

nire him, and I want to express to Mr. Cornell the hope that he will shortly return, having completed that duty that his large heart and lofty patriotism have demanded. For you, Mr. President, I hope that the recess will be a period of rest and recuperation and that you will long be spared to preside with dignity and impartiality as you have always done over the deliberations of this Chamber. I move—

That this House at its rising adjourn to Wednesday, 4th April.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 12.20 a.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 21st March, 1917.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands: 1. State Forests, Timber Regulations; 2. Cemetery Boards, Statements of receipts and expenditure; 3. Permanent Reserves Act, Quarantine Reserve, Bunbury.

RESIGNATION OF A MEMBER— GERALDTON.

Mr. SPEAKER: I yesterday received the following communication:—

Parliament House, 20th March, 1917.
To the Hon. James Gardiner, M.L.A., Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Perth. Dear Sir, I herewith tender my resignation as member in the Legislative Assembly for Geraldton. Yours faithfully, E. E. Heitman.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [4.33]: In view of the hon. member's resignation I beg to move—

That the seat be declared vacant.

Question put and passed.

QUESTION—ALLEN GAS PRODUCER COMPANY.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (without notice) asked the Minister for Works: Has the Minister had a settlement made by arbitration regarding the claim of the State against the Allen Gas Producer Company; if so, was it on the advice of the Crown Law Department: and is it true that the amount has been reduced by two-thirds.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: There has not yet been any settlement arrived at but it is hoped we shall arrive at a settlement to-morrow. There are various negotiations, all of which I shall be pleased to show the hon. member. Every effort has been made to safeguard the interests of the State.

QUESTION—WHEAT SALE.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (without notice) asked the Minister for Industries: 1, Is he responsible for the statement in regard to damaged wheat and good sale (*vide* Press report)? 2, Was the flour referred to shipped oversea? 3, Is the ruling price of f.a.q. wheat for export flour to the same place 6s. 9d. per bushel or 4s. 9d. as indicated in the statement? 4, At what mill was this wheat gristed? 5, Who decided that the wheat was damaged? 6, What was the extent of damage per bushel?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1 and 2, Yes. 3, 6s. for good wheat.

4, Ockerby & Co. 5, The general manager and the acquiring agents; and in this instance the wheat was refused by the ship because of weevil. 6, Probably worth 3s. 3d. per bushel as pig or fowl feed.

QUESTION—RAILWAY SERVICE, CURTAILMENT.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: Will he make an announcement regarding the intentions of the Railway Department to curtail the railway facilities to the general public? I have only heard of one reduction so far, and that is on the Perth-Midland suburban line, where it is proposed to introduce a service of two hours in lieu of the present hourly service. Is that going to be general?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The matter has not yet come before me for consideration. It will be necessary to curtail the train service and every centre will be affected.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In view of the answer given to the leader of the Opposition will the Minister get into communication with the Commissioner of Railways forthwith, ascertain from him particulars of the proposed reduction in the running of the trains between Perth and Fremantle, and report to the House before the close of the session.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The matter will certainly be taken into consideration.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Will the Minister immediately get into touch through the telephone with the Commissioner of Railways and ascertain whether there is any truth in the rumour that a reduction almost approaching to 50 per cent. will take place in the suburban railway service? I understand that this to some extent has been made public, so far as the Midland line is concerned.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We were told to look at the notices on the stations, but they are not there to see.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I will get into touch with the Commissioner of Railways and ascertain what has been

done so far in regard to the matter. Trains will have to be cut out in some cases.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do you propose to cut them out in such a way as to give one train every two hours to Midland Junction?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, there will be as reasonable a service as is possible in the circumstances.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We have an hourly service now, but that is not a reasonable one.

The Minister for Works: It may be an unpayable one nevertheless.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Why this policy of hush; tell us what you know.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know. I shall know before the change is made, and such change will be considered by the Government. We must cut out trains largely because of want of material to keep the trains going. I will discuss the matter with the Commissioner of Railways and satisfy members on the point.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Will you let us know the result before the House rises?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I will endeavour to do so.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I must protest against proceeding any further until we know what is going to happen in this matter. We ought to know and the public ought to know. What I cannot understand is the fact that already notices have been issued to the public to look out at stations for the proposed alterations in the train service. We ought to be able to discuss the matter before the House rises.

QUESTION—RAILWAY SERVICE, KALGOORLIE-MENZIES.

Mr. MULLANY (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: Is it a fact that the train running between Kalgoorlie and Menzies on Saturdays is being cut out?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: I regret I cannot furnish a reply, and I am sorry that I was not aware members would require this information this afternoon.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Everybody knows all about it except the Minister.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I respectfully suggest to the Minister that, inasmuch as this question is causing a lot of public uneasiness, he should make inquiries and make a statement to the House after the tea adjournment, so that Parliament may know what the position is.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of four amendments requested by the Legislative Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

No. 1—Clause 2, add at the end the following proviso:—"Provided further that particulars of the resumption and the amount of pecuniary compensation paid be laid on the Table of both House of Parliament within fourteen days of the resumption, if Parliament be sitting, or if Parliament be not sitting, within fourteen days of the opening of the next succeeding session of Parliament":

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Clause 2 deals with the question of resumption wherein pecuniary compensation is paid for the reason that there is no land available for exchange: and the proviso now suggested is that all papers connected therewith shall be laid on the Table. The Government have no objection to giving the fullest publicity to these matters. I move—

That the amendment be made.

Amendment put and passed.

No. 2—Clause 28, line 18, after the word "section" add "Provided that no interest shall be payable on any such advance for the first five years after the advance is made":

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Clause 28 deals with the settlement of returned soldiers on the land. I do not advise the Committee to accede to this request because all advances are to be made from a general scheme agreed upon at the Premiers' Conference, and it was also decided that, so far as practicable, there shall be uniformity between the several States. It will, therefore, be understood that if we agree to this am-

endment we will be acting contrary to the conditions mutually arrived at. The question of deciding the initial period during which interest and instalments will be suspended is left to the Soldier Settlement Board of Australia, to be constituted by the Commonwealth Government and upon which Western Australia is to be represented. All matters in connection with the settlement of soldiers, or the expenditure of loan moneys secured from the Federal Government, will be left to the decision of that board. The board will consist of the Ministers for Lands in the other States; Western Australia, being so far away, it is arranged that, should it be considered necessary or expedient when a meeting of the board is being held, and our Premier happens to be visiting Melbourne in connection with a Premiers' Conference, he will be authorised to act on the board as the representative of this State. Another objection to making any alteration to the scheme—and we are not empowered, really, to make any alterations—is that it is considered highly undesirable there should be competition between the federated States with regard to the settlement of soldiers. The moneys in the scheme have to be applied equally in all States. Consequently, if we inserted in our Bill such a provision as now proposed, that soldiers should be exempted for five years from the payment of interest on loans granted for improvements, it would be acting contrary to the agreement arrived at at the conference and will be practically breaking faith with the Commonwealth Government. I think members of both Houses are all agreed that we should do everything possible for the returned soldiers, but we are not in a position to grant assistance in this way. If the proposed assistance were granted it would have to be done out of Consolidated Revenue. We have the money from the Federal authorities and without that assistance we would not have been able to do anything.

Hon. J. Scaddan: They are not concerned where the interest comes from, whether the soldier pays it or whether it comes out of Consolidated Revenue.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not in the least. It was distinctly understood at the federal conference that there should be

an uniform scheme and one rate of interest should hold good. The leader of the Opposition knows what the conditions are and we will be acting unwisely if we attempt to add a proviso to the clause as suggested by the Legislative Council. I move—

That the amendment be not made.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I regret the attitude the Minister has taken in regard to this amendment. It is not correct to say that we have no power to do this. We have ample power to do it. It is true that the amount of consideration or assistance we are getting from the Commonwealth is limited, but the amount of consideration which we can extend is unlimited. It is quite interesting to follow the trend of affairs in regard to the returned soldiers. There was no need to put all these clauses in the Bill at all. The Government by doing so invited what followed and they got it. All the privileges which we intend to extend to the returned soldiers are provided for in the principal Act. It has been stated that these clauses were put in to make the Bill a little more acceptable to Parliament and to use the returned soldier as a bait for support. The amendment which has been inserted by another place is quite relevant to the clauses and is a declaration by that Chamber that they want to do more than talk about the returned soldier. They want to help the man and this is the way in which they propose to do it. They want to give him assistance during the first five years of his settlement. Hon. members know that land in Western Australia does not respond immediately to cultivation. Generally speaking it takes five years before the improvements begin to be reproductive to the extent that a man can meet his obligations. After five years if we get a man who understands farming in Western Australia, such a man will be able to meet his obligations. I attended the conference in Melbourne on the question of the returned soldiers and I took up the attitude that this was not the responsibility of the State at all. I pointed out that if we were going to transfer this obligation to the States, the States would experience a difficulty because of their limited powers in regard to taxation, and the returned soldiers would not get that consideration they were entitled to re-

ceive. I have been misrepresented over this matter. The *West Australian*, as usual, in attempting to discredit me took up the attitude that I was opposed to helping the returned soldiers. Nothing was further from my mind. I was taking the broad view that the Federal Parliament alone, inasmuch as they were handling the revenue of Australia, and had so much power in regard to the imposition of extra taxation, could do full justice to the returned men. The States, however, decided otherwise. My next move was to attempt to get this money for the soldiers free of interest for three years. That was debated and ultimately we arrived at a compromise that we would give it to the men at three and a half per cent. and increase the interest by one half per cent. each year until they paid the full amount and that the loss should be borne equally by the Commonwealth and the States. The best assistance we can give to the returned soldier is to advance him the money with which to make improvements and not ask him for interest until the expiration of five years. Experience has shown that it takes that time to make a farm anything like re-productive. Even if we give him that five years and we persevere with the Nornalup Inlet proposition, the returned soldier will not be ready in that period to begin the payment of interest. The Nornalup proposition is one which I trust will not be persevered with. I have a good opinion of the land around Nornalup, but the fact that the surveyors themselves could not land there, and were actually shipwrecked in the attempt to land, shows that it is not a place to which we should send ordinary settlers let alone returned soldiers. We do not want to send our soldiers out to isolation, neither do we want to use them for the development of land settlement in Western Australia. What we want to do is to make available to these men that land which is in close proximity to railway lines and where they will have a reasonable prospect of marketing their produce at cheap rates, and where also they will be able to keep in touch with civilisation. If we put these men at Nornalup Inlet they will be completely away from civilisation. We have any number of repurchased estates and Crown lands within reasonable distance of

railways, within a good rainfall area, and within reasonable distance of ports, which could be offered to these men. I trust the Government will take a proper view of the position and show that they are deeply anxious to do something for these men. Up to the present time I am sorry to say we have done nothing more than talk. The leader of the Country party knows that in connection with the War Council we have a land committee, but that that committee has never met. I do not know whether I have been excluded from that committee. I have received no official intimation of my removal from it. All I know is that Mr. Garner in making a statement to the Press, and mentioning what was being done, gave the names of the members of the committee which did not include mine.

The Minister for Lands: The hon. member is still on the committee.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It does not worry me because there has not been a meeting. We have to admit that the criticism which has been levelled against all parties in Parliament is justified inasmuch as we have done nothing, and that what we have done is the very worst thing possible, namely, to suggest that we should send the returned soldiers to Nornalup Inlet so that they may develop an isolated part of the State. Let us do something and do it in a practical way, something which will be of benefit to the returned soldier. I defy anyone to point to a better way of helping soldiers than to give them the money, and say that so far as interest is concerned, we are going to wait until the land itself pays it.

The CHAIRMAN: In looking at this question I notice that the amendment reads:

Provided that no interest shall be payable on any such advance for the first five years after the advance is made.

The Minister in opposing the request stated that if this was carried it would necessitate provision being made from the Consolidated Revenue to meet the amount of interest mentioned here. That would be increasing the burden of taxation on the people. As Ministers only have authority to do that, it is beyond the province of private members, in accordance with Standing Order

387, to move to increase any taxation or to impose any upon the people. I have to rule in accordance with that that it would not be possible unless Ministers themselves take the initiative for private members to carry his request. I, therefore, rule that the request is out of order.

Hon. J. Scaddan: That, I think, creates rather a serious position.

The CHAIRMAN: If we do not take this stand, presently there would be no length to which this sort of thing might go. It might even be possible for private members to move that these people be paid so much, and that would be increasing the taxation on the people. Seeing that it is against our Standing Orders, we must take a stand on the matter.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I do not take exception to your ruling, Sir. This amendment appeared to me to be encroaching on the privileges of this Chamber, wherein all matters connected with taxation must originate, and that all amendments which require a Message from the Governor must be made by way of a request.

The CHAIRMAN: This is only a request; it is not making an amendment. If the Council made an amendment it would be ruled out immediately, as has been done on previous occasions.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I believe there have been occasions when the Council have passed amendments which they have afterwards requested the Assembly to agree to, in the nature of putting a clause in italics, which is not considered a clause in the Bill until such time as it receives a message from the Governor, through Ministers of this Chamber. That, however, is hardly on all-fours with this. This is an amendment which has been made. It seems to me we have no way out of the difficulty except to return the message to the Council, and draw attention to the fact that the amendment cannot be considered because it is a breach of the Constitution Act and our Standing Orders. I do not think we can deal with the rest of the message until that has been altered.

Mr. Carpenter: Unless the Government agree.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I do not think the Government can agree. This is an amendment made in another place.

The CHAIRMAN: It is only an amendment which is requested. The Council cannot make an amendment to a money Bill. They can request that we should make it here. If Ministers refuse to make that amendment I cannot allow private members to take upon themselves to carry the request.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I take it that you cannot accept the motion already submitted by the Minister, who has moved that the request be not agreed to. The Minister must accept your ruling, Sir, and allow the amendment to go by the board or else must move the amendment himself. I do not think he can move that the amendment be not made.

The CHAIRMAN: Unless the Minister takes the responsibility of moving this amendment himself, I intend to rule it out of order.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The question is as to whether the Minister has decided to accept your ruling that it is out of order, or to submit it as a motion of the Crown.

The CHAIRMAN: I rule the amendment out of order as the Minister will not accept the responsibility himself.

The PREMIER: I think the Minister in charge of the Bill is quite in order in dealing with the request of another Chamber.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Not if it is not in order.

The PREMIER: The Legislative Council sent us down a request—

Hon. J. Scaddan: Which is out of order.

The PREMIER: They have power to send that request down. It is out of order, however, for this Chamber, in opposition to the Government, to carry their request, because it imposes taxation upon the country.

Hon. J. Scaddan: How do you arrive at that decision?

The PREMIER: It is the Chairman's decision, is it not?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

The PREMIER: The Council is not out of order in making the request. We should be out of order here unless it was a Government motion. I think we can carry the Minister's motion and show that we disagree

with the request, and can state that as one of the reasons why we disagree.

Hon. J. Scaddan: You do not catch us like that.

The CHAIRMAN: I have taken the stand which I think is perfectly right, namely, that if Ministers will not accept the responsibility of making the amendment which has been requested, I must rule it out of order. Standing Order 387 supports me in this. If Ministers oppose this, I cannot allow it to be carried by private members of the Chamber.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I decline to be faced with the position which the Premier desires us to be faced with. If we are not going to permit the matter to be dealt with in respect to obtaining a decision on the part of a majority of members of this House, it must be ruled out of order. The Premier desires that the motion submitted by the Minister shall be carried by the Chamber, as though we agreed to it. If it were within the province of the Chamber to do what the Council desires without Ministers' authority, I would vote in favour of agreeing to the amendment, but I am not going to be placed in the position of voting against an amendment with which I agree. Either I have the right to vote against it, or you, Sir, rule it out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: I rule the amendment out of order because Ministers will not accept the responsibility of moving the amendment themselves, as requested by the Council.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Does the Minister accept that?

The Premier: We will accept that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They can never pay the money.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I regret that the Minister was not prepared to submit the matter to the House in order to obtain the consensus of opinion of members. I want it to be understood that the matter has not been dealt with by the Chamber, and that under the Standing Orders the Minister has exercised his right to refuse to father this amendment, with the result that the Committee is left in the position that it cannot express an opinion. The Minister might easily have obtained the opinion of mem-

bers by fathering the motion, even if the Government voted against it afterwards.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept any responsibility in the matter. I am only doing my duty as Chairman.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I want the position to be understood, that the Government have taken the responsibility of using the Standing Orders for the purpose of preventing an expression of opinion by the Chamber on this important matter.

The CHAIRMAN: I have ruled the amendment out of order because the Minister would not accept the responsibility of moving it as requested, and it is, therefore, not competent for private members to deal with it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The leader of the Opposition desires to make capital out of this question. I am sorry for that.

Hon. J. Scaddan: That comes well from you.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow any further discussion on this matter.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member has attacked me; he should withdraw.

No. 3—Clause 30. Subclause 1, strike out the words "By the Governor," in the second and third lines of the proviso in this clause:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the amendment be made.

Amendment put and passed.

No. 4—Clause 30. Subclause 2, add the following to this clause:—"The maximum area to be held in the same division by two or more persons jointly, or by any association of persons incorporated or unincorporated, shall not exceed two million acres. If any leaseholder is beneficially interested in an area exceeding the prescribed maximum, or in several areas exceeding in the aggregate the maximum or if his leasehold is worked in association with other holdings exceeding in the aggregate the maximum area that may be lawfully held as aforesaid, his lease or leases shall be liable to forfeiture, and the lease or leases in which he is interested shall be liable to forfeiture. Any lease holder may be required by the Minister at any time to make a declaration that he is not beneficially interested in an area

exceeding the prescribed maximum, or that he is not beneficially interested in several areas exceeding in the aggregate the prescribed maximum, or that his leasehold is not worked in association with other holdings exceeding in the the aggregate the maximum area that may be lawfully held under this Act, and if a leaseholder refuses to make such declaration, the lease or leases in which he is interested shall be liable to forfeiture. In the case of an incorporated company such declaration shall be made by the public officer of the company":

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This amendment has been introduced in another place with a view to preventing persons or corporations from securing large areas of country, in other words to stop monopolies.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not much of a monopoly, two million acres, is it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think it is the wish of hon. members generally to prevent the holding of enormous areas by one person or companies and it was for this purpose that the addendum has been made to the clause. I move—

That the amendment be made.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When the conference was held the other evening I understand the intention was to limit areas below that permissible to-day. It was realised that some individuals had considerably over one million acres, and the purpose of the Bill was to limit any holding to one million acres; but we now have an amendment making the limit two million acres. In my opinion, this will leave the North-West portion of this State open to foreign invasion. I pointed out when the Bill was at the second reading that we have already some firms holding very large areas in the North-West. I know there are members opposite supporting the Government who are strongly opposed to handing over large areas and by that means assisting the introduction into Western Australia of at least the fringe of the American Beef Trust. I am confident that not one of those members who have given an undertaking to assist the Government to the end of the session had any idea that it was proposed to hand over two millions of acres to one man.

The Premier: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes; the "two or more," is only a blind. I have stated previously in this Chamber, and the statement cannot be denied, that the firm of Vestey Bros. holds several million acres of land in this State.

The Attorney General: If this Bill is passed, they cannot hold them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I believe the people of Western Australia are in accord with the policy of the Opposition when in office to block such firms as Vestey Bros.

The Premier: The Opposition has agreed to this clause.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They have not. I never saw the clause before this afternoon, and I am sorry now that I left the other evening in order to catch a train. I tried to do my duty in this House for several hours, but I realise now that I did wrong in leaving before Parliament had concluded the consideration of this important matter. I depended on the assurance that provision for the limitation of areas would be made. I want members behind the Ministry to bear in mind that we have in this State to-day men introduced here by the holders of large interests in the North-West who expressed the intention of removing their offices to America for the express purpose of avoiding war taxation to the British Empire. And yet we are here affording facilities to those very men to come here and take up two million acres of land.

Member: What is the name?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Vestey Bros. If I had my way and were in the position of a Minister to refuse, I would not let them have one acre of land. I would refuse transfers so far as Vestey Bros. are concerned.

The Minister for Works: Who granted them the land?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member knows perfectly well that these leases were granted many years ago, he knows that they do not fall in until 1928, and he knows also that those holding the leases have the right of transfer. I have it on very good authority that since we dealt with this Bill on the second reading Vestey Bros. have got in, and have secured some of the best leases in the North-West of this State.

The Attorney General: Do you want them cut down to one million acres?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I want them cut down by another million acres if I can manage it.

Mr. Foley: Will the Government under the Bill have power to cut down the areas when the renewals come around?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Under this clause they will be able to cut them down to two million acres only.

The Attorney General: Vestey Bros. cannot hold two million acres, but one million acres only, except jointly.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Is that not forcing on trust methods, compelling people to combine?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In regard to trusts which have sprung up in America, the Attorney General as a lawyer will realise the difficulties which have been faced in compelling the trusts to recognise their responsibilities and of compelling them to carry on their business in conformity with the law. I am satisfied that if those parties are allowed to enter here they will get around this legislation. I have no fault to find with the conference of members which sought to arrive at an equitable solution of the difficulties. No doubt that conference of members endeavoured to do what was thought to be best in the direction of preventing large areas being held.

Mr. Willmott: If there is anything in your argument, if the areas be cut down to 1,000 acres it will not have any more effect.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am opposed entirely to the pastoral leases being dealt with at the present juncture, but we were told that the Bill had to go through whether right or wrong. It is provided that the maximum area to be held in the same division by two or more persons jointly, or by any association of persons, shall not exceed two million acres. At the same time we have been told in the Press and in this House that the areas held by Connor, Doherty and Durack have been too large, and that those areas should have been divided up between a number of squatters. Did that firm hold two million acres? I think a million and a half was their total area and here now we propose to provide that a company shall hold even more than the area held by the firm I have named, and in regard to which the people were told it was

not possible to take any action until 1928. Unless we get more people to take up the lands in the northern part of our State we shall lose them altogether. By giving such large tracts of country we shall be doing an injury to the whole of Australia. Have we not been told that it is necessary to fill up the vacant spaces and that unless we do so some other power will step in and do it for us? I am pointing out the danger of granting such big areas of land, and when we propose to give two million acres we should have presented to us statistics showing the area held by each person, how the areas could be subdivided and information as to the value of the areas, and whether it will be possible to see that in the future we will be able to provide for the protection of this great continent. If this provision is passed no greater injustice will have been done to the future generations of Australia. Are we to do this injustice merely because it is expedient to bring in the Bill at this juncture?

Mr. Underwood: It is merely for financial reasons.

Hon. J. Scaddan: They are fearful of another Government coming in and not giving similar terms. The member for Gascoyne knows that better than anyone else.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No person knows better than the present Minister for Lands that if all the present leaseholders kept their leases until 1928 they would get a renewal of them just the same. A member who belongs to the Liberal party at the present time told me that he had spent some years in the North-West of this State and knew its requirements and disadvantages under which it had laboured for many years and he added that it would be a crying shame if the legislators to-day gave away the people's heritage in the North-West without making some provision to subdivide those large areas. Each area is almost a State in itself; yet the leaseholder need not live on that area. The member for Gascoyne admitted that there is in the North-West at least one station having not a white person on it. Fancy the American Meat Trust populating the North-West with white labour when they can get aborigines free of cost; aborigines who if they fall sick

will be looked after and tended by the Government. I have heard of a man working on a station under an agreement providing for medical attention if he should fall sick, yet when that man did actually become sick he was taken beyond the boundaries of the station, where the conditions of the agreement lapsed.

Mr. Butcher: Who did that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It has been done up there, and I understand legal proceedings were threatened in consequence. For years past we have been told that the areas held in the North were too large and that they should be reduced when the leases expired in 1928. It is our duty to see that the empty spaces of the State are filled up. When I was a Minister I assisted in bringing out more emigrants than had been brought out by any previous Government.

Mr. Butcher: Did you settle them in the North-West?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, for the reason that they would have to go back hundreds of miles from the coast to get any land at all. I hope the Government will reconsider the proposals in respect to these leases. Only a few weeks ago the British Parliament advised Australia to protect the meat-producing areas against the American Meat Trust.

Mr. Butcher: This will do it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. Only a few days ago Mr. Massey said that he would do everything possible to keep the meat trust out of New Zealand. Yet here the Government propose to give away our pastoral lands in immense tracts. The activities of Vestey Bros. in the North are only too well known. They have agents buying both cattle and land wherever possible.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It will be necessary, in view of the establishment of freezing works at Wyndham, that we should be able to reduce the size of the leases in that area, so that closer settlement around that centre may be brought about. It is our duty to limit the areas that may be taken up more than is proposed under this clause. The question is of such vital importance to

the people that I would not be surprised to see a later Parliament reverse altogether the decision of the present Parliament in regard to these leases. When the public realise that we have handed out at least a million acres to an individual in the north-west of this State, I am confident that they will demand that Parliament should rectify the gross injustice which has been done to them. I move an amendment on the Council's requested amendment—

That the word "two" in line 5 be struck out and "one" inserted in lieu.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It is desirable to agree to this amendment so as to be consistent. If we in one part of the Bill provide that the maximum area to be held by one person shall not exceed one million acres, and it should so happen that one person holds more than that amount, that individual will immediately transfer one million acres to some member of his family and so evade the law. Some doubt exists as to whether the clause will have the effect desired. According to the Press there was a serious omission from the clause as received from the Council; I refer to the word "laughter" which appeared to follow in that place. It is possible that members recognised that the amendment proposed by the Government would not have the desired effect, and that this laughter was the result of that belief. Except that we will have power to prevent the aggregation of large areas under the pastoral provisions of the Bill, I still think we would be more consistent if we limited the area to be held by one person to a million acres. So far we have not thoroughly understood the duty which devolves upon us as representatives of the people, legislating for about one-third of the continent so far as the North-West in particular is concerned. If we are going to hold Australia for white people, we have to provide by legislation that the North-West shall be held in small holdings, and not in large holdings. So long as we allow one person or a combination of persons to hold up to two million acres, we shall not have the North-West populated, although it may be stocked with cattle and sheep. Unless the State handles this problem in a satisfactory manner to the rest of Australia, the people of Australia will insist that the

control of the North-West should be removed from the State arena and placed under the control of the Federal authorities. We are doing nothing but provide that those who hold pastoral leases to-day in the North may continue to hold them for a further period of 30 years, or until 1928, under certain conditions. I do not think anyone will say that the provisions of the Bill are likely to be considered harsh so far as the pastoralists are concerned. I judge this by the undue haste with which these particular clauses were passed and this amendment, from which fact it appears that the reverse is the case. Will the hon. member for Roebourne say that the provisions of the Bill are not favourable to the pastoralists of the North?

Mr. Butcher: Not unduly favourable.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Are they favourable to the pastoralists of the North?

Mr. Butcher: Not so much as they are to the State.

Mr. Nairn: Would you like them to be unfavourable to the pastoralist?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I do not want them to be unduly unfavourable to the pastoralist. This amendment is only effective with new leases. Will the Attorney General answer this question: If Vestey Bros., who hold four and a quarter million acres in the north of this State, do not decide to come under the provisions of the Bill within twelve months, shall we be able to apply this clause?

The Attorney General: No, their leases cannot be renewed then.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The Attorney General knows that this statement is not entirely correct. The Attorney General knows full well that Vestey Bros. can hold their 4½ millions acres under existing conditions if they choose.

The Attorney General: Of course they can. Everybody in Western Australia knows that. Vestey Bros. or anybody else may do that. You may.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I take it that unless these clauses are favourable to Vestey Bros. they will not decide to come under them.

The Attorney General: Then they will not get their lease renewed.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The Attorney General cannot adopt that attitude.

The Attorney General: Why not?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Because the existing Act gives the right of renewal in 1928. The Attorney General can shake his head as much as he likes. This Bill does not repeal those provisions of the existing Act which give Vestey Bros. the right of renewal in 1928.

The Attorney General: If there were a right of renewal, there would be no occasion for this Bill. There is no right of renewal anywhere.

The Premier: Vestey Bros. have no claim on the State in 1928.

Mr. Butcher: They have a moral claim.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Will any hon. member suggest that the Government of this State will rob any man of his moral claim?

The Attorney General: You said the claim was under a section of the Act.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Any pastoralist who does not within 12 months come under the provisions of this measure will lose all his rights in 1928; is that the position?

The Attorney General: He loses his lease.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The lease is his rights.

The Attorney General: No; he has certain rights; he has improvements.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: That means nothing.

The Attorney General: It means a good deal. It is in the Act.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The pastoralist will lose his right to the leasehold.

The Attorney General: True.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: And yet we talk about the matter being optional. A leaseholder, then, must understand on the authority of the Attorney General speaking for the Government, that unless he comes under this measure within 12 months, he must, once and for all, go off his holding in 1928?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: If the Government adopt that attitude, they will adopt an absurd and silly attitude. No one in this community would suggest that the holder of a lease expiring in 1928, with a moral right of renewal in 1928 for a further term, is to be robbed of that right because he does not choose to come under some new provision now.

The Attorney General: He cannot be robbed. His lease ceases.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I have heard that before. Does not the same thing apply to licensed premises?

The Attorney General: Exactly. At the end of his lease the lessee must go out.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The pastoralist, then, will be compelled to accept altered conditions—different rents, different provisions altogether—for the balance of 11 years of his existing lease?

The Attorney General: What have you in your mind?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Possibly eight or nine million acres were taken up last year. The leases for that area expire in 1928; and yet, 12 months after their being taken up with the intention of improving them and using them until 1928, the lessees are to be told that they will have no right of renewal for a further term unless they agree to be subject to fresh conditions imposed by the Government, not after, but before, the term expires.

The Premier: Are you supporting one million acres or two million acres?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I support one million acres, as I said at the outset.

The Attorney General: You speak as if you were supporting Vestey Bros.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The Attorney General may be clever in interpreting what I appear to be doing. If he is as far wrong in his interpretation of the clause as in his interpretation of my attitude, this measure will not attain the ends we are aiming at.

The Attorney General: You draft a better clause, then.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I am not the Attorney General. Will this amendment, in the opinion of the Attorney General, have the effect we desire?

The Attorney General: I believe it will.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: That is not very definite.

The Attorney General: We are none of us infallible.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Have I the assurance of the Attorney General that the effect will be what is intended?

The Attorney General: Yes.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: If we cannot get anything better than this clause, we must

accept this clause, and trust to Providence and the law courts for the protection of the State. The inroads of the American meat trust on Australia, however, are not a matter in the air, but something actually existing, something that has been appreciated for several years in certain Eastern States and also in New Zealand. It is a matter of concern, not only to the consumer of meat, but also to the Northern pastoralist, who may find himself squeezed out by the American meat trust. The operations of the trust have absolutely crippled the production of stock in America. Will this clause bar out the meat trust? It will not, if Vestey Bros. like to sit down until 1928. Until that term expires they can increase their four million acres to nine million if they please, and then let things go hang in 1928. We do not know what will happen by 1928.

The Premier: During all your time the area was unlimited.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I do not know that there is anything to prevent us from amending existing legislation so as to prevent the further aggregation of pastoral leases. We can pass a law preventing Vestey Bros. from taking up any additional area.

Mr. Butcher: We cannot prevent them from buying additional leases.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I think we can. We could prevent the transfer of existing holdings.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The Minister can refuse any transfer.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: That is what I am coming at.

Mr. Foley: I intend to move an amendment to that effect.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The Council's amendment goes back on a previous decision of this House. We fixed a maximum of one million acres, whereas the Council propose to allow a combination to hold up to two million acres. That is being done today. It can be done in connection with conditional purchase holdings, and similarly in connection with pastoral leases. The holder of one million acres can get his wife to hold another million. This is not the proper method for dealing with the North. I want to see the North stocked with cattle; but, above all, I want, for the sake of the safety of Australia, to see the North

populated. Since the pastoral leases do not expire until 1928, there is no occasion to rush this matter.

The Attorney General: It is not being rushed.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Undoubtedly it is. Even the supporters of the Government in another place say it is being rushed.

The Attorney General: They have had all the time they wanted.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: That is absurd. A matter of this nature cannot be thoroughly understood or adequately dealt with by either Chamber unless the people affected have had an opportunity of seeing the provisions and discussing them publicly, and informing Parliament how the conditions will affect them. How many of the people of the North know the provisions contained in this Bill?

The Minister for Works: Every one of them.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I am now getting information. We are told that men out-back 150, and even 200, miles from the coast line, distant a fortnight's journey from a port and not in touch with rapid communications, know the provisions of this Bill.

Mr. Butcher: According to statements from your side of the House, the people up there are only managers.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: There we have another admission, that those in the North are managers and that the only persons really interested are those who live in Perth and do not worry about the North except to draw pounds, shillings, and pence. I ask the member for Gascoyne how it comes about the people in the North have been able to obtain information regarding this Bill and have had time to digest it seeing that the members of this House have not.

Mr. Butcher: They have had the Bill, the same as members of this House.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: We know that members of the Pastoralists' Association are objecting to amendment of this Bill, they wish it rushed through before too much is known about its provisions.

The Attorney General: I want to keep Vestey Bros. down as much as you do.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: With me it is not a question of keeping Vestey Bros. down, but of keeping the State up. I am not so much concerned about Vestey Bros. as I am about the interests of the State, the Commonwealth and the Empire. Our northern areas must be populated, and they will never be populated so long as we permit men to hold millions of acres along our water courses.

The Attorney General: Do you wish to withdraw all you have said about Vestey Bros.?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I have not said a word about Vestey Bros. I am speaking on the question of permitting people to hold large parcels of land in the North and I say that this amendment plainly invites them to do so.

The Attorney General: What would you put in the clause?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I would limit it to one million acres, to be consistent. I do not care whether one or twenty persons are concerned.

The Attorney General: Why did you not say that when the amendment was submitted to you?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It was never submitted to me.

The Attorney General: It was submitted to the members for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson), Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), and Leonora (Mr. Foley) and it was approved by them: and I understood also by you.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: This is a most astounding position in which I now find myself, merely because two or three members of this House confer—

The Attorney General: The whole of the members conferred.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I claim I am still a member of this House, and I say I did not confer. I want the Committee to be consistent and, if this clause is necessary to prevent the aggregation of large holdings in the North or elsewhere, to decide, as has already been decided, to restrict any holding to one million acres. Personally, I would go further and would be prepared to support an amendment which I understand the member for Leonora intends

moving, that no transfer of existing leases be permitted except with the consent of the Minister, who may approve or refuse in his own discretion. I warn the Committee that if Vestey Bros. get in in Australia they will be very hard to beat, and they will be prepared to take the risk of going on until 1928 in the hope of being able before then to change the political atmosphere of this State. And I would point out this, that even if the maximum be limited to one million acres, one lessee holding in a favoured spot would be practically holding up 10 million acres of country because the holding of the water supply would mean the exclusion of others.

The Attorney General: That aspect is provided for in Subclause 2

Hon. J. SCADDAN: That applies only to new leases. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Butcher) will admit that there are large holdings in favoured spots in the North, and I assert that until those large holdings can be subdivided by some means, they will retard settlement. It is well known that Connor, Doherty, & Durack held the position in Kimberley in their own hands by holding the land in favoured spots around Wyndham. I must accept the amendment by another place; but I suggest to the Minister that he consider the advisability of formulating some machinery as quickly as possible which will give the Minister that control of our pastoral country in the North which is essential in the interests of the State. I would even go to the length of providing for compulsory resumptions, with compensation if necessary, in order to settle those lands in a manner beneficial to the State. We know that the holders of many large areas reside in Perth, maintaining only one or two white men on their stations as boundary riders or in looking after the work of the blacks. Yet those are the very people who complain about the White Australia policy, urging that the black race requires to be employed and that this is employment suitable to them and not to white men. Yet so soon as a Japanese doctor came amongst them they immediately despatched a protest to the late Government against the Government recognising him or permitting him to practice. It was an entirely different

proposition when a labourer or artisan was being competed against to what it was when professional men were subjected to competition by a member of a coloured race. And some of those people who sent that protest were themselves employing Japanese as servants. I want to draw attention to the fact that the North has to be populated as well as stocked and we too frequently lose sight of the necessity for populating in the desire to stock the North. It would be better to compel a pastoralist to keep 20 white men employed on his holding when he would be obliged to keep his holding well stocked. We are proceeding with so much indecent haste that we are neglecting the opportunity of doing a duty not only to ourselves but to the Commonwealth to give proper appreciation to the responsibilities of the white race. We will not do that by stocking the North with cattle. They cannot fight, but they are an inducement for people to come along and take them from us. In the existing conditions most of the large areas in the North employ only one or two white men.

The Attorney General: How much white population have the Commonwealth put into the Northern Territory since it has had charge of it?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: That will not help us. Because Queensland has allowed the meat trust to go into that State, is it any reason why we should allow it to come into Western Australia?

The Attorney General: What white population did you put into the North during the time you were in power?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: We recognise that something must be done by Parliament to meet the position which will arise in 1928. We proposed a certain course of action and that was to obtain all the information which was essential to enable members to arrive at a proper conclusion. The present Government have merely sat down and taken the Land Act, and then the Treasurer, recognising that he was in need of revenue, said, "How can we get more revenue out of that part of the State?" It is not revenue alone that we want. The whole of the North is capable of being peopled if we tackle the problem. We know nothing about the North.

Mr. Butcher: I know you don't.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The only thing I do know is that the conditions in the North are not satisfactory from an Australian point of view. I want to see Australia progress and with it the British Empire, but, unfortunately, we here are viewing the position through a pair of spectacles with Western Australia written across them.

Mr. Nairn: Is there anything in these clauses to prevent settlement in the North-West?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Is there anything in the Bill that will assist in the settlement of the North?

Mr. Nairn: Answer my question and I will answer yours.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Suppose I admit the hon. member's statement. Let me ask him if there is anything in the Bill to assist the settlement of the North.

Mr. Nairn: I believe there is.

The Attorney General: Certainly, security of tenure.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I venture the statement that in the next five years the Attorney General will not be able to produce a record of area taken up under leasehold provisions in the North, which will compare with the last five years, and that was before they had any idea about security of tenure. I have already asserted that there are pastoralists in the North who do not employ more than five or six white men, while many of them only employ one or two. There are five or six white men on Vestey Bros.' four and a half million acre holding.

The Attorney General: How do you know?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I honestly believe it.

The Attorney General: You can only believe a thing from evidence or knowledge, and you have neither.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Does the Attorney General believe this clause to be effective from the knowledge he possesses?

The Attorney General: By logical argument. But how do you know there are only five men on Vestey Bros.' station?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Does the hon. member deny it?

The Attorney General: I do not know anything about it.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Then the hon. member should keep quiet and allow himself to be told.

The Attorney General: I am not going to be told by you. I would accept the statement if it came from the member for Pilbara, because he does know something about stations. It is more than likely there are 60 on that station.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: If the Attorney General will not take my word as to the number of men there, will he assert that he is satisfied with the present population of the North?

The Attorney General: I have nothing to do with it.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: What an admission to make! The Government are pushing through a Bill of this nature and the Attorney General remarks he has nothing to do with it. I am urging that if we want to solve the problem of the North we will not solve it by making stocking provisions.

The Attorney General: Why did you not suggest all this when the Bill was before the House?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I have made these suggestions times out of number. The North has to be considered from other standpoints than those of producing cattle and sheep. The tropical lands of the North can be used as they are used in other parts of the world. Because of their suitability for other purposes, as for instance, tropical cultivation, certain parts of the North ought to be withheld from pastoral leasing.

Mr. Butcher: They can always be resumed if required.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I do not think they can.

The Minister for Lands: Of course they can.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: At all events I emphasise the danger of introducing the meat trust into Western Australia. We shall have those people overrunning the pastoral areas of the North. The maximum lease ought to be a million acres or less.

The Minister for Railways: There is no limit at all to-day.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: We should have complete information in regard to these leases before we agree to the provisions in the Bill. It will be useless to furnish us with all the information after the Bill is passed.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: When first the Bill was introduced I regarded it as the most important we had had for many years, yet it was discussed in its various stages in a House of empty benches. I still say it was not fair to introduce a Bill like this at the end of the session.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must deal with the amendment, and not the Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Well, we have just had a second reading speech extending over about two hours, so I suppose it will be as well to come to the amendment. The amendment represents a compromise. If that compromise had not been arrived at the Bill would probably have passed as printed. I am opposed to the Bill in toto, but as my efforts to defeat it have failed, I would now like to improve it. I admit that I deliberately stonewalled the Bill in order that some reasonableness might be introduced into the Chamber, and am glad to say that whilst we talked other hon. members were outside trying to arrive at a compromise.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We did not know you were stonewalling.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Whilst we were opposed to the Bill and the compromise we entered into it in the hope of getting some reform in the Bill. We did this because of the want of sympathy found in the attitude adopted by hon. members, and only at the eleventh hour members have awakened to what is being done. I do not want to increase the area beyond one million acres, and on the other hand do not want to break the compact which has been arrived at. We now have an hon. member moving an amendment which either causes us to be misrepresented by supporting it or to break the compact which was entered into. If the Attorney General keeps me to that compact I will abide by it, but if the question is left an open one I will support the amendment because it is in accordance with my previous convictions.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There was not much compact about the Bill. In fact no compact was arrived at. The member for Pilbarra and the member for Leonora got their way in respect to certain clauses, and secured certain amendments, mainly because I agreed with them and also because Ministers subsequently agreed. All hon. members interested in the pastoral clauses were asked to listen to what was being arranged. An understanding was arrived at that the Bill should be put through in its altered form and that was done. The only portion of the Bill left which it was impossible to draft that night was in regard to the clauses restricting the area of leases which might be held by several persons or companies. I undertook that a clause embodying the opinions of hon. members who took part in the arrangement, as far as I could gauge exactly what was intended, should be introduced in another place. On the following day the member for Pilbarra and the member for Leonora came to the Attorney General's office, and with myself and the Parliamentary draftsman prepared clauses which seemed to us, not only to embody our own ideas, but those of each member who had spoken, with the object of restricting the accumulation of acres and acres of ground and the extension of such firms as Vestey Bros.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What about the two millions? It represents a State.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I regret the hon. member was not here when the arrangements were made. It was not a party clause that was drawn up, and I did not insist on how it should be done.

Mr. Green: That is the first we have heard of it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Why was not the hon. member in his place at the time? An open invitation was extended to all hon. members interested to come into my room and hear what was being said. This clause is an honest attempt on the part of the two hon. members I have mentioned and myself to draw up something in the shape of words which would prevent the conglomeration of leases, the acting together of persons, the joining of companies, and so on. We have endeavoured in a large number of ways to attack that aspect of

the question. When dealing with associations of person one method of attack must be to limit the amount of land held. If one person holds a million acres, and that was conceded, surely when we come to two or more persons jointly, or an association of persons, holding land we must assume that they will hold more than one million acres. This amendment is to prevent those persons who hold this area from getting any more, and from putting a manger in to run the whole lot together. It was a question of what area should be named, and two million acres were named so that possibly two sets might act together, but no more. The hon. members who drafted the clause had in mind that it was alleged that Vestey Bros. had somewhere about four and a half million acres.

The Minister for Lands: I said about eight million acres.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The area does not matter. We honestly came to the conclusion that no combination of firms should own more than two million acres, and this clause seems to express that. When that was set forward the following day in this tight form copies were distributed to these same hon. members before I handed it to the Minister in charge of the Bill in another place, and it was approved by those hon. gentlemen. I asked if they could suggest anything further. I would be willing now, if any words could be used to make that more stringent than it is, to adopt such words.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Strike out the word "two" and put in the word "one."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The two million acres was never discussed. That was accepted as a fair thing. Hon. members must know that there is more than one pastoralist in the North who has an area exceeding that. It would act hardly upon these pastoralists. I do not suggest any extension to these persons. They cannot hold on combination more than two million and will, therefore, have to get rid of the remainder of their holdings or their leases will not be renewed. Exception has been taken on the question of the time fixed. Parliament, however, is supreme in the matter. If it is found that the 12 months works a hardship Parliament can extend the term to

any period which is deemed in its wisdom desirable.

Mr. Munsie: It will be extended to 10 years for a certainty.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That would not have my vote at any rate. I am informed that the pastoralists are satisfied with one year. Those who do not make application to come under the Bill within that time will have to take their chance afterwards. These pastoralists will not be placed in a better position than those who elect to come under the Bill. I cannot contemplate any Government giving terms to pastoralists at a later stage which would be less harsh than these are. The mere fact of members meeting together as a special committee to consider special provisions of the Bill and arriving at an understanding should be sufficient to show that the results express the views of the hon. members concerned.

Mr. Munsie: The member for Pilbarra distinctly stated that there was no necessity for the Bill this session. You have not complied with that, have you?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The same argument might be used next session or at some subsequent session. I believe the member for Hannans will always use the same argument, and that he would give no one any lease or property whatever.

Mr. Munsie: I believe in the State holding the land.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I commend to members of this Committee, and especially to those who were present during the all night sitting when such an amount of good fellowship was shown between members on both sides, that they should stick to the amendment which was the outcome of their action, and support the motion.

Mr. FOLEY: When this measure was first discussed, the question of the proper time for bringing it forward was debated. With other members, I held the opinion that the time was not opportune. That view was based on two proposals of the Bill—the proposal to convert leasehold town blocks into freehold, and the proposal for extension of pastoral leases. What the Council's amendment proposes was suggested by several members of this House on the second reading. Had hon. members who have to-night spoken on this question dis-

played the same energy during the earlier stages of the Bill, the hands of the Government might have been forced to grant something that we have not secured so far. The Council's amendment is the outcome of a consultation between the member for Pilbarra and myself and the Attorney General. If one cannot get everything, it is just as well to get something. We knew that on the clause the numbers were against us. The Council's amendment represents the best we can get. I am as strongly opposed to monopolies as any man in this Chamber or outside it. The leader of the Opposition said the ultimate effect of the Council's amendment might be the handing over of our North to the Commonwealth Government. But have we any security that the Commonwealth Government will not allow monopolies to come in? The Commonwealth Government gave Vestey Bros. about eight million acres in the Northern Territory. We have provided that the largest area of pastoral land to be held by any one individual shall be one million acres and the amendment clearly lays down that the largest area any company, or any combination of companies or of individuals, can hold shall be two million acres. Moreover, there is the declaration as to beneficial interest in any other pastoral lease or holding. These facts dispose of the arguments of the member for Coolgardie. Personally, I consider one million acres should be large enough for all purposes.

The Attorney General: Why did you not suggest one million acres the other night?

Mr. FOLEY: There were a number of suggestions to be considered then, and every point could not be brought forward at that hour of the night. Had the case been put to me then, I would have recognised the necessity for the provision which I intend to move later. I am satisfied, however, that under the amendment no two or four or eight companies in combination could hold more than two million acres. Companies are specially forbidden to operate in unison. The danger lies, not in the area of land which may be held, but in the fact that at the present time the Minister has not the power to withhold transfers. We lost sight of the possibility of other men taking up pastoral country and transferring it to Ves-

tey Bros. Even under this clause there is no absolute certainty that that will not take place; and I intend to move an amendment to obviate the danger.

The Minister for Lands: The Minister has the necessary power already.

Mr. FOLEY: I cannot find it in the Land Act.

The Minister for Lands: Under Section 144.

Mr. FOLEY: I did not think that section gave the necessary power. In my opinion, the Minister would be well advised to accept, even at this late stage, a maximum of one million acres. However, there is the safeguard that the appraisers will not let those pastoralists who have picked out the eyes of the north continue to hold their areas at present rentals. The Bill fixes no maximum rent. When the appraisers have done their work, the pastoralists can pay to the State what the appraisers consider fair, or else leave their holdings.

Mr. TROY: I shall support the amendment. I do not think hon. members fully appreciate the position when it is proposed to allow any person to take up two million acres of land. When we realise the progress made in agricultural development in this State during the past 10 years, and looking forward to the probable progress in the next 30 years, it must be realised that much is likely to happen in the pastoral industry in that time. I am somewhat surprised at the action of another place in raising the maximum from one to two million acres after the protest which was raised against passing this hasty legislation at all. Unless the Committee is careful, we shall be giving away the heritage, not only of this or the next generation, but of future generations. The member for Roebourne claims that the people have been consulted on this Bill. I say the people have not been consulted, that they know nothing about the Bill, and have never been given an opportunity of understanding it. I want to see that the pastoralist is given every encouragement, and that he has sufficient land to carry on his occupation with advantage to the country; but I consider two million acres much too large an area to hand over to any individual pastoralist, particularly when it is remembered that those two million acres will be held for a

period of 30 years without possibility of resumption, except for absolute failure to comply with the conditions. I urge the Minister to accept this amendment, which is most reasonable, and not to accept the amendment made by another place, which first pretended indignation and then passed the Bill, adding a condition which makes the Bill unacceptable to the people of the country. I want to repudiate any suggestion that I was a party to a measure of this character, and I cannot believe that any members on this side were a party. I would ask the member for Roebourne whether he does not agree that a man could make a fortune on a million acres, or even half a million acres, and could make big money on 100,000 acres even.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): It depends on the quality of the land. How would a hundred-thousand-acre man get through in times of drought? He would have no reserve at all.

Mr. TROY: I know a man on 30,000 acres, who came through the last and previous droughts, and who never at any time made less than £700 a year. The member for Leonora suggests that the appraisers would overcome this difficulty by raising the rental. But if the rental be so raised that one pastoralist cannot pay it, how can it be expected that another pastoralist can? The appraisers can only fix the rent at a fair value. I hope the Government will not refuse to accept the amendment proposed to the Committee.

Mr. BUTCHER: At the last sitting of this House a compact was made, after strenuous opposition on the Opposition side and after the House had discussed the matter for many hours, and it was agreed then that the limit should be one million acres of pastoral land to each individual, and for a combination of individuals, interested either directly or indirectly, the holdings should not exceed a maximum of two million acres. I think that was a fair compromise. To limit the maximum to a million acres in any one division would be inconsistent, in view of the differing value and carrying capacity in the various districts. While one million acres might be quite sufficient in one division, that area might be totally insufficient in another. Therefore, I think we should

leave it to the discretion of the Minister. I mean to stand by the compromise arrived at the other evening. The member for Guildford has pleaded for further time to consider this matter. I protest against members crying out against the Government for allegedly attempting to force a matter through this House. Once a Bill is introduced here, it cannot be forced through except by the will of members. Personally, I would never permit any measure to pass through this House hastily whether it was introduced by a Government I am supporting or one to which I am in opposition. It is idle for any member to say we have not time to discuss the matter. If we cannot discuss it to-night, we can do so to-morrow or next week. Hon. members have dealt with a suggestion that this country should be cut up into small areas. My memory takes me back many years, and I can recall instances where men started on small areas and, with very few exceptions, failed because those areas were not large enough. It is ridiculous for hon. members to quote Queensland and the areas in that State, and compare them with the carrying conditions of the land in Western Australia. In Queensland they are not subject to long droughts similar to those which occur in this State. If any hon. member thinks he can make a living on 1,000 or even 10,000 acres there is plenty of land he can take up within reasonable distance of a railway or the coast. Some hon. members have dealt with the question of pastoralists holding river frontages, and no other land being taken up. The river frontage is of no advantage as compared with the back country. It might have been of advantage in the early days when we had no opportunities of sinking for water, but now when it is possible to put down artesian bores and get a supply of water, we find that the back country is better than that which has a river frontage. The river frontage business is a great bogey; there is nothing at all in it. I am with hon. members who desire to prevent any combine or trust which is likely to militate against the interests of the people of the State appearing on the scene, and anything that can be done to prevent a firm like Vestey Bros. getting hold of an unduly large area of land will receive my support.

But I do not want to prevent the legitimate development of our pastoral areas, and that is what will happen if the amendment is carried. The present leaseholders in Western Australia, those with leases well developed and partly developed, do not occupy the whole of the pastoral areas of the State by a long way. We have pastoral lands which at present are waste areas, and which we want people to take up and settle. Those areas are as good as any which are at present occupied, and we want to encourage settlement on them. The leader of the Opposition dealt at considerable length with the question of the settlement of the North-West by white people. Let me tell hon. members that it never will occur in the history of Australia that the northern portions of this continent will be settled by a white population, and I am not afraid to say that.

Mr. Carpenter: They said the same thing about Queensland.

Mr. BUTCHER: The hon. member has never lived in the far North. I have lived there for a considerable time, and I know that it is absolutely impossible for any white man to live and work in that country, and it is still more impossible for any woman to live there and bear children. If we are going to ask white men to live there without their wives, we are asking them to do something which amounts to an unnatural state of affairs. If hon. members talk about developing the northern country by white labour, they talk about something they know nothing at all of. The far North can only be worked by coloured labour, and if hon. members want to introduce the strictest conditions by which the coloured population will have no right of citizenship, let them do so.

Mr. Green: So long as they are cheap.

Mr. BUTCHER: I do not care whether they are cheap or dear.

Mr. Foley: The white shearers stand it pretty well.

Mr. BUTCHER: They are in the North for only a few months of the year, and those months are the coolest period. But that is not the broad question. The broad question is settling that part of the country with white people, and to do that we must have womenfolk and children there,

without whom it will be impossible to expect white men to live there.

Mr. Munsie: Does the hon. member assert that it is not possible for a white woman to rear a family at Roebourne or Ouslow?

Mr. BUTCHER: It is possible for a woman to live in that part of the State as far as Marble Bar, but beyond there it is impossible, and the hon. member is not one who would take any womankind there to live with him, that is, if he had the pluck to go there himself. I apologise for having digressed. With regard to the leases, at their expiration in 1928, if the present lessees do not feel disposed to come under the clause of the Bill, it is obvious they will have no rights at all. At the expiration of the lease they will be entirely in the hands of the Government of the day, and it is idle for hon. members to say that the pastoralists will not come in under this Bill. I say that they will, and that they will take the first opportunity of doing so.

Mr. Munsie: Do you think there is no possibility of getting an extension of the time under which they can come in?

Mr. BUTCHER: I hope not. If they cannot make up their minds in twelve months I hope no alteration will be made. The Committee should agree to the compact entered into, and which to my mind was fair and calculated to do the very best towards the development of the pastoral areas. It is idle for members to say that we are locking up pastoral areas for this undue length of time. We are not doing anything of the kind. It would be unfair to take an area from a man and give it to another man for the same purpose, but if it is required for horticultural or for tropical culture, the right to take it exists at the present time.

Mr. Troy: Can an area be taken for leasing purposes?

Mr. BUTCHER: Would any Government be justified in taking it from one person to give it to another for the same purpose? There is a moral obligation to allow the existing lessee to continually use it for the purpose for which he originally took it up.

Mr. Troy: It could be leased in smaller areas.

Mr. BUTCHER: The hon. member would create a community of individuals just as has been done in the agricultural areas. We know the condition of things in the agricultural areas through forcing settlement in small blocks, in which intelligent men could not make a living. Why is it that we have 700 or 800 farms thrown back on the State. Does the hon. member wish to create a similar state of affairs in the pastoral areas?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you call a million acres a small area?

Mr. BUTCHER: It is a fair area. I would not allow more than a million acres for any partnership or syndicate, no matter how many it might contain. I hope hon. members will adhere to the compact made the other night.

Mr. MUNSIE: I support the amendment. I take no responsibility for any compact entered into. Even with the amendment, the Bill would not be palatable to the people of the State. The Bill should not have been introduced until after the elections. Unless the amendment is agreed to it will be possible for one man to own both the Minderoo and Globe Hill stations. Those two stations, aggregating nearly one and three-quarter million acres, employ but one white man between them, that is to say, one white man is employed at Minderoo and none at all at Globe Hill. What we want in our pastoral country is, not stock alone, but people also. I protest against the possibility of two million acres being handed over to a man and his wife for 30 years.

Mr. Butcher: Any part of it could be resumed to-morrow.

Mr. MUNSIE: I cannot find that provision in the Land Act. It is only for purposes other than pastoral that a pastoral lease may be resumed, and of course we know that all that country is pastoral, and good for only pastoral purposes. Minderoo and Globe Hill could carry at least 20 families, who would make handsome profits on their smaller holdings. If it was made known that those two stations were to be subdivided on the expiry of the present leases, there would be 500 applications for the

smaller holdings. To-day there is only one white man on the two stations.

Mr. Butcher: That is not true.

Mr. MUNSIE: When I was up there it was true; there was but one white man on Minderoo, and none at all on Globe Hill. Is it desirable that that state of affairs should be perpetuated until 1948? People who are holding leases close to the seaboard are those who employ no one but niggers. Those who are in the back country employ a reasonable number of white men year in and year out. There are portions of the North-West where a million acres is not too large an area to hold as a pastoral lease. I know of one pastoral lessee who said he would gladly give up all his improvements and all his lease for one-third of the Minderoo station. I am sorry that hon. members did not realise what they were doing in regard to this Bill. It is robbing the future generation of Western Australia to place a Bill of this kind without any information concerning it upon the statute-book. The *West Australian* has pointed out that there is more stock in the State than is necessary to comply with the stocking conditions contained in the measure. I appeal to hon. members to accept the amendment. Even then we shall be giving the pastoralist four times more than they are entitled to in the interests of the people of the State.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We passed through Committee a Bill to provide that the maximum area to be held on pastoral leases should be one million acres. Under that provision there was nothing to prevent an association of people acting together from securing perhaps 10 million acres of land.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There was a condition that a clause was to be put in in that regard.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think that the amendment of the Legislative Council improved the measure and the area to be held is now limited. This is really a new provision because it minimises the amount of land which can be held by one individual. In South Australia there is absolutely no limit to the area which the pastoralist can hold. In Queensland where the carrying capacity of the land is for the most part greater than it is here, leases of

over two million acres were granted in certain cases to individuals.

Mr. Troy: When does the Queensland legislation expire?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think it was only passed in 1928. Where the pastoralist now takes up land and has only a tenure of some 10 years he has no time in which to improve the property and no guarantee that he will be recouped for his expenditure. It takes at least 10 years before a pastoral lease will recoup the owner for his initial expenditure and give him an income from it. We should, therefore, give some security to pastoral lessees who are likely to desire to take up land now. Many people are deterred from taking up leases at the present time. Those who hold leases now should have some security of tenure and some prospect of having their leases renewed after 1928. Although we know that at present pastoral lessees are making perhaps considerable amounts of money, time was, not long ago, when the pastoral lessees of the North had, in vulgar phraseology, not a feather to fly with. Although I have never been a pastoralist in the North, I know that 25 years ago most of the pastoralists there were so heavily involved as to be compelled to clear off their holdings. It was only pluck that enabled some of them to hold on; and, by doing so, they have reaped benefits of late. Our northern pastoralists have had a hard row to hoe, and they deserve all they have got. In discussing the Council's amendment hon. members have suggested that we are sacrificing the interests of future generations. It has been suggested, too, that a lessee can transfer his lease to anyone. That is not so. The approval of the Minister for Lands is necessary before a transfer can be completed. In the past, when the area of land available was practically unlimited, the Minister had no reason to refuse his approval of transfers. But now, if this Bill passes, the Minister, before granting approval of a transfer, would have to satisfy himself that the proposed transferee has not already one million acres, and that the transfer will not cause him to hold more than that maximum.

Mr. Foley: But under the present law the Minister must make out a case to the Regis-

trar of Titles for refusing approval of a transfer.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; that is not necessary. Future transfers will more especially be governed by the provisions of this Bill, if it passes. There are associations or corporate bodies with large funds at their disposal for taking up country; and I think such associations or corporations are wanted to develop our North. The stocking clauses of the Bill demand the carriage of treble the amount of stock now required. The existing Act imposes no improvement conditions, while this Bill does. We do not wish people to hold up country; we wish them to improve it and stock it. As regards the birthright of posterity, I dare say that argument has been used in connection with all Bills for the granting of pastoral leases. Nothing, however, has so far arisen to point to these lands being required for any other purpose than the feeding of stock, or to their being capable of use for any other purpose. In the tropical country, I believe, very much might be done in the way of growing certain products; and I hope the time will come when that will be done. The Drysdale mission station is now making experiments in that direction. The existing Act, however, does not provide for the leasing of land for other than pastoral purposes. Leases are granted under Schedule 34, which provides numerous reasons for which pastoral lands can be resumed. Finally, the lease instrument provides that pastoral lands may be resumed for the purpose of facilitating or improving in any way the settlement of the State.

Mr. Troy: But not for leasing again.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think it would be a fair thing to take a lease from one man and hand it over to another man to be used for exactly the same purpose.

Mr. Troy: Then, why do you resume agricultural areas to be used for the same purpose—agriculture?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is done under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act. If this Bill provided for the purchase of pastoral lands, it could be done in connection with them. Under the existing law, the Government can resume an area for tropical agriculture, if they think it advisa-

ble. One hundred thousand acres have been resumed out of Mr. Burt's pastoral lease on the Gascoyne. The Government resumed a large area of land on that occasion, and nothing has been done with it since. I hope members will agree to this amendment, which is an improvement on the Bill as it left this House.

Mr. TROY: The Minister has told us that the Queensland law provides for large areas.

The Minister for Lands: What I said was that there were leases granted in Queensland for larger areas than two million acres.

Mr. TROY: Part 3 of the Queensland Act provides that the Minister, with the approval of the Governor-in-Council, may declare any Crown land open for pastoral lease, that the term of any lease shall not exceed 30 years; but in no case is the lease granted for 30 years, but in terms on a ten years basis. It is further provided that when the term of a lease does not exceed ten years, the conditions shall be for a like period. It is also provided that there shall be power to resume, not as here with compensation, but without compensation. The second schedule to the Act sets out specifically the grounds upon which leases may be resumed. Why did not the Minister tell the Committee that?

The Minister for Lands: All of them are liable to resumption. I gave that information to the Committee, but the hon. member was absent.

Mr. TROY: I beg the Minister's pardon; it is true I was absent at the time. The Bill was passed in 1910, and it provided that within two years one-fourth of the area of a lease might be resumed, and that if further resumption had not taken place by the end of 1918, one-fourth of the remaining portion of the lease might be resumed. One would imagine that the present Government would have been guided by the legislation of a Liberal Government in Queensland. I join with the Minister in his admiration of those who have pioneered this part of the State. I realise their sacrifices and difficulties, and would not advocate resumption without compensation. But the children now growing up, and who will reach man's estate before 30 years, will demand access to

these lands, and they should not be denied, as they will be if this addition is made to the Bill. Reference has already been made to the increase in recent years in pastoral settlement, due to a better understanding of its possibilities. Members would be justified in remaining here a fortnight protesting against the legislation embodied in the amendment of another place. I am prepared to fight to the bitter end that the maximum shall be limited to a million acres.

Mr. BUTCHER: What is proposed shall be done with those lessees who at present hold more than a million acres, and who desire to come under this Bill? Is it intended that there shall be taken away portions of their holdings on which probably large sums have been expended in improvements? I have in mind one such settler, Mr. R. E. Bush, who is an example to Western Australia and to the whole of Australia. Yet members opposite would drive such men out of the country, and deprive them of the result of the hard work of years. If it were proposed that the amendment should apply to future leases, no one would be harmed. I trust the hon. member will not press his amendment.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The arguments just put forward afford a stronger reason for the amendment. Those supporting the amendment have no desire to drive anyone out of the country, but merely to protect the interests of the State. The hon. member's argument in support of a maximum of two million acres is the very argument which might be used for fixing the maximum at one million, for he has told us of the very large areas leased formerly at a time when there was no competition. Regarding agricultural lands, the State has been forced to repurchase large areas at a cost of hundreds of thousands of pounds, and quite recently legislation has had to be introduced to relieve those who have taken up that land from the payments on account of the high prices the Government had to pay for the estates. The Government have realised in years gone by that the areas taken up were too large. The Minister has not been able to give us any information about the existing pastoral leases as to whether they could be subdivided or not. We do not desire to take away from Mr. Bush what he has, but

if it is in the interests of the State that the land should be subdivided some system of subdivision should be adopted, as has been adopted in connection with large holdings for agricultural settlement. Under this amendment my family, which is not a large one, could hold six million acres of land, so long as it could be proved that I had no financial interest in it. It was previously understood that a clause would be inserted to protect the State against trusts, and I further understood that, while it was the intention of Parliament to give those people with leases security of tenure, at the same time their holdings could have been considered by Parliament from day to day, and the renewal of the leases would have been subject to conditions which Parliament might have set out. Is it not advisable to accept a million acres until we can get the information that the House is entitled to have. After due investigation has been made into the leases, the Minister could say that he had gone into the question and shown in some cases that it was necessary to have over a million acres, and he could then ask the House to agree to increase some of the areas and reduce others. I hope the Minister will agree to reduce the area to one million acres.

Mr. GREEN: I trust the Minister will not delay the House any longer and that he will accept the amendment proposed by this side of the House. The Bill has been brought in to help to people the North, and yet we propose to give away to about 20 men in the Kimberleys areas which will be almost as large as Victoria. A proposal of that kind will keep the country sparsely populated. I have been in Kimberley twice and quite long enough to convince me that white people can live there and work.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): How far did you go away from the ship?

Mr. GREEN: I was on the coastline at Wyndham and operations were being conducted at the freezing works right throughout the summer.

Mr. Butcher: How many hours a day did they work?

Mr. GREEN: Eight hours. The old proper element told these people that it would be impossible to work at Wyndham

during the summer months. We were told that white labour could not work in the sugar fields of Queensland. We were also told that the Panama canal could not be built by white labour, but the backbone of the construction of that canal was not Jamaican labour, but labour with a white skin brought from Spain.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): What about the million acres?

Mr. GREEN: What I am saying has a close relevancy to the fact that a million acres is sufficient for any squatter. Under the proposals of the Government 20 men could occupy the whole of the Kimberleys. The granting of more than one million acres to a squatter is not going to people this country, and is indeed unnecessary. I hope the Minister will see his way clear to accept the amendment of the member for North-East Fremantle.

Mr. LAMBERT: No one has greater sympathy for the pioneers of any industry than have I. The member for Roebourne must know that a million acres of pastoral lease is quite enough for any squatter. The greater portion of the areas held in the Kimberleys are not stocked to the extent of one-tenth of their carrying capacity. That is the admission of a pastoralist, yet the hon. member for Roebourne protests that a million acres is not sufficient.

Mr. Butcher: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. LAMBERT: I accept the hon. member's denial, still I really thought that he had stated it would be an absolute hardship if the clause were applied to Mr. Bush.

Mr. Butcher: I said that if he were forced to come in under the Bill it would be an injustice, seeing that he has to-day over a million acres.

Mr. LAMBERT: It amounts to the same thing. The position is ridiculous. None of these areas should be larger than 50,000 or 100,000 acres, and the leaseholders should not be permitted to pool or aggregate their holdings without showing good cause. Moreover, there should be improvement conditions, which would enforce the utilisation of the leases to the full. I am very sorry that the Minister has refused to accept the amendment. The hon. member for Roebourne was able to supply only one in-

stance of hardship likely to occur under the amendment.

Mr. Butcher: I gave the one as a specific instance; I could give many more.

Mr. LAMBERT: The pastoral industry employs less than 5 per cent. of the white labour employed in any other industry.

Mr. Butcher: Nonsense.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is the duty of the Committee to see whether means cannot be devised for the legitimate opening up of our North. Why have we not been supplied with full information regarding these leases, to assist us in our consideration of the question? I hope the amendment will be carried. We should have one large Federal State so far as the northern portion of Australia is concerned. I always understood that the pastoralist in this State was treated better than any other pastoralist in the Commonwealth. Whilst it is the duty of hon. members to assist in encouraging this industry and to show an appreciation of the good work those engaged in it are doing in some of the undesirable portions of Western Australia, at the same time I have heard no arguments which convince me that a million acres under present conditions is not sufficient for any pastoralist to hold. It is regrettable that we have not more opportunity of properly considering the Bill to the extent to which it is desirable to do so. The only desire that seems to prompt many hon. members is to look after the interests of a few pastoralists in the northern portion of the State, but I would point out that there are also the interests of the State to be considered. I am certain we shall find some aggregation of the lands if the Bill is passed. If ever people were being given an additional asset, these pastoralists are those people.

Mr. Smith: You did not say that in regard to renewing gold-mining leases.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Minister should see that these people spent some of the money they make off the land within the country. The member for Roebourne will surely agree that we have some right to protect those who may come after us and may desire to work some of this country.

Mr. Butcher: There are millions of acres yet unoccupied.

Mr. LAMBERT: Are they in possession of water facilities.

Mr. Butcher: Any amount of them.

Mr. LAMBERT: I have never heard that statement seriously made.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. LAMBERT: We should not barter away this portion of the State and it is a great pity the Federal Government have not taken it over.

The Attorney General: This is not relative to the Bill.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is, and until I am pulled up by the Chairman I will continue in that strain.

The Attorney General: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member was dealing with what the Federal Government might do; is he in order?

The CHAIRMAN: It is easy to connect the two things. The hon. member can show why a lesser or a greater area should be given in this case. The argument is a fair one.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am obliged to you, Sir. Greater consideration should be given to this question. The time will come when the Federal Parliament will find it necessary to create a big Federal State right across the north of Australia.

Mr. Foley: And give eight million acres of land like they did to the great meat trusts.

Mr. LAMBERT: Whilst the Minister is giving the greatest possible consideration to the pastoral industry, very little consideration is shown for the welfare of Western Australia.

Mr. Butcher: That is not a fair statement.

Mr. LAMBERT: I believe no Minister would try to promote the welfare of the country more than the Minister for Lands, but it is regrettable, nevertheless, that the measure should have been brought along at such a late hour of the session and forced through in the interests of the pastoralists. In connection with the subject of this Bill, we must think not merely of to-morrow, but of the future. I support the amendment.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I regret that the Minister for Lands could not see his way

to accept a reduction of the maximum area to one million acres. If the clause passes in its present form, it will be possible to obtain much larger areas of pastoral country. The amendment of the member for North-East Fremantle seeks to reduce the area which may be held by corporations or combinations from two million acres to one million. Under the Council's amendment, a man and his wife would be able to hold one million acres in each of the six divisions, or six million acres in all.

The Minister for Works: I do not think you are right in that.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Even with the proposed reduction to one million acres, a man and his wife would still be able to hold six million acres of pastoral lands in this country. The words "in the same division" at the commencement of the clause should be struck out.

The Minister for Works: I find that I am incorrect in what I said, and that one million acres can be held in each division.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Even one million acres is a more generous area than should be permitted.

The Minister for Lands: If the hon. member intends to move an amendment, it would be prior to the present amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot go back.

Amendment (Hon. W. C. Angwin's) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	..	..	13

Majority for 7

AYES.

Mr. Angwin
Mr. Carpenter
Mr. Chesson
Mr. Collier
Mr. Foley
Mr. Green
Mr. Harrison
Mr. E. B. Johnston
Mr. Lambert
Mr. Mullany
Mr. Munste

Mr. Nairn
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Thomson
Mr. Troy
Mr. Walker
Mr. O'Loghlen
(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Verryard
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Lefroy	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Question, as amended, put and passed; the Council's amendment, as amended, made.

Mr. FOLEY: I now desire to move the insertion of a proviso.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is too late. I put the question distinctly. I am sorry the hon. member did not signify his intention of moving a further amendment.

Mr. FOLEY: I mentioned it when speaking.

Hon. J. Scaddan: I also mentioned it.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—BUNBURY TOWN LOT 318.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

PRIVILEGE—THE ELECTION OF MR. E. B. JOHNSTON AS SPEAKER.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin) [11.44]: I regret very much having to rise at this late hour on a question of privilege. I think, however, that the House, after hearing the article which I shall read, with the permission of hon members, will agree that I have every justification for bringing the matter before Parliament. I refer to an article which appears in the *Great Southern Argus* published at Wagin on 17th March. The article is headed "Mr. Stubbs, M.L.A., and the Speakership. Remarks by Mr. Johnston, M.L.A. (Contributed)," and reads as follows:—

Subsequent to unveiling an honour roll at Darkan last week, Mr. E. B. Johnston said that he would like to say a few words to his constituents regarding some recent

political events. In regard to his short occupancy of the position of Speaker (laughter) he had nothing to reproach himself with. He had not sought the position in any way (applause), but the Government had been very anxious for him to take it, and hold it, until the no-confidence motion was safely passed. (Laughter.) The Government need, however, have had no doubts as to his attitude on that motion. He wanted the Land Bill through, and in any case he would not risk any reversion to a reign of Labour misrule and maladministration in this State. (Applause.) No more secret contracts. However, he had been placed in a position of some difficulty, and then had been deserted by certain Liberal members, whose words were worth nothing. They had walked out of the House and refused to vote. (Shame.) Mr. Sydney Stubbs was one of those gentlemen, and he had absented himself from the Chamber for two days after he was turned down by his own party for the Speakership, leaving his electorate disfranchised. There had been certain charges made in the *West Australian*, inspired from an obvious source. These charges were untrue, and the paper had had to apologise. They had been deceived by some member of Parliament. The member had withheld from them the vital information that the Speaker elect was chosen at a combined meeting of Government supporters (Liberal and C.P. members which he had attended. At the meeting a vote was taken for the nomination between Mr. Stubbs and himself, and he had received 18 votes (applause), whilst Mr. Stubbs received one vote only. (Laughter.) Mr. Stubbs had left the room declaring that he had done with the Liberal party for ever. (Laughter.) In the circumstances he (Mr. Johnston) had felt entitled to accept the position offered to him, but parties were very evenly balanced in Parliament, and when he found that one or two disgruntled Liberals had not given him proper support, he had promptly resigned, rather than remain in an undignified position. (Applause.) He felt, too, that he could best serve his constituents on the floor of the House, holding the

balance of power at the present time. (Prolonged applause.) Mr. Johnston then dealt at length with the Land Bill, and concluded by vigorously urging his hearers to vote for Sir John Forrest and the supporters of the Hughes Government at the forthcoming Federal elections.

The report says that certain charges have been made in the *West Australian*, inspired from an obvious source. There can be no doubt that Mr. Johnston referred to a member of this Chamber.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: On a point of order. Is there any point of privilege involved in this matter?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. The hon. member for Wagin will please confine his remarks to the article on which he bases his motion.

Mr. STUBBS: The motion I intend to move will give the publisher of the *Great Southern Argus* and also the member for Williams-Narrogin an opportunity of proving the truth of the charges published in that paper.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are referring to the article. I presume you are going to conclude by making a motion in regard to the printer and publisher.

Mr. STUBBS: Yes.

Mr. SPEAKER: In these circumstances you can refer to such portions of the article as affect your privilege and justify your motion. The member for Williams-Narrogin does not appear in this at present.

Mr. STUBBS: I will endeavour to confine my remarks to the four corners of the article in question. I shall be as brief as possible and to the point. The article states that the position of Speaker was not sought by the member for Williams-Narrogin. It will be within the recollection of the House that the leader of the Opposition on 8th February last tabled a no-confidence motion, whereupon the House adjourned. Shortly after that the gentleman who was elected Speaker on the following Tuesday gave his pledged word of honour that he would support the Government and the Country party against the no-confidence motion.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: On a point of order. The hon. member is not obeying your ruling; he is not confining his remarks to the article.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine himself to the article on which he has raised a point of privilege.

Mr. STUBBS: It reflects on my honour.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is quite justified in raising a point of privilege on an article which reflects on his honour. Seeing that his motion will refer to the printer and publisher of the newspaper, he must confine himself to that article as an article. Whatever inference he may choose to draw may be right or wrong. He has the right to say whether the article is true or untrue, but he must not reflect on any member of the House.

Mr. STUBBS: Am I not to refer to the contributor of the article?

Mr. SPEAKER: The contributor may not have been Mr. Johnston, a member of this House. It may have been contributed by a correspondent. Therefore, the hon. member must confine himself to the article on which he is basing his motion, and must not refer to a member of the House.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: If the hon. member is to be confined to the newspaper article to the extent you suggest, he can do little beyond reading that article and saying that it is not true. Seeing that his honour is at stake, I think he is entitled to explain the facts which led up to the position dealt with in that article. Otherwise he could not justify his position.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will be justified in referring to those remarks without involving a member of the House. He has yet to learn that a member of the House was actually responsible for those remarks which appear in the newspaper.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The article purports to be a correct report of a speech delivered by a member of the House, a speech which reflects upon the honour of another hon. member. Surely, then, the hon. member is entitled to explain the facts which led up to the position dealt with in that article, which is really the report of a speech, and is not an article at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: The leader of the Opposition loses sight of the fact that the hon. member has to move a motion in which, I presume, the printer and publisher of the newspaper will be alleged to be guilty of

contempt. Consequently he is perfectly justified in referring to the printer and publisher and even in elaborating his arguments, but he must not make a direct attack on a member of the House.

Hon. T. WALKER: The article, which is a report of a speech, gives an account of the alleged utterances of a member of the House. He may, of course, have been incorrectly reported. In the course of that report it is stated that certain members of the House gave to the Press incorrect and untrue information. As to what appears there and what is alleged in that article to be untrue, the member for Wagin, I submit, has a right to show whether it is true or untrue. Because, if that article is literally correct, there is no privilege involved. It can only be a breach of privilege if it states untruths. The member for Wagin has a right to demonstrate the truth or the lack of truth in the report, and to that extent it is necessary for him to show the inaccuracies. I submit he will be in order in stating his case.

Mr. SPEAKER: Quite right so far as the privileges of members are concerned.

Mr. HOLMAN: The member for Wagin is entitled to rise under privilege on the score of a statement impugning his honour. A similar case caused a good deal of sensation in Western Australia many years ago. I refer to that of Mr. Robson, then member for Geraldton, when he made a certain statement which was published in the Press. On that occasion no action was taken against the Press, because the Press was not responsible for the statements made. It is the person who makes the statements and accuses members of dishonourable actions who must reply to the charge. On that previous occasion the member for Geraldton, Mr. Robson, was requested to attend in his place and reply, which he did after the vote was carried. If the hon. member alleged to have made these damaging and unfair statements published in the Press, containing serious charges against members of the House, really did make those statements, he is not fit to retain his seat in the House. The hon. member who is accused of having published those charges is here to say whether or not he made those statements. The other hon. member is quite right in defend-

ing his honour. He should reply to the charges if he can, either denying them, or, if he made them, withdrawing them unreservedly and tendering an apology.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Or proving them.

12 o'clock, midnight.

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes, certainly. The privilege case I have referred to is reported in *Hansard* of the 23rd May, 1900. You yourself, Sir, will remember the sensation which the matter caused, and the action which was taken. The present case seems to me on all-fours with that case of 1900. The article is really a speech by a member of this Chamber; the newspaper merely published what a member said; and the member himself is responsible.

Mr. SPEAKER: As regards the matter to which the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) has just referred, on that occasion the motion made in this House was directed against the member referred to. The motion of the member for Wagin is directed against the publisher of the paper. I am going to allow the member for Wagin ample opportunity.

Mr. HOLMAN: I perfectly understand, Sir, that that is correct; but I consider that the member for Wagin should move against the member for Williams-Narrogin, and ask him to reply.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [12.2 a.m.]: I have not yet heard the motion which the member for Wagin proposes to move: I take it, Mr. Speaker, that you have seen the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion that the hon. member for Wagin is bound to move.

Mr. TROY: You have admitted, Sir, that it would be quite competent for the member for Wagin to embody in that motion a charge against the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. Underwood: Why not let us get the motion?

Mr. TROY: The fact that the newspaper is responsible for publishing the article does not exempt the member for Williams-Narrogin from his responsibility. That hon. member either made those statements, or he did not make them. The man who makes the statements must be responsible. If the

hon. member did not make the statements, he is not responsible.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is a very condensed report.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Very damaging to me, though.

Mr. TROY: I presume the member for Wagin is proposing a motion that the newspaper be adjudged guilty of contempt. There should be no objection to his including in that motion the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is quite so. The member for Wagin informed me that his motion was against the printer and publisher of the newspaper. As the member for Mt. Magnet says, if the member for Williams-Narrogin were included in the motion, I could not raise any objection. At the present juncture, however, the information I have is that the motion of the member for Wagin is against the printer and publisher of the newspaper.

Mr. TROY: Does the member for Wagin propose to include in his motion the member for Williams-Narrogin?

Hon. T. Walker: That can be done by amendment of the motion.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin) [12.5]: Is it the desire of the House that I should move the motion when concluding my remarks, or does the House prefer that I should move the motion now?

Mr. Holman: Outline the motion now, and include the member for Williams-Narrogin in it.

Mr. S. STUBBS: With the permission of the House, I will include the member for Williams-Narrogin. My motion will be that the printer and publisher of the *Great Southern Argus*, Mr. B. L. Innes, by publishing an article in the issue of the said newspaper on the 17th March, 1917, under the headlines, "Mr. Stubbs, M.L.A., and the Speakership is guilty of contempt.

Hon. T. Walker: Add to that, "As is also the member for Williams-Narrogin, who is alleged to have made the statements."

Mr. E. B. Johnston: On a point of order, can a charge of that kind be made without notice?

Hon. J. Scaddan: Yes.

Mr. Taylor: You gave no notice yourself.

Mr. S. STUBBS: You did not give me any notice.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Wagin is quite in order.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: May I rise to a point of order?

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Wagin is quite in order.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I move—

That the printer and publisher of the "Great Southern Argus," Mr. B. L. Innes, by publishing an article in the issue of the said newspaper on the 17th March, 1917, under the headlines "Mr. Stubbs, M.L.A., and the Speakership," is guilty of contempt, as is also the member for Williams-Narrogin, who is alleged to have made the statements.

The member for Williams-Narrogin, shortly after he vacated the Chair, as I understand, unveiled an honour board in a town on the boundary or near the boundary, of the Wagin electorate. The newspaper which published the statements is the only newspaper published in the electorate. For the past three years the proprietor of that newspaper, Mr. E. A. Absolom, has been a bitter political opponent of mine. I want the House, in dealing with the question, to know that no man living in Western Australia knows better than the member for Williams-Narrogin knows that Mr. Absolom is a bitter opponent of mine.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is outside the motion now.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I desire to say that the only newspaper published in the Wagin electorate is broadcasted throughout the district in the interests of a political association to which I do not belong. The carrying of my motion will give the publisher of the newspaper and the member for Williams-Narrogin an opportunity of proving the truth of the charges made in that article.

Hon. T. Walker: What is the truth?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am coming to that. I especially challenge the member for Williams-Narrogin to refute a single sentence of the statement which I am making now by the indulgence of the House. If he can do so,

I shall stand condemned as unworthy of my position in this House, and as one who should be ejected as a dishonourable man. The member for Williams-Narrogin made his inaccurate charges against me in a town not far from the border of my electorate. I leave it to the judgment of hon. members and of the public of Western Australia to decide what other object the member for Williams-Narrogin had in view beyond the obvious one of discrediting me and belittling me in the eyes of my electors. Hon. members will observe that the article is described as having been contributed. Now let me cull a few extracts from the article:—

Mr. Johnston said at the outset that he did not aspire to the position of Speaker.

It is very regrettable that I should have to refer to certain matters that occurred between the submission of Mr. Scaddan's no-confidence motion on the 8th February, and the elevation of the member for Williams-Narrogin to the Chair. I can, if necessary, bring testimony to prove that within a few minutes after the leader of the Opposition gave notice of his no-confidence motion the member for Williams-Narrogin pledged his word that he would support the Liberal party and the Country party against that motion. Within a day or two of giving that pledge, the member for Williams-Narrogin approached more members than one of this Chamber, stating that he would like to get their support to an amendment he intended to move to the no-confidence motion.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That is absolutely untrue.

Mr. O'Loghlen: It is absolutely true.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Williams-Narrogin must withdraw his remark.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I withdraw, Sir.

Mr. S. STUBBS: As I have already indicated, if I cannot prove to the satisfaction of hon. members any statement I am making, I am prepared to resign my seat as a member of this Chamber. I have lived for 56 years, and have endeavoured to be fair and just to every man with whom I have come in contact; and I am not likely at this time of my life to make statements

which I cannot prove. It is regrettable to have to move such a motion as this, and to mention certain matters; but I have to clear my character and my honour. I am prepared to do that with your permission, Mr. Speaker, and with the indulgence of the House. On the morning of the day on which Mr. Johnston was elevated to the position of Speaker, he wrote a letter to the Government saying that he intended to move an amendment to the no-confidence motion, and that the gist of that amendment was that it would humiliate the Government—that no Government could remain in power if such an amendment were carried. Within a few hours of that information being conveyed to me, the member for Williams-Narrogin was elected Speaker. In the course of the article it is stated that my nomination for the Speakership was defeated at the meeting of parties by 18 votes to 1. I challenge the member for Williams-Narrogin to prove that statement. I was not in the room when the business of 18 votes to 1 cropped up. The member for Williams-Narrogin conveniently forgot to tell his audience the reasons which caused me to leave the room; and no good purpose would be served by my mentioning them.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Mention them.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No good purpose would be served by my mentioning at this stage the reasons why I left the room.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That is the point of the thing.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am coming to the point of the thing. Had I entered this Chamber when Mr. E. B. Johnston's name was submitted by the leader of the House, I have no hesitation in saying, I would have secured the Speakership by a substantial majority.

Mr. Taylor: That is beyond doubt.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Incidentally, the country would have been saved the sorry spectacle of a fortnight's scenes unparalleled in the annals of the Western Australian Parliament.

Mr. Taylor: Unparalleled in the annals of any Parliament in any English-speaking country.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. S. STUBBS: Therefore it ill becomes the member for Williams-Narrogin to traduce the honour of any member of this House. I challenge him, as a man, either to prove me to be untruthful, or himself to stand forth as a political acrobat of the first order.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [12.15]: I regret this incident very much indeed. I can scarcely understand the member for Williams-Narrogin making the statements he did when unveiling that roll of honour. He journeyed to Darkan to perform the duty of unveiling a roll of honour, and then he took the opportunity of traducing a member of the House. I can scarcely credit that he was in his right senses. I know that the statements made to the House by the member for Wagin to-night are perfectly correct. No good can come of prolonging this debate. I am supporting the member for Wagin in his attitude. Under our Standing Orders the Attorney General has power to prosecute a member for publishing any false and scandalous statements regarding another member.

Mr. Thomas: So far we have had no proof that the member for Williams-Narrogin has said anything that is untrue.

Mr. THOMSON: I have said that I know the statement of the member for Wagin to be perfectly correct.

Mr. Thomas: I am inclined to believe that he is correct, but I want to hear facts.

Mr. THOMSON: If the hon. member is waiting to know from me what took place at a party meeting, he will be disappointed. It showed very bad taste on the part of the member for Williams-Narrogin to go to any part of his electorate and make a statement traducing the honour of the member for Wagin.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It was a reply to a long, garbled account of the proceedings which had appeared in the *West Australian*.

Mr. THOMSON: As one of those members whom evidently the hon. member regards as unworthy because we were not prepared to support him, I wish to explain that the reason why I left the Chamber rather than vote in support of the Speaker was because I had come to the conclusion that the business of the country was of far greater importance than keeping any individual in

the Speaker's chair. Therefore, so as to bring matters to a climax and show the member for Williams-Narrogin that in my opinion the affairs of State were of more importance than the keeping of him in the chair, I retired from the Chamber. I am prepared to stand or fall by my attitude on that occasion. I regret very much that the member for Williams-Narrogin should have made the statements reported in the *Great Southern Argus*.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [12.20]: The statements made by the member for Williams-Narrogin in the newspaper referred to are very serious indeed. The hon. member is alleged to have said that the Government had been very anxious for him to take the Speakership and hold it until the no-confidence motion was safely passed.

The Premier: That is absolutely incorrect.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not saying it, I am quoting from the article. The member for Wagin has said that a letter was sent by the member for Williams-Narrogin to the Government intimating that he intended to move an amendment to the no-confidence motion, which would humiliate the Government and make it impossible for them to retain office.

The Premier: He sent no letter to the Government.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: And that within a few hours afterwards the member for Williams-Narrogin was made Speaker. That was the purport of the statement made by the member for Wagin. That is all very serious, because if the alleged facts are correct the Government have been guilty of corrupt practices. It is the only inference to be drawn from the two statements, the one in the Press and the other made by the member for Wagin. It is very necessary that a strict inquiry should be held into a question such as this. It is the duty of the Government to see that the honour of the West Australian Parliament and Government is vindicated. We should be able to hand down the reputation of Parliament to our successors clean and unsullied. In the public Press the ex-Speaker is reported to have said that he took the Speakership at the request of the Government, notwith-

standing that he had just previously sent to them a letter stating that it was his intention to humiliate the Government. I think the Premier has said that that is not correct.

The Premier: It is not correct.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: At all events, it is the duty of the Government and also of the Opposition to have this thoroughly cleared up. Even at this late hour it is our duty to move a motion of no confidence in the Government. If nobody else does it, I will do it myself.

Mr. Holman: And perhaps the member for Williams-Narrogin will move an amendment on it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Except we take steps to have this matter cleared up, none of us will be justified in asking the electors for a renewal of confidence at the forthcoming election. In the interests of the State I sincerely trust that the Government will be able to clear themselves of the accusations made against them by the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [12.27]: Every member will desire a full investigation of the circumstances dealt with to-night. When, a little while ago, the member for Williams-Narrogin thought there was something wrong, he was very quick to move for a royal commission to inquire into the actions of the leader of the Opposition. If it was right for the member for Williams-Narrogin to seek redress in the sacred name of the honour of this Chamber, it is the duty of this Chamber to see that the fullest investigation is made into the charges which the member for Williams-Narrogin has levelled against the Government. One thing absolutely incorrect in this newspaper article is the statement that the member for Williams-Narrogin felt that he could best serve his constituents on the floor of the House, holding the balance of power. As regards the statement that in the event of his not attaining to the Speakership he would have held the balance of power, I wish it to be distinctly understood that he did not hold the balance of power as far as my vote was concerned. Had the member for Williams-Narrogin crossed the floor to support this side on the want of confidence motion, I would have gone to the opposite side of

the Chamber. I know another member who expressed the intention of adopting the same course as myself. I say the member for Williams-Narrogin did not hold the balance of power. His statement to that effect was misleading. If every statement in that report is as incorrect as the statement that the member for Williams-Narrogin held the balance of power in this House, the report is a tissue of incorrect statements. Time cannot be regarded as wasted which is spent in discussing a matter in which the honour of a member is impugned, or the honour of the House is impugned. There is no time other than the present to give such a matter the fullest investigation. If the honour of a member cannot be upheld, then that member, no matter who he may be, is not fit to hold a seat in this Chamber, or to hold any other public position.

Hon. P. Collier: Do you remember the classic words of Mr. Bent about carrying guts to a bear?

Mr. FOLEY: I do not wish to enter into that question. In discussing a matter affecting the honour of a member of this Chamber, it is not my province to throw mud or to use any undignified expressions. I intend to see that an hon. member who is attacked is afforded the opportunity of investigation. I believe the spirit of honour still lives in the minds and hearts of members of this Chamber just as it did before the member for Williams-Narrogin became a member of this House.

Mr. Taylor: Before other members make any remarks, it would be as well for us to hear the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): You do not give him a chance.

Mr. Taylor: He has been asked to speak two or three times. I do not wish to make my statement before hearing the hon. member. Let us hear the hon. member in defence first. If the hon. member will not defend himself, I must speak.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [12.35]: I wish to move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. Taylor: You have no hope of getting an adjournment.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I wish to move the adjournment for the reason that I have not even been able to see that article. Since

I heard about it, the paper has been removed from the files of Parliament House.

Hon. J. Scaddan: On a point of order, when an hon. member moves the adjournment of the debate there can be no discussion.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. Taylor: Now will you speak before I go?

Mr. Carpenter: Be a man.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I have explained that I have been unable to see the newspaper report even during the tea adjournment. I just wish to say that the report is, necessarily, very condensed. It is a very much abbreviated report of the remarks I made on the occasion referred to. In many respects it is correct, although there were qualifications and additions made by me when speaking, which, naturally, do not appear in a condensed report of this kind.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Do you know who contributed it?

Mr. Underwood: Who wrote it?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I do not know.

Mr. Underwood: You do know.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Williams-Narrogin is included in the motion.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The main point I wished to make clear when speaking to my electors was that there had been a ballot of a combined meeting of members of this House on the question who should be nominated for the Speakership.

Mr. Taylor: Not a ballot of this House.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Of the members on this side of the House; of the members of the Country party and of the Liberal party and myself. The ballot was taken, and I received every vote but one.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Do not forget that I was not there.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I was not responsible for the hon. member's absence. That was the vote taken at that well-attended meeting. It seemed to me most unjust, unfair, and unwarranted that the metropolitan Press, in publishing a lengthy statement as to those proceedings, omitted all reference to that vote. When the leader of

the Country party and other gentlemen mentioned the matter to me during that day, before that meeting, I said that I was not prepared to permit myself to be nominated at all unless it was with the unanimous or practically unanimous wish of members on this side of the House. I felt that the fact of my receiving every vote of those present except one vote warranted me in submitting myself to the pleasure of the House.

Mr. S. Stubbs: At what time was the vote taken?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I should say at about 25 minutes past four.

Mr. Taylor: The bells were ringing.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: At any rate, I have not had an opportunity of more than glancing at the article. I have read in *May* that charges against a member of Parliament should be made on notice. Had that practice been followed in this instance, it would have assisted me in dealing with the matter. The matter has been sprung on me.

Mr. Holman: Did you write the article?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No.

Mr. Holman: Did you send that letter to the Government?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I sent no letter to the Government on a point of that kind.

Mr. Holman: Or to any member of the Government?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The reference made in this article to a member of Parliament was made by me because it was obvious that the account, which was not fair and correct, of a meeting held at which the vote was recorded in my favour, could only have come from a member of Parliament, because only members of Parliament were present at the meeting. Since the *West Australian* published an account of the meeting, an inaccurate account, but still an account of what certain gentlemen had said at the meeting, it was clear to me that that information could only have leaked out from some member of Parliament. It is inconceivable that there could be any other source. Whoever gave that information, very carefully omitted to make any reference to the vote that was taken. There may be other points I would like to deal with, but at this moment they do not occur to my mind.

Hon. T. Walker: Read that portion of the article which says that the Government were very anxious about—

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The article speaks for itself.

Mr. Taylor: The article is your own.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Is it correct?

Mr. Taylor: Is it in keeping with your speech?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I said I was sorry for the *West Australian* because that newspaper had been put in an unfortunate position through the information as to the vote taken at that meeting having been withheld. I am quite prepared to justify every action of mine. I recognise thoroughly well that even after motions adverse to myself had been carried there was no necessity for me to resign. However, I felt that the position—

Hon. P. Collier: No necessity for you to resign?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I felt that the position was not dignified, and I preferred to resign.

Hon. T. Walker: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member for Williams-Narrogin whether he used those words as alleged in the article?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Is the hon. member in order?

Hon. T. Walker: I want to ask the hon. member whether he used those words as stated in the article, that the Government had been very anxious for him to take the Speakership and hold it until the no-confidence motion was safely past?

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Kanoona cannot ask that question.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [12.44]: I rise to address myself to this subject with feelings that I do not usually experience in addressing the Chamber. I have been in this House for something like 16 or 17 years and such a spectacle as this has never before come under my notice. I hope it will be the last time. I listened with great interest to the statement made by the member for Wagin when that hon. member brought a charge against the public Press of this State, and coupled therewith the name of the member for Williams-Narrogin. I thought that member might have been mis-

represented. I pressed the member in question to put up his defence and when we heard it we could not but come to the conclusion that it was lame and weak. He did not deny that he was responsible for what was contained in the paragraph. His statement to the House was that it was a condensed report. The report is too elaborate for the hon. member's future in this State. This meeting was held at Darkan and it was held under conditions which every man in Australia would be proud to be associated with. The object of it was to unveil a roll of honour to our dead heroes who perished while fighting for the Empire. Can we imagine that any member of this House, or any man living, would seize an opportunity of that kind to vindicate his alleged political honour or impeach the honour of another member of this House, or to introduce party politics at all?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The hon. member is misrepresenting me. The remarks I made on politics, at the request of the audience, were made some hours after the roll of honour was unveiled.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not know how the audience took the speaker on that occasion. I know that no pressure living could ever make me err on an occasion of that kind in the direction in which the member for Williams-Narrogin erred. This was done at the unveiling of a roll of honour, and to use an occasion of that kind for party politics, or even to defend one's own political honour, no matter how much it might have been attacked, would be an action unworthy of anyone. There would have been many other occasions at which a straightforward man could seize the opportunity to defend his character without selecting such an opportunity as the member for Williams-Narrogin chose. If those men who are lying cold in their graves could have heard the statement of the member for Williams-Narrogin they would have turned in disgust. Could politics be dragged by anyone to a lower level? Just imagine the member in question never defended himself up to that moment. I do not know what occurred at the Government meeting when he was appointed by the party to which he did not belong to the position of Speaker in this House. He has

pointed out to us that there was only one dissident when the question arose that he should be nominated for the position of Speaker, and he had no hesitation in saying that there were 19 members present. What I want to say is that, whatever may have happened by reason of the fact that the Government found themselves in a tight corner, on account of the no-confidence motion, nothing whatever justified the member for Williams-Narrogin in taking advantage of the place and time he did to vindicate his character, and to try and besmire the honour of another member of this House. The member for Wagin made a clean and straightforward statement, and any person, without prejudice, who heard it would accept it as the truth. The hon. member did not prevaricate in any way. He made a clean and bald statement of fact. How was it replied to by the member for Williams-Narrogin? Only in the most offensive fashion. How are we going to get to the bottom of all this? The House is placed in a rather difficult position. We are called upon to-night to give a vote, but how are we going to give it? We are going to give it without knowing the full facts of the case unless we accept the statement made by the hon. member for Wagin, supported by the hon. member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) and not in the slightest way refuted by the member for Williams-Narrogin. We may have the pleasure of hearing Ministers give their version of what occurred at the party meeting when the position of the Speakership was dangling in the balance, and when that position meant saving the Government. No Government, or member of the House, were justified at a time like that in taking up such a position. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) said that if it be true it is political corruption. If it be true it is tantamount to that, and will redound neither to the credit of the Government nor of the House. If hon. members tolerate it, then they are as bad as those who helped to perpetrate it. Even in the last dying hours of a perishing Government we should test the feeling of the House on a question of this kind. I thoroughly agree with the member for North-East Fremantle. It is never too late for the Opposition, if

they find the Government are guilty of something which it is considered they should not have done, to attack them by means of a no-confidence motion. I think the evidence to-night from the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) supported by that of the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson), and which has not been refuted by any hon. member, is justification for supposing that things were very shady when the appointment to the highest position in the House was made. The gift of the Speakership is the highest gift within the giving of the Parliament of the country. It is a position which the occupant should respect, and who should be respected by Parliament who puts him there, while he holds it. No intriguing of parties should militate against the chances of the Speaker being respected in every way. What do we find? For party purposes, even the highest position in the House has to-night been impeached as being used as a form of corruption, to keep the party in power which did not possess the confidence of the people and had not the courage to appeal to them. We now find that an hon. member of this House—a young man, single and fit—goes to the place he did go to to make a statement of a political nature on the occasion of the unveiling of a roll of honour. What can I think of the people who asked him to do it? The whole thing is a standing disgrace. It was a disgrace to ask him to unveil that roll of honour.

Mr. Underwood: If he was a married man, or unfit, it would still be a disgrace.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is going outside the motion.

Mr. TAYLOR: I will not go any further on that point. The hon. member put up no defence.

Mr. Underwood: If he would make a defence he would be defending Australia in France to-day.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TAYLOR: He has not denied the accuracy of the statements which we have heard to-night. He says that the report is condensed. If so, it is all the better for the hon. gentleman concerned. I believe the House will support the member for Wagin, and I congratulate him in bringing up the question. I am always ready to support a

man to the last ditch in the defence of his honour. When an hon. member is impeached this is the place in which to defend himself. When we are impeached outside the House, we cannot reach those who impeach us, but if we are impeached within the House let us defend our honour to the last drop of blood we have in our body.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [12.55]: I regret that there should be occasion to draw attention to derelictions on the part of any member of this House. I thought, after the scenes which were enacted recently, that we had passed them forever. Although I did not then feel satisfied that we had reached the truth, I did feel a sense of satisfaction that an unpleasant episode was past and gone. And it might have been passed and gone had it not been for the conduct of the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston), and for his most uncalled for action upon an occasion which should have brought forth the highest eloquence of the human mind, and have suaged any lower or baser passions of human nature.

Hon. J. Scaddan: It was his topic.

Hon. T. WALKER: On that occasion he went out of his way, not to defend his own honour, not to put himself right on a moral plane with his constituents, but to deliberately attack, and maliciously wrong, and, if we are to take the facts he has given us to-night as true, slander another member of this Chamber, and to have that contribution forwarded to the constituency represented by the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs), and to the only paper circulating therein that could do that hon. gentleman any injury, in order to reach one who might have been a rival to the Speakership when he was anxious for it, and to injure him and others as well, is to me a revelation of character which is amazing. He has put the Government on their trial. He has accused them of doing a most diabolical and dishonourable act. He has accused the Government of making use of him for the purpose of tiding over the no-confidence motion.

Mr. Carpenter: That is the more serious aspect of the business.

Hon. T. WALKER: There is no other meaning to be given to the words than this. If the House can sit complacently under an

action of that kind, then I say the spirit has gone out of it. I ask the hon. member if he used these words or anything equivalent to them, "that the Government had been very anxious for him to take it (the Speakership) and hold it until the no-confidence motion was safely passed." I cannot understand the composition of a man who could, even if this had taken place, as I suppose it must have, for he says so, bite the hand which had given him his bread of life as Speaker. The Government had offered this position to him to save themselves, he says, and yet he is the one to expose the Government. To use a vulgar expression, he turned dog on them. If what he alleges against the Government be true, one can readily credit the statement made by the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) when he says that on that very morning of the day on which the hon. member was made Speaker, he wrote a letter to a member of the Government disclosing the nature of an amendment of his to the vote of censure which was hanging over the heads of the Government, and which he intended to move.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Wholly, and in every way untrue, I assure the hon. gentleman.

Hon. T. WALKER: It may be untrue, but I trust the words of the member for Wagin on this revelation of the character of the member for Williams-Narrogin, rather than the denial of the latter hon. member.

Hon. P. Collier: I should think so.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is wrong.

Hon. T. WALKER: This statement is not denied by the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I have denied it every time.

Hon. T. WALKER: But the statement in the report has not been denied, and I submit cannot be denied. That statement accuses the Government of having solicited him. The words are "The Government had been very anxious" to induce the member for Williams-Narrogin to take the Speakership until the no-confidence motion was safely passed. Has any accusation more serious than that that ever been brought against any Government within the knowledge of hon. members? Unless the statements made in that report can be contradicted, unless the Government can show

a clean slate in this regard, this session ought not to end to-night, we ought to have further investigation. I agree with the member for North-East Fremantle that an inquiry is necessary. Because, if such things as these are possible and have taken place, then Parliamentary government and honourable government are at an end in this country and we are the mere toys of intrigue and dishonourable conduct to keep certain members in office. I cannot contemplate a condition of affairs like that without alarm to the future of the State. From what the member for Wagin has said and left unsaid, what he has told us it would not be wise to disclose, I am convinced that there is more behind this than we know of. The member for Katanning has told us that he respects the secrecy of the meetings of his party so much that he will not tell us what occurred. But he intimated that he could tell us something.

Mr. Thomson: No, I said I was not going to tell the public what took place at the party meeting.

Hon. T. WALKER: I quite approve of the respect shown by the hon. member to his fellow members. What the hon. members has said confirms what has been said by the member for Wagin. But what about the member for Williams-Narrogin; has he that tenderness of conscience, that respect for his colleagues? He attends a meeting and afterwards not only tells all his constituents what occurred, but communicates it to the Press.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: After every point save that one had been described in the Press.

Hon. T. WALKER: The point is that to his constituents and to the Press he told what had taken place in the meeting, how many votes had been cast, how many he had received and, particularly, how few had been received by the member for Wagin.

Hon. J. Seaddan: Well, a leopard cannot change its spots.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A letter had been written by him in the morning and the Speakership was his in the afternoon.

Hon. T. WALKER: Whatever the reason, he had no scruples about disclosing what took place at a meeting of the party.

He communicated it to his constituents, and in a condensed and more biting form it is communicated also to the only newspaper circulating in the district of the man whom he considered his rival for the Speakership. Nothing more mean and contemptible could be alleged against any mortal than that line of conduct. The hon. member declares that the report of his remarks is condensed. How little condensed it is is shown by the interpolation everywhere of "laughter," "loud laughter," "applause," "long and continued applause." There is plenty of room for that. But poison is always in a little room. It is the quintessence of poison, the very minuteness of it that gives it facility to do its work. It is the brevity of that report which is the chief injury to the member for Wagin. It is condensed into paragraphs of poison. And in order to reach the member for Wagin, the member for Williams-Narrogin evens turns against the Government who gave him his brief period of inglorious Speakership and accuses them of being corrupt inasmuch as they had approached him to make a tool of him to hold the Chair only until they were safely over the no-confidence debate.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [L.S]: I, too, in common with the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, regret exceedingly that anything has arisen to reopen the discreditable proceedings of a few weeks ago. I had thought that peace was declared between the hon. members concerned and that we would hear nothing further about the matter. Now, unfortunately, this ill-advised speech has been delivered by the member for Williams-Narrogin—at least I presume it was delivered—at Darkan, and after perusing the report I can only say that if it be a correct account of the hon. member's remarks it is very discreditable indeed. The attempt to injure another seems to me to be unmanly, to say the least of it. In the heat of the moment we say many things which cause pain and may injure. But, after one has explained or withdrawn and apologised, then to return to the attack is certainly not the right thing for any hon. members to do. I am concerned about the honour of this House; and in connection with this alleged speech I am concerned

more especially about the honour of the Government; and I was sorry to hear certain hon. members evidencing in their remarks to-night a wish to discredit the Government on account of the statements made by the member for Williams-Narrogin. The member for Kanowna has drawn attention to the opening remarks of the report, and that is a portion which I am specially concerned in. The remarks are—

He (Mr. E. B. Johnston) had not sought the position (the Speakership) in any way; but the Government had been very anxious for him to take it and hold it until the no-confidence motion was safely past.

There is not one jot or tittle of truth in that statement. The Government were never concerned about the attitude of the member for Williams-Narrogin on the no-confidence motion. Indeed, on the Thursday evening before the question of the Speakership arose, when the leader of the Opposition gave notice of the no-confidence motion, I had the personal assurance of the member for Williams-Narrogin that he stood firmly and solidly behind the Government.

Hon. J. Scaddan: You did not count much on that, did you?

The PREMIER: And, of course, the member for Williams-Narrogin gave that assurance subsequently at the party meeting. There is no question about it, no question at all.

Mr. Taylor: It is easy to see you did not know how long the assurance would last.

The PREMIER: I do not wish to hide anything that took place in connection with this matter, and it is not an abuse of privilege to repeat now what I have already outlined in the public Press. At the party meeting the question naturally arose as to the attitude of the Speaker at that time. I explained that I had the assurance of the member for Mt. Magnet some time previously that if he ever thought of resigning the Speakership he would give me ample notice, in order that I might make the necessary arrangement for filling the position. In other words, the hon. gentleman assured me that he would not take me unawares. I accepted the assurance, knowing full well that he would loyally abide by it. I had not the slightest compunction about conveying

that information to the meeting of members which was held after the adjournment on the day when the leader of the Opposition gave notice of his want of confidence motion. Naturally, the meeting proceeded to consider what steps would have to be taken should the emergency arise, should the then Speaker decide that, in view of the no-confidence motion, he should resign his position in order to give his party the extra vote which otherwise would not be available. It was left in the hands of the leader of the Country party and myself to suggest the name of some member to fill the position of Speaker should a vacancy occur. The meeting was adjourned until four o'clock on the following Tuesday afternoon, in order that we might then decide upon our course of action should the Speaker in the meantime have decided to resign. Pending this, of course, steps were taken to sound members with regard to their feelings in case of a vacancy; and the leader of the Country party very kindly took upon himself to ascertain the feelings of hon. members. For instance, he mentioned the matter—so he subsequently told me—to the member for Williams-Narrogin late on that Thursday evening. He had previously mentioned it, I think, to yourself, Mr. Speaker. Later, on the Tuesday morning, I think the leader of the Country party paid you a visit, Sir, and distinctly asked you whether or not you would accept the position. At that time you were disinclined. Now with regard to the so-called letter. There was a note, a few lines, delivered at my office from the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Hon. J. Scaddan: He has just denied it.

The PREMIER: I understood him to deny the letter as outlined by the member for Wagin.

Hon. J. Scaddan: No. He absolutely denied it.

Mr. Taylor: He has absolutely denied writing any note.

The PREMIER: I understood the member for Williams-Narrogin to deny having written a letter stating what the amendment was, or that the amendment would be humiliating to the Government, and thus holding a threat over the head of the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: He denied any communication whatever. He denied any negotiation whatever with the Government.

The PREMIER: There was a note left at my office on the Monday; in the afternoon, I think. At any rate, I did not get it until the following morning. Or, rather, the note was left at the outside office, and I got it on the Monday afternoon just before leaving my office. In the meantime the member for Mt. Magnet had intimated to me, between five and half-past five, that he intended to resign the Speakership on the following day. The note from the member for Williams-Narrogin, so far as I can remember, merely contained a very few lines—I attached very little importance to it—informing me that he was thinking of moving an amendment to the no-confidence motion on a matter affecting his electors; and he did not know whether he would get a seconder or not.

Hon. P. Collier: He has denied that tonight.

Mr. Taylor: He has absolutely denied it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: This is very different.

The PREMIER: In view of the instructions from the party meeting, immediately on learning from the then Speaker of his intention to resign the position, I tried to get in touch with the leader of the Country party, who had been deputed, with myself, to act in a certain direction, as I have already explained. I could not get hold of the leader of the Country party, who was out of town. I also rang up the West Australian Club to try and get the member for Williams-Narrogin, for the purpose of ascertaining for my own information what his amendment would be—whether it would be an amendment detrimental to the Government or favourable to the Government. This was the proper course to pursue. However, I could get neither gentleman until the following morning. The member for Williams-Narrogin I saw at about a quarter past ten. He called upon me, and I asked him what was the nature of his amendment, and what was the meaning of the note. He pointed out to me that his electors were affected by the raising of the railway rates, and he said he proposed to add certain words expressing disapproval of the rais-

ing of railway rates as it affected his constituents.

Hon. P. Collier: Which all bears out the statements which he previously denied, which were made a fortnight ago in this House.

The PREMIER: I do not know what it bears out. I wish to be permitted to make my statement. I immediately said to the member for Williams-Narrogin, "There is only one amendment that you can move, and even that would be a direct negative, and I doubt whether you can move it; that is an amendment expressing entire confidence in the Government; you had better reconsider the matter." He certainly left me with the impression that he would reconsider it. He said he would. He left me with the impression that there was no importance to be attached to the matter, and that he would not carry out his suggestion.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You assured me that the matter would be reviewed.

The PREMIER: I had already stated in the House that the railway rates were matters that could be reviewed and readjusted.

Mr. Taylor: One vote was hanging in the balance, then.

The PREMIER: That is all that took place between us. I attached no importance to his suggested amendment, and he left me under the full impression that he was not going to take any further action in that direction. No mention of the Speakership was made by me to him on that occasion, or on any other occasion.

Mr. Holman: Mr. Willmott was carrying on the negotiations.

The PREMIER: There was no need to bring in a threat of an amendment. Some days previously the leader of the Country party had mentioned the question of the Speakership to him.

Mr. Troy: He was clinching it.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Country party will be able to speak for himself. Within half an hour of the party meeting, Mr. Willmott waited upon Mr. Johnston at my request. I had told him what occurred and that I attached no importance to it. Ministers were in my room and I told them also that I attached no importance to this, and Mr. Willmott told me that he had al-

ready broached the subject to Mr. Johnston on the previous Thursday night. Mr. Willmott then left to see the present Speaker (Mr. Gardiner) and I believe he did see him. Mr. Gardiner refused to take the position, and Mr. Willmott came back and reported that to me and to the others of my colleagues who were in the room at the time. We then decided to ask the member for Williams-Narrogin to allow us to submit his name at the party meeting. Other members in the meantime had been sounded by one of my colleagues, as to whether they were willing to accept the position. At least two other members were sounded; but they, for different reasons, declined to allow their names to be submitted. We met at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and the name of Mr. Johnston was submitted to the meeting. Exception was taken by the member for Kataning (Mr. Thomson), and the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs). Ultimately just about the time when the House was to meet I said that the matter would have to be decided as the Speaker's resignation was in the hands of the Clerk. We then took a vote and it was decided that Mr. Johnston's name should be submitted.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Were his proposed amendments discussed at the party meeting?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. Holman: Who were the tellers when the vote of 18 to one was taken?

The PREMIER: The member for Williams-Narrogin said clearly before any vote was taken, that he was supporting the Government right through on the no-confidence motion.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He was sitting in his chair in this Chamber for some time before the House met and Mr. Butcher came in and took him out.

The PREMIER: The member for Williams-Narrogin was at the meeting and he made his statement.

Mr. S. Stubbs: The meeting did not take place until 10 minutes past four.

Hon. J. Scaddan: As a matter of fact, you went upstairs with him arm in arm.

The PREMIER: This is too serious a matter to joke about. The hon. member knows full well that I did not do such a

thing. I was sitting in my room waiting for hon. members to come in. It was then a few minutes before 4 o'clock and I felt somewhat concerned because they were not rolling up quickly enough.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The member for Williams-Narrogin was in this Chamber at a quarter past four.

Hon. T. Walker: Anyway, that is not material.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is mistaken. We did not get a full meeting until 10 minutes past four and the member for Williams-Narrogin was there all the time we were discussing this business and he assured members there present that he was standing solidly behind the Government on the no-confidence motion.

Mr. Foley: At a quarter past four by this clock, the member for Williams-Narrogin was sitting here, and the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) and I were in the Chamber writing when the member for Roebourne (Mr. Butcher) came down and took him out.

The PREMIER: At any rate, the member for Williams-Narrogin was present at the meeting and agreed to submit his name. He heard the whole matter discussed and answered questions which were put to him, and he had given an undertaking to remain behind the Government on the no-confidence motion.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What were the questions put to him?

The PREMIER: There seems to be a desire to cast blame on the Government in connection with this matter. This is the only portion of the statement in the Press alleged to affect the Government, and I indignantly deny that the Government ever sought the hon. member in any way or were at all anxious for him to take the position of Speaker or to hold it until the no-confidence motion had been dealt with. I think I have shown conclusively that such a thought was far from our minds. The fact that other members were approached, including the present Speaker, before a decision was arrived at to nominate Mr. Johnston for the position, is in itself quite sufficient to prove that there is not one vestige of truth in the statement. I am prepared to submit to any

inquiry, so far as the Government are concerned, and to stand or fall by it, but I resent any attempt made by any hon. member on this side or the other side of the House to besmirch the honour of the Government and put a wrong construction upon their actions.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [1.30]: One must be pleased to hear the statement made by the Premier, who declared that there is not a vestige of truth in what has been said. The member for Williams-Narrogin stated that this report was correct, although not a full and complete one. He has charged the Government here in his own words as follows:—"He (the hon. member) did not seek the position in any way (that is the position of Speaker), but the Government had been very anxious for him to hold it until the no-confidence motion was safely past." The Premier has denied that statement. When we come to refer back to the *West Australian* of the 22nd February, we find that, owing to the report published by that paper, they were declared to be guilty of contempt. After refreshing my memory from a perusal of the *West Australian* of that date, I am of opinion that not only should those who are responsible for this other article be highly censured and firmly and strongly dealt with, but that the *West Australian* should be declared not guilty of contempt, because what they say in that report is, on the hon. member's own showing, absolutely true.

Hon. J. Scaddan: We knew it at the time.

Mr. HOLMAN: When we read the report which is now before us, we must admit that the *West Australian* was wrongly condemned. The Minister for Lands (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) will remember the charges that were made in an old case which occurred in 1900. The charges then made were exactly on all fours with those which have been made to-night. The Government of that day had been charged by hon. members with being corrupt. That charge, so far as the present Government are concerned, has been denied. At the time I am speaking of, the then member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) made this charge against the Government, "That the Government were corrupt and rotten to the core." If

the Government did what the member for Williams-Narrogin said they did, these words could be repeated in their case. The Government, however, have denied the charge. Other charges were made at the time by the then member for Geraldton; and other charges are made again to-day by the member for Williams-Narrogin. He made this charge against hon. members, that there should be no more secret contracts, inferring that members were carrying on certain business which was not above board, thus impugning their honesty and integrity. He said further that he had been placed in a position of some difficulty, and had been deserted by certain Liberal members whose words were worth nothing, that they had walked out of the House and refused to vote, and that Mr. S. Stubbs was one of these gentlemen. He has made a direct charge that certain Liberal members of this Chamber were worth nothing, impugning the honour and integrity of members on that side of the House. That is a very serious charge. If an hon. member, making such a charge, cannot prove it, he should suffer for having made a false charge. Then again he says that there have been certain charges made by the *West Australian* newspaper which had come from a very obvious source, that these charges were untrue, and that the editor had to apologise, and that they had been deceived by some member of Parliament. Who is the member of Parliament who has deceived the *West Australian*? We find that the very charge made by the *West Australian* is the charge made by the hon. member himself. There is no difference at all. The charge made by the *West Australian* on the 22nd February is the same as that made by the hon. member in the speech delivered by him in the Wagin district. One must feel sorry to learn that these things have occurred. At 25 minutes past four on the Tuesday it was only decided that the hon. member should occupy the position of Speaker of the House. When I desired to find out whether any action had been taken by this House against the *West Australian*, a proper course of action for Mr. Speaker himself to take, I was named because I insisted on

having that question answered. Now members are charged with being dishonourable and the Government are charged with corruption. Are the Government going to take the proper course of action and hold an inquiry, as was done on the previous occasion I have referred to, or are they going to suffer silently the statement made by the hon. member? There is only one course to be taken and that is for the Government to prove that they are in the right. If the Government are in the right, the hon. member must of necessity be in the wrong.

The Premier: That statement is wrong.

Mr. HOLMAN: If that statement, which the hon. member admitted to be correct---

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I did not admit that statement to be correct.

Mr. HOLMAN: The hon. member also denied that he had sent any communication to the Government, or any member of the Government, which is proved to be absolutely incorrect. In reply to a direct question from me, the hon. member denied that he had sent any communication to the Government, or any member of it. This is not the first time that the hon. member has made a denial which has subsequently been proved to have been incorrect.

Hon. J. Scaddan: He denied having said that he suggested the amendment to anyone.

Mr. HOLMAN: Absolutely. The Premier said that the hon. member came to him and gave him a copy of the amendment which he intended to move. Other hon. members also made that statement.

Hon. P. Collier: He made them withdraw and said it was untrue.

Mr. HOLMAN: From the position which the hon. member then occupied as Speaker, he compelled those hon. members to withdraw. He took advantage of his position and made them withdraw and apologise. This is a matter which should be cleared up in the interests of the public life of the State. The member for Wagin has been charged with being a man whose word is worth nothing.

Mr. S. Stubbs: I would drown myself if that was so.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You ought to be in a lunatic asylum.

Mr. HOLMAN: I have made strong statements myself at times, but have never made

any of that nature. I have always fought for what I considered to be the right side, but never impugned the honour or integrity of any hon. member. The statements which appeared in the article now under discussion are just as serious as were the accusations made by the member for Geraldton in 1900. You, Sir, will remember as well as other hon. members what took place at the time.

The Minister for Works: In connection with Mr. Robson?

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes; the Minister was a member of Parliament at the time. Instead of the matter being passed over then in a few minutes, the question took days to consider in the House.

Hon. P. Collier: What was done?

Mr. HOLMAN: A Committee was appointed to go into the matter and to bring down a report.

Mr. Willmott: This was a charge of bribery and corruption.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Government of that day were charged with being rotten and corrupt. If what has been said about the Government on this occasion be true, then their actions must be rotten and corrupt.

Mr. Willmott: There are a lot of "ifs."

Mr. HOLMAN: The hon. member stated in his speech that this was so. It is suggested that the member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott) made somewhat light of the matter. I maintain that everything possible should be done to have the whole matter investigated and made fully public. I would not like to say that there has been some intriguing on the part of the Government.

Mr. Willmott: That would be wrong.

Mr. HOLMAN: I will say, however, that there has been some coming and going over the question of the Speakership in which the member for Nelson acted as intermediary.

The Minister for Works: There must be someone of that sort.

Mr. HOLMAN: The member for Williams-Narrogin has stated that he did not seek the position of Speaker, but that the Government had been very anxious for him to take it and hold it until the no-confidence motion was safely past. There is something wrong somewhere, as the Premier must admit.

The Premier: There is nothing wrong so far as we are concerned.

Mr. HOLMAN: Well, is there anything wrong in the statement made in the paper?

The Premier: I have told you so.

Mr. HOLMAN: What action is to be taken? On the previous occasion, after some days of debate an inquiry was held, and when the delinquent member found that he could not substantiate his statements, he apologised and resigned his position. The hon. member should take the same stand here. I regret that the necessity for discussing this question should have arisen, especially seeing that many members have been compelled by the ex-Speaker to withdraw and apologise—I myself was wrongfully named—for statements which are now shown to have been correct. I trust the Government will tell us what action they propose to take.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [1.42]: I regret that the hon. member who has just sat down should have by innuendo dragged me into this. Am I responsible for the utterances of other hon. members? The hon. member has suggested that I was intriguing.

Mr. Holman: No. I distinctly said that that was not so, but that you had acted as an intermediary. If the cap fits, you can wear it.

Mr. WILLMOTT: There is no need for the heat. I thought this matter over very carefully when statements were being bandied to and fro. I went carefully into it from the moment it was mooted that the member for Mt. Magnet intended to resign the Speakership. I noted everything down so that my memory would not have to be trusted. Here are the notes.

Mr. Taylor: That is a Press report.

Mr. WILLMOTT: No, it is a statement made by myself. So far as I was concerned, the member for Williams-Narrogin did not come into the argument at all until you, Sir, had definitely refused to take the position of Speaker. I was deputed to offer you that position, and I did so, but much to my regret you decided that you could not accept it. Where, then, is the intrigue? Would any hon. member have the temerity to say that I acted as intermediary to ask

the member for Williams-Narrogin to take that position? Is it a matter of intrigue?

Hon. P. Collier: No.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The position was offered to the present Speaker, but was by him refused. Where is the intrigue?

Mr. Taylor: The intrigue started afterwards.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The statement I then made to the Press is absolutely correct in detail.

Mr. Taylor: How did you come to drop on the member for Williams-Narrogin?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I thought the matter over.

Mr. Taylor: I do not think you gave much thought to it.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I gave it very much thought. The matter was discussed and it was decided that should it become necessary the member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly) should be asked to take the Speakership. However, owing to his experience as Colonial Secretary his services were very necessary to the Government, and it was decided that his appointment should only be made failing any other satisfactory arrangement.

Hon. P. Collier: On what day did you make the offer to the member for Williams-Narrogin?

Mr. WILLMOTT: First of all I discussed it with him two days before I discussed him with the Premier.

Hon. P. Collier: It was after you first discussed it with him that he sent to the Premier the letter regarding his amendment.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I interviewed him as a private individual.

Hon. P. Collier: With some authority; you were deputed by the Government

Mr. WILLMOTT: No, it was afterwards; it was on the Tuesday morning that I was deputed. This was after Mr. Gardiner had refused to accept the Speakership.

Hon. P. Collier: Then you approached the member for Williams-Narrogin before you were authorised to do so?

Mr. WILLMOTT: The question of Speakership is not to be decided lightly, and I went through every name on this side of the House.

Hon. P. Collier: Before you were authorised at all?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes. I hold a responsible position here, and it was my duty as leader of the Country party and a supporter of the Government to pick out the best man to fill the position. The present Speaker is the man who I decided was the man to fill the position.

Hon. P. Collier: Now you are making a ridiculous statement.

The Premier: On Thursday afternoon there was a meeting to suggest a name for the following Tuesday.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member just stated that it was on Tuesday he was authorised.

The Premier: No.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I was authorised by the party on Thursday to confer with the Premier, and to submit a name to the party.

The Premier: In case of a vacancy.

Mr. WILLMOTT: On Tuesday it was a different thing. It was the Ministers then.

Mr. Taylor: The Ministers had then received the note of the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. WILLMOTT: There is no use in trying to put me in a hole, because everything is open and aboveboard, and there is no hole to put me in.

Hon. P. Collier: You are putting yourself in a hole.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Can anything dishonourable be imputed either to the Government or to myself in respect of any action taken in this matter? Everything is open to the light of day. A statement giving all the facts has been published in the *West Australian*. Was the member for Williams-Narrogin rushed to fill the position? You, Mr. Speaker, know that he was not rushed. You know it from the fact that on the Tuesday morning I was deputed to offer the position to you. That fact pulls the sting out of the wasp altogether. I cannot be held responsible for expressions used or statements made by any other member of the House. I was anxious to see the best man in the position. There is the best man now in the position, showing that my judgment was good.

Hon. P. Collier: And the next best man was who?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I thought the next best man was a certain hon. member on this side of the House.

Hon. P. Collier: And the next best man after that?

Mr. WILLMOTT: In my opinion there were four hon. members who could fill the position.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a reflection on all the others.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Not at all. If that were so, I would be reflecting on myself. Had the position been offered to me, I would have refused it, simply because of want of Parliamentary experience. The same consideration debars many members on this side of the House. Others, again, were, in my opinion, too fully occupied to accept the position; business men who could not possibly give the necessary time to the position. Those were the reasons given then, and they are the reasons given now. Very well. I went through the list. I decided that Mr. E. B. Johnston was a fit and proper person then—

Hon. J. Scaddan: Then?

Mr. WILLMOTT: To be offered the Speakership.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Then?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes; after the others. Comparisons are odious; but, after all, everything in this world is comparative.

Hon. J. Scaddan: I was merely emphasising the word "then."

Mr. WILLMOTT: What is the position now? I contend that, whether the member for Williams-Narrogin was right or wrong in speaking as he is alleged to have spoken at Darkan, the question is purely and simply one between himself and the member for Wagin.

Mr. Taylor: No. The honour of this House is in question.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The honour of this House is not touched by anything published in that newspaper.

Mr. Taylor: You cannot convince the House of that.

Mr. WILLMOTT: If I stayed here all night, I am sure I would not convince the member for Mt. Margaret.

Hon. J. Scaddan: The statements for publishing which the *West Australian* was adjudged guilty of contempt, and which it

had to withdraw, and for which it had to apologise, are practically repeated in that report, which the member for Williams-Narrogin says is correct, but incomplete.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I have not heard such a statement made to-night. With regard to reports of speeches in the daily Press, when reading reports of my remarks the next morning I have had to look two or three times to see if my name was really prefixed to the remarks attributed to me.

Hon. J. Scaddan: "The West will not report Willmott."

Mr. WILLMOTT: I would rather the newspapers did not report me than that they should report me as they do sometimes, omitting the points I have tried to make, and putting into my mouth words which I never uttered.

Hon. P. Collier: I think you are very foolish to speak in defence of a member who will not defend himself.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Any action the Government took or that I took in the matter of appointing a Speaker is open to the light of day. There is nothing to be hidden. The statement I published on the 23rd February contains the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Hon. P. Collier: Nobody is making any charge against you. What are you labouring?

Mr. WILLMOTT: My statement makes everything so plain that the statement in this country newspaper does not interest me at all.

Hon. P. Collier: What are you excusing so much about?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am not excusing or accusing. I will stand by every word of my own statement. As regards anything done by myself or by members on this side in the matter, I have a bed of roses to fall on.

Hon. J. Scaddan: I think you will fall into a septic tank.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The members for Williams-Narrogin and Wagin can both fall in the soup, and discuss this thing until the end of time. It does not concern me.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [1.59]: I think members of this House and the public generally will greatly appreciate

the very full statement made to-night by the Premier as to certain happenings.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. SCADDAN: That statement has undoubtedly cleared the air very considerably. But it has done something else. It has shown up the member for Williams-Narrogin in his true colours at last. More than once, during the discussion of this very subject, various hon. members made statements which the then Speaker, in the person of the member for Williams-Narrogin, immediately denied, and, enforcing his right as Speaker, obliged those hon. members to withdraw and apologise for. After the complete statement made by the Premier, it is plain that the assertions which had to be withdrawn and apologised for were absolutely and entirely correct. Here we have further evidence of the tactics adopted by some people for the purpose of covering up their own misbehaviour. The whole position was thrashed out on a previous occasion and the House, while not quite satisfied, was prepared for the better conduct of the business of the Chamber and in the interests of the State to allow the matter to end there. But the member for Williams-Narrogin evidently was not so much concerned about the behaviour of this House nor the proper conduct of the business of the State; he was more concerned about what I may term venting his spleen upon hon. members who had not seen eye to eye with him when he was elected as Speaker, by going to Darkan, in the vicinity of the electorate of one hon. gentleman who had not concurred in the election of Speaker, and there made statements which were not founded on fact and also made it appear to the public that the member for Wagin had been guilty of some dishonourable conduct. It was all very well for the member for Williams-Narrogin to assert that he was not responsible for the statement as it appeared, and that there were certain qualifications which he said had not been published, but I venture to declare that notwithstanding what may be said to the contrary, that speech was deliberately reprinted in the Wagin newspaper with a specific object in view, and that object was to politically and privately undermine the integrity of the member for Wagin in his district. That is

a course of conduct which is unforgivable. When a member of Parliament cannot pursue his duties as a representative of the people on the basis of discussing public questions, without attempting to undermine not only the political, but private standing of an hon. member by indulging in untruths, and making half statements and misstatements, he is guilty of conduct that is not acceptable to members of this House and to the public. In fact the position becomes entirely dangerous. What position do we find the Premier placed in? He found himself compelled to appoint a Speaker and he had to negotiate with members on his side of the House. The negotiations took place at a party meeting and surely it can be expected that one who takes part in the discussions, even though he might not be in accord with the decisions arrived at, would have enough honour and integrity, and would be manly enough, even if happenings arose afterwards which reflected against him, to put his feelings in his pocket and decline, at the risk of being misunderstood, to go back on his colleagues. I would prefer to crack stones on the road rather than go back on a colleague, irrespective of what had happened. If we cannot have an understanding between members and the party without feeling that one of the number when he is piqued over something or other is going to have the whole thing blabbed about, and the honour and integrity of members undermined, what sort of a position are we in? It is absolutely dangerous for anyone to be connected with public life under such conditions. If there is one thing that a member ought to pride himself on, when taken into anyone else's confidence, it is that he is able to keep that confidence even to the extent of being martyred by so doing. A member goes to a party meeting to discuss the course of action that it is intended to take, and having accepted a trust, he is in honour bound to retain the confidence reposed in him at any cost; even at the cost of being misunderstood. I could say of the member for Williams-Narrogin that which would damn him for ever, not only as a member of Parliament, but also in the eyes of the public. But a leopard cannot change its spots, and the hon. member has lived on such methods

ever since he has come under the public limelight. I have warned him that I can give any number of particulars concerning his deeds if he wants them. I can go back some time and I can produce in his own handwriting an indictment of his against the present Minister for Industries in connection with the Narra Tarra estate.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You got me the file to look through.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I did nothing of the kind. I never saw that file in my life.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It was in your office.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: And the information I gave to the House came from the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The leader of the Opposition is going just a little outside the scope of the motion.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I am trying to show the danger of being surrounded by a man of the class of the member for Williams-Narrogin. The Premier has had to suffer him, and while he remains in the House the Premier will have to continue to suffer him in exactly the same manner. I have no hesitation in saying that if the Premier were to give up the leadership of the Government to-morrow and a new Government came into power, and Mr. E. B. Johnston remained a member of the House he would indulge in the same practices for the purpose of undermining whoever might be in power. As a matter of fact he has lived on that sort of thing; it is a form of insanity peculiar to the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must withdraw the word "insanity."

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I did not mean to convey the hon. member was insane, but I will withdraw the word "insanity." After all, Mr. Speaker, we all have a bit of a kink, and the kink of the member for Williams-Narrogin is in the direction I have outlined. I am saying all this for the purpose of causing the member for Williams-Narrogin to look back on his actions. He knows them as well as I know them, and he should ask himself whether it is desirable to pursue a course of action of this kind. If you cannot give a man your hand and ask him to keep your confidence, of what use is he to anybody? My sympathy goes out to the Premier in this matter. There may have

been intriguing, but I know that the member who is responsible for what is occurring to-night was taken into the confidence of all hon. members on the Ministerial side of the House at their meeting, and he should have been the last man in the world to betray that confidence.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It was all published.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It was not all published. The member for Williams-Narrogin wanted to complete it. I have been told that the member in question was prepared, if the Land Bill was not disposed of this session, to use his vote for the purpose of putting the Government out.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You have been told what is wrong.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Do not make any error about it; we know that it is right. That is his kink; that is his method of doing things; all the time he is adopting that sort of attitude. He is a danger and he has no right to be a member of this House. We are here to conduct the public business of the State and if we cannot confer one with the other without being betrayed then the position becomes impossible. The Government remain in charge of the affairs of State largely because the people trust them. When they can no longer be trusted, they have no further right to be in power. While they are in power the necessity arises for the party to hold meetings and if something happens to displease the one member who claims to be an independent, and that member tells the world at large what has transpired, such a man has no right to be present at a party meeting. In this case he was permitted to attend because he gave his word that he would support the Government through thick and thin. Even since this has arisen he makes a speech of that kind, and I hear from a reliable source that he was prepared, if he got the Land Bill through, to help to put the Government out, in order to get even with the head of the Government, who, he thought, had not kept faith with him in keeping him in the Speaker's Chair.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That is entirely your imagination.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I know all about that. I know the hon. member too well. I know of those who have left the State be-

cause of the same sort of business on the part of the hon. member. Probably it would be better if the thing were made public, as some day it may be. I am not concerned as to whether the Government made a stand in the matter or not. I do not care whether the hon. member sits on this side of the House or the other side of the House, I would never rely upon his assurance. That he is not to be trusted in public life is shown by the statements he has made. He tells the public that he holds the balance of power in this Chamber. Some time ago I heard a sermon delivered from a pulpit in Perth on the very same sort of thing. In the course of his remarks the speaker made reference to a statement made by Mr. Cameron, a member of the House of Representatives, who said "I hold the destiny of Australia in the palm of my hand." Now we have the member for Williams-Narrogin saying the same sort of thing. Why, Mr. Cameron takes the position of the Czar in comparison with that of the hon. member. If Parliament is to be carried on by the member for Williams-Narrogin holding the balance of power, God help both parties and the State as well. Knowing the member for Williams-Narrogin as well as I do, I would never, if I could help it, allow him to hold the balance of power, because he would wreck any Government and the State, as he has attempted to wreck the honour and integrity of the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs).

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth) [2.12]: I regret that this unfortunate incident has been revived to-night. As a member of the Chamber who has known the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) for a great number of years, I feel I must express some words showing the respect in which I hold him. He is a personal friend of mine and I had the honour of sitting under him for two years, when, at the time he was in business in Perth, he was elected by the ratepayers of the City to the high and honourable position of mayor, which, in my opinion, is a much higher position than that of Premier of the State. I am pleased to bear my testimony to the hon. member regarding his conduct during the time he held the position of mayor. I never sat under a more honourable man than the hon. member. I am pre-

pared to believe his statement, so far as he can gauge the position to-night. The position is rather a difficult one, but I believe he has conscientiously stated what he felt to be true and correct. I feel that his honour has been somewhat impunged to-night.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: His statements have been supported by the Premier.

Mr. ALLEN: The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) stated that these remarks in the newspaper were condensed. Probably, if they had been more elaborated, they would not have been too favourable to him. Knowing the member for Wagin as I do, and knowing that he has held a high and important position, I am prepared to accept every word he says as being absolutely true so far as his memory serves. I am not going to say anything about the party meeting. The member for Williams-Narrogin said that he had 18 votes, and the member for Wagin had one vote. I did not vote on that occasion because I was not present. Had I been present my vote would have been given to the member for Wagin, whom I know to be an honourable man and one who has enjoyed the confidence of most of the ratepayers of Perth. It would have been very much better if the incident had been left alone. I regret, too, that the occasion for the unveiling of a roll of honour was taken advantage of to revive the incident.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It was a different part of the proceedings.

Mr. ALLEN: I take it, it was in the programme.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It was some time later in the evening.

Mr. ALLEN: It would have been very much better if the hon. member had reserved until some other occasion any remarks he had to make in this connection. I am prepared to accept the statement of the member for Wagin, and to add my testimony to that of others as to his being a gentleman and a man of honour and integrity, and who, though he has not been a very conspicuous figure in the politics of Western Australia, has merited the confidence of the ratepayers of Perth.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [2.17]: I regret the necessity for bringing up this old grievance.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You are as pleased as Punch.

Mr. GREEN: I would not have spoken at all but for the fact that the member for Williams-Narrogin stated that a member of this Chamber had been approached by him and told that it was his desire to move an amendment on the no-confidence motion which was to be moved by the leader of the Opposition. It is well within the memory of members of the Chamber that, when I tried to state that fact, the hon. member who at the time occupied the position of Speaker of the House was the hon. member concerned, namely, the member for Williams-Narrogin, and the power which he was then able to exercise compelled me to withdraw the statement I then made, which was absolutely true.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It was untrue.

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member denies that on the 21st February he approached me, but he afterwards made a statement in the *Daily News* that he had approached me in a jocular vein. He has thus made two distinct statements, but my statement has been absolutely corroborated by the Premier himself. One by one the tissue of fabrications which have come from a certain quarter have in their turn fallen to the ground. Personally, I have no dislike for the hon. member.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You have every reason to thank me.

Mr. GREEN: I only regret that his conduct has been such that, as a decent man myself, I could not have sat in this Chamber so long as he continued to occupy the position of Speaker. We find that, on the Saturday, he asked me to come into the corridor. That was on the 10th February. The hon. member in denying that said the date was the 17th February. He was very anxious to know when the then Speaker was going to resign. I went so far as to tell him, as we were fairly friendly, that the Speaker would not, I thought, from what I knew, resign. He then said, "I have an amendment on the Labour Party's want of confidence motion, which affects my district. You fellows will have to vote for it to be consistent." I said, "Do not make any mistake; there are on our side certain members who would go

to the other side or absent themselves from the Chamber if you brought forward an amendment to the motion." He then said that he wanted to see another member of the Chamber, to ask him to second his amendment. I said that other hon. member was not present. Thereupon the member for Williams-Narrogin went away, but before leaving he asked me to tell the other hon. member that he wanted to see him. This I promised to do. As a matter of fact I did not see that other hon. member. I was writing in the chief messenger's room when the member for Williams-Narrogin came back again and, calling me out, asked me if I would second his amendment *pro forma*. "You need not speak to it," he said, "It will be only necessary to second it." I said, "Before I could do a thing of that kind I would have to consult the party." He said I could consult the party. It will thus be seen that the conversation between the hon. member and myself was not of a private character. I had the permission of the hon. member to consult my party before I took action. Does the hon. member deny that?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Absolutely.

Mr. GREEN: Years ago I saw in the *Bulletin* a statement something like this:—One man said to another "Do you call me a liar"? The other man replied "No, I merely say that when I hear you speak I can hardly bring myself to believe that Ananias and Sapphira died without issue, or that Tom Pepper was a single man." It is unnecessary for me to elaborate the argument with the hon. member across the Chamber. He has been convicted out of his own mouth, and is proved to be utterly untrustworthy. However, I did not get up to prove that, because it is self-evident. My object in rising was to rehabilitate myself in respect of the statement which I was previously made to withdraw. I think I am amply justified in vindicating my honour, and I trust the Chamber will carry the motion.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [2.25]: I am in a quandary. It is to me surprising that the Government have not given any idea of what action they intend to take.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They cannot until we carry the motion.

Mr. MUNSIE: Still the Premier should have given us some intimation of what he would be prepared to do in the event of the motion being carried. We require further evidence than we have. The member for Wagin said he could prove that the member for Williams-Narrogin had sent to the Government a letter threatening that if he did not get the Speakership he would play up.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): No, nothing of the kind.

Mr. MUNSIE: I understood him to say that a letter had been sent. I am sorry if I have misinterpreted the member for Wagin, for I have no intention of discrediting his statement in any way. I am quite prepared to accept it, believing it to be true. However, mention was made of the sending of a letter. The member for Williams-Narrogin, in giving his version, point blank denied that he had ever written a letter to the Government or any member of it. Then the Premier said that he had received a note from the member for Williams-Narrogin to the effect that he intended to move an amendment to the no-confidence motion. The least that can be said of the whole business is that it is fishy and requires clearing up.

Mr. Carpenter: Has not the Premier's statement cleared it up?

Mr. MUNSIE: No, I think not. It behoves the Government to let us know whether they are prepared to hold an enquiry.

Mr. Thomson: Into what took place at the party meeting?

Mr. MUNSIE: No. The member for Wagin has read a newspaper article, and on top of that made certain statements. The member for Williams-Narrogin, who is included in the motion, and against whom the member for Wagin's statements were made, has denied the truth of the statements made by the member for Wagin. Who is telling the truth? An inquiry should be held to find out who is speaking the truth, to sift the whole business. It appealed to me when I heard the Premier give so full and complete a statement of what actually took place. The statements made by the two gentlemen largely coincide with one another. Assuming that the House carries the motion of

the member for Wagin, when the procedure will be for the Government to announce what action they purpose taking; and it is probable they will announce nothing, but simply let the matter drop.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They may do the same as the Federal Government did—let the electors settle it.

Mr. MUNSIE: For the sake of clean politics in Western Australia, I hope the Government will not come out of it as the Federal Government did. That is why I want an indication from some member of the Government. I want to know whether they will pursue the matter further if the motion is carried. Once the vote has been taken, they can simply let the matter drop, and that will be the end of it. Let me warn the Government that if they adopt that course, I shall not speak on one public platform in Western Australia, from the time the House goes into recess until it re-assembles, without stirring up this matter. In the interests of clean politics, in the interests of the honour and integrity of the Government, the matter must be cleared up. It must be cleared up in order that the country may know what sort of members are in this House. If the statements in the article are true, some hon. members assuredly should not sit here. On the other hand, if the member for Wagin proves conclusively that the statements which the member for Williams-Narrogin has never disavowed or disclaimed are incorrect, then the member for Williams-Narrogin should not be here. That is the stand I take. I believe the motion will be carried almost unanimously, and I want an assurance that the Government will not let the matter drop.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin—in reply) [2.33]: I think I have cleared my honour and that of my family, which had been attacked. I think the House will declare that a great wrong has been done, not only to a member of the House, but to the House itself. I thank the Premier for the manly way in which he has explained the position to-night. To my mind he has come out clear, especially in view of the denial of the member for Williams-Narrogin that he had seen the Premier or communicated with

him on the day the hon. member was elected Speaker. In my opinion, it is right that the House should take cognisance of the matter. I could not allow the statements which were published to go unchallenged. Had I done so, I would not have been worthy to hold a seat in this Chamber. I commend my motion to hon. members.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [2.34]: The House having carried the previous motion, and the member for Williams-Narrogin, Mr. E. B. Johnston, having been adjudged guilty of contempt, some further action is necessitated. The editor and publisher of the newspaper were included in the motion; but, since the hon. member, as I understood, when speaking admitted that the article, although condensed, is substantially correct, and that he gave it to the paper, the onus of the article should fairly rest on his shoulders. I would not like to suggest that we should proceed, under our Standing Orders, to instruct the Attorney General to prosecute in the Supreme Court.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Oh, no.

The PREMIER: But I do think this House should leave some record of its strong disapproval of the hon. member's action in giving this contribution to the newspaper. Thus the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) would be cleared of any slur that might attach to him through that publication having been made. Therefore, in order that the House may not have to take further action at a later date, I propose, if hon. members are agreeable, to submit a motion which would convey the sense of the House. I do so with extreme regret, but the duty devolves upon me, as leader of the House, to take some action in the circumstances. I therefore propose for the acceptance of the House the following motion—

That the hon. member for Williams-Narrogin, Mr. E. B. Johnston, having been adjudged guilty of contempt, this House deems him to be deserving of its severest censure.

I think that is only what the House ought to do.

Hon. J. Scaddan: That is treating him under the First Offenders Act.

The PREMIER: The carrying of that motion will leave a record which will for all time clear the member for Wagin of any imputation upon his integrity or his character. It is with extreme regret I have moved the motion.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [2.38]: I am indeed pleased that the Premier, as leader of the House, has thought fit to move this motion. I do not think either the House or the member for Wagin is at all vindictive. The member for Wagin has, however, more than cleared his character. The motion moved by the Premier should be acceptable to every member, including the member for Williams-Narrogin. Had not the Premier moved this motion, the consequences to the member for Williams-Narrogin would have been heavy pains and penalties. The motion, after all, represents the most generous way in which the House can deal with the situation. I support the motion.

Question put and passed.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Message received from the Council notifying that it did not press amendment No. 3 and agreed to the Assembly's modification of amendment No. 4.

ADJOURNMENT—CLOSE OF SESSION.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [2.40]: The business of the session is now concluded and it is my intention to move that the House at its rising adjourn on Wednesday, the 4th April. This will be following the precedent established by my predecessor in office, and in the interval Parliament will be prorogued by proclamation. I am sure hon. members will feel that they have earned some rest after a strenuous and lengthy session.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Will we get it?

The PREMIER: I am afraid not. You, Mr. Speaker, although only a brief period in the Chair, will no doubt appreciate the short period of rest which is to follow the close of this session, and I wish to convey to you my thanks for the way in which you have filled your position since you were appointed. On behalf of members on this

side of the House I desire to thank the officers of the House and the members of the *Hansard* staff who have shown so much attention to our requirements. At times some little heat and temper may have been displayed in connection with the debates, but this was due to the long hours of sitting and the heavy work and the strain which followed. If I have shown my temper unduly I regret it. I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to Wednesday, 4th April.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [2.43]: May I be permitted to echo the sentiments expressed by the leader of the House and to add my thanks to you, Mr. Speaker, and the officers of the House for the assistance rendered to members during a very trying session. This has been one of the longest sessions on record. It has had a break or two, and there have been at times little holes and a few hills. We have earned a rest, but just whether we will get it is another matter. Whatever may happen I sincerely hope when we re-assemble, whether it be in the near future or not, Peace will have been declared, and that notwithstanding the fact that we may suffer somewhat by its declaration, we will suffer readily rather than continue experiencing the difficulties we have been contending against during the state of war. I trust also that when we re-assemble party warfare will have ended.

Mr. SPEAKER [2.48]: Mr. Premier, and the leader of the Opposition: I thank you for the kindly remarks that have fallen from your lips with regard to myself. I have not been in the Chair very long, but I appreciate the fact that amongst members of the House on both sides there has been a sort of conspiracy of kindness and courtesy towards myself. I would also like to thank the officers of the House for their courtesy towards me, and on their behalf would like to thank you both for your kindly expressions towards them. I, too, hope that when we next assemble there will be that in view which will make us hopeful that the war will soon be over.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 2.50 a.m. (Thursday).

Parliament was prorogued by Proclamation issued in a *Government Gazette*, published on Friday, 30th March, 1917, to the 31st May, 1917.

The following notice appeared in the *Government Gazette* of 30th March, 1917:—

Acts of the Parliament of Western Australia, passed during the Third Session of the Ninth Parliament.

An Act to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the sum of Six Hundred and Forty-eight Thousand Pounds, and from moneys to Credit of the General Loan Fund, Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds, to the Service of the Year ending 30th June, 1917; and to apply out of the Public Account the sum of Three Hundred Thousand Pounds for the purposes of temporary advances to be made by the Colonial Treasurer. (17th August, 1916.)

An Act to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the sum of Six Hundred and Forty-eight Thousand Pounds to the Service of the Year ending 30th June, 1917. (16th October, 1916.)

An Act to amend and continue the operations of the Postponement of Debts Act, 1914. (31st October, 1916.)

An Act to further amend the Acts relating to the Property of the Roman Catholic Church (17th November, 1916.)

An Act to further amend the Adoption of Children Act, 1896. (17th November, 1916.)

An Act to declare the purposes to which the Funds raised by the Movement known as "The Western Australian Day for the Sick and Wounded" may be lawfully applied. (17th November, 1916.)

An Act to authorise the granting of Mineral Leases on Reserve A A 1537 (17th November, 1916.)

An Act to facilitate the Execution of Instruments and Powers of Attorney during the present War. (17th November, 1916.)

An Act to amend the Zoological Gardens Act, 1898. (17th November, 1916.)

An Act to further amend the Treasury Bills Act, 1893. (5th December, 1916.)

An Act to validate certain Rates levied by the Nelson Road Board. (5th December, 1916.)

An Act to further amend the Stamp Act, 1882. (5th December, 1916.)

An Act to continue the operation of the Roads Act, 1911, and its amendments. (5th December, 1916.)

An Act to confirm the purchase of the Flinders Bay-Margaret River Railway, and to vest the said Railway in His Majesty. (5th December, 1916.)

An Act relating to the Taxation by the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia of Salaries, Reimbursements and other Moneys paid by the State of Western Australia. (5th December, 1916.)

An Act to authorise the raising of a sum of One million five hundred and thirty-seven pounds by Loan for the construction of certain Public Works and for other purposes and the Re-appropriation of certain Loan moneys. (16th December, 1916.)

An Act to enable a Special Lease to be granted under the Land Act, 1898, on Lake Clifton and Reserve A 998 in the South-West Division of the State, and to authorise the construction of a Railway from Waroona to said Reserve A 998. (5th December, 1916.)

An Act to confer certain Powers on the Government of Western Australia in regard to the Marketing of the Wheat Harvest of the Season 1915-1916, and the next following Season, and for other relative purposes. (5th December, 1916.)

An Act to appropriate and apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund and from Moneys to Credit of the Trusts

Fund and the General Loan Fund and the Public Account certain sums to make good the supplies granted for the Service of the Year ending the thirtieth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and seventeen, and to supplement grants made by the Present Parliament during its last Session in adjustment of the Vote "Advance to Treasurer, 1915-16," for charges during the Year ended the 30th day of June, 1916. (16th December, 1916.)

An Act to amend the Licensing Act, 1911. (2nd December, 1916.)

An Act to amend the Law relating to the Sale of Fermented and Spirituous Liquors, and to prohibit the Sale of Tobacco to young persons. (2nd March, 1917.)

An Act to regulate the Manufacture and Sale of Footwear; and for purposes consequent thereon or incidental thereto. (23rd March, 1917.)

An Act to further amend the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, 1909. (23rd March, 1917.)

An Act to preserve the Franchise to Electors on Service with His Majesty's Forces. (23rd March, 1917.)

An Act to impose a Land Tax and an Income Tax. (23rd March, 1917.)

An Act to amend the Friendly Societies Act, 1894, and its amendments. (23rd March, 1917.)

An Act to amend the Early Closing Act, 1902, and its amendments. (23rd March, 1917.)

An Act to empower the Government to establish and delimit, by Proclamation, Ports and Harbours for the purposes of Ordinances 18 Victoria, No. 15, and 37 Victoria, No. 14, and for other relative purposes. (23rd March, 1917.)

An Act to facilitate the Treatment of Mental Disorder of recent origin arising from Wounds, Shock, and other causes. (28th March, 1917.)

An Act to enable a Special Lease to be granted under the Land Act, 1898,

of a portion of the Stirling Estate; to authorise the construction of a Railway from the demised land to Capel on the South-Western Railway, and to enable a License to be issued to the Lessee to dredge for Shell in the estuary of the Swan River. (28th March, 1917.)

An Act for the Restriction of Horse Racing and Trotting. (28th March, 1917.)

An Act to regulate the establishment, carrying on, and management of Trading Concerns by the Government of the State, and to authorise the continuance or disposal of certain Trading Concerns, and for other relative purposes. (28th March, 1917.)

An Act to consolidate and amend the Law relating to the Protection of Life and Property from Fire. (28th March, 1917.)

An Act to amend the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907. (28th March, 1917.)

An Act to further amend the Agricultural Bank Act. (28th March, 1917.)

An Act to further amend the Industries Assistance Act, 1915. (28th March, 1917.)

An Act to authorise the issue of Treasury Bonds or Inscribed Stock to provide for the Deficiency of the Consolidated Revenue Fund up to the thirtieth day of June, 1916, and for purposes incidental thereto. (28th March, 1917.)

An Act to enable the Augustine Congregational Church of Bunbury (Incorporated) to sell and dispose and make use of Bunbury Town Lot Number 318, freed from the trusts and restrictions affecting the same, and to apply the proceeds of any sale or disposal of the property for the purposes of the said Church and for other relative purposes. (28th March, 1917.)

An Act to further amend the Land Act, 1898. (28th March, 1917.)

G. F. HILLMAN,
Clerk of the Parliaments.
29th March, 1917.