

The Hon. W. SCOTT thought six months a better age at which to commence the tax.

In reply to the Hon. C. DAVIES, the Hon. the CHIEF SECRETARY said the former Act fixed the age when the tax should commence at six months.

The amendment was then put and lost.

A verbal amendment suggested by the CHAIRMAN was then carried, and the clause passed as amended.

Clause 2. "Dog may be substituted for registered dog dying."

The Hon. G. M. WATERHOUSE observed a peculiar form of expression, permitting the owner of a dog which had died to keep another "in the room thereof." What room was referred to? Ordinarily dogs were kept in kennels—(laughter)—he proposed that the words "theroom" be struck out and the word "lieu" be inserted.

The amendment was agreed to, and another verbal alteration being effected, the clause was passed as amended.

Clause 3 passed as read.

Clause 4 passed with a verbal amendment.

Clause 6, "Travelling expenses may be paid to registrars."

The Hon. A. FORSTER thought the clause somewhat indefinite. It did not specify what registrars were referred to. He would propose the insertion of the words "under this Act." It did not appear that the payment of registrars under the Dog Act were especially referred to.

The CHAIRMAN considered the preamble indicated sufficiently that all that followed referred to the Dog Act.

The clause was then passed as printed.

Clause 7, "This and Dog Act of 1860 to be one Act."

At the suggestion of the CHAIRMAN the word "constructed" was inserted instead of "read together." (This Act and the Dog Act of 1860 shall be "constructed" as one Act.)

The Hon. G. M. WATERHOUSE would take the opportunity of saying that he would have preferred seeing the Acts consolidated. Unprofessional persons could not understand the numerous Acts that were passed, and were often put to great inconvenience and expense in buying several Acts, while one consolidated Act might have been passed to answer the purpose of several on the same subject. It was important that the people should be enabled to understand the laws with as little difficulty as possible.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that there was no commencement clause.

The Hon. C. DAVIES thought the Date of Acts Bill provided for that.

The CHAIRMAN said there was no such Act at present.

The preamble was then passed with a verbal amendment.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill, and its third reading was made an Order of the Day for the next meeting of Council.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

The PRESIDENT reported the receipt of a message from the House of Assembly, signifying the concurrence of the House with the amendments of the Council in the Post-Office Act Amendment Bill.

ASSESSMENT ON STOCK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. the CHIEF SECRETARY said, in moving the second reading of that Bill, the subject had been well discussed during the past session. The object of the present Bill was to alter the scale of the assessment on stock. The former Act contained a maximum and minimum, but the present Act contained neither. The word "situation" was in the present Bill, and had led to much discussion elsewhere. The Bill as originally laid before Parliament did not contain the word "situation"—(hear)—the assessment being levied simply according to the carrying capabilities of the runs. Parties holding poor runs would not be assessed to the same amount as if they had good runs. Much land would be not worth taking up in consequence of its poor quality; it had been proved that a great deal of land in the colony would not carry 50 sheep to the mile. It was desirable in their legislation to facilitate as far as possible the production of exports, and this would be done by the provision he had named. He had already said that the word "situation" was not in the Bill, as originally introduced into Parliament, but had been inserted in the other House; he would leave hon. members to consider the matter, but he might say that he thought any alteration the Council might make in that word would probably meet with opposition from the other House, and the Bill would thereby be imperilled. Rather than such a result should happen, hon. members would perhaps give up their private feeling in the matter. The Government would take every guarantee that the work would be done by the party entrusted with it in the fairest possible manner. The matter had been standing over since 1858, and it was very desirable that it should be settled. It was desirable that the assessment should be made according to the carrying capabilities of the runs. They were formerly assessed according to the number of sheep actually upon them, but that plan was attended with inconvenience. The plan of the present Bill was better, and the occupier could place what sheep on the run he thought best.

The Hon. H. AYERS seconded the motion, although the Bill did not go so far as might be desired. He thought, however, that it was better to pass it than to make alterations, and lose more time.

The Hon. S. DAVENPORT could not regard the Bill as a measure founded on sound principles, as it made the Executive of the country—a class interested in making as much money as possible out of the class for which the legislation of the Bill was intended—judges of the value of the property without arbitration and without appeal. The voice of the party who had to pay should certainly be heard. The bill was therefore unsound in principle. It was desirable on all sides that the measure should be passed, and it was a matter for some congratulation that, after struggling on since 1858, a rather better measure was brought before them. Still it was imperfect, and would not, he felt sure, work satisfactorily. It was useless to attempt to control nature by means of artificial limits, and it was well known that over a vast expanse of country, and comprising a large amount of the wealth of the colony, not 20 sheep could be carried to the square mile. The Bill came before the House with the word "situation," which he thought was not only useless but perplexing. He could only imagine one mode in which "situation" could be taken into account in connection with an assessment based upon the number of sheep depastured. A man near a market might be said to have more sheep on his run than he actually had, because he could fatten and sell them in six months and restock his run. In that sense the word "situation" might be said to represent numbers. The Hon. the Chief Secretary spoke of the Act affecting the assessment which was payable in the year 1860. He was not prepared to move an amendment, but he thought in honor the Government should go back to the year 1850. Any excess of assessment which had been paid then, if demanded back, should be refunded.

The Hon. G. HALL did not rise to oppose the motion, but would like the Hon. the Chief Secretary to define the word "situation." (Laughter.) Runs were variously assessed at 10s., 15s. or 20s. per mile, but was something more per head for situation to be added to the carrying capabilities of the runs? It was true the Bill contained no maximum nor minimum; but he did not envy the Commissioner of Crown Lands his berth when all the questions of situation came before him. The present Bill was better than the former one, but it was not all that was required.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR-IN-CHIEF.

The PRESIDENT informed the Council that the Governor-in-Chief had transmitted the following Message (No. 16):—
"The Governor-in-Chief informs the Legislative Council, in reply to address No. 8 of the 21th ult., that the preparation of a Bill is under consideration for the purpose of authorising the leasing of mineral lands, in which provisions will be introduced to give effect to the views of the Council as expressed in the said address."

The Message was ordered to be printed.

ASSESSMENT ON STOCK ACT AMENDMENT BILL—
DEBATE RESUMED.

The Bill was then read a second time, and the Council went into Committee upon it.

In Committee.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1, passed as printed.

Clause 2.

The Hon. C. G. EVERARD thought the word "situation" would be better struck out. He could not understand it, and thought it was of no use; perhaps the Hon. the Chief Secretary could explain it.

The Hon. the CHIEF SECRETARY said that so far from being able to explain it, he thought it would puzzle a conjuror. (Laughter.) The Government would, however, do their duty in reference to the matter, and see that the assessment was carried out fairly.

The Hon. S. DAVENPORT was not intending to oppose but did not like the clause to pass without expressing his opinion. The Select Committee appointed to consider the question on a former occasion, had recommended as a principle of fairness the power of appeal, but the Bill before them made no such provision. In the other colonies more justice was done, and in the new colony of Queensland, where they seemed to be adopting the cream of legislation from the other colonies, they provided for appeal; but here if persons felt aggrieved, they must take their case to the Supreme Court, and might have to travel 500 miles, and go to great expense in order to recover damages for over assessment. Such a state of things was neither convenient for individuals nor for the Government, and they should not pass laws disregarding the interests of a portion of the community, the more so as the assessment was to be regulated by the Executive. Fortunately, at present they had a gentleman to manage it who was in every way qualified, and who was formerly a stockholder himself. The Government had lately had an opportunity of availing themselves of his high intelligence on such matters, but hereafter they might not have so good an opportunity. The same gentleman might not be available when they next required his services in a similar way. Many years' experience was needed for such an office. The class of persons interested was a large class, and represented nearly one-third of the