

and the general, in his capacity as Director of Social Work.

I come now to recent history, with which most members are moreover less familiar. At meetings on the 8th January, 1929, and the 13th February, 1929, the High Council, created by the deed of 1904, by resolution, decided that General William Bramwell Booth was, owing to ill-health, no longer fit to carry on, and they thereupon removed him from that position and appointed Edward John Higgins to take his place. Edward John Higgins accepted the position and then a few months afterwards, on the 16th June, 1929, the death took place of William Bramwell Booth.

That is a resume of the preamble and we now come to the operative parts of the Bill, which are simply designed to vest in trustees the property in Western Australia, which, at the moment, is vested either in the general, as general, or in the general, as Director of Social Work. The trustees will number not fewer than five or more than seven, and they will be persons appointed by the general of the Salvation Army for the time being. The trustees are to have the custody of the common seal, and three trustees are to form a quorum at meetings. They will have the same powers with reference to the property vested in them as were previously vested in the general, as general, or in the general, as Director of Social Work. Those powers will enable them to borrow, mortgage, sell, and deal with the proceeds of sales. The Bill also contains provisions requiring the trustees to keep minutes and to keep a register of land, and power is given to the general to remove trustees and appoint new trustees. Those are the ordinary powers conferred by a Bill creating trustees of property. By Clause 22, the Registrar of Titles and the Under Secretary for Lands respectively are directed to take notice of the effect of this measure and, on application, they must cause alterations to be made in the register setting forth the vesting of property in the trustees and the divesting of it from the general. Acts practically identical with this Bill have already been passed in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and Tasmania, and one is expected to be passed in South Australia. If desired, I can give further information on the respective clauses when the Bill is in Committee. In that connec-

tion, the local solicitors—Messrs. Stone, James and Co.—have given me lengthy explanations and hon. members may peruse them if they so wish. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 9.1 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 10th November, 1931.

	PAGE
Questions : Land Act, Report of special committee...	5119
Lake Carnody settlers	5125
Motion : Urgency, Referendum on secession ...	5120
Bills : Loan (No. 2), £2,450,000, 1R.	5125
Land Act Amendment (No. 2), 2R.	5125
Vermion Act Amendment (No. 2), returned ...	5152
Annual Estimates : Votes and Items discussed ...	5152
Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief	5152

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

QUESTION—LAND ACT.

Report of Special Committee.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands: Will he lay on the Table of the House the report of the special committee, composed of Mr. Courtney, Mr. Pellow and Mr. Drake-Brockman who advised him in respect of the matters contained in the Land Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) now before the House.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: I have no objection to these papers being laid on the Table of the House.

MOTION—URGENCY.*Referendum on Secession.*

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received from Mr. McCallum the following letter under date 10th November, 1931:—

I desire to advise you that it is my intention at this day's sitting of the House to move "That the House do now adjourn" under Standing Order 47 (a) to draw attention to the action of the Electoral Department in calling for voluntary assistants to man the polling booths for a vote on secession.

Before that motion can be entertained it will be necessary for seven members to rise in their places.

Seven members having risen in their places.

HON. A. MCCALLUM (South Fremantle) [4.35]: I desire to draw the attention of the House to the following circular, dated the 2nd November, 1931, which appears above the signature of Mr. H. Gordon, the Chief Electoral Officer:—

There is a probability in the near future of legislation being introduced whereby a referendum will be taken of electors on the question "Are you in favour of Western Australia withdrawing from the Federation?"

From many places in the State offers have been made by members and officers of local institutions to render their services free in the event of the referendum being submitted to the electors. The full extent of that free assistance is not yet known, but I deem it advisable to address you on the question of whether or not you are prepared to conduct the poll on the understanding that you will receive no payment for your services as returning officer, and furthermore, to advise me whether in your opinion those officers who are usually assisting with you at elections, and those you deem necessary for the proper conduct of an election, would also be prepared to act in an honorary capacity.

In some cases there would be out of pocket expenses, but even those would only be considered where it was thought the expense was unavoidable.

I, personally, would welcome any assistance or suggestions you may offer which would guarantee the conduct of the referendum with the same efficiency as is displayed by you and your staff at an ordinary State election.

In submitting the proposal contained herein for your consideration, it has occurred to me that the returning officers may desire to consult among themselves on the subject, and so far as those who are resident within the metropolitan area are concerned, I will be in attendance at the Electoral Office, 62 Barrack Street, at 5 p.m. on Monday, 9th November, to give any information or supply any explanation which might assist the returning officers in arriving at a decision. The majority

of the officers are resident in country, gold-fields and northern areas, and although they would not of course be bound by any decision of those situated in the metropolitan area, no doubt they would in a measure, be guided by the conclusions of the suggested meeting.

It is realised that there are many electorates in which the organising of a staff for an election creates a greater amount of work than in others owing to the size and inaccessibility of some of the districts.

This seems to me a most objectionable circular. The first objection I take is that a move is being made by a Government official to set up machinery to deal with a question upon which Parliament has not yet been consulted. It is a deliberate insult to Parliament. There is no item on the business sheet of this House dealing with any referendum as to whether Western Australia shall withdraw from the Federation. Yet here is a circular going out from a Government official stating that legislation will shortly be introduced, and seeking to create a machine to deal with an issue that, so far, has not even been before Parliament. It is not treating the House with common courtesy, nor even with decency, for a Government official to act in this way. According to this morning's Press two meetings have been held. One was held last night, and the report states that arrangements will be finalised shortly, in accordance with this circular, to staff the booths with volunteer officers. I find it hard to believe that the Chief Electoral Officer has acted on his own initiative; I cannot conceive that a Government official would take this action without direction from his Minister. I do not think any man would shoulder the responsibility of stepping out and calling for volunteers to conduct a referendum, altering the existing custom, shattering the practice that has obtained ever since elections have been held in this country, and introducing a new idea which is surrounded by all sorts of dangers—I cannot believe that a Government official would take such steps without having had directions from his Minister. It appears to me the Chief Electoral Officer must have received directions from his Minister to take this action, else he would never have adopted such a serious course. If the Minister has directed the Chief Electoral Officer to man the booths by volunteers, to alter the existing custom and get away from the practice that has obtained in all elections since the granting

of responsible Government, what is behind it? Why was such a suggestion ever put up? Why break away from the established practice of putting in charge of the booths men who are paid for their services so that they shall be trustworthy? Why is all that discarded and, according to the circular, a system introduced under which only such out-of-pocket expenses as are absolutely unavoidable shall be allowed? These men will even be expected to meet their own out-of-pocket expenses on the day, unless the department decides otherwise. There can be only one reason prompting the Government—for, I assume the Government have directed the Chief Electoral Officer to take this move—and that is to meet the argument which they know will be put forward, and which is a substantial argument against the taking of this proposed referendum, namely, that the expenditure incurred must be a pure waste of money. That is inevitable. The Government know that the expenditure on such a referendum will be a sheer waste of money, and in order to meet that argument they wish to be in a position, when the Bill comes down, to say the booths will be voluntarily staffed. What else could have prompted the Government to take this step?

Mr. Withers: Voluntarily staffed by partisan officers.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Some time ago the Secession League made, through the Press, a public offer to man the booths, to provide the labour for the booths, so that it would not cost the State anything. Now the Government step in and adopt the suggestion. Or are we to understand that the Government are obeying the dictates of the Secession League? Still there is the fact that some time ago the league publicly offered to man the booths without expense, and now here is this circular going out from the Chief Electoral Officer, and the report in this morning's newspaper to the effect that the arrangements would shortly be finalised. They must have been well on the road before Parliament heard anything about it. This is also being done behind the backs of the people. What will be the position? The department call for volunteers to man the booths. Who are likely to be sufficiently enthusiastic and patriotic to volunteer their services, give up a whole day, and meet their own out-of-pocket expenses subject to the

approval of the department? There can be only one answer, namely, that the booths will be manned by strong partisans. No one is likely to lose a day's pay, to meet his own out-of-pocket expenses and his own costs in order to conduct this election unless he is really enthusiastic and strongly partisan towards the secession movement.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It takes more than a day to organise an election.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: If it is proposed that these people shall do all the work, it will certainly take them more than a day. Before he makes a sacrifice of this kind, a man would have to be a dyed-in-the-wool secessionist, as well as a strong partisan. To what is this likely to lead? We are to have men in charge of the booths whose convictions carry them so far that they are going to give up their time and their money to carry out the work? I do not want to suggest that one section of the community is more liable to corruption than another. It will be seen where this will lead to. The situation is open to all sorts of corruption. Any number of votes can be rendered informal. If it is suspected that a man is voting other than as a secessionist, it is the easiest thing in the world to make the vote null and void. There is a wide scope for corruption in a polling booth. That has been realised by every country that carries on elections. It is always held in this country, as the most essential feature of our elections, that booths shall be staffed by independent men. No one the department suspects of being a partisan will be permitted to hold office in a booth. If there is anyone associated with any of the political parties, he will have no hope of getting a position in a booth.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is the law that this cannot be done.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Men have come to me who wanted a job during election time. If they went to the department with a note from me it would be enough to rule them out. The department would think that, if they knew one who was prominently connected with the Labour movement as I have been, he must of necessity have some association with the Labour Party. The mere fact that he had a note from me would be enough to sign his death warrant so far as a job for the Electoral Department was concerned. This work, however, is to be confined to people who are strong partisans.

What a farce it will be to hold such an election? Once the principle is adopted, even though it be for what may be termed—I do not agree with it—a non-party issue, once it is introduced into a contest, it will be cited as a precedent, and Heaven knows where it will end. There are parts of the world where a great deal of suspicion surrounds elections, where the party machine has been built up to cope with corruption, where people specialise in that sort of thing and there are experts to handle it. I hope we are not going to introduce such a system as that into Western Australia. It is the duty of the department, the Government, and the Minister in charge to see that the election is carried out by impartial men, that it is impartially administered, and that there is no breath of suspicion of partisanship surrounding the contest. To save a paltry £4,000, by running all this risk, the action would be most dangerous, ill-advised and indefensible on the part of the Government. I cannot conceive that the Chief Electoral Officer has done this without Ministerial authority. I view the move with a great deal of abhorrence. There are channels for all sorts of corruption, for work that will interfere with future contests, and undermine the confidence and trust that are now held in local elections. I hope the Government will see their way to stop this business altogether, that the Electoral Department will be told that the ordinary custom which has been built up shall continue, and that the people are given an assurance that whatever contest is held will be held free from any likelihood of partisanship so that an impartial decision may be given. Some explanation should be made by the Government as to why this has gone so far, and why the department have taken these steps without the knowledge of Parliament. The circulars have gone out and meetings have been held, but we have known nothing about them. The whole thing is most unsavoury. For that reason I feel strongly about it, and move—

That the House do now adjourn.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.53]: This is the first we have seen of the circular. The House directed that a Bill should be introduced for the taking of a referendum. This measure will be brought down in a few days. I agree with the member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum) that the

taking of any referendum ought to be a serious matter and not lightly undertaken. I do not, however, agree that the man who is getting a guinea a day is likely to be more honest than he who does the work free of charge. Scrutineers spend days in counting and are perfectly honest, not because they are paid for the work, but because they take the responsibility of doing the job. It will cost about £5,000 to take a vote on this question. That is usual when so many polling booths have to be manned. I have not previously heard of this circular. I assure the hon. member that when the vote is taken it will be beyond suspicion. When the Bill comes down members will have an opportunity of deciding whether it shall pass or not. Many offers of free services came from road board members in this State, if it were thought wise to employ such people. The Government have not yet decided whether these offers can be entertained.

Hon. P. Collier: I should hope they would not be.

The PREMIER: Not for the reason given by the member for South Fremantle.

Hon. P. Collier: No doubt you could get every polling booth manned by partisans, but that is no reason why the offers should be accepted.

The PREMIER: No polling booth is ever manned by a presiding officer who does not vote for either one party or the other.

Mr. Panton: He has not got a vote.

The PREMIER: Of course he has, and he does vote.

Hon. P. Collier: He is not there if he is associated with any political body.

The PREMIER: Not if he is closely associated with some organisation, but surely his views are fairly definite in regard to one party or the other. This, however, does not make him less honest. I do not think every man who votes for my friends opposite is dishonest, and I hope they do not think those who vote for our side are dishonest. We can trust the great bulk of the people that they will be honest on these occasions. Even if the offer has been made of free services in connection with the referendum, the matter has not yet been determined. It would be most difficult to man polling booths by people who acted in a voluntary way. It is not possible to have one half of the people paid and the other half not paid. It certainly is a temptation to

save money in the taking of the vote, but I am afraid, no matter how willing the people are to give their services, it would not be possible to accept them. No doubt some people would be willing to do the work, and I do not think, if members opposite knew those people, they would raise any objection to them. I have not yet discussed the taking of the referendum, and nothing has been decided. It would be impossible to accept the services of volunteers in some places, and pay men at other places. I hope the hon. member will be satisfied that the Government have not decided to adopt this system. The Bill is not yet before the House, but a resolution was carried directing that it should be introduced. I hope the member for South Fremantle will withdraw his motion.

HON. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.1]: I view the action of the Chief Electoral Officer in a serious light. I am unable to understand why any officer occupying such a responsible position should of his own initiative circularise the men who usually occupy positions in polling booths, with a view to obtaining their labour free of cost. It is a most extraordinary action for any officer to take. A motion favouring the taking of a referendum has been carried in this House, it is true; but this House does not constitute Parliament. Motions carried here, or Bills introduced here, do not necessarily become law. Parliament consists of two Houses, not of one House. There is no guarantee that any action taken by this Chamber will be endorsed in another place. I accept the Premier's assurance that this is the first the Government have heard of the matter. It would appear that some move has been made by the Secession League.

The Premier: No. This is due to a misunderstanding.

Hon. P. COLLIER: As has been stated, some months ago there was a declaration by that body that the cost of taking the referendum would be infinitesimal, because they could guarantee voluntary labour for the taking of a poll. After an announcement of that kind being broadcast, it is rather an extraordinary coincidence that the officer in charge of the department should take steps in the direction of accepting the offer apparently made by the league. That is what it amounts to. The

first thing we know about it is that the matter is to be finalised in a day or two. If Parliament decides upon the taking of a referendum, surely the Government will not consider the cost too great. If, as we are told, there is an 80 per cent. majority in favour of secession, and if the carrying of the referendum will get us out of Federation, and if once out of Federation Western Australia will experience a flow of prosperity ending all its financial troubles, surely the cost of achieving this marvellous result can be borne by the State. Are we to be dependent on voluntary labour to free us of all these shackles? I should think not. The taking of a referendum on this matter is not less important than the holding of a general election. In fact, it is infinitely more important. Now, we do not ask for voluntary labour in connection with general elections. It is an accepted principle that the State pays all the expenses necessarily incurred in a general election. And not less should that be the case here. The report states—

It appears that finality on the matter under discussion was not reached, but will be sought in a few days. A questionnaire to define out-of-pocket expenses, and raising such questions as polling arrangements and the efficiency of a poll staff of inexperienced people or enthusiastic secessionists who give their labour voluntarily, had been prepared for submission to yesterday's meeting.

An inefficient staff of inexperienced people or enthusiastic secessionists who give their labour voluntarily is to be considered. I have no doubt that we could conduct every general election without any cost whatever to the State. There would be any number of political partisans, belonging to any and every party, ready to man the polling booths gratuitously.

The Premier: I think you would have a job to find them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. There would be any number of them. I remember that at an election of mine, in one polling booth, in the Town Hall of Boulder, there were eight tables at which the elector could get his ballot paper. Thus there were eight presiding officers in addition to the general returning officer. At one table alone of the eight there were 50 informal votes, because the presiding officer at the table failed to initial the ballot papers. It was well known that that presiding officer was an out-and-out opponent of mine.

The Premier: Was he paid?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. No fewer than 50 times did he issue a ballot paper uninitialled, because he knew the particular elector was going to vote for me. It is the easiest thing in the world to make votes informal. I have no doubt that, in addition to manning the booths, Mr. Watson, if the Chief Electoral Officer would stand aside, would be ready to take the whole of the votes.

Mr. Marshall: But he would not do it for nothing.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have no doubt whatever that Mr. Watson would be quite willing to take charge of the department and do the whole of the work gratuitously with enthusiastic supporters of secession.

Mr. Marshall: His enthusiasm is measured by what he gets out of the thing.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope this is the last we shall hear of the affair. To me it seems extraordinary that it has proceeded so far.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth) [5.8]: I think the House is entitled to have my personal assurance that the circular was not authorised by me, and that I was not aware it had been issued. I also wish to say that the House can be perfectly satisfied that whatever has been done by the Chief Electoral Officer has been done perfectly honestly.

Hon. P. Collier: Very foolishly.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: He is a most keen and efficient officer, whose honour is completely beyond reproach. Perhaps this has arisen because he is always anxious to be well ahead of his work. Having heard or seen that there was some suggestion of this referendum, he has taken time by the forelock and sent out this circular, so that any information which might be asked for would be available.

Mr. Corboy: It was a very foolish action.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I wish to make inquiries before I join in any condemnation of what has happened. The House can rest assured that the mistake was perfectly innocent, and that the Secession League have had nothing whatever to do with the matter.

Hon. P. Collier: They offered to do the work free.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, I have seen that. I can assure the House that the league have not got me.

Mr. Corboy: They knew it was no use tackling you, and so they tackled the officer.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum) was justified in raising the matter, but I hope he will be satisfied with having done so.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [5.11]: I welcome the explanations given by the Premier and the Attorney General, but they only go to show that a most extraordinary proceeding has taken place on the part of the Chief Electoral Officer. The sending-out of a circular of that nature without first consulting the Minister is highly extraordinary. I am glad to know that the Attorney General is going to make inquiries into the matter; but I consider that before the motion is withdrawn, the House should receive an assurance that the Chief Electoral Officer will be instructed that Parliament is not likely to endorse the conducting of an important ballot such as this by honorary labour. I do not wish to repeat what has already been said regarding the danger of such a course, and how undesirable conditions could be introduced. Those features, I believe, are perfectly appreciated by the Attorney General. I think the hon. gentleman should give an assurance that negotiations by the Chief Electoral Officer for the obtaining of any honorary labour will cease, and that the officer in question shall not be encouraged to proceed any further in the matter. The Attorney General will appreciate how undesirable it is to introduce anything of this kind into the department. Already it has gone to the extent of meetings being held, with the result of possible differences of opinion among the officers of the department. One man may not be prepared to give honorary labour, while the other man may be so prepared. Thus there is immediately a difference of opinion arising within the department, where the utmost unanimity ought to prevail. The whole affair is to be regretted, and I trust the Attorney General will assure the House that no further negotiations in the matter will take place.

HON. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle—un rep.y) [5.15]: I am pleased to have had the explanations of the Premier and the Attorney General. I would not for a moment suggest that the Attorney General is influenced by the Secession League, but I suggest to him that it is advisable to inquire whether the league have been in communication with the department. If they are attempting to interfere with the working of the department, the Attorney General should lay down pretty definite instructions. All the talk in the Press goes to show that the league are anxious to take charge of the whole electoral machine. That would be most unsafe. We all know the Attorney General's views on the question of secession, and I am sure the House would not for a moment accuse him of being a party to this; but if the Premier has laid down strictly as regards the cost—

The Premier: No.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That might be the explanation.

The Premier: I merely inquired as to the cost.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: If the Premier laid it down that only costs that were absolutely unavoidable must be incurred, that may be the explanation of the matter.

The Premier: That is not so; but surely one must discuss costs.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That is all very well, but perhaps the hon. gentleman conveyed that impression.

The Attorney General: I have no doubt that the Chief Electoral Officer got it into his head that the referendum must be taken as cheaply as possible.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: It is extraordinary that the affair should be published in the Press while the members of the Government knew nothing about it. As I said in opening, it is hard to conceive that the Attorney General would take such action. I hope the hon. gentleman will make strict inquiries to ascertain where the initiative came from. I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

QUESTION—LAKE CARMODY SETTLERS.

Mr. BROWN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is it the intention of the Government, in view of Dr. Teakle's report regard-

ing the Lake Carmody area, to transfer settlers, if they so desire, to other blocks in time for next season's cropping? 2, If not, will the Government define the policy they intend to follow regarding those settlers?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No. 2, The matter will be further considered when negotiations now proceeding with the Commonwealth are completed.

BILL—LOAN (No. 2) (£2,450,000).

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th October.

HON. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.16]: The Bill requires careful examination before it finally passes all stages in this House, if, indeed, it reaches finality in that direction. The Bill contains three important amendments of the Land Act, one of which embodies a principle entirely new to legislation in Australia, so far as I am aware. For that reason alone, irrespective of whether we agree or disagree with the principle, the Bill should be carefully scrutinised before we endorse its provisions. There are few people in the State who will not agree that the pastoral industry is suffering at present because of the great fall in the prices of wool and stock. As a matter of fact, the industry has been suffering considerably from the effects of decreased prices for some time past. That will be acknowledged by everyone. It is also a fact that, so far as I know, the pastoralists, as a section of the community, have asked the Government for very little assistance, if any at all. It must be remembered that the pastoralists enjoyed many years of good prices. It is questionable whether during those years, the pastoralists carried out the improvements that might have been attended to, or took advantage of high prices in order to build up the quality and breeding of their herds and flocks. In addition to the pastoralists who are in the State, there are quite a num-

ber of absentee holders of pastoral leases, and they also have had the benefit of good prices for many years past, and I have been informed—I have no first-hand knowledge myself—by those who know the North-West well, that on the holdings of those absentee owners very little has been done by way of improvements either to the properties themselves or in respect of the quality of the stock. The Minister informed the House that he had appointed a committee to investigate this question, and as a result of their recommendations, the principle of increasing or reducing rents, based on the rise or fall in the price of wool, had been introduced. I do not want to criticise the committee, but it was more or less a departmental body. Two of the members of the committee are departmental officers, one of whom only is known to me. I am aware that he is a very capable and conscientious officer. The third member, so the Minister informed us, has had some lengthy association with one of the banks of this State and has now retired. I am not in a position to say what the qualifications of the members are to warrant them making the recommendations that the Minister has embodied in the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: The committee went through the reports of the Royal Commission and others.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. I shall have something to say about that presently. The principle adopted was, taking 1s. as the basis of calculation for the price of greasy wool, to increase or decrease the rentals 6 per cent. for every rise or fall of 1d. per lb. in the price of greasy wool, with a maximum increase and minimum decrease of 30 per cent. That is to say, when wool reaches 1s. 5d. per lb., the rental will be increased by 30 per cent., but should the price of wool go beyond that figure, there will be no further increase in the rent beyond 30 per cent.

The Minister for Lands: Unless altered by reappraisalment.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. Should wool increase in price to 1s. 6d. or 1s. 8d. per lb., the increase in rental will not go beyond the 30 per cent. that I have indicated will be reached when wool is 1s. 5d. per lb. On the other hand, should the price of wool fall to 7d. a lb., there will be a reduction of rental by 30 per cent. I think the pastor-

alists have it both ways there because, while there is a possibility—I hope it will even-tuate—of wool going beyond 1s. 5d. per lb.—

The Minister for Agriculture: That is, the average price.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am speaking of average prices; that is referred to in the Bill. I do not say that there is much probability of the price of wool going beyond 1s. 5d. on the present outlook, but, on the other hand, there is no possibility of it falling below 7d. per lb.

The Minister for Lands: It has been below 7d. a lb.

Hon. P. COLLIER: By how much?

The Minister for Lands: You will remember it when you were much younger. I think it reached 4½d. a lb.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but that was when the prices of butter, eggs, wool and everything else were very low indeed. Those prices were left behind with our youth, and, like our youth, I am afraid will never return. Let us hope so.

The Minister for Agriculture: Wool was approaching 7d. a lb. two sales ago.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but that was not the price for the year. Some prices may have reached as low as 7d. a lb., but, speaking from memory, the average was—

The Minister for Lands: For last year, 8d. a lb.

Mr. Angelo: At the first sales in Sydney this year the average was 6½d. per lb., and at Adelaide 5½d. per lb.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That was the average at the sales, not for the season. The figures I have referred to represent the average for the year, not for one or more sales. Of course, I am aware that in respect of the Kimberley leases, where cattle are mainly dealt with, the reductions shall be 40 per cent. in the eastern division, and 20 per cent. in the western part. The Minister said that the committee had made exhaustive investigations, consulted, through evidence, all the interests concerned, and the Bill was the result of their recommendations. We have had no information as to the extent of the committee's investigations. Did they confine themselves entirely to reading reports, or did they take evidence from people interested and having a knowledge of the subject? The Minister did not give us any information on that point. What

was the extent of the committee's investigations and who was consulted? Did they consult the pastoralists concerned, and ask them for their opinions, or did they confine their investigations to the reports? I know there are some most voluminous reports in the possession of the department.

Mr. Angelo: I hope they saw some of the account sales of the cattle owners; that would have been illuminating for them. They showed losses on sending down their cattle.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know.

Mr. Angelo: I have seen the accounts.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not criticising the committee, but at present the House is not in possession of any information regarding the investigations carried out. Yet the Bill has been framed on the recommendations of the committee. In view of the fact that we are asked to adopt a very important principle, which is a vital departure from any hitherto adopted—

The Minister for Lands: Is it not sound?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I cannot say whether it is or it is not, but before we adopt such a new principle, even though it may appear sound—it must be remembered that we have often approved of what has appeared to be sound, but has subsequently proved to be unsound—we should have further information. Did the committee call any witnesses? We do not know. Did the committee invite evidence? If witnesses were called, who were they? To what extent did their evidence influence the committee? In respect of all the things I have mentioned we ought to have information, particularly as the Minister has stated that the Bill is based entirely on the investigations made by this committee and on their recommendations. That being so, we should be informed as to the extent of the investigation, and as to how thorough and full was the information available to the committee. If we knew all the facts, we might be able to determine whether this is the fairest way by which the rentals shall be reduced. The House is not able to judge whether the basis of 1s. per lb. for greasy wool is the proper one. It may be too high. In the opinion of the committee, nothing less than 1s. per lb. for greasy wool will enable the industry to be carried on profitably. What information was available to the committee that enabled them to reach the conclusion that nothing

less than 1s. per lb. would make the growing of wool profitable? Information might be available that 1s. would be sufficient to achieve that end. We do not know. The basis of 1s. per lb. and an increase or decrease of 6 per cent. based on a rise or fall of 1d. per lb. may be more than is justified in the circumstances. On the other hand it may not be sufficient. Maybe the industry cannot be successfully carried on even under the concessions contained in the Bill.

Mr. Angelo: I think if evidence were taken we would find that the cost was more than 1s.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Rather than see the pastoral industry decline, I would be prepared to give a greater measure of assistance, if necessary, because I realise the great importance of maintaining our pastoral areas on a profitable basis. I have no doubt the committee satisfied themselves that it was a fair basis, but we do not know the evidence upon which they came to that conclusion. Without reflecting upon any member of the committee, I have not quite the same confidence in a departmental committee as I have in an outside committee entirely free and untrammelled. From my experience of departmental committees, they sometimes give findings in accordance with the desires of the Minister or of the Government. That sort of thing is not unknown, and therein lies the danger. They are bound to have a knowledge of the opinions of the Minister or of the Government, and there is such a thing as unconscious bias. They might unconsciously make a finding in accordance with the views of the Minister. Two members of the committee are unknown to me, and I am not aware whether they are qualified or not. The Minister stated that the 1s. per lb. basis of the calculation was arrived at as a result of evidence secured by the committee, who were of opinion that such evidence was in general agreement that 1s. per lb. was the lowest figure which would enable sheep stations to be worked at a profit. I have no doubt that that was the opinion of the committee, but two questions arise. What was the evidence, its range, and by whom given? What were the qualifications of the committee to form a judgment? I think the committee would have needed access to balance sheets and profit and loss accounts over a number of years, and only by having that information

in the fullest degree could they be sure of the basis of 1s. per lb. for their calculation I am sorry that the Minister has not been able to give us fuller information on the point.

The Minister for Lands: I am sorry now that I did not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Without questioning the thoroughness or the qualifications of the committee, I must say we are asked to accept and swallow their recommendation *holus bolus* without knowing on what it is based. That might be all right on ordinary questions, but in this instance we are making such a great departure from past practice that we cannot have too much information. The concession does not apply to the South-West; it applies only to the North-west division. If we take a line from Northampton right through the Murchison and include the goldfields and all the agricultural areas lying to the south, we find that there are approximately 6½ million sheep in that area, whereas in the area that will be benefited by the Bill there are only about 3¼ million. Those are the latest figures I have been able to get. Consequently there are only about half the number of sheep in the area to which the Bill will apply, as against the rest of the State, which will not receive any benefit.

Mr. Angelo: Are there any pastoral leases down here?

Hon. P. COLLIER: There are pastoral leases on the goldfields.

Mr. Angelo: They will be included.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not think so.

The Minister for Lands: Only the South-west division is excluded.

Hon. P. COLLIER: My reading is that the leases on the goldfields will not be included.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Bill does not include them, and the Minister did not convey that they would be included.

The Minister for Lands: Yes I did.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I read your speech and I could not see it.

Mr. Angelo: It would be manifestly unfair to excise the Eastern Goldfields.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It will not embrace all the growers of sheep.

The Minister for Lands: Not those on freehold.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Or those on conditional-purchase holdings.

The Minister for Lands: They are in a different position.

Hon. P. COLLIER: All those people who have been engaged in mixed farming in agricultural areas have felt the fall in the prices of wool and sheep severely. I do not know what relief they are getting. I shall not oppose the second reading, but I think the Bill is of sufficient importance to be referred to a select committee. If a select committee took evidence from the members of the committee and called other evidence to satisfy themselves of the merits of the Bill, a recommendation could be made to the House that would be accepted in better spirit than is possible when we have no real inside knowledge of the subject. I have no desire to delay the Bill, but I should think that a select committee would not need much time to examine it. A week or two would be quite sufficient. A few witnesses might be called and a recommendation framed which would give us more confidence in the basis of 1s., and satisfy us whether it is likely to meet the circumstances.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is a question whether this is the best method of giving relief.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The whole question is whether some other method should not be adopted. I feel sure all will agree that relief is necessary.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Hear, hear!

Hon. P. COLLIER: But this proposal may give more relief than is required, or may not give as much as is required. Further, it may not be the best way of giving relief.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [5.40]: I should like to preface my remarks by saying how much I regret the absence from the House this afternoon of the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale), who represents one of the North-West constituencies, and is greatly interested in the pastoral industry. The hon. member and I have sat in this Chamber for over 14 years, having been elected at the same time, and we have been regarded to some extent as two of the four members representing the pastoral industry. Members who have sat in the House for some time will know that never before this occasion have we been compelled to ask for relief for the pastoralists. We have taken many opportunities to support requests for relief for farmers and others, and I assure the House that it goes against the grain of the pastoralists to have to ask for

this relief, as well as against the grain of members representing them to have to voice their requests by supporting the Bill. Unfortunately the time has come when some relief must be given to keep the industry going. I was delighted to hear the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. He said that relief is necessary. That being acknowledged, I feel a great deal safer in making the remarks I propose to make. Everyone knows that for many years the cattle growers of East Kimberley have experienced very parlous times. Those who have kept going must have been living under very poor conditions, because the prices they have received for their cattle at the Wyndham Meat Works could not have left them anything more than enough to scratch along on. Every member knows, or should know, that it takes five years before a beast can be made ready for the market, and that a grower obtains only about 10 per cent. of marketable bullocks from his herd. In fact he is lucky if he gets that percentage. For a number of years the average price received by the grower at the Wyndham Meat Works has approximated £4 per head, and from this return the producer has to pay all his station expenses, the maintenance of his whole herd and the expense of droving. In addition he has to pay his land rents. He has not been able to pay much in the way of income tax. It will be realised, therefore, that he has very little, if anything, left to provide any very high standard of living or enable him to keep his flocks at that high standard that we, as a State, should like to see reached by the cattle industry. The same remarks apply more or less to West Kimberley, and although in past years cattle growers there have been able to get better prices in the metropolitan meat markets, the recent restrictions imposed by the Department of Agriculture have hit the West Kimberley growers very hard indeed.

The Minister for Agriculture: Had not you better leave that matter to the Royal Commission now sitting?

Mr. ANGELO: I intend to do so, but owing to the restrictions many of the cattle growers have received very little indeed over the cost of transportation for their beasts, and some of them have actually shown a loss. I know that because I have seen the account sales. When the present rentals not only for the Kimberleys but also for the other pastoral areas were approxi-

mately 50 per cent. more than they are today, the cost of production was considerably lower than it is at the present time. The Leader of the Opposition said the other night that revaluations of land tax assessments were necessary. All I can say, and with equal right, is that a readjustment of land rents is considerably overdue. The Leader of the Opposition asked for more information a little while ago. He wanted to know why the basis had been fixed at one shilling, and asked to be assured that the pastoralists were conducting a losing proposition at the present time. At an inquiry recently conducted by Mr. Justice Dethridge, it was ascertained from the audited balance sheets of 50 principal stations established in Western Australia, that the cost of producing wool in this State was 12.55d. per lb., and this cost did not take into consideration interest on the owners' capital invested in the property, Federal or State income tax, nor allowance or remuneration for the owner's services. I want to impress that on the Leader of the Opposition and also to tell the House that the investigation was made from audited accounts compiled by an accredited accountant. The cost of producing a pound of wool was arrived at—and I wish to impress this on members—after allowing for the profit made by 43 of the 50 stations by the sale of surplus livestock, and the profit from the sales of this livestock amounted to 1.7d. per lb. Really that had nothing to do with the growing of the wool itself, and very few of the stations have made any profit from the sale of sheep in recent times. It is only those that are closer to the market and are able to dispose of some of their surplus sheep that have shown any profit in that direction. Consequently we find that the cost of producing a pound of wool runs up to 14.25d. The average price realised in Western Australia, including all wool from the farming districts, for the last two years, was:—1929-30, 9.75d.; 1930-31, 7.67d., a little over 7½d. We know that wool from the farming districts brought a higher price than that obtained from the broader areas of the pastoral industry. The average for the two years I quoted was 8.71d., and if we deduct this figure from 14.25d. it will show that the pastoralist has been making a loss of 5½d. per lb. during the last two years.

Hon. P. Collier: Then this assistance is not nearly enough.

Mr. ANGELO: The State cannot afford to grant too much relief at the present time. We want relief immediately.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What relief are you advocating?

Mr. ANGELO: I am supporting the Bill with the exception that I am going to ask that it be brought into line with the other emergency legislation and dated from July last instead of from January next.

Hon. P. Collier: Will you agree to the Bill remaining in force for the same period as the other emergency Bills?

Mr. ANGELO: The Bill introduces a new method which will be found to be absolutely fair, that is, when wool rises the Government will get more from the pastoralist, and vice versa. It will be recognised that urgent relief is wanted immediately. It is proposed in the Bill that it shall date as from next January, but what we require is that it shall operate as from July last. The Premier, the Minister for Lands and the Leader of the Opposition have all acknowledge that some relief is necessary. I agree with them. But why say to a drowning man that you are going to save him in six months time, instead of going to his rescue immediately? If the scale suggested is the correct one to adopt, the measure should operate as from the 1st of July last. All the emergency legislation was dated back to the 1st July.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, for a given period.

Mr. ANGELO: Why not bring this into line?

Hon. P. Collier: Are you willing that this should operate, like the others, for 12 months?

Mr. ANGELO: The Leader of the Opposition knows that the Bill has a two-fold object; it is asking that relief be given and at the same time it establishes a new basis for the payment of rents, that is to say, relief will be given when wool is low and when it rises, higher rents will be charged. What could be fairer than that? The Government have said that landlords generally must grant relief to their tenants during abnormal times and now they themselves are lagging behind. Members opposite will recall that when the Attorney General introduced the emergency legisla-

tion, he said that the policy of the Premier's Conference was a general sliding down in all directions to the extent of 20 per cent. Pastoralists have suffered like other sections of the community. When they have sent requisitions for supplies to the firms financing them, many items have been cut out on account of the bad times.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Farmers too have suffered.

Mr. ANGELO: I have supported the granting of relief to the farmers. It may be said that in the years 1924 and 1925 wool was bringing a very high price. That is so, but it must not be forgotten that during the period of those good prices the industry was loaded up considerably more than is the case to-day with high costs, and the profits that were made in those good years were not wasted by the pastoralists, they were spent not on luxuries, but on improving the property and the herds. The Leader of the Opposition said something about improving the herds. Statistics of a few years ago would show him how greatly the South Australian sheep used to beat ours in weight of wool, and also in the price obtained for that wool. Now, however, we have caught up to them, the reason being that the profits made by our pastoralists during good years were all spent in improving the herds and the properties. I wish I could take members through the stations and show them the hundreds and thousands of miles of fencing and the thousands of windmills that have been erected.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Has that rendered the production more economical?

Mr. ANGELO: It has enabled the pastoralists to make better use of their leases and to pay more in income taxation in order to keep the Government going. I do not think we require much evidence of the improvements carried out, for the merchants of Perth would be able to verify the extraordinary quantity of material that has been purchased by the pastoralists for the carrying out of their improvements. The fencing and improving of these areas served to disburse an immense sum of money amongst the numbers of men employed on the work. Had growers in those prosperous times instead of improving their leases invested their money overseas, as many other people have done, they would not be in the financial difficulty in which they find themselves to-day, while on the other hand the

State would not have benefited by the expenditure of those profits. Some time ago the question was raised that a great sum of money might be involved in the giving of this relief. But let me quote what the Minister for Lands said in moving the second reading, as follows:—

The estimated relief that the Bill will afford pastoralists is £33,310 out of a present total annual rental of £139,518. That saving of £33,310 is made up by the writing off in East Kimberley of £3,374, in West Kimberley of £2,216, and in the other divisions of the State £27,720.

The amendment I propose will mean only half the £33,310, and will involve a loss to the Government of only £13,860.

The Minister for Lands: That is a lot to-day.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes, but it means everything to the pastoralists. This is the first time they have ever asked for a little consideration, the pastoral industry being perhaps the only one in the State which has not received financial assistance from the Government.

Mr. Kenneally: The pastoralists have had a fairly free hand and have helped themselves freely.

Mr. ANGELO: How?

Mr. Kenneally: By taking it out of other people.

Mr. ANGELO: And they have helped a thundering lot of people, too, by providing employment at good wages. Actually, the pastoralists, by their efforts and efficiency, have provided cash and credit which has enabled the carrying out of many other industries in the State. One cannot forget the huge quantities of wool that are exported, making our credit available in the Home market. Now that the industry has fallen on bad times, those engaged in it have to seek the relief proposed in the Bill. I hope the Government will agree to my amendment to date back the measure to the 1st of July instead of the 1st of next January. That will give immediate relief and will bring the programme into conformity with other emergency legislation. The Government will not give away anything, as the rents will remain as at present until there is a re-adjustment of prices. We all hope the Government are going to get more rent out of the pastoralists before very long as that will mean better prices for their wool. The Leader of the Opposition wondered

whether the shilling was a correct basis. I think the correct basis should be 15d., but I am prepared to support the second reading.

Hon. P. Collier: We might be able to make it 15d. in Committee.

Mr. ANGELO: You will have my support.

Hon. P. Collier: But we need to be careful not to overdo it, else we might lose the Bill.

Mr. ANGELO: In 1919 there was an appraisalment of rents. In nearly every instance those rents were doubled, and in some instances trebled.

Mr. Marshall: That principle of appraisalment was absolutely wrong.

Mr. ANGELO: During the period of 1918-20, when the pastoral leases were appraised, all wool was sold to the British Government, and the average price was 15d. per lb.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: A wartime price.

Mr. ANGELO: The 15d. was nothing like the price that was obtained later on. But when the appraisers got to work they took into consideration everything; proximity to the market, improvements that had been made, capabilities of the station and the value of the wool, which was then 15d. Taking all these things into consideration, they made their appraisalment. Now what we ought to suggest is that we should take that as a basis, and when the price of wool falls we should get a reduction, and when it rises, higher rent should be paid. But the Bill provides for a shilling, and I am going to support the second reading, because half a loaf is preferable to no bread and at the present time we cannot get all we ought to get.

Mr. Marshall: Do you not think that when wool is bringing higher prices some of the rent reduction, instead of going to the pastoralist, should go into improving the holdings?

Mr. ANGELO: The hon. member could not have heard me say that the reason why the pastoralists have not a reserve fund is that when wool was higher and profits were big, instead of sending those profits overseas for investment or creating reserve funds the pastoralists put them back into improvements.

Mr. Marshall: And now you want to take it from them.

Mr. ANGELO: No. Through no fault of their own, a certain condition of affairs has come about which could not have been foreseen: the world collapse has occurred, and the pastoralists find they are up against it, simply because they did what the hon. member says they should do.

Mr. Marshall: You do not follow my point. When they get an increased price for their wool, why take it from them in rent? Why not let them use it for the improvement of their holdings?

Mr. ANGELO: If the hon. member will vote for doing away with the 30 per cent. increase and that the maximum rent be 1s., I will support him.

Mr. Marshall: I want a guarantee that the money will go in station improvements.

Mr. ANGELO: The trouble is that the coffers of the State are empty and the Government want money. So they have brought down a Bill that will give a certain amount of relief. The chief fault I have to find with it is that it does not start where other relief that has been given started. I am sorry no provision is made for increasing the tenure. The banks that have financed this industry must be concerned about their securities and since the State, if the Bill be passed, will get full value in rents, there is no reason why the increased tenure should not be given. A banker looks to have something that gives a tenure long enough to provide for a depression such as we are now passing through. In 99 cases out of 100 the stations are being financed far above the limits originally arranged by the banks and financial houses. The tenure is growing shorter every year, and so such a provision might well have been brought down.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: How many more years would you want?

Mr. ANGELO: The trouble also is that a lot of our eastern goldfields areas are only just coming into development. We do not want to hamper them; we require them to go on improving their stations as the stations in the Murchison, the Gascoyne and the Roebourne districts have been improved. That can only be done by giving the people who lend the money sufficiently long tenure.

Hon. P. Collier: About 99 years.

Mr. ANGELO: No, only about 30 or 40 years. That would be a fair thing. I again remind the House that this is the first time the pastoral industry has asked for relief. It is against the pastoralists' grain to do it.

Mr. Marshall: And it will be the first time they have got it.

Mr. Panton: They have not got it yet.

Mr. ANGELO: I hope the Government will agree to bring the proposed relief into line with the relief that has been given to other industries, if they are going to assist the industry over the depression. I am sure good times are coming when the industry will not require relief, but will be able to pay higher rents than are being paid now, and in that way assist in the development of the State. Immediate relief, however, is imperative.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [7.30]: The Bill before us deals with three principles, one being a reduction in the rents paid by pastoral lessees, another being a proviso enabling agricultural college students to acquire land under certain privileged conditions, and the third to increase the area of certain freeholds in the South-West land division. The most important part of the measure is that providing for a reduction in the rent of pastoral leases. It is proposed to accept the present value, but that the rental shall be assessed on a sliding scale based on the price of greasy wool at 1s. per lb. For every one penny rise or fall in the value of wool there will be an alteration of 6 per cent. in the rental, and the reduction or increase in either case is not to exceed 30 per cent. Whether this will work out as the Minister thinks remains to be seen. My experience is such as to cause me to be cautious about such proposals. I have found in my experience that legislation passed by the House to bring about certain results has not always had the effect desired. Conditions change rapidly nowadays, and the economic structure has been so badly shaken that it is impossible to say what will happen in the next few years. Some 16 or 18 years ago the member for Maylands (Hon. J. Scaddan), who was then Premier, made an agreement with the Perth City Council respecting the sale of electric current. It was a good agreement at the time, but within 10 years it was found to be a bad one for the State. It is magnificent for the City Council but no good for the country. It may happen in legislation of this character that the con-

ditions may so alter in a few years that the basis upon which the rentals are to be increased or reduced will have disappeared, and new conditions will have taken their place. There is of course one thing about legislation which is different from agreements, namely, that we can amend legislation and have always got that protection. When we pass legislation of this character, however, we ought to be prepared to do the job as well as possible. Based as it is, having regard to the value of wool during the last two years, the Bill will give very substantial relief to pastoralists. Greasy wool has averaged 6d. or 7d. per lb. over that period. If the principle of this measure had been in operation, it would have brought substantial relief for the industry. Things are better to-day than they were a few months ago. I would say the price of wool is now in the neighbourhood of 9d. or 10d. a lb., and there is a possibility that it will still further increase. If there is a revival in the world's trade, which must happen sooner or later or this civilisation must go to the wall, 1s. per lb. may not be out of the way for wool. There is a general acceptance in civilised and progressive countries of the principle that low wages and low prices do not mean prosperity. It has been correctly argued that the world produces so abundantly to-day, and that the peoples in the civilised countries have reached so high a standard, that, if they are to go on producing in abundance, a new standard of values must be created. The contention that values should be based on those of 1929 is not a condition applicable only to Australia but is accepted in many places. I have read that Sir George Paish, one of the world's greatest economists, has advocated this on more than one occasion, and only within the last few days economists in England and on the Continent have advocated that values should be fixed. It is, therefore, possible in this time of tremendous scientific progress that within the next few years 1s. per lb. will not be over much for greasy wool. That price may satisfy the pastoralists for the time being, but if all commodities are correspondingly increased in value, the time may come when 1s. per lb. for wool may not pay the producer. It is not long since wool in this State was bringing 12.7d. per lb. That was in 1920-21. A great increase in the price took place in

the years that followed, until the fall a couple of years ago. It appeared in the minds of many that the prices which obtained from 1923 to 1929 could be looked upon as permanent. That was not so, and many people were misled. Properties were, however, bought and carried on in that belief. There is no doubt that the pastoral industry is to-day in urgent need of relief. I do not think that any member, who knows the conditions, will deny that. Large sums of money have been expended in development since the war. If the price of wool was high for six or seven years, the cost of development was also high, with the result that, at present prices, the sheep stations are vastly over-capitalised. This has happened in Western Australia more than in any other part of Australia. We have made rapid progress with the industry in the last ten years. The development, however, has been very costly. It is doubtful whether any of the properties on the Eastern Goldfields will carry the capitalisation even with wool at 1s. a lb. I am inclined to think, if the matter were gone into, that some of those who own stations in that part of the State, and along the far north-eastern railway, would be unable to make ends meet on 1s. a lb., because of the cost of development. Although the development has been wonderful, it has been carried out under costly conditions. That is why these particular pastoralists are burdened as they are to-day. It could not have been avoided. Many of them came into the industry when prices were high, they undertook development when costs were high, and now that the value of wool is low their position is most difficult. These are the people who require relief. It is also required in other parts of the State where similar development has gone on. When the crisis occurred the industry almost crumbled up. We have the spectacle of men who, a few years ago were acclaimed as wealthy, now sadly embarrassed, not because of their extravagance, but because they expended large sums of money in pastoral development. I know of people who have been extravagant, but I know of many more who embarked upon the industry after the war, who tried to make good, but who built up their properties at too high a cost. They are the people who are sadly embarrassed. I know of one case where £20,000 to £30,000 was laid out, but wool

values fell before the owners of the station were able to get on their feet, and the property has been lost to them. I am disappointed that the South-west land division has been excluded from the provisions of the Bill. There are many pastoralists in the South-west who are as much entitled to relief as are their neighbours living immediately across an imaginary line. I refer to such stations as Tallarang, Karara, and Wanara, Marloo, Bowgada, Mt. Jackson, and others.

The Minister for Agriculture: Are those not east of the rabbit-proof fence?

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes, but they are in the South-West land division.

The Minister for Agriculture: Is not the rabbit-proof fence the boundary of the division?

Hon. M. F. TROY: No. Those stations have their disadvantages. On one of them, no less than £34,000 was expended in improvements, but it was sold a few months ago for £5,000. The owners were not people who had been actually compelled to sell the station. Some of them are well-known business men in this city. Yet that station, on which the improvements had cost £34,000, was sold for £5,000! It has an area of 200,000 acres, a large area for Western Australia; but in my opinion it is not good country. A great deal of the land in the South-Western Division under pastoral lease is unsuitable for any other purpose. It is country that lies between the agricultural areas and the pastoral areas. It is neither on thing nor the other. It is thick country. A summer rainfall of 10 inches would not be of advantage to it. It is a sort of No Man's Land. For pastoral purposes it is not nearly as valuable as country a hundred miles further east, and that applies to a great extent to the whole of the stations I have named. They cannot be compared to stations in the North-West. Therefore, if we are to give relief to the pastoral industry, we must bear in mind the position of the pastoralists in the South-West Division. I repeat that in regard to quality these stations do not compare with stations on the Murchison or on the Gascoyne. The country is thick and difficult, and has not the carrying capacity. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) said the pastoralist was a pioneering man. I can hear that out. If in this country there are two classes of men who have stood

out in pioneering development, it is the pastoralist and the prospector and miner. Both are independent types, and have probably done more pioneering here than any other section of the people. They have had to do it. They embarked in industries in which pioneering must be done. A man who takes up a back-blocks station away from railway communication has to bear the hardships of pioneering life. These men are independent and enterprising, because the occupations in which they embark require those qualities. They are the essential qualities to be possessed by a people; they are the qualities for the making of a nation. I do not know whether the relief proposed by the Bill is of the quality that will meet the needs of all the pastoralists in Western Australia. The Minister has not said how he arrived at the Bill, beyond stating that Mr. Courtney, Mr. Pellow, and Mr. Drake-Brockman had investigated the position. These gentlemen are all good men. I do not know Mr. Drake-Brockman very well, but I am aware that Mr. Pellow and Mr. Courtney are very useful men. Mr. Courtney, however, is an accountant. I am not depreciating his value or integrity or capacity in stating that he has not much pastoral knowledge. I do not know that Mr. Pellow has such knowledge. Mr. Drake-Brockman has been an engineer on the North-West coast, and his pastoral knowledge would be more from observation than experience. There are men on both sides of this Chamber who have more pastoral knowledge. I believe that had the Government submitted the measure to this House and asked the opinions of hon. members on it, a better Bill would have been evolved. Even now it is not too late to adopt that course. The Bill does not take effect until the 1st January, 1932.

The Minister for Lands: That is in about six weeks' time.

Hon. M. F. TROY: We can do a lot in six weeks, or even in three weeks. All that is necessary is to get the opinions of members of this House, and then the Government will be able to depend upon a solid and unanimous vote regarding the utility of the measure. In a fortnight we can get all the information we want. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, the Bill might well go to a select committee so that the views of all parties interested might be ascertained. We could get their consid-

ered opinion in the course of a few weeks. Let us do the job properly while we are on it. I feel certain that the Leader of the Opposition does not desire to hold up the Bill. His speech was one of sympathy with the people affected. But a Bill which results from the investigations of three men is not, in my opinion, one that has received sufficient consideration. I know personally many men engaged in the pastoral industry. I know a number who have lost their properties because they could not secure the necessary finance. There is no appeal to Parliament for them; there is no pastoralists' disabilities Bill. The pastoralist is in the hands of private agencies—city firms or banks. He does not come to Parliament, because Parliament is very little concerned with him except as regards his rents. He is involved with private agencies. His liabilities are not to the Government or the Agricultural Bank or the Industries Assistance Board. I know that some of these people are bearing heavy burdens, particularly those who were encouraged to make developments by the good prices which did not last. We should give relief where relief is badly needed. To my knowledge hundreds of young men formerly employed on stations are now out of work. Having developed independence of spirit and self-reliance in the back country, many of them have unwillingly been compelled to come to the city and apply for sustenance. The second part of the Bill I disagree with entirely. It provides a preference to agricultural students who apply for land.

Mr. Kenneally: Provided they have money.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Provided they have the agricultural certificate and have the money. I cannot conceive of any legislation more abhorrent to members of this House, more repugnant to their democratic spirit, than legislation giving preference to an applicant for land merely because he possesses what? A certificate from an agricultural college or school.

The Minister for Lands: A Western Australian certificate.

Hon. M. F. TROY: What does that matter?

The Minister for Lands: We have paid for his education.

Mr. Kenneally: It may be a certificate from another State.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Hon. M. F. TROY: What does that matter?

Hon. P. Collier: If he is educated, he is better equipped to make his way in life than the man not so educated.

The Minister for Lands: That is why we are anxious to get the man with the certificate.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Minister qualifies by saying, "If the student has a Western Australian certificate." His Bill does not make that qualification.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, it does.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I have not seen it in the Bill. If it is there, I stand corrected. But to what position does that provision bring us? Muresk Agricultural College grants, say, 100 certificates to 100 boys. Forty of them have capital, and 60 have none. They all stand equally: they are all citizens of the country. Their parents and the State have taken the trouble to educate them. Forty go to the land board and get preference, and 60 do not. Why? Not because the 40 have more ability or experience or capacity, but because they have more money.

The Minister for Lands: No; because they are able to back themselves.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It is perfectly ridiculous. I know how the Minister has been influenced, because the same suggestion was made to me when I was Minister for Lands. I frowned on it. I would not have it, and said so definitely. I do not think the possession of an agricultural certificate is a guarantee that the person possessing it is a farmer. There are hundreds of men with agricultural certificates who might make good lecturers on agriculture, and even might make good agricultural editors, but who would be dismal failures as farmers. The Minister has set up a new standard, that because a youth gets an agricultural certificate he is a farmer. I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that the best farmer in his own electorate was for many years a cab driver. That particular farmer has won numerous prizes at agricultural shows. I do not doubt that many settlers in the hon. gentleman's electorate have certificates, but I am not prepared to say that they are all farmers. Certainly I respect the experts as advisers and instructors, but—

Hon. P. Collier: We are not accepting Dr. Teakle's recommendation now. There is a highly qualified man who is being ignored.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I have a still further objection. We have not yet arrived at the stage in this country when we guarantee a position to every man whom we provide with an education. We do not guarantee positions to young men who qualify at the University. We meet the requirements as far as possible, but we give no guarantee. This principle of singling out agricultural students with certificates for preference before the land board is, in my opinion, a very bad principle. If the Minister introduces it and it finds a place in this Bill, it will be asked for as regards every other occupation in Western Australia. I appeal to the Minister not to insist upon this provision. The mere fact that a man possesses money has nothing to do with the position at all. The more important considerations when an applicant goes before the Land Board are that he shall possess practical knowledge and commonsense which will enable him to develop a farm, and the qualifications that will help him to become a farmer. If he has those qualifications, we should require nothing else. I will not agree that a certificate from an agricultural college should give any man preference. The other principle embodied in the Bill is one respecting which I desire more information. The Minister proposes to increase the area of freehold beyond 160 acres, which is prescribed in the Land Act. The Minister said that was due to the fact that it had been found necessary to enlarge the areas held by some of the more recent settlers. I hope the Minister, when he replies, will tell us who the settlers are. If he refers to those in the Nornalup area, I would remind him that we were given to understand they were on standard areas, on land that had been properly investigated as a result of our group settlement experience. If that is the position, there can be no reason for any extension of the area of the holdings beyond that which they now possess, and which the Land Act prescribes. I admit that legislation was introduced to increase the areas that could be held by group settlers, but that was for an entirely different reason. It was found that land on which group settlers had been

placed, had not been previously investigated. They were put on some wretchedly poor country, with the result that it was subsequently found that the 60, 80 or even 100 acres that some possessed were not sufficient to enable them to make farms. In other instances, 160, 260 or even 400 acres were not sufficient. It was necessary to increase the areas there, otherwise the improvements made by the State and by the settlers, could not be maintained. The extension was necessary owing to the nature of the country, which had not previously been investigated. We were given to understand that the land at Nornalup had been properly investigated and, in view of our group settlement experience, it was suggested there was no possibility of mistakes being made there. If that be so, I shall be surprised if the provision for the extension of areas applies to that part of the State. Then again the Bill does not support the claims made by the Premier, Sir James Mitchell. He is not the Minister for Lands, but the Minister controlling group settlement and the Minister in charge of the Agricultural Bank. Sir James Mitchell advocated the principle of farms containing not more than 60 or 80 acres. He insisted on more than one occasion that 100 acres was more than enough in the South-West. In those circumstances, I shall be surprised if the Premier supports some of the principles embodied in the Bill and particularly that relating to the extension of holdings. He disapproved of large areas. I do not say that I do. I am convinced that in many parts of the South-West, a holding of 160 acres is large enough for any farmer. In other places, 200 acres may not be too much. There should be a proper investigation before any areas are settled. If the Minister represents the views of the Government in advancing the policy of granting preference to the holders of agricultural college certificates, then he and the Government have abandoned a principle advocated by the Leader of the Government himself. In his policy speech, Sir James announced clearly that he would find land, not for people possessed of agricultural college certificates, but for all the young men of the State. That was a distinct promise. He did not say that people possessing capital would have preference over other young men. I warn the Minister for Lands

that if he is advocating that policy, it is contrary to that expressed by his leader. I have given my opinion regarding the Bill. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the passage of the Bill should not be delayed, but that it should be sent to a select committee for a brief but fuller investigation. The Bill will not come into operation before the 1st January. We have not dealt with the business of the session yet. The investigation can be a speedy one, and we should be able to pass the legislation this year. I make this promise that I shall do nothing to prevent its passage this session. On the other hand, further investigation is necessary. It is quite possible that as a result of such an inquiry, additional information will be forthcoming that will enable us to pass a more equitable measure. Western Australia represents one-third of the continent. The conditions are not the same throughout the whole State. Some pastoral areas possess different characteristics compared with other pastoral areas. It has been stated that the sheep men in the North-West cannot produce wool as abundantly as can those operating in the more southern parts such as the Murchison and the Gascoyne. That information may be wrong. It has been pointed out that the wool production of the growers up North is not so much per sheep as that secured in the Murchison. If that be so, we must give the Kimberley men more relief, because they have more handicaps. There are other places where freights are heavier and costs greater. People labouring under those disabilities are entitled to further assistance. Without departing from the principles I have advocated, I think that if the Bill were submitted to a select committee for two or three weeks, a much more equitable measure could be agreed to. I approve of the principle of relief to pastoralists, and I hope that, following upon an investigation by a select committee, a measure will be presented that will be more satisfactory to the pastoralists and people of Western Australia.

MR. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [8.8.]: While I can agree with the Minister who introduced the Bill and other members who have spoken regarding it, that the pastoral industry, like all our primary industries, is in desperate need of some assistance, I be-

lieve that what is required is something more in the nature of reconstruction than the application of fiddling methods such as those outlined in the Bill. I cannot support the measure in its present form. Those responsible for drafting the Bill were influenced, or had their activities cramped, by the instructions issued by the Minister or by the Government.

The Minister for Lands: That is a very unfair thing to say, and it is not true.

MR. COVERLEY: I can come to no other conclusion.

The Minister for Lands: I can tell you what instructions the committee received.

MR. COVERLEY: In the first place, the rentals of the pastoral leases have been messed about from the very inception. Earlier legislation introduced by a Nationalist Government some years ago provided the pastoral industry with opportunities for re-appraisalment, but the provisions of the legislation itself hampered the Re-appraisalment Board. It was provided that the minimum extent to which re-appraisalment could apply was 10s. per thousand acres. That established a bad precedent because the appraisers, irrespective of what they thought regarding the various holdings, could not re-appraise them at less than 10s. per thousand acres. Some of the pastoral companies were operating in areas that were much more favoured than others. Some of the holdings were situated many miles from a port, entailing heavier droving costs and extra expense in connection with carting. There were added difficulties associated with operations in the drier areas. As a result of legislation, which provided the minimum appraisalment of 10s. per thousand acres, the board had a small margin to work on as between the more favoured areas and those where heavier expenditure was entailed. I am satisfied that the Government have been over-anxious to assist the pastoral industry. They have introduced the Bill too quickly. They have not given the sound consideration to the framing of the legislation that is so essential. The Government have adopted a very narrow viewpoint. I do not desire to help those who will not help themselves. With all due respect to the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) and the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy), I disagree with some of their contentions. I realise there is a big

difference between the pastoral industry in the Kimberley areas and the pastoral industry in other parts of the State. For instance, the majority of the sheep stations in the North and the more southerly parts of the North-West are occupied by resident owners, people who live and work on their stations. In the Kimberley areas it is a difficult proposition. The majority of the pastoral leases there are held by absentees. That is a vital difference. My experience leads me to believe that the majority of the absentee leaseholders, when conditions were good, took their profits, which were huge at times, overseas or spent the money on city properties or in other businesses. The profits were never put back into the industry in order to develop it. No industry can thrive unless the profits are utilised for development purposes. That is one adverse phase of the pastoral industry in the Kimberley district. When moving the second reading of the Bill, the Minister rightly said that the measure should be divided into three sections. The first deals with the wool industry, under which rentals will be regulated by the price of wool itself. On paper that would seem to be a reasonable proposition, but before I have concluded my remarks, I shall demonstrate to the Minister that many anomalies will be apparent. The second portion of the Bill relates to the cattle industry, and the third has reference to preference to be given to agricultural students. I am not prepared to give preference to those students or any person under the conditions outlined. It appears to me that because a student has passed through the University and has gained degrees or diplomas and, in addition, possesses money, he is to receive preference over other individuals in the selection of holdings. I am not prepared to support that principle. I do not believe that the person possessing degrees and diplomas, plus funds beyond those of his fellows, has ever shone over the practical man in agricultural or bush work. Anomalies will arise in connection with the Bill as it applies to the sheep stations. There is a difference between the wool grown in the northern parts, on the coastal areas, and in the more southerly parts of the State. There is unfairness that must be considered. We have in Kimberley several sheep stations, one known as the Kimberley Pastoral Company, 80 miles from a port, with over 30 miles of river frontage. To cart their

stores to the station and their wool to the port of shipment costs £2 per ton less than the cost to the neighbouring sheep station, Ellendale. Ellendale is a small station owned by a private person who is a resident owner. He has to pay the extra freight on his stores and wool and has not any permanent water on the station, except what has been obtained by boring. There must be a grievance in such a case.

Mr. Angelo: Do they pay the same rate of rent?

Mr. COVERLEY: There is very little difference: the man with the small holding pays more rent than does the Kimberley Pastoral Company.

Mr. Angelo: The appraisers must have been at fault.

Mr. COVERLEY: I do not know, but the Government, in their anxiety to introduce the Bill, have not given the subject the careful consideration it needed. Such anomalies will occur in every district where the pastoral industry has been established. As to the cattle stations, the Minister proposes to reduce the rent in East Kimberley by 40 per cent. and in West Kimberley by 20 per cent. When introducing the Bill he gave as his reason for discriminating, the pleuro restrictions. I have never heard of such a ridiculous reason for making a discrimination of that magnitude. Many years ago East Kimberley pastoralists suffered in their competition on account of an imaginary pleuro line, but during the last six months or more both East and West Kimberley have suffered from that disadvantage. On account of the pleuro restrictions, West Kimberley growers have to ship their cattle for immediate slaughter. That has been the position in East Kimberley for many years. There is no objection to East Kimberley owners shipping their cattle to the southern markets for immediate slaughter only. I do not know whether the Minister overlooked that fact or whether he did not desire to enlogise a State trading concern by saying that the only advantage the East Kimberley pastoralists have is the State meat works. The advantage to East Kimberley pastoralists from the meat works is that all their culls can be treated as by-products. That does not apply in Derby. Probably the Minister did not care to mention that fact, and so fell back on the evergreen excuse of pleuro restrictions. There is no sound reason why East Kimberley pastoralists should

get a 40 per cent. reduction as against West Kimberley 20 per cent., unless it be that they have a longer freight to pay, and probably greater costs to meet. If the Bill becomes law and the Minister insists upon the reductions, I suggest that he increase the 20 per cent. reduction to West Kimberley owners to 40 per cent. There is no sound argument why there should be a difference of 20 per cent. between the two districts.

The Minister for Lands: How long will that differential treatment obtain?

Mr. COVERLEY: It is likely to obtain for ever. A Royal Commission has been appointed to inquire into the pleuro restrictions in West Kimberley, but I cannot imagine what the report is likely to be. I have not much confidence in Royal Commissions. Some time ago a Royal Commission inquired into the beef industry and quite a lot of information was not obtained. I read the report carefully, and I do not think one practical stockman was called to give evidence. A Royal Commission should not restrict the evidence to that of business heads and people who control the industry. Others are vitally interested and should be given an opportunity to tender evidence. I stated in my opening remarks that I was not prepared to help those who would not help themselves. Let me analyse the position and show what the reduction will mean to the cattle industry. West Kimberley has approximately 47 stations, 40 of them cattle stations and seven sheep stations. They are owned one-third by resident owners and two-thirds by absentee owners.

The Minister for Agriculture: Absent from the State or from Kimberley only?

Mr. COVERLEY: The majority are well overseas, many miles from Kimberley. Many of them have never seen the Kimberleys, and never will.

Mr. Marshall: And never want to.

Mr. COVERLEY: While times were good absentee owners took all the profits overseas. One has only to see the cattle yards, wells, and other slight improvements to bear out what I say. On the permanent water frontages annual grasses are eaten out year after year, and the rank grasses prevail. Kimberley has been a wonderful country to stand the strain of the past 40 years. I say without fear of contradiction that, until the last twelve months not one plant, herbage or top-feed,

has ever been tried out in Kimberley. Only since the appointment of the Tropical Adviser, Mr. Wise, has any scheme of the kind been entertained. The same applies to the cattle yards: there is not a decent one in the country. The majority of them were made out of plain wire and a few odd posts, erected by blacks. Under the Bill, the Minister proposes to save to the West Kimberley owners the magnificent sum of £2,216. The resident owners will get a rebate of £738 13s. 4d., or less than £50 per station. Can the Minister tell us what good the £50 per station will do, particularly to the absentee owners? As regards the resident owners, approximately £50 per station would allow them to buy a little more tucker each year, and goodness knows, they need it—a little extra cream of tartar and soda for their damper and johnny-cake. The £50 would not employ an extra white man, would not pay for importing a decent bull, and would not pay for putting down one artificial water supply. The same practically applies to East Kimberley. It is proposed to save the owners there £3,374, and over 50 per cent. of those owners are absentees.

Mr. Angelo: Were not the absentee owners pioneers in the early days?

Mr. COVERLEY: I have not heard of Sir William Vestey having done much pioneering in the early days.

Mr. Angelo: He is one of the exceptions.

Mr. COVERLEY: There are a few others I could mention. The hon. member should not interject and lead me to say things that I do not wish to say. I have no desire to detract from the pioneers of that country. They have earned every shilling they have got out of it, but I am opposed to helping people who will not help themselves. I am not prepared to cast a vote in favour of granting concessions to absentee owners who have never given the country a fair deal. Year after year the country has been grazed on the permanent water frontages, all the edible grasses have been eaten out and the country is becoming worse and worse every year, and now they blame the country. The country is all right; as I said before, it is a wonderful country to stand the strain.

Mr. Angelo: You must remember that Vestey's spent tens of thousands of pounds.

Mr. COVERLEY: I go through the country and I know where the bores are, because I get up a thirst occasionally and get sore eyes looking for a drink. I wish the Government would take a much broader view. I support the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mt. Magnet. We can improve the Bill if we refer it to a select committee for consideration. I have not much faith in select committees because, as a rule, evidence is taken from the wrong people, just as with Royal Commissions. If the Government have made up their minds to pass the Bill, I am afraid it will not receive much consideration in Committee, and so I should like to see it referred to a select committee. I am not wholly opposed to the Bill. I realise that the pastoral industry needs some assistance, but mostly it needs reorganisation. It needs more than a miserable pittance of £50 a year proposed in the Bill. That will not overcome the drawbacks that exist on those remote stations. The Government could have done quite a lot to assist the industry if they had given serious consideration to the many requests made for the provision of water on the stock routes. That is one thing that might have been done, and that would have proved of practical benefit to all the owners. The proposals in the Bill, however, will not do any material good. The Minister in charge of the Bill might well have glanced through the New South Wales regulations dealing with the sinking of shallow bores under the Irrigation Act of 1919. From those regulations he might have gained an idea of how he could give practical assistance to the industry. New South Wales has a scheme under which water is sunk for on various pastoral holdings. It is made a charge against the station, and rightly so, because the owner derives the benefit that accrues. The water difficulty is not the only drawback from which the industry suffers, but it is one of the biggest drawbacks. In 1925 the New South Wales Government had 32 boring plants working; 202 bores were completed, and ten bores were cleaned out at a cost of 16s. 2d. per foot, including the casing. I can imagine, with my friend the member for Mt. Magnet, when he referred to the carrying capacity, what such a work would have meant in Kimberley—a couple of hundred bores put down in a year. From the inception of the New South Wales Act 1,600 bores have been

put down to an average depth of 273 feet and at an average cost of 16s. 2d. per foot.

Mr. Angelo: What is the depth at Kimberley?

Mr. COVERLEY: Quite a lot run from 80 feet to 150 feet. As a matter of fact, the Fossil Downs Pastoral Co. did not sink for water until nature forced them to do so. Two years ago they suffered a bit of a drought, and were compelled to sink for water. They let a contract and got permanent water at 125 feet. Another bore was sunk and water was obtained at about 131 feet. Then the rain set in, and the company immediately sacked the contractor. That has been the experience in the Kimberleys. God has provided for them very well. I suggest that the Minister should take a broader view and study the New South Wales Act which may give him ideas that will help him to benefit the industry and the State generally. He could have given the pastoral industry a general reduction, or could have given the holders their areas rent free, so long as he made it a condition that the equivalent of the rent had to go back into the industry so that it might be developed. It is not yet too late to do that. The Re-appraisal Board were handicapped from the very start, and when the Act was amended and the board went into the subject again, they were again handicapped and found it very difficult to diagnose the position. The Minister cannot cavil at the suggestions I have made. It is pretty well understood that the resident owners have not the money with which to carry on development, and that the absentee owners will not do any development work. I am satisfied that the financial assistance the Bill proposes to give will not afford relief to any extent. I repeat that if the Minister followed on the lines of the New South Wales Act, he would find that in the course of a few years he would have done something to assist in the development of the industry. That development would consist of increasing the carrying capacity of the areas and would afford unemployment relief, and would circulate new wealth wherever the scheme was operating. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) referred to the prices of cattle, and pointed out that the East Kimberley pastoralists had had a lean time for some years. That is so in the majority of cases, and I find that the larger the holding, the less do the cattle bring in the market, while the smaller the holding

the bigger the price that is paid. The Ord River station, which belongs to Vestey's, covers a territory of 200 square miles, and it is worked by four white men, including the bookkeeper and manager, and a number of natives. We can imagine a couple of stockmen trying to muster cattle over 10 or 12 miles of country per day! We can imagine also how clean the runs would be! There are not the men there, nor is there the time for the few employed to work the country as it should be worked. Recently the Victoria River depot station sent cattle to Wyndham, and I am told—the report of the Wyndham Meat Works is not yet on the Table of the House, and therefore I am not able to confirm this—the cattle were the poorest that were ever sent to the works. Ruby Plains, a small station which is watered from bores that have been put down, has obtained for about four years in succession, top prices at the Wyndham Meat Works, the average being about £4 11s. 10d. per head. The highest price they were paid was £6 11s. 2d. I do not know what they got this year. That proves to me that the smaller the holding and the more it is worked, the better is it developed and the better is the result.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What is the lowest price obtained for cattle?

Mr. COVERLEY: About £2 5s. at the meat works.

Mr. Angelo: The average price is about £4.

Mr. COVERLEY: There we get the difference; the small station properly worked disposes of its stock to advantage, whilst the cattle from the bigger properties fetch poor prices. If we were to compel the pastoralists to improve their holdings on sound lines, we should be doing something that would make us feel proud of the result in a few years' time. The industry would then receive the impetus that it requires. The member for Gascoyne also touched on the question of the extension of tenures. If the extension is necessary, the Government should get a guarantee from the pastoralists as to what they are prepared to do in the way of carrying on development work. I have nothing further to say except that I intend to support the motion to refer the Bill to a select committee.

MR. KENNEALLY (East Perth) [8.37]: The Bill proposes to introduce two principles each of which I desire briefly to deal

with. The first is that of basing rental on earnings. The Bill makes provision by which rental shall be paid to a certain amount when greasy wool is 1s. and shall rise by 6 per cent. for each penny when the 1s. is increased, with a maximum rise or fall of 30 per cent. I am not going to find fault so much with the principle that it is proposed to introduce, but I do decidedly find fault with one view the Government appear to take in the case of the pastoralist as against tenants. If it is right for the pastoralist to be considered in his particular sphere of life, it is equally good argument to say that consideration should be given to other sections of the community. The sensible view to take is to give consideration to those whose income has been reduced compulsorily. I do not intend to oppose the measure, though I shall support its being referred to a select committee, but I do suggest that the Government should be consistent, and that there are other avenues in which the Government could give relief in the manner they propose to extend to the pastoralists. When we were dealing with the financial emergency measures, we on this side of the House endeavoured to protect the interests of those who desired to keep a roof over their heads. We got very little support from the member for Gascoyne when we endeavoured to secure a provision by which the people of the metropolitan area would not be excluded from the rent-reducing proposal. We attempted to make that measure applicable to weekly tenants, instead of limiting the proposal to monthly tenants, as the Bill provided, but there was nothing but opposition from members who now ask us to give consideration to the poor pastoralist. There are many people in this country who are poorer than the pastoralist, though I am not using that as an argument against giving consideration to the pastoralists who have fallen on evil times. But we should be fair to all sections of the community; we should give consideration to those who through no fault of their own are in difficulties. When the member for Mt. Magnet was speaking with regard to the preference it was proposed to show to people with means, the Minister for Lands interjected that that was provided they had a Western Australian certificate. The Minister shakes his head. Possibly he

does not understand his own Bill. Let us look at it and see what it says—

Any person (not being under the age of 18 years) with a degree, diploma, or certificate in agriculture at the University of Western Australia or a State Agricultural College or State farm in Western Australia, and has the means necessary to enable him to carry on agricultural pursuits

The Minister for Lands: Or a State farm in Western Australia.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It refers to any State agricultural college first.

The Minister for Lands: I think you will find that I am right on this occasion, though I am not always right.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I agree with the latter remark, but I hope the Minister is right this time. Then the latter portion, which is the cardinal feature of the whole thing, goes on to say "and has the means necessary to enable him to carry out agricultural pursuits." I hope the Minister will avoid the necessity for any further discussion on that by intimating that he does not propose to proceed with it.

The Minister for Lands: If I do, will you let the Bill go through to-night?

Mr. KENNEALLY: Like the member for Kimberley, I am speaking in the interests of having the measure made as good as possible. But it should have some more consideration. It is not of much use hurriedly passing legislation if it is not going to be of the benefit it is intended to be to those whom it proposes to advantage. There are people not far distant who, if this Bill were sent to a select committee, could give information that would be of considerable use to the Government in finalising the measure. In view of the Minister's interjection I do not propose to dwell any longer on that part of the Bill making provision for the man who has money. It will be apparent to the Government that if a man or his people has money to enable him to obtain these diplomas he is very fortunate, and the Government ought not to shower further benefits on him. The House should not lend itself to legislation that will say to one individual, "Because you have been fortunate we are going to give you additional opportunities by restricting the choice to you and your fellows, to the exclusion of others less fortunately placed." I hope we are going to give consideration to the pastoralists who deserve it, and that the Gov-

ernment will also extend that consideration to another section of the people who are their tenants and whose wages they have compulsorily reduced.

MR. LAMOND (Pilbara) [8.47]: Having returned from the North only to-day, I have not yet been able to give to the Bill the consideration it deserves. But I represent a pastoral district and I am well aware of the position of the industry to-day. Any relief the Government can give it I shall be only too pleased to support. I have read the Bill and the Minister's speech in moving the second reading, but I am not convinced that the Bill is going to give to the industry the relief indicated by the Minister. If the Government were anxious to give relief to the industry in my own electorate they could not go a better way about it than to reduce the jetty charges at Port Hedland to the basis of those in other ports of the State. To bring wool over the Port Hedland jetty costs the pastoralist just double what it costs at the port of Derby. If the Minister for Railways would but agree to put the charge at Port Hedland on the same basis as obtains in other ports, he would give the pastoralists in my district substantial relief. This year in particular our district will not receive under this measure the same benefit as will be received by pastoralists in other parts of the State. For instance, we were unfortunate in striking the bad sales in September, and I doubt very much if many of our clips will average 7d. per lb. Since then wool has taken a sharp rise, and if to-day's prices continue then certainly we shall have struck the worst market of the season. Of course the better prices will increase the average. Although our wool has brought only approximately 7d. per lb., that price will probably be raised to 10d. by the prices reached at later sales by wool grown in other portions of the State. The Minister, when moving the second reading, said the Government were anxious to help the beef industry by introducing fresh blood into the herds per medium of imported bulls. I suggest to the Minister that he could give a great deal of assistance to small woolgrowers in the North-West by assisting them in the purchase of rams. Small owners are hard pressed to-day and not able to import fresh blood. Consequently they have to use their

own rains, and we all know what that will mean in time to come. The Minister might well consider giving assistance to small wool-growers in that direction.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [8.52]: The fact that the measure has been presented to us indicates that the Government at last realise that there are other primary industries than the wheat industry which urgently need assistance. I have to admit that the assistance proposed in the measure is infinitesimal and not calculated to benefit to any great extent those engaged in the pastoral industry. The Bill, like several others the Government have introduced, seems to have been prepared hastily and without due consideration. While perhaps the majority of the woolgrowers and beef growers are in urgent need of relief, there are quite a number of growers in both industries deserving of no consideration whatever. Under the Bill, of course, they will get the same relief as those who have been industrious, economical and careful, who have given all their time and capital to the development of their properties. They are to be treated on all fours with those men who are merely jobbing in the industry, taking up land, giving no attention to improvements, developing no organisation, no initiative, putting a few cattle or sheep on the property and waiting for a price. In the strict sense of the word such men are merely jobbing their holdings in the hope of selling. Yet under the Bill those men will derive the same benefit as the bona fide pastoralists who have done so much for the development of the wool and beef industries. The Government do not seem to have given any thought at all to that phase. We have old-established stations holding up huge areas of land without improvements or any probability of improvement. The pastoralists on such stations have the audacity to ask the Government for relief. What are they doing with their land? Certainly they are not using it.

Mr. Sampson: Do you not believe in giving relief?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, to those who deserve it, but I do not believe in treating the bona fide pastoralist on all fours with the jobber.

The Minister for Lands: It would be very difficult for you to practice that, because you are a trades unionist.

Mr. Angelo: It is hard to discriminate.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, but what measure of this character have the Government introduced which has not been on the same basis? The hon. member will not tell me there are not in his electorate stations that are not deserving of any consideration at all. Huge areas are held, but the lessees will not yield up one acre.

Mr. Angelo: There are few such stations in my electorate. I have gone over all the stations up there.

Mr. MARSHALL: It must have been on the eve of an election. When wool prices were so attractive a year or two ago there were hundreds in search of pastoral country who could not obtain it. Yet, in various electorates there are stations with unduly large areas. In my own electorate at one time millions of acres were held up, and the owners had never seen the land. They had selected it on the recommendation of someone else, or some official in the Lands Department. Now those holders are to get relief although they have not delivered the goods, and so do not deserve relief. On the other hand, the industrious pastoralist who has struggled for years, putting every penny of profits back into improvements and who, as nearly as possible, has utilised every acre of his land, is deserving of every relief. But the Government have been too hasty in the introduction of measures such as this, and have proposed to reward the slothful with the industrious. The class of wool in Western Australia has improved enormously during the last few years, until it now ranges with the best in the Commonwealth. That has been due to the expenditure of capital by individuals who have initiative and organisation. On the other hand, there are many who took up pastoral lands for the purpose of jobbing them. They improved the properties in a casual manner, and put up a show of complying with the conditions, always in the hope of getting a price for them out of all proportion to their real value. I am sorry to think that such people should share in the reward that is offered to industrious pastoralists, who have done so much for the State. A thorough investigation should be made to find some solution of the problem, and to show a way in which relief can be given only to those

who deserve it. The reward should not be given in an indiscriminate manner. The principle embodied in the Bill of basing the rent on the price of wool should be closely investigated. It appears to be an equitable form of assessing rents, but it seems to me the industrious individual will not get the same benefit as the person who is without either industry or initiative. The latter individual would not worry much about improvements, or the class of stock he was running. The former, however, studies the lay out of his property and the class of stock he holds, with the object of getting the best price he can for his wool. The indifferent squatter is likely to reap the benefit of this legislation. He will even drag down the price of wool against his industrious neighbour. The man who is keenly interested in the industry will be hard hit. He is the man who has invested a large proportion of his income in his property. No account is taken of the expenditure on development and improvements, or upon the money spent in improving the quality of the wool production. We are telling the world that a man must have a million acres before he can make a living in the pastoral industry. That is ridiculous. There are hundreds of thousands of acres upon which not a sheep is running, but the lessees will not let anyone else use the land, although they claim to be deserving of relief. I certainly support the Bill as it affects those to whom relief should be given. The measure states that preference is to be given to applications for land from students of the Agricultural College. That is an unjust principle. I have had more experience of theoretical individuals than any other member. Scores of technically educated individuals have been sent up to the mines. Some have graduated in Canada, others in the United States, England, South Africa, or the Eastern States. They got preference of employment so that they might receive a practical education. Some of the greatest duds we ever saw were amongst those so-called technical experts. In a matter of that kind it is the practical man who counts.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We want a combination of the two.

Mr. MARSHALL: If we want a job well done we require a practical man to do it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: If I could get a man with a university training as well as practical knowledge, I would take him.

Mr. MARSHALL: But why should the theoretical man get the preference? Boys are trained by their fathers to follow in their footsteps. They become practical men, but, because they have not had the necessary education, they are turned down in favour of some theorist. I hope the Minister will not press for the inclusion of this principle.

The Minister for Lands: I will explain it further to you.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister cannot explain away an injustice. The clause in question gives preference to those who have graduated from the University and had an agricultural education, provided they have money. The son of any wealthy man is to get preference over the son of a poor man. Indeed, the clause asks the board, when considering applications, to give that preference. Some day it may reflect upon the Minister and cause him a lot of trouble amongst his electors. I appeal to him to let the Bill go to a select committee. We all know the pastoral industry is in urgent need of relief. The Government appreciate the fact themselves, and that is shown by this Bill. I am not in favour of giving relief in a wholesale fashion, to all and sundry, whether they be deserving of it or not. I should like to see discrimination shown, and the means whereby that can be indicated can best be discovered by a select committee. After paddling its own canoe for many years, the industry at last is receiving consideration, and is to be placed on all fours with other industries that are receiving financial assistance. The State has much to thank it for. It has brought millions of wealth into Western Australia. Unfortunately, we also have the land jobber, who brings into disrepute the conscientious pastoralist. I do not think the Bill will do all that is claimed for it. Stations like Lake Violet, Wanara, and others have been well developed, and were recently acquired by Eastern States pastoralists. Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent on improvements and on building up the flocks, and the amount of relief the Government propose to give falls far short of what is requisite to meet the situation. In effect, the Bill does not give that relief in an equitable form. The best thing the Government can do is to send the measure to a select committee for thorough investigation and

review, so that when relief is given it will be passed on to those who most deserve it, who have done most to get it.

MR. PIESSE (Katanning) [9.15]: The aims and objects of the Bill in so far as they propose to give relief to the pastoral industry are very laudable, but I would remind the Minister that there are small pastoralists in other parts of the State who are suffering equally with the squatters of the North-West. Of course that is no reason why one should object to the provisions contained in the first part of the Bill, but I beseech the Minister and the Government to consider the unfortunate position of the small wool growers, many of them combining wheat growing with wool growing, situated throughout the South-Western portion of the State. I have listened carefully to most of the speeches on the Bill, and I think that members without exception have admitted that there is need for giving immediate relief to the pastoral industry. Members might therefore realise all the more the urgent necessity for granting the relief at the earliest possible moment.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And in the best possible way.

Mr. PIESSE: Yes. To fix the rent upon the market value of wool is an innovation, and it appeals to me as being a practicable way. For the life of me I cannot see why such strong objection should be taken to that basis. We might rightly contend that the same principle should be applied to the farmers and pastoralists who have selected land under other conditions of the Land Act. The land rents, particularly of grazing leases and conditional purchase leases, might be varied according to the value of the produce. If the value of wheat varied, the rents might also be varied. I do not wish to trespass upon the patience of members by again referring to the unfortunate position of small wool growers in the South-Western division. I am hoping that the Government at the earliest possible moment will consider the requests made to the Premier a few nights ago with regard to giving relief to those wool growers. The Royal Commission on Farmers' Disabilities laid special stress on the unfortunate position of the small wool growers. They were referred to on more than one occasion, and the Commission went so far as to point out

that relief might be given to them by deferring payment of rents due to the Government and of interest due to the Agricultural Bank. Before the session concludes I hope the Government will bring down a measure to afford sufficient relief to settlers who find themselves in such an unfortunate position. The second portion of the Bill deals with preference to students who are fortunate enough to be in possession of a diploma or certificate of agriculture. I view that provision sceptically and doubt its justice. Much is to be said in favour of giving consideration to the practical man who for years has worked as a farm labourer and has acquired experience. His experience is of great value to the country. I know hundreds of successful farmers who started as farm employees and who, by thrift and industry, were able to select land, often in the neighbourhood of the farms on which they had gained their experience. A certificate should not be the only qualification for preference of this kind. A man who has worked hard and has proved himself a good servant and has helped to make a good farm is just as much, if not more, entitled to consideration than a student. We realise what an important part science plays in the development of agriculture, but a knowledge of science is not the only qualification needed. If that clause is retained, a proviso should be inserted stipulating that certain land should be set aside for the purpose. We have much light land that requires a knowledge of science to make it yield the best results, and that portion of the Bill should apply only to third-class land. In the third part of the Bill, no limit is placed upon the area of which the Minister may approve in excess of the 160 acres of free homestead farm. I should like to know what the Minister has in mind. I agree with the principle of granting a free homestead farm so long as all the conditions are complied with, but there must be a definite limit on the area proposed to be granted in excess of the area of 160 acres. I should like to direct the Minister's attention to another serious matter. All land under Part VI. of the Land Act should be withdrawn from selection in the heavier rainfall districts. I refer more particularly to the land lying at the southern end of the Great Southern railway, in the neighbour-

hood of Cranbrook and Mt. Barker, and in the districts toward Manjimup.

Mr. Kenneally: How do you propose to connect that with the Bill now before us?

Mr. Marshall: What has that to do with the Bill?

Mr. PIESSE: If the hon. member reads the Bill and brings his intelligence to bear upon it, he will realise that the third part deals with increasing the area of homestead farms. I wish to impress upon the Government that much land has been taken up under Part VI. of the Act—under grazing lease conditions—and the Government should not approve of its selection under those conditions in the districts I have indicated.

The Minister for Lands: This deals with pastoral leases.

Mr. PIESSE: Provision is made, under Clause 4 of the Bill, to increase the area of homestead farms. There is a danger of allowing land suitable for fruit culture and subterranean clover pasture to be taken up in large areas—land that in future years will have to be repurchased for closer settlement. In the Cranbrook district settlers are asking the Government to take back some of their land. I warn the Government of the danger of allowing the land to be selected in that way. Legislation should be introduced immediately to prevent such land from being selected under grazing lease conditions. You, Mr. Speaker, in company with the Premier, saw in the Mount Barker district, evidence of what can be done on small areas, and it behoves the Government to prevent land in that part of the State being taken up in areas too large to be properly developed. I hope that immediate relief will be given to the pastoralists in the North and that the Government will not overlook the agriculturists and small sheep farmers in the South-Western division.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [9.28]: I wish to direct the Minister's attention to a proposal which I consider to be wrong—the proposal to give preference to agricultural students. The member for Mount Magnet was quite right in saying that many of them made good agricultural advisers but many have made failures as agriculturists. The Superintendent of Dairying has been a failure on the land, though I do not doubt his qualifications as an adviser. A big per-

centage of our Agricultural Bank inspectors are men who failed on the land.

Mr. Brown: Some of them were never on the land.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Almost 75 per cent. of the foremen in charge of group settlement were failures on the land. Failure of this kind seems to be one of the qualifications for such positions. I am wondering whether the Minister had those failures in mind when he introduced the Bill. Would the Minister, as a practical agriculturist, consider that a man with a theoretical knowledge of growing wheat, a theoretical knowledge of milking cows and a theoretical knowledge of feeding and breeding pigs would be more successful on the land than his own son or the son of any other farmer, or many men who have worked on farms all their lives and know the business from A to Z? Yet, if the Bill goes through in its present form, farmers' sons, farm workers, and other qualified men who are crying out for land will be penalised, and the land boards will have positive instructions to give preference to men who have been to an agricultural college or the University. I hope that in Committee that provision will be entirely deleted. I see no reason for it. Evidently the Minister has been caught in a weak moment by some of his advisers, and consequently has inserted the provision. I was struck by the remark of the ex-Minister for Agriculture that the proposal had been put up to him when he held the Lands portfolio, and that he had turned it down.

Hon. P. Collier: That is an old rule. A new Minister generally has put up to him something that his predecessors have turned down.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I support the second reading of the Bill, but I oppose the clause giving preference to agricultural students. Again, I have to take exception to the fact that a concession is to be given to the Northern Division and not to the South-Western Division. Owing to the low price of wool some of the pastoralists in the South-Western Division are having a very hard time indeed. There is no need for differentiating between portions of the State. I agree that the pastoralists of the North have also had a particularly hard time, and that they should receive some small concession. I agree with the statement of the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley) that it does not matter a penny-piece whether any rents are

paid or not so long as the money they represent goes back into the land in improvements. The Government always have the right, through taxation, to get from the land the revenue they require. I reiterate my protest against the giving of preference to men with agricultural diplomas.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York—in reply) [9.35]: Hon. members now have a fairly good grip of the contents of the Bill. I regret that the urgency of the measure does not permit of my assenting to the suggestion that it should go to a select committee. Effect must be given to the Bill on the 1st January next; and if it is referred to a select committee, the time when it reaches the Administrator for his assent will probably be well on in January.

Mr. Marshall: It could be made retrospective.

Mr. Panton: This is a financial emergency measure, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. The present position of the industry demands some consideration from Parliament. Neither any Minister nor, I believe, any member of this Chamber would for a moment suggest that the small relief proposed by the Bill will place the industry on a sound financial basis. Even the wiping-out of the whole of the rents would not do that. However, the Bill is an indication that Parliament appreciates the difficulties of the pastoralist. This measure, together with other legislation passed during the present year, will, I hope, permit those engaged in the industry to carry on. The financial emergency legislation already enacted affords some slight relief, and this session's Land and Income Tax Bill will render some additional assistance. I am sorry that when introducing the Bill I did not give the House more information. Probably it was neglectful of me not to do so. For the information of hon. members I now wish to quote the terms of reference to the committee. The members of that committee were given a fairly free hand. It is not a fact, as has been suggested, that their report was practically dictated to them before they framed it.

Mr. Marshall: They made a pretty bad job of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Here are the instructions which were given to the committee—

1. To carefully peruse the following reports:—Royal Commission on Meat Industry, W.A., 1928. Beef Cattle Industry Commission (Queensland), 1928. Joint Report of Queensland and W.A. Commissions on cattle industry of Queensland and North and North-West of W.A. and Northern Territory, 1929. Report of Messrs. Lefroy and Evans, Northern Territory, 1929.

2. To take evidence from—the Pastoral Appraisal Board, Associated Banks, financing firms, Agricultural Bank, Pastoral Association, cattle industry representatives.

It should be possible for each of these interests to submit their evidence through one representative.

3. To peruse the land laws of Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia in respect to pastoral leases.

4. To report on the various recommendations and suggestions submitted in evidence particularly in respect to—(a) Tenure; (b) Area; (c) Rentals; (d) Market prices; (e) Costs of production.

5. To submit recommendations in regard to—(a) The existing provision in the Land Act for reappraisal in 1933 (or 15 years after commencement of leases of new country approved since 1917). (b) Whether pastoral lessees are entitled to any relief from the Government in the matter of tenure and rentals, and, if so, to what extent.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the date of those instructions?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The 23rd April. The report was submitted to Cabinet during the Premier's lengthy absence in the East. It could not be dealt with until his return, as this legislation vitally affects the Treasury.

Hon. P. Collier: I only inquired the date for the purpose of knowing what length of time the committee had to consider the matter.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They had a fair time. Their report was submitted about July. It is easy for members of Cabinet to make themselves popular, but consideration must be given to the effect on the finances of the State. This question could not be considered in the Treasurer's absence; hence the delay in submitting the Bill to Parliament. The committee went exhaustively into the question, and ascertained the price of wool over a period of years, the average being about 1s. 1½d. The committee pointed out that for the last three years wool had been produced at a loss. The allowance being limited to 30 per cent., that percentage was divided, giving 1d. for every 6 per cent., so that, as the

Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, it was estimated that the price of wool would not be below 7d. Provision had been made for a reduction in the event of wool falling to 7d. It was only fair to provide for a corresponding increase if the price went above 1s. per lb. I disagree with the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) as to the cost of production of wool being 1s. 3d. per lb.

Mr. Angelo: I said 12.55d. after giving credit for the sale of sheep.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The question is not only one of the sale of wool, but also of the sale of surplus sheep. During the past two or three years the pastoralists have admittedly found great difficulty in getting rid of their surplus stock; some of it they have not been able to sell at all.

Mr. Angelo: Pastoralists have had to send cheques, instead of receiving cheques as the result of their shipments from the North.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I know that that has also been so in the case of cattle shipments. A similar position exists in many industries to-day. Wheat was sold at a loss last year. Vegetables are frequently produced at a loss. Much as we regret it, isolated cases cannot be picked out for relief. For the Kimberleys, the average price for the year ended 30th June, 1931, was £10 6s. 2d. for 9,637 head of cattle on record as having been sold. It is estimated that a price of £13 per head is needed to yield a profit.

Mr. Angelo: What is the freight?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot say exactly at the moment. In East Kimberley the average price this year has been less than last year's price, but more than the price over an average of years. The average over years would be £3 14s. 2d., and last year's price was £4 7s. 10d. The cost of the cattle is estimated at something below £5 per head. Thus the cattle industry is being carried on at a loss. Now, here is an honest attempt to give it relief by means of this Bill. I regret that under the system it is impossible to differentiate between pastoralists. Re-appraisement of pastoral leases took place in some cases during 1926, when the Government of the present Leader of the Opposition put through a Bill abolishing the minimum of 10s., and also abolishing the maximum. It

was provided that the re-appraisement board could make any adjustment they thought necessary, and that such adjustment should continue for the remaining period of 15 years. This period had been fixed by the re-appraisement board. Thus there has been some alteration made.

Mr. Coverley: But the foundation the board had to work on was wrong in the first place.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The foundations are not laid down for the re-appraisement.

Mr. Marshall: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Then Parliament is responsible for that.

Mr. Marshall: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is useless for hon. members to say to-day that Parliament in the past has made mistakes.

Hon. P. Collier: The experts of the future will not be able to say that of the present Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. They will offer the same criticism.

Mr. Coverley: You should refer this Bill to a committee.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have already referred it to a committee, who have given it serious consideration. I contend that they were more able to give proper consideration to the issues involved than are members of this Chamber.

Mr. Coverley: Then explain the difference between the proposals for East Kimberley and West Kimberley.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was pointed out that there are two distinct markets there—the market for overseas beef, and the market here in the metropolitan area. The latter has been a good one in the past, but certain restrictions have been imposed this year, due to the fact that stock brought down must be killed at once. They cannot be depastured as in the past.

Mr. Coverley: Is not that an argument for increasing the markets?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: To an extent, it limits the market.

Mr. Coverley: Why reduce one part of the Kimberleys by 20 per cent. and the other by 40 per cent.?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am informed that in one part of the Kimberleys the area is suitable only for breeding stock, not for fattening them. On top of that

they cannot travel the cattle for fattening purposes as in the past.

Mr. Coverley: That is an argument for a further decrease for West Kimberley.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I explained that East Kimberley was dependent entirely on the overseas market.

Mr. Coverley: That is not so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, it is.

Mr. Angelo: They have to shift them by sea over a longer distance.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, an additional 500 miles by sea. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley) is cross-examining me to see what I know about the subject, and he is surprised at my knowledge.

Mr. Coverley: I am surprised that you cannot see any substance in my argument.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member suggested that we should take each individual pastoral lease, examine it, and deal with anomalies that may exist. That is more than we can do. It was never intended that this Chamber should essay anything of the sort. Further than that, legislation has already been passed enabling the re-appraisal board to undertake that task. I want to clear up a misunderstanding regarding land in the South-West. The value of the land there was fixed before 1898, and since then no alteration has been made. The value was fixed at £1 per 1,000 acres. That land is not subject to re-appraisal. If we consider its value prior to 1898, and compare it with the values obtaining to-day, it will be agreed that the people in the southern parts of the State are not in the same position as are those in the North. The re-appraisal of the pastoral leases that we refer to in the Bill is that effected in 1917, a time when pastoral leases were considered of higher value than they are to-day. There are two or three reasons why the troubles of pastoralists are difficult to rectify. In the first instance, there are the pastoralists who selected their land many years ago and pioneered the industry. They were able to have work done much more cheaply than is possible to-day.

Mr. Coverley: Yes. £2 7s. 6d. a week and tucker.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At any rate, it was much cheaper than is possible to-day.

Hon. M. F. Troy: That is, for such work as they had carried out.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, I do not know how much work they had done. I am sure that if the industry were more prosperous, more developmental work would be carried out. Then there are the men who have developed their holdings recently. In addition there are the men who bought their leases at fairly big prices. It is difficult to differentiate between them, and arrive at an arrangement that will be equitable for all. I hope that phase of the question will be taken into consideration. Eastern States people who have invested in the industry have made out a good case for consideration. They have spent a tremendous amount of money in connection with their leases, and to-day they are financially embarrassed.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You could buy their stations for half the cost of their improvements.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so.

Mr. Marshall: And the Bill will save their propositions.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We do not say that.

Mr. Marshall: Then what are you arguing about?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was never suggested that the Bill would put the industry on a financial basis. In reply to the remarks by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the committee, I would point out that it was not suggested the members of that committee would have an intimate knowledge of the pastoral industry. All they were asked to do was to adjudicate on the evidence submitted to them. They were asked to peruse the reports and the evidence submitted to them. They were asked to peruse the reports and the evidence given by witnesses, on oath, before the Royal Commission. They were asked to call evidence locally and to sift that evidence. On the result, they were asked to submit a finding. I think their recommendation quite reasonable. I propose to lay on the Table of the House the report of the committee, and members may peruse it before we consider the Bill in Committee.

Mr. Angelo: Did the committee suggest that relief should be afforded six months hence, or when?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member will have an opportunity of ascer-

taining that when the report is laid on the Table.

Mr. Angelo: It may be too late then.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It may be. Nearly every member who has spoken, has taken strong exception to the preference proposed to agricultural students who have obtained a diploma, degree or certificate. It should be made perfectly clear that the education that enabled the students to secure those distinctions, was given free, and that the people of the State paid for it. Surely to goodness, in the circumstances, we have a right to the use subsequently of the knowledge acquired!

Mr. Panton: And those who pay for their education should have an equal right.

Hon. A. McCallum: That is rather a dangerous argument for the Minister to advance.

Hon. P. Collier: We pay for the education of engineering students at the University, but we do not guarantee them jobs.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. The point is that these agricultural students are leaving the State and making use of their education in other parts of the world. All I said was that if such students, after we have educated them, have money with which to back themselves on the land, we should see to it that they get land, and that we have the benefit of their knowledge.

Mr. Patrick: Why not leave that to the land board?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We do.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is a direction. The Leader of the Opposition knows that probably we could do it by way of a Ministerial direction. We have adopted the more honest way, and have brought the question before Parliament.

Mr. Marshall: Well, Parliament will not agree to give any such direction.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If Parliament does not agree, then Parliament will not give the direction. The reason I have advanced is the only one behind this proposal. If these people have money to back themselves after we have educated them, Parliament will be justified in giving them the opportunity to make use of the education for the benefit of the State.

Mr. Panton: But they will get that opportunity.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It will be impossible for the Agricultural Department to absorb all these students, and many of them will probably leave the State. The use of the education they have gained will be denied to the State. I am desirous of giving them an opportunity, if they have the necessary money, to remain in the State on blocks made available to them. It seems to me that it would be a wise policy to scatter those young men throughout the agricultural industry. It has been suggested that they are not practical men. They are not trained in theory only; they have received practical training as well. Muresk College is a practical agricultural school and so is the school at Narrogin.

Mr. Panton: The Technical College is a practical school, where they train carpenters, but we do not guarantee to give jobs to those lads.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That was never intended. A knowledge of farming is not useful to a man who remains in the city, but carpentry is useful to an individual whether he resides in the city or in the country. I was surprised at the remarks of the member for Katanning (Mr. Piesse).

Mr. Piesse: Would not the land board take into consideration the special qualifications of the students when dealing with applications?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is what we ask the land board to do.

Mr. Kenneally: That is not so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: All we say is that if these students have money of their own they should be given preference in the allocation of blocks. Personally I hope that many of these young men will be absorbed on the repurchased estates. In the past I regret that many people who have been placed on blocks on repurchased estates have not proved as successful as we anticipated.

Mr. Kenneally: The Bill is not necessary in order to absorb those students on repurchased estates.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That has not been suggested. Another question raised particularly by the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) and by the member for Katanning, related to the 160-acre proposition. The position at Nornalup was referred to. There may be three or four blocks there that will require to be extended beyond the 160-acre limit, but that

is due to the fact that it would be stupid to leave a 10-chain strip between holdings. The cost of fencing would be so great that the extension would be justified. By slightly increasing the area of the two holdings, the one sub-divisional fence would be all that was necessary. That is the only reason for any such extension of holdings in the Nornalup area. There may be some holdings in the Busselton area that will be in excess of the 160-acre proposition.

Hon. M. F. Troy: They will be abandoned holdings.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not so sure that it will not be in the best interests of all concerned to leave them there. The other evening the member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum) presented an excellent case for the establishment of small holdings. His scheme was perfectly justifiable from the standpoint of taking people out of the cities and placing them on small blocks so as to give them an opportunity to engage in productive work.

Hon. M. F. Troy: That will be a problem for the next Government.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Then I hope that will be a long way off.

Mr. Panton: You do not think anything of the sort; you can see the writing on the wall.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the unemployment trouble continues, we will be more than justified in doing it to-day. Reference was made to the housing of these people, but none of them gets more than £2 a week.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I could live there myself on £2 a week. It is a wonderful proposition.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: None of them gets more than £2.

Hon. M. F. Troy: That is not settlement; that is a pension proposition!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Some have been pensioned by the hon. member, and he was fairly careful. I hope the House will agree to the extension of the 160-acre maximum holding, because the proposal is justifiable. It is not intended to abuse the privilege. In reply to the member for Katanning (Mr. Piesse), it is not intended to use this provision in his electorate. One day the homestead farm difficulty will have to be considered by Parliament. I agree it is unfair to give one man 160 acres of first-class land in a good area, while another man in light-land country is able to get 160 acres of

third-class land only. That is not equitable. One day a readjustment will be effected. As this proposition does not apply to the hon. member's electorate, I will not discuss it further from that standpoint. I resent the statement by the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley) that we instructed the committee. They were given an absolutely free hand to bring in their report. This is not hasty legislation. It has been given a great deal of consideration and thought. We will not take the Committee stage to-night, and so members will still have another evening to think over the Bill. Meanwhile I will lay on the Table of the House a copy of the report of this lands committee, so that members can see for themselves exactly what the position is. In reply to the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley) who complained that the Government had not found water for pastoralists, I believe the pastoralists can do that work very much cheaper than we could do it for them; indeed, I think they would resent our finding water for them at the price we would have to charge for it. They are sufficiently saddled, without our saddling them with work carried out under that system.

Mr. Coverley: I merely suggested that it could be done.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is not likely to be done. Of course it is not in my department, but in that of the Minister for Works. I have seen many experiments made at finding water in this State, and can say it has cost far in excess of its value.

Mr. Coverley: I can show you a report from New South Wales.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is entirely different. In the western portion of New South Wales one can go out anywhere and by putting down a bore get water. Our pastoralists can find water much cheaper than the Government could find it for them, and I feel sure they would resent our interference in that respect.

Mr. Marshall: You could put down a few on the stock routes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A number have been put down, and we have had to send out parties to recondition them. It is not fair to make a comparison between Western Australia and New South Wales, for in New South Wales they have railways running through their pastoral areas.

Mr. Coverley: We do not want railways; we merely want water.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member could apply to the department for it.

Mr. Coverley: And get the same old reply—"We have no money."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There have been past Governments that might well have spent money up North. I have heard the Wyndham Meat Works condemned, but I do not know what would happen to the pastoralists up there without those works.

Mr. Marshall: Have you ever heard yourself condemned?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have heard the hon. member condemned.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This must cease.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have dealt with the main arguments put up by members.

Hon. P. Collier: And you will have a further opportunity in Committee.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I suppose so. I ask members to remember that if we said we were going to charge no rent at all in the North, that the rent could be set aside to be used for developmental purposes, it would take an army of inspectors to enforce it.

Mr. Coverley: No fear.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I say it would. The hon. member himself has said that even now the conditions are not being complied with. We have no money for an army of inspectors, and while our population up North is so scanty we have to depend on the pastoralists doing a fair thing by the State. The Bill has been introduced, not to put the industry on a sound financial basis, but merely to show that we are attempting to assist it. The one point I am concerned about is that I do hope members will not turn down the proposal to place students.

Hon. P. Collier: But we certainly will.

Mr. Kenneally: It has already gone.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think members have accepted the proposed legislation in a friendly spirit, and I desire to thank them for it. Other points in the Bill we shall discuss further in Committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Returned from the Council without amendment.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1931-32.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 5th November; Mr. Richardson in the Chair.

Vote—Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief, £607,902 (partly considered):

MR. KENNEALLY (East Perth) [10.9]:

This is one of the most important votes of the session, particularly since it embraces the item Unemployment Relief. The attitude of the department in regard to the employment of men and women requires the utmost attention of the Committee, if we are to do justice to those out of employment. Already, on earlier votes, we have had opportunity for giving attention to the conditions under which men are being called upon to work. Those conditions have not been improved in the time that has expired since we last dealt with them. They require a man to work four or five days to secure two days' pay. I should like to know whether the Minister is responsible for that system. Furthermore, the amount on the Estimates is in excess of that which was previously passed by Parliament. It is time we were told when the "work for all" policy, which was so glibly advocated and promised by those sitting behind the Government to-day, is to be given effect to. If the digging of a few holes in the South-West is to represent the sum total of the effort to provide employment for the people, it is a poor lookout for them. We are awaiting the fulfilment of the Government's promises, upon which they were returned to power. One of the biggest tragedies of the period through which we are passing is that of boys who are out of work. There is nothing ahead for a lad of 15 who has left school. If he gets into the Railway Department he has to leave at the age of 21, and lapse into idleness at a time when he should be on the road to making his way in life. Efforts are being made to form a council by which it may be possible to absorb these lads in some sort of employ-

ment. A special effort should be put forward by the Government to brighten the outlook. We are doubly penalising parents to-day. We say to the father, under this relief system, "It will cost you 7s. a week to keep that child until he is 14; when he passes that age he will cost you nothing." We make provision whereby the father of a family, who is out of work and on sustenance, is to receive 7s. a week for each child so long as that child is under 14. When that age is passed the child has to live upon nothing. Even if a boy, who has just turned 14, is out of work, he gets no further sustenance and the father gets no further assistance towards his keep.

Mr. Panton: And because he is not getting sustenance, he is not considered when work is offering.

Mr. KENNEALLY: That is so. The position of these boys and girls is terrible. There may be a man with a family of eight or nine children all under the age of 14. He will have been receiving the maximum of £2 9s. As each child reaches the age of 14 the sustenance is reduced. Let us take a man, his wife and four children. One child reaches the age of 14, and 7s. a week is immediately cut out. The remaining amount of sustenance is spread over the entire family, including the child who has just reached the age of 14. When the second child reaches that age the sustenance is again reduced, and the lesser amount is still spread over the whole family. A boy of 14 will eat more than he will at any other time of his life. It is, therefore, very hard for the family which has to lose 7s. every time a member of it reaches the age of 14. The reduction in the food supplies also means that the physique of both parents and children suffers, even though parents may do with less themselves. I hope attention will be given by the Minister to that aspect of the matter. Some definite effort should be made to co-ordinate the activities of the Child Welfare Department with those of the Unemployment Relief Department. When relief is granted by the Child Welfare Department, payment up to 9s. per child is made, and sometimes the mother receives the same. The relief that is given under the unemployment scheme is, however, only 7s. per week per individual. When a man gets out of work he is transferred from the Child Welfare Department to the Unemployment

Relief Department, and the sustenance is reduced from 9s. to 7s. The family is, therefore, penalised to the extent of 2s. per head for each individual. The Minister should see that such an anomaly is rectified. When are the Government going to do those things that will obviate the expenditure of these large sums of money? Are we continually going to subscribe to conditions that mean increased payments both by the Child Welfare Department and the Unemployment Relief Department? The increase in the amount is a reflection on the Government, especially when considered in conjunction with their promises to the people, on the strength of which they were returned to power.

Mr. Sampson: And a reflection of the low prices and the fact that they will not pay the cost of production.

Mr. KENNEALLY: We have the spectacle of the member for Swan advocating low prices in the shape of low wages.

Mr. Sampson: When was that?

Mr. Sleeman: That was when he went to Malta.

Mr. KENNEALLY: No, after he returned from Malta.

Mr. Sampson: You are in the realms of fiction now.

Mr. KENNEALLY: At Malta he told the Maltese that they ought to migrate here. They would provide cheap labour.

Mr. Sampson: No, to develop the country.

Mr. KENNEALLY: We remember the eloquent speech he made of the bright prospects if the Maltese came here in their thousands.

Mr. Marshall: Big families.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Yes, big families for preference.

Mr. Sampson: The hon. member is exaggerating.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It would be impossible to do that when dealing with any of the utterances made by the hon. member on his return from Malta.

Mr. Sampson: That is gross exaggeration.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The time has come when we should be able to reduce the amount spent under this vote by giving men work. In every depot there is a call for work, not for sustenance. It might be argued that when men are under the sustenance system, they are all right. That is not so. They want work. In spite of the

fact that they are applying for work, the sustenance vote is increasing day by day. Very feeble efforts, if I may term them such, have been made by the Government to place men in work, but the system has not engendered the correct spirit in the men who have been called upon to undertake the work. We shall not relieve the demands on the Treasury if we call upon men to work for five days in order to earn two days' pay. What inducement is there for a single man to do anything to lighten the expenditure under this vote if he is required to work five days in order to earn two days' pay? Under the piecework system operating, that applies to married men as well as to single men being sent out to certain jobs. Endeavours should be made to induce the men to remain on the jobs, rather than have them leave in despair and fall back on sustenance. Information supplied to the Labour Party, and through them to Ministers, indicates that a number of men who have undertaken Government jobs, thus showing their willingness to accept work, have found the prices charged for commodities so high as to compel them to give up in despair. In many instances the prices charged down there are 100 per cent. above those charged in Perth.

The Minister for Works: What do you mean by "down there"?

Mr. KENNEALLY: At the various depots to which the men are sent. To some of the men concerned the term "down there" would have an entirely different meaning, and a correct meaning. It should be "down below." Ministers made a promise that, when the men were sent to those jobs, they would be guaranteed provisions at approximately Perth prices. We believed that the promise was made in good faith. The men accepted it as such, and yet in many instances they are being charged 100 per cent. above Perth prices. We even went so far as to define "approximately Perth prices." The definition of Ministers was that it would represent Perth prices plus the cost of freight to the destination. We have shown Ministers that 50 to 100 per cent. additional is being charged. If that continues, the vote of this department will not be decreased. In fact, the tendency will be for it to increase. Now that a definite effort has been made to place a large number of men in work, I am anxious that the condi-

tions will be made attractive to them. We have suggested to the Government that instead of paying the men a certain amount of money and withholding the balance, they should be treated as are the workers in casual jobs, namely, that while they are at work they be paid the full amount they earn. If there is not sufficient money to keep them going, let us confess that we cannot keep them in constant work at that rate. The A.W.U. covers workers who engage in more or less casual occupations. The same might be said of the workers on the wharves. In those instances the employers do not say that they will keep back portion of the men's money for fear they will spend it unwisely if the lot is given to them at the one time. They are paid the money which they earn, at the time they earn it. Then the responsibility of looking after the money is the responsibility of the man who has earned it. We placed that proposition before the Minister, and he undertook to put it before Cabinet. That was some time ago, and I am hopeful of shortly getting a favourable reply. Some such change is required in connection with this work. I trust that before the general discussion on the Vote closes, the Minister will give us some information regarding proposed new works, and also particulars of contemplated improvements, especially as regards the prices of commodities on relief works already established.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [10.32]: Throughout the world it is being recognised more and more that the actual solution of unemployment and charitable relief is the provision of land for those who are unemployed.

Mr. Hegney: The abolition of the capitalist system.

Mr. SAMPSON: In New Zealand recently there has been formed the New Zealand Settlement and Development League, and a good deal of progress has been made by that body. It is claimed that the economic trouble which has been encountered is to an extent being met by what is being done in New Zealand. As has been said on many occasions, the solution can never be 100 per cent. However, the work being done in New Zealand—the league operate near Auckland—is so encouraging as to warrant the attention of the Minister in charge of unemployment relief. It has been

pointed out that if it comes to the actual providing of the essentials of life for our unemployed citizens, this can be done in the country at a lower figure than is possible in the town. That is the opinion expressed in connection with the New Zealand method, the reason being that a great deal of the essential food is produced on the holding. Again, the clothes to be worn in the country are not of a standard such as is required in the city, and a simpler dwelling can be obtained at a fraction of the cost which has to be met in towns.

Mr. Kenneally: Those people will soon get back to the loin cloth.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is not a question of the loin cloth, but a question of getting over this trouble. In the interests of those who are out of employment and can see no opportunity of obtaining it, the provision of a block of land must be highly beneficial, giving the families concerned the opportunity of working for themselves. During the early period it is essential that assistance be continued. According to this morning's "West Australian," Queensland is taking up the solution on the lines of land for the unemployed. Queensland has a wonderful name for the fertility of its soil and the development achieved in respect of marketing, but nevertheless that State has a large number of unemployed. The "West Australian" deals with the matter briefly in a telegraphed account. Unemployed there go on the land, and rations are provided for a period. This is to enable the first few months' work to be carried out. I would like to refer further to the position in New Zealand. The first report issued by the New Zealand Settlement and Development League states that great consideration is being given to the development of pig farms. That is not a particularly romantic subject, but from the utilitarian standpoint remarkable success has been accomplished already. When it is considered that Denmark, one of our chief competitors in the world's markets, exports in excess of £20,000,000 worth of pork annually, it will be realised that there are almost unlimited possibilities for other parts of the world: and New Zealand is seeking to secure a greater share of that export trade. During the year the executive of the New Zealand Settlement and Development League inspected two magnificent demonstrations of what can be done. One

was a farm at Henderson, the other a farm at Takanini. The former, containing 40 acres, had on it at the time of the executive's visit 2,600 fowls, three horses, 33 cows, two bulls, six two-year-old heifers, eight yearling heifers, and over 800 pigs. It is almost inconceivable that on so small an area as 40 acres those animals could be cared for. In addition, seven adults are being wholly supported on that farm. It is further stated that the owner of the farm specialises not only in fattening but also in breeding the type of pig which he considers suitable for the London market. He stated that he had made a very substantial profit out of this business, and that five acres given over to pigs yielded more than 95 acres on which a Holstein herd had provided milk for the city.

Mr. Hegney: That is very interesting information.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, and it shows what is being done by New Zealand in an effort to stand up to the heavy problem which that Dominion, in common with the rest of the world, is facing. I hope it will be possible for our Government to give serious consideration to the provision of allotments of land for our unemployed. During the first few months sustenance would have to be continued, so that the allotments could be developed. People who have owned blocks of land for some time are certainly in a much better position than those without land. They have their own homes, and are able to produce the major portion of their own food requirements. Therefore I hope the Minister and those associated with him will give the fullest consideration to this aspect. I do not wish to imply that they are not giving consideration to it; but it is quite clear that the payment of sustenance gets us nowhere, because, as the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) has said, each month we are getting deeper into the mire. The way out is to return to first principles—the development of the land and the production of their own food by those who are in distress.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [10.38]: I fully recognise that the Child Welfare Department are doing splendid charitable work. Undoubtedly hundreds of women and children have to thank the department for their very existence at the present time.

Yet the necessity for this assistance comes hard on the State, especially in view of the existing financial position. I wish to bring to the attention of the Committee some cases which have come under my personal notice. A man who came to Western Australia at the age of 60 years, after being here a short time met with an accident, incapacitating him for work. He applied for the old-age or invalid pension, but apparently was not eligible for it. After a deal of controversy and correspondence, he had to fall back on the Child Welfare Department. In fact, I know of two such cases. Again, in cases where the husband has run away from his wife and children, the wife, in order that she and her children may live, has to fall back on the State. Even in my little sphere of observation there have been several cases of that sort. It cannot be doubted, therefore, that the Child Welfare Department are doing splendid work. Their system is excellent. The abolition of the farm labour scheme I do not consider altogether wise. It has been said that now the harvest is coming on, the farmer should surely be in a position to employ that labour at the present wage, if not a bigger one. I appeal to the Minister on behalf of these young men who are content to remain in the country a long way from the city. They do not make a practice of coming down to the towns. If the scheme is abandoned, these young fellows will be thrown on the labour market, and they will have nowhere to go, but back to the city. The Minister for Labour, no doubt, is satisfied regarding the £1,250,000 that the Government are to get from the Commonwealth Government and the reproductive works that will be undertaken.

The Minister for Railways: We are not getting that from the Commonwealth: it is to be borrowed money.

Mr. BROWN: Is not work done on the farms to be regarded as reproductive? It is true that those men receive 10s. a week for six days a week. Under that scheme, much reproductive work has been done in clearing the land and making way for increased cultivation. If men are employed in keeping the farms in good order, are they not carrying out splendid work in the interests of the State? The abolition of the farm labour scheme will cause much hardship. The Minister must have received many protests from the country districts.

The Minister for Railways: If you give people something for nothing and then take away that privilege, would you not expect many protests?

Mr. BROWN: Men at Blackboy or Hovea cost the Government, I understand, something like 18s. 7d. a week, whereas the total cost regarding the farm labourers is but 10s. a week. The men employed under the farm labour scheme are doing more reproductive work than are those at Blackboy or Hovea. If the scheme is terminated, many of these fellows will have to leave the country districts.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Will they come to the city?

Mr. BROWN: Where else can they go?

Mr. Mann: They had better stay in the country.

Mr. BROWN: In many instances the farmers cannot afford to employ them, if they are expected to pay wages. It has been said that with the price of wheat rising, and the harvest having to be taken off, the farmers should be in a position to pay. If wheat were 8s. a bushel, farmers could not afford to pay the additional wages, because they have the leeway of the last year or two to make up. These young men receive the same treatment as the farmer himself receives. They are content to remain where they are because they realise the position confronting the State. I admit it is deplorable that the State has to pay these men 10s. a week only.

Mr. Hegney: How long do they have to work for 10s. a week?

Mr. BROWN: Six days a week.

Mr. Hegney: How many hours a day?

Mr. BROWN: None of them is growling.

Mr. Piesse: They want to stop on.

Mr. BROWN: Of course the men do. In 99 cases out of 100 the farmers treat the men well. I deplore the fact that they can receive 10s. a week only.

The Minister for Railways: And that is what we get when we find £20,000 for the farmers!

Mr. BROWN: My object is to point out to the Government that they will gain nothing by ending the scheme.

Mr. H. W. Mann: How long do you suggest the Government should keep the scheme going?

Hon. P. Collier: For ever!

Mr. BROWN: No.

Mr. H. W. Mann: How long?

Mr. BROWN: Until the farmers' position is buoyant again.

The Minister for Railways: That has never been known. There has never been a year when some farmers have not been in distress, notwithstanding high prices.

Mr. BROWN: That is possible.

The Minister for Railways: And we are to provide free farm labour if there is any case of distress?

Mr. BROWN: No. The Minister forgets that, owing to our liberal conditions, many of the men were induced to take up land and develop it, although they had no capital. Such men were in difficulties from the start, but their work has been an asset to the State. The Minister forgets that.

The Minister for Railways: I do not forget it, but the farmer has no more right to claim free labour than has any other man in the community.

Hon. P. Collier: Every industry could keep going if provided with free labour.

The Minister for Railways: Of course.

Mr. BROWN: I do not believe in men working on farms for nothing, but I have to take into consideration the conditions that apply in Western Australia to-day. Can the Government find work for these young men if they abolish the farm labour scheme? I do not think they can. These lads are native born, and we must not allow our own people to starve. Many of them cannot find employment. It will not be in the interests of the State if the scheme is abolished. Throughout Australia the scheme propounded by the present Government has been regarded as one of the finest attempts to solve the unemployment difficulty. I appeal to the Government not to abolish it altogether.

MR. PIESSE (Katanning) [10.48]: I wish to add a few words in appreciation of the manner in which the Government have met the unfortunate unemployment position. It is to be regretted that the vote under consideration has grown to such an enormous extent. It is the duty of Government and Parliament to get the unemployed back as soon as possible into profitable occupations, so that reproductive work may be undertaken.

Mr. Hegney: Why the duty of the Government?

Mr. PIESSE: The hon. member would be the first to complain if the Government did not carry out that duty.

The Minister for Railways: No Government on earth have been able to find work for the whole population; the people must go back to the industries from which they came.

Mr. PIESSE: It is the duty of any Government—

Mr. H. W. Mann: You are getting down to Communism if you expect the Government to find work for everyone.

Hon. P. Collier: If that is true, there was a good deal of Communism in evidence about 18 months ago.

The Minister for Railways: Even when you were spending £4,000,000 of loan funds you had the unemployment difficulty, and we cannot expect to be without it now.

Mr. PIESSE: It is generally understood that until industry reverts to normal we must be prepared to face a huge expenditure for relief purposes. It behoves Parliament to see that this money is put to the best possible use. What appeals to me is the want of a definite policy in that respect. From the inception it was necessary to put a large number of men at Blackboy because of the accommodation provided there, but it seems to me the Government missed a good opportunity to embark on a scheme of land development by clearing and improving land. In that way the money could have been put to more profitable use than by expending it in the National Park. If the unemployed could be put out on the land they could clear large areas which could be brought into closer settlement. Even if by that means we got down to the proverbial ten acres and a cow, it would at least be affording the men a chance to do something for themselves. I hope that much of the loan money will be put to practical use in clearing the land and making small farms. As to the farm subsidy scheme, the Government were largely justified in withdrawing it for the time being, for they could very well expect that the harvest would absorb a large proportion of the people sent out under this scheme. I am satisfied they are not all going to be absorbed, and that a number of farmers who are employing men to-day will not be able to use them for taking off the present harvest. It means that a lot of single men will drift back to

the towns and the Government will be again called upon to provide sustenance for them. When the scheme was initiated, it was not understood that it would be for all time; it was only a temporary expedient, and those of us who live in rural districts know that it was a very wise scheme and that the Government could not be expected to continue it for all time. Possibly it is not too late to provide for a continuance of the scheme in partial form. I wish to express my appreciation of the splendid manner in which the Child Welfare Department and the Unemployment Board have met a trying and difficult period.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Have the department met the position down your way?

Mr. PIESSE: Yes, in every particular. I am grateful to them for the promptitude displayed and the business-like way in which they have dealt with cases. In my own electorate splendid work has been rendered to the country either through the local authority or through the farms subsidy scheme. The State has not lost anything by it, for a splendid return has been given. The one unfortunate feature is that in the country districts we have not been granted the maximum amount allowed in the city. However, I am not complaining, for we have got along very well and I hope that ere long we shall be able to absorb the unemployed in our district. Also I appreciate the splendid services of our local committees. They have given up a tremendous amount of their time to the work, and a humane interest has been evinced by the people in all the localities with which I have been associated. I thank the department for the courteous manner in which they have dealt with applicants and the kindly treatment meted out to the unemployed.

MR. H. W. MANN (Perth) [10.57]: A good deal has been said of what various committees have done for the male section of the unemployed. I should like to indicate what has been done by a committee dealing with unemployed single girls. Since July of 12 months ago a committee of ladies have successfully dealt with upwards of 1,400 single girls. Positions have been found for about 1,000 of them, and the committee are still handling some 400. A majority of the girls were migrants from the Old Country. Many of them have been

brought up in orphanages, and when they reached the age to go to work they went into domestic service, passing from one employer to another until the time came when there was no call for domestic labour. They were then thrown upon their own resources, and with no money they were more or less helpless. This committee have been looking after those girls, keeping them in clothes and shoes, paying the rent and in many cases providing medical attention. To-day they have between 300 and 400 to whom they are giving assistance. The unemployment department have been providing sustenance for those girls, but the 7s. per week would have been of little service to them had it not been that this committee were more or less standing in the position of parents to them.

Hon. P. Collier: Do they get Government sustenance?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Yes, 7s. a week. The committee have been paying rents which have ranged from 5s. to 7s. a week, and paid for repairs to clothing, and for medicine. Very little has been said about the wonderful work of this committee, whose operations have been investigated from different points of view. Owing to the complaints of sweating, the member for Guildford-Midland and the member for Middle Swan made an investigation into the system under which the girls are being cared for. They found there was no ground for the allegation of sweating, and that the girls were being well looked after. The time came when it was thought necessary the girls should have something that would occupy their time during the day. Accordingly, a sewing room was opened. The Government provided a dozen machines, and for a considerable time the attendance in that room numbered between 80 and 100 daily. An excellent mid-day meal and afternoon tea are provided for one day in the week, and, if the girls care to attend more often, they are welcome to do so. The cost is £18 to £20 a month for sustenance and care, and £60 a month for material. The products of the room have been going into the country. A great proportion of the garments, etc., have been passed on to confinement cases. The nurses of the Child Welfare Department find that some women are without the necessary clothing, either for themselves or for their babies. This sewing room has been

providing nearly all that is necessary in such cases.

Hon. P. Collier: Is not instruction given in dressmaking, etc.?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Yes. The ladies attend two or three days a week, and give instruction to the girls in cutting out and in sewing generally. Mrs. Douglas has been giving instruction in dressmaking and cutting, and Miss Stewart in tailoring and cutting. Last month positions were found for 68 girls, ranging in pay from 10s. to 65s. a week. The lower wage was for young nursery girls in suburban homes, and the maximum wage was for a position at Wiluna. The work is equal to that which is being done in Victoria, where 4,400 single girls are out of employment. Those girls are cared for by a committee, and the Government are finding a greater proportion of the money than is being found here. They are employed in manufacturing clothing, jam, etc., which is distributed among the unemployment centres. The local committee have been making up clothing from material provided by unemployment committees, which purchase the material and pass it on to the workroom to be made up into wearing apparel. The Government are contributing £10 per week towards the cost. For the week ended 3rd October, the expenses were as follows:—Rentals £14 18s., fares £1 8s. 7d., general expenses £1 19s., meals £3 6s. 6d., total £24 18s.; and for the week ended 10th October, the total expenditure was £29. The average cost has been between £30 and £60.

Hon. P. Collier: Where is the balance of the money obtained?

Mr. H. W. MANN: The Shop Assistants' Employees Union raised £300 by means of an art union, the Golden Apple Appeal brought in £1,500, and there have been many donations and other voluntary payments. The average income is between £20 and £25 a week. During September 68 girls went into employment, the wages ranging from 10s. to 65s. a week. A committee investigate the positions which the girls fill. There are times when attempts are made to employ under sweating conditions. The girls reported the conditions themselves, and, when the cases had been investigated, the girls were taken away and other employment was found for them. Wonderful work is being accom-

plished by this committee of ladies, who give up their whole time to their fellow women. It is generally accepted that women will suffer for a longer period without complaint than will men. In these cases many women suffered great hardship for a long time without making any noise about it. More of them are now getting employment over a period. As 30 went out another 30 came in, but recently fewer are asking for assistance because more are going out into employment. The committee are hopeful that before long their services will no longer be required. They will carry on for some time yet, no doubt, and with the assistance of the Child Welfare Department every effort will be made to help those girls who have no parents and no homes of their own and consequently are unable to help themselves.

HON. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [11.8]: Some members have expressed themselves as being well satisfied with the treatment meted out to their districts by the Child Welfare Department. All I can say is they are extremely lucky to have been so successful, where I have failed. If the department have been specially active in their districts, and miserly in others, I want to know the reason for it. A sum of money was granted by the Federal Government for the assistance of unemployed in this State, but it has been spent almost entirely in coastal electorates, and particularly in those represented by members opposite. For instance, places like Wagin and York have received £500. That surely is in keeping with the policy of spoils to the victors. The Commonwealth gave the money to help the unemployed of Western Australia, but the State Government have interpreted this as a gift to people in the electorates represented by members opposite. I do not think one penny has gone to our goldfields. The member for Fremantle also referred to the allocation of this money. Road boards in the metropolitan area have enjoyed a fair proportion of it. I would not ask for money for unemployed in my electorate if no need existed for it.

Mr. Sampson: A lot of money is being expended in the Bunbury district.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I realise that the major portion of unemployment exists in the metropolitan area, because here the

large population is concentrated and here are the people who depend upon Government work and work in secondary industries. I have approached the Government on behalf of people in my electorate. It had been the custom of the Government to give free passes to unemployed people to go to the country, but I understand that that practice has now been discontinued. Still, unemployed have gone to localities which are a dead end and have become a charge on the local people.

Mr. H. W. Mann: I have assisted men to go to your electorate, because they said they had a chance to engage in prospecting.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Now it is the practice for the railway officials to allow men to jump the trains, without taking exception to it. In the circumstances that is not wrong, because the men have no money with which to pay their fares. The trouble is that they become a charge upon the people of the back country, who are very generous and open-hearted, particularly the people of the goldfields. According to the "Geraldton Express," Inspector Crouch is going to spend a lot of his time in the Northampton district, but that is an agricultural district. Quite a lot of men follow mining in their search for employment. There is a fair amount of unemployment at Kalgoorlie, but that is not in my district. Gwalia is the only mining town between Kalgoorlie and Wiluna, and a great many men are camped at Gwalia. I saw them camped there in the railway reserve. They had no food or bedding and were camped on the bare ground. Those men were banging around the mines in the hope of getting employment, and when they failed to find it they moved on, probably to Wiluna, and then would come back again. The miners at Gwalia contributed to the support of those men by raising nearly £300, because they could not see the men starve. From the department, however, I cannot get a shilling of assistance. The Minister adopts the attitude that he is advised by the authorities at Gwalia that no unemployment exists there and no hardship. There will not be any hardship so long as the local people shoulder the burden. But what justification is there for insisting upon the people of one centre bearing a burden that is not theirs while assisting the unemployed elsewhere? What

justification is there for raising money to assist all and sundry in the coastal areas, whether deserving or undeserving, because no particular questions are asked, and refusing assistance to unemployed in the back country? Why should the local residents have to put their hands in their pockets and contribute to the support of men who should be a charge on the community as a whole? The secretary of the Gwalia unemployment committee informed me there were 30 men on his hands. They are the responsibility, not of the local people, but of the State. But the local people cannot see them starve, and cannot deny them assistance. Members realise that if they saw unemployed unclothed and unfed, they could not allow them to remain in want. In the city where there are thousands of people, it is possible to refuse individual assistance, but not so in the back country. The Minister has done very good work in his department in the city, and I consider that the Government showed wisdom in placing him in charge of unemployment. Still, the Minister is not justified in giving help in Perth, and refusing people in the country similar help. I can quite understand that the pressure of public opinion in the metropolitan area is stronger, but the system is not fair, just or honest. It is not right that men drawing little more than the basic wage should have to put their hands in their pockets every pay in order to maintain strangers who are unemployed and who are therefore entitled to some consideration from the people generally. The burden should not fall on the local people alone. If they received only a little assistance it would be helpful. I read in a newspaper of an inspector travelling to Mingenew, but unemployed people do not go to Mingenew as they go to industrial centres like Gwalia in search of work. The Minister knows from his own experience that hundreds of men follow mining, and that the miners will not see anyone starve. Still, they should not be expected to carry the burden while unemployed elsewhere are being assisted. If any hon. member can justify that state of affairs, I should like to hear him. The Minister states he receives reports that there are no unemployed and no people in want, and so no help is forthcoming. Of course the local unem-

ployed will not be in want while the local people bear the burden. The only thing is for the local people to say, "The burden is not ours, and we will bear it no longer."

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.30 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 11th November, 1931.

	PAGE
Question: Referendum on Secession, as to honorary officials ...	5161
Papers: Legislative Council biennial election, 1930 ...	5161
Bills: Salvation Army (W.A.) Property Trust, 3R., passed ...	5161
Licensing Act Amendment (No. 3), 2R., etc. ...	5161
Adjournment: Special ...	5162

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

QUESTION—REFERENDUM ON SECESSION.

As to Honorary Officials.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is there any truth in the report in to-day's "West Australian" that the Chief Electoral Officer is endeavouring to get the various returning officers scattered throughout the State to act in an honorary capacity, or at a nominal fee, should it be decided to hold a State referendum on the question of secession? 2, If so, do the Government consider it proper to get heretofore fully-paid officials to commit themselves to act in an honorary capacity, or at a nominal fee, or at a reduced fee, on a question for which Parliamentary sanction has not yet been asked, and, when asked for, may be refused? 3, Should these officials agree to act in an honorary capacity, or at a nominal fee, or at a reduced fee, will the Government ask a similar favour from the employees of the Government Printing Office, with respect to the printing of the proposed referendum ballot papers and other necessary material,

and also from all other referendum supernumeraries, so that these persons can show their patriotism, or lack of it, on such a far-reaching question as Western Australia's seceding from the Commonwealth?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The Chief Electoral Officer sent a confidential letter to his returning officers in the terms published in the "West Australian" some days ago. 2, No. 3, No.

PAPERS—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BIENNIAL ELECTION, 1930.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell ordered: That all papers relating to the issue of writs, date of nomination, and date of polling in respect of the Legislative Council biennial election, 1930, be laid on the Table of the House.

The Chief Secretary laid the papers on the Table.

BILL—SALVATION ARMY (WESTERN AUSTRALIA) PROPERTY TRUST.

Read a third time, and *passed*.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

HON. SIR CHARLES NATHAN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.39], in moving the second reading, said: This Bill, though received at the instance of the Minister on Thursday last, is a private member's Bill, and consequently the responsibility devolves upon me, as a representative of the Metropolitan-Suburban Province, to take it through its second stage. It is a small Bill, and covers two points intended to overcome disabilities connected with the issue of a temporary license at the Midland Junction saleyards. As hon. members probably are aware, sales are held at Midland Junction at regular intervals—during the busy season on two days in the week as a rule, and sometimes on a third day; during the rest of the year, on one day per week. The work at the saleyards necessitates the attendance of numerous men from early morning till late in the afternoon; and it has been found desirable, and in fact necessary, to provide facilities for these men to