my impression is

that he has not read the paper from which he quoted, and that some extracts only have been given to him ; and as some hon. members who have followed him assumed that he was right, I ask them to allow me to make a brief explanation. Upon the occasion on which the hon. and learned member referred I set myself to answer the question, "Ought there to be exemptions from land taxation ?" and I said that before you answer that question you must decide on what principle the tax was to be levied. If you are going to levy it on single-tax principles I say that every single-taxer must logically oppose exemptions ; but if you are going to levy it as a tax on landed property, and as one form of property taxation, then it is perfectly legitimate to have exemptions, and that whether you shall have them or not is a matter of temporary and local expediency. Surely nothing could be clearer than that. The bill which the Government presented to the House was not framed on single-tax principles.

The Hon. Dr. MACLAURIN : What the hon. and learned gentleman referred to in the paper was not a tax on the single-tax principle, but a tax on the incremental principle which is a perfectly different thing, and I pointed out that the bill which we had before us proposed a tax on unimproved land values, and therefore was based on the incremental principle and not on the property-tax principle—that it was not a property-tax measure at all—and in my former speech I said that in the case of a property-tax an exemption was a proper thing ; but the point was that as the proposal was for an incremental tax there ought to be no exemptions.

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN : The bill does not place a tax on the mere increment of land ; but on the ground-value, whatever it may be, whether increment or decrement. Some land will have to be taxed without any increment at all. The tax is on land at its market value. The improvements are taken away, and the tax is simply on the land property value. If I have property in the city worth £10,000, it is property whether I build on it or not ; if I put a building on it worth £10,000 that does not make the land cease to be property. That is my answer to the assertion that I am inconsistent in accepting exemptions. I have stated distinctly that

the policy of exemptions is a question of local and temporary expediency.

The Hon. W. H. PIGOTT : What about the statement as to an electioneering dodge ?

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN : Do not be in such an awful hurry. The hon. member is most intemperate. In a country like ours what can better determine the question of expediency than the express will of the people ? I have not said one word in favour of exemptions, nor against exemptions, except that I think they are always open to the charge that they have the appearance of letting one portion of the people put a tax on another portion. I say that now. That is one of the great objections. I did not disguise that, and I do not disguise it now.

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR : They make a class consisting of the "other fellows !"

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN : That is one objection, and a great objection, to exemptions ; but if the majority of the population say, "We do not take that view of it, but think that for social, commercial, and political reasons small properties up to a certain point should not be taxed," what can this House do but accept the decision of the public, what can the other House do but accept the decision of the public, what can the Government do but accept the decision of the public ? I would rather have a land-tax with exemptions than no land-tax at all, because I am certain that we can never restore free-trade unless we have some degree of direct taxation, and we cannot have that without taxing land, which is one of the most important forms of property in the country. The Government introduced a bill without any exemption, and it was the Assembly that insisted on it and determined the amount of it. The hon. and learned member, Mr. R. E. O'Connor, says, "If you did that before, why not do the same thing now" ? But the hon. and learned member knows perfectly well that the general election, which turned on the point, puts the Government under certain obligations. The Government are not as free now after the general election as they were previously to bring in a bill without an exemption. It is the bill as it went to the public, and upon which the present Assembly was elected, which the other House and we have to consider. The Assembly

is free to do as it likes. It can take out the exemption if it likes, but the Government are hardly free to bring in the bill as they did before, without an exemption, because they took the bill to the country as the bill of the Assembly, and not their own bill. It was the bill which this House rejected which was taken to the country; therefore the Government has not the same degree of freedom now as they had before. That is my answer to my hon. and learned friend. I do not like to speak about myself, but so far from my being inconsistent, I should have thought that it would have been more rational if the hon. and learned member, Dr. MacLaurin, had charged me with being obstinate. I have always been in favour of free-trade and mixing direct taxation with indirect taxation, and I have always been in favour of taxation on land as a necessary part of property taxation. The principles I am advocating now I have advocated all along. I may be ignorant, obstinate, and obtuse, but at least I am consistent. I do not say that a man should always be consistent. If I thought that I was wrong I would change.

The Hon. Dr. MACLAURIN: Does the hon. and learned gentleman infer that other hon. members are inconsistent?

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: Not at all. I am consistent, because I am advocating land taxation, and I have always advocated it. I consider the matter of exemption merely one of expediency. I am not a despot, but must bow to the opinion of the country. We cannot dictate to the community whether they shall or shall not have exemptions from a land-tax. It is not a question of principle, and as politicians we must bow to the opinion of the people. I say that there are strong objections to exemptions, but I cannot force the people into acquiescence in my view. I say that there is a strong moral objection, and a strong political objection to exemptions, but I cannot make the people see the matter in the same light. The exemptions were not put in by the Government, but by the Assembly. The danger that the exemptions may be considered a bribe to small holders, I admit, is a strong objection. As to the bill, I am sorry to hear so many hon. members expressing their views upon it before it has come up. I think it is inconvenient that before the bill is

brought in they should say, we intend to do so and so; we have made up our minds. We do not care what the people say. If you do not bring the bill in in a certain form, we will kick it out.

The Hon. A. H. JACOB: We have been told in the Governor's speech, and by the Attorney-General, how the bill is to be brought in.

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: But the other House has full power to debate that bill, and has yet to debate it. The Government are at liberty to make minor alterations in the bill.

The Hon. J. M. CREED: Suppose the Government are beaten on the exemptions by the Assembly will they appeal to the country?

The Hon. Dr. GARRAN: No. As to the bill, if the House will do its duty it is very likely that any minor amendments which they make in it will be accepted.

The Hon. J. M. CREED: The speech which we have had from the Governor is not one at all of the usual character, and the address in reply to which we have been asked to give our assent is really colourless, except that we are made to thank his Excellency for his speech. I think we certainly owe no thanks to those gentlemen who prepared that speech, and if we include them in the address in reply it is purely as a personal matter to his Excellency himself. If its omission were moved by any hon. member I should vote for it. I think this House should not in any way be inclined to give thanks for that speech, but the high character of his Excellency personally may make us accept the motion without protest. The first portion of the speech to which it is necessary to refer is the proposal for the reconstruction of the Legislative Council. The proposals which were laid before the Legislative Assembly and rejected by this House as being discourteous and insulting, and which were afterwards laid before the country through the newspapers, are of such a character that I think if carried out they would in no way add to the stability of the colony or to the well-being of the people. Those proposals, if adopted, would render this House absolutely powerless for good, and would leave the Assembly really uncontrolled, but with a nominal control which would perhaps relieve them of the feeling of responsibility which

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it is advisable that the Assembly should always have. Sooner than accept such a reform as that proposed by the Government I would vote for the abolition of this House, and would leave the Assembly with the entire responsibility for the legislation of the colony. It is then probable that more thought might be exercised in the election of members to that House. The members of that House, knowing that the decision which they came to would have to be final, would not vote for a bill which they did not believe to be in the interest of the country, because this House would not then be here to protect the country against the effects of their proceedings. I might point out how little control the Council would have if the proposal of the Government for its reconstruction were adopted. But I shall not go fully into the matter now. I will, however, refer to clause 8 of the proposal, which says :

All bills imposing, increasing, reducing, varying, or dealing with taxation, or regulating the collection of taxes, and all bills authorising the construction of public works, or authorising the raising of loans upon the security of the consolidated revenue fund of the colony, may be amended but not rejected by the Legislative Council ; and after the return to the Assembly of any such bill, the Assembly, if any such amendments have been made, may finally determine the nature and scope of any such bill, which, when so dealt with, may be presented for the royal assent, and shall become law upon such assent being given. If any such bill be not returned to the Legislative Assembly within one month, it may upon resolution of that House be presented by the Speaker for the royal assent, and when assented to shall become law.

I cannot conceive any proposition which would so tend to destroy the confidence of outside nations in the stability of the Government of this country as such a proposition as this. It professes to leave the colony in possession of two chambers, one being the Legislative Council or Upper House, which in all countries is a check upon the hasty legislation of the Lower Chamber. This proposal, if carried out, would leave the Assembly at liberty to pass any law that it chose. The Legislative Council might make such amendments as it thought fit in a bill, but the Assembly could reject all the amendments and send the measure on to the Crown for its assent. I say that this is much more dangerous than having no Upper Chamber at all. The effect which it would have in Europe would be very great. It would tend to lessen the belief

of the people of those older countries in the stability and safety of this colony. We depend in a large measure for our means of advancement on the credit which we possess in them, which enables us to raise loans for reproductive works. At the present time our credit is fairly good. We are able to raise such loans as we find necessary, but our credit has not been undisputed. On many occasions very grave doubts have been cast on the wisdom of investors in lending their money to these colonies. One of the grave grounds of complaint against the Council at the time of dissolution of Parliament was that it rejected portions of the Loan Bill which was brought before us. Some items in the bill were assented to by this House and might have been passed with advantage to the country. Other items unquestionably were inserted by the Government without that thought which it was advisable and necessary should be exercised. Take the item of £100,000, it was proposed to borrow in England for the improvement of Crown lands for sale and settlement. When our credit was disputed it was always laid down that independent of the works on which the money was to be spent, which perhaps at first would not be reproductive, but which it was hoped would be profitable in time, the investors would be perfectly safe because we possessed such a splendid asset in our Crown lands. What greater confirmation could we send home that the asset was a mere delusion when we proposed to make the land valuable by borrowing £100,000 to make it fit for settlement? No more imprudent and improper item could be included in a loan bill. I do not mean to say that the expenditure would be unjustifiable, but I contend that it should be taken from current revenue. It would be one of the first things seized upon to lower the value of the securities of the country. I think this House rendered eminent service to the colony in omitting that item from the Loan Bill. To show that the credit of Australia in Great Britain has been impugned, I will read a passage from a book which is issued as a guide to investors by a high financial authority in England, which gives information to many people there relative to investments throughout the world. It is accepted as a high authority by people in the old country when making their investments, and has great influence

on the leisured class, who wish to invest their money on security which is indisputable. It says :

Our colonies in Australia, again, are piling up debt with dangerous rapidity, and the voting power being in the hands of the mob, ministers and parliaments are more and more pandering to a selfish and socialistic demand. It is not the common weal that is considered ; it is the vote of the lower grade of working men, and the considerable body of respectable and honorable colonists are quite unable to stem the democratic tide. The high prices to which colonial bonds have been lately engineered in London are far above their real value, and allow of no margin to capital to cover any risk.

I do not say it is true. I only say it is advanced by a high financial authority for the guidance of investors in England, and being advanced by such an authority to such people, it will, undoubtedly, tend to lower their confidence in our securities, and will prevent them from advancing money, on which we depend for the carrying out of our works. It is not addressed to the business class directly, who have no money to put in for permanent investment, but to the people who have a certain amount of capital from which they wish to derive a fixed income. These are the persons who are ultimately the investors in Colonial stocks, and whose confidence will be destroyed by such publications as this one. To show the tone of this work I will read another extract. It goes on to say :

The bonds of Crown colonies, such as Ceylon, Hongkong, &c., are perfectly safe, but generally yield only a low rate of interest.

This shows how careful the country must be not to so amend the constitution of the Council as to prevent it from having a fair checking power against hasty legislation by the Lower House. I am not opposed to a reform of the Council. I have always advocated its reform, and before the Government advanced their proposal I published in the press a scheme of reform which, I think, is fairly practicable. It provided for a definite number of members, which would prevent the swamping of the House by any government, for a fixed period of tenure of office, namely, six years ; for the periodical secession of members who had filled their period of office, and for the nomination of members and their selection by the two houses generally, in such a way that the members could not be mere nominees—I was going to say the tools or creatures—of the Government of the day, but

[*The Hon. J. M. Creed.*

I wish to say nothing offensive. They would be in an independent position ; they would be chosen in such a way that they would not be mere nominees of anyone. I also proposed a reform by which we might get finality of legislation without reference to a general election. As regards the referendum, there is no doubt about it that to get the views of the people on every question would be a very great advantage. But I take it that there are very few questions which could be so put before the country that the people could give a definite answer "Yes," or "No." It would be most difficult to submit nearly every question which arises in a direct way. There are one or two questions which might be put before the people for a direct answer, "Yes" or "No"—for instance, payment of members. That question I myself proposed should be referred to them, but at a general election. Even supposing it were possible to put the matter in such a concise form that it could be answered "Yes" or "No," I do not see how proper information could be conveyed to the more remote districts, and how the people there could have the necessary information on which to form an opinion. Another thing which I have never yet heard mentioned is as to the cost of the referendum. Surely if we are to have a settlement of disputes in that way it would be a matter of frequent occurrence to refer a question to the country ; and if it were a matter of frequent occurrence, the expense would be something which the country could not bear. The referendum would entail exactly the same expenditure as occurs at every general election. It could not be lessened by one penny. The same number of polling booths, the same facilities for voting, the same number of electoral officers would be required, and undoubtedly the cost would be exactly the same as the cost of a general election ; and from the information I can gather that now is in very close approximation to £30,000. Is it feasible that every dispute which occurs, every difference of opinion which happens in regard to legislation, should be referred to the country at such a cost ? I think that alone renders the referendum impossible in this country. In the debate on the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill, I said I was and always had been in favour of direct taxation, but I certainly thought

that that taxation should be imposed in such a way as to have a fair incidence on all persons. I do not see why land should be the only property taxed. In every country the taxation is supposed to be levied for carrying on the government of the country for the protection of the lives and properties of the people. Land is the one property which probably can take care of itself without the protection of the Government almost better than any other, and that alone is the one which is chosen for taxation. I admit that the country has decided that a land-tax is one of the forms of taxation which shall be levied. I am not going to dispute with the country over that matter, but I certainly shall object to the unjust exemptions which have been proposed. If taxation is to be imposed it must be imposed without exemptions. With regard to the income-tax, it is inquisitorial. It is difficult of collection, and the returns will not be as great in proportion to the discomforts imposed as many other forms of taxation. The proposition to exempt all incomes up to £300 a year is utterly unjust and uncalled for, and to make the bill acceptable to me, the amount will have to be lowered at all events to the amount which is exempted in England, namely, £160. A land-tax, I think, is one which should be devoted to local self-government. Then the landowners in a district would be able to pay a very much higher tax, and thus more fully relieve the central government, than if it were collected and spent by the central government. It would be collected and spent in the district where it was raised. The district would be improved. The value of property would be advanced by the improvements, and the taxpayers would in a large measure recover the tax by means of the increased value of their properties by the carrying out of public works. It would be spent economically, because every person would be interested in seeing that no waste occurred. There is only one more thing which I think it is necessary to refer to, and that is the question of federation. No person having the well-being of Australia at heart, and with the hope of seeing it a great nation, could for a moment hesitate as to the advantage of federation if it were possible. I am not however prepared to accept federation on such terms as will, perhaps, nearly double the cost of governing the various colonies,

by a series of provincial governments with a very expensive central government over all. I am in favour of some such scheme as that proposed by Sir George Dibbs. I believe that unification may be brought about easily and well. It will not, however, be brought about under any such plan as that of the Government. The governments of the other colonies—which have shown no particular regard for this one, for they tax the whole of our products—are not likely to join in any federal scheme which will not give them any greater benefits than they will get under the proposed tariff, and they having to give nothing in return. How can we expect Victoria, which imposes duties varying from 40 to 100 per cent. on imports, and which as a consequence is enabled to keep up a number of sickly manufactories—how can we expect her to practically destroy her factories by removing these duties? The proposal of the Government will render federation impossible for years to come. I considered myself, until lately, a free-trader. I am not a free-trader, because, though I believe absolutely in the freedom of commercial intercourse I do not want free-trade to be all on one side. I am not prepared to give a market to any country which will not furnish a market for the products of this colony. Some months ago I moved for a return, which has not yet been laid on the table, and with regard to which I intend to ask a question as to the cause of delay, showing the duties levied by all the principal countries of the world on Australian products. When we have that we shall be in a position to see, if we have a perfect free-trade tariff, what we are getting in return. I am afraid that the belief of Cobden and Bright that any country which established perfect free-trade would have freedom of imports given to it by other countries is exploded. I fear that this age is no less selfish than any former one, and that if a colony has a market in its neighbour without restriction, and without having to make any sacrifice in return, we shall have to wait a very long time for reciprocity. I will do everything I can to bring about federation. I have my own ideas about it, and I think that in a manner which is little thought of, federation can be enforced in Australia by a very simple process, within a few months after the machinery is prepared, and that

machinery might be prepared in a fortnight. I again say that federation is one of the things which I hope to see, but I hope to see it in a way which will produce economy in government, instead of extravagance, and I am certain that the proposals of the Government to give perfect free-trade without any return from other colonies will tend to delay and not to hasten federation.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The PRESIDENT: I have ascertained it to be the pleasure of his Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor to receive the address in reply to his speech on Wednesday next at 4.30 p.m.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The Hon. J. H. WANT: Before moving the adjournment of the House, I would ask hon. members to do me the favour of being here early on Wednesday, so as to form a quorum for the purpose of presenting the address to his Excellency. There being very little business to do on Wednesday, hon. members may think it is not necessary to attend; but it is necessary that we should have a sufficient number of members to present the address to his Excellency. I move:

That the House do now adjourn until Wednesday next.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 8.5 p.m.

### Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 15 August, 1895.*

Boring for Coal near Bradley's Head—Speed of Steamers in the Harbour—Payments to Contractors—Working Dredge Service and Fitzroy Dock—Banking Conference: Sydney—Reports from Technical Education Branch—Special Areas on Nanami Station—Small Debts Court at Leichhardt—Globe Island: White Creek, Roselle Bay—Bridges: Yallakool and Whymoul Creeks—Surrender and Exchange of Land, Deniliquin—Printing of Documents—Sessional Orders—Order of Business—Chairman of Committees—Temporary Chairmen of Committees—Liens on Wool and Stock Mortgages Bill—Master and Servants Bill—Lieutenant-Governor's Speech: Address in Reply (Second Night's Debate).

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair.

[*The Hon. J. M. Creed.*]

#### BORING FOR COAL NEAR BRADLEY'S HEAD.

Mr. E. M. CLARK asked the COLONIAL SECRETARY,—Is it a fact that persons are now employed boring for coal or sinking shafts on military reserves in the neighbourhood of Bradley's Head, and by what authority?

Mr. BRUNKER answered,—There is no information in the department of the Colonial Secretary as to any application to mine on the military reserves at Bradley's Head. Perhaps if the hon. gentleman will put a question to my hon. colleague, the Secretary for Mines, he may obtain some information on the subject.

#### SPEED OF STEAMERS IN THE HARBOUR.

Mr. E. M. CLARK asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—In view of late accidents, and the constant danger to the passenger traffic at Circular Quay, what steps, if any, have been taken by the Marine Board to enforce the regulations in regard to steamers travelling in the harbour at a rate exceeding 6 miles an hour?

Mr. REID answered,—The Marine Board do what they can by prosecuting, punishing, and cautioning offenders who commit breaches of the harbour regulations by proceeding in ocean-going steamers at a speed exceeding 6 knots westward of Fort Denison. It is found most difficult, however, to obtain convictions in cases of the sort on account of the difficulty in proving from outside that a vessel is exceeding the regulation speed.

#### PAYMENTS TO CONTRACTORS.

Mr. E. M. CLARK asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—Will he inquire into the delay of transmitting contractors' vouchers from the accounts branch of his department to the Treasury, and give instructions to facilitate more regular and prompt payments than at present?

Mr. YOUNG answered,—The hon. member must, I think, be referring to delays in the past. Since the reorganisation of the department there has been no unnecessary delay in checking and passing vouchers in the account branch, and forwarding them to the Treasury. In isolated cases, however, where the remission or imposition of fines has to be dealt with, or default has been made by the contractor in carrying out the work, or failed to pay his