

The PRESIDENT: I do not regard it as an amendment, but simply as a motion to adjourn the debate.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I propose to move the adjournment of the debate.

The PRESIDENT: If I accept it as a motion to adjourn the debate, it must be put without any discussion.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

Motion put and a division called for.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: Have I power to ask leave at this stage to withdraw my motion?

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

Question (Standing Orders Suspension) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	10

Majority against .. 2

#### AYES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. M. Sewell
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	(Teller.)
Hon. R. J. Lynn	

#### NOES.

Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. R. D. McKenzie
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. W. Patrick
Hon. J. F. Cullen	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. D. G. Gawler	Hon. J. Duffell
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller.)
Hon. A. G. Jenkins	

Question thus negatived

#### PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Hon. R. O. Ardagh	Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. E. McLarty	Hon. J. F. Allen
Hon. D. G. Gawler	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. W. Kingsmill	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. Sir J. W. Hackett	Hon. J. Duffell

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [10.57]: I move—

*That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, 19th January, at 4.30 p.m.*

Question passed.

*House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 13th January, 1915.*

	PAGE
Assent to Bills .. .. .	590
Papers presented .. .. .	590
Questions: Coolgardie State Battery driver ..	590
<i>Hansard</i> , Comparative costs .. .. .	591
Papers: Lands Reclassification Board, report on	
poison lands .. .. .	591
Notice of Motion: Magistrates' retirement, Mr. Foss	603
Perth-Fremantle and Karrakatta road ..	604
Gold Mining Leases, renewal .. .. .	604
Bills: Postponement of Debts Act Amendment,	
1A .. .. .	591
Public Service (Temporary), 1A .. .. .	591
Control of Trade in War Time Act Amend-	
ment, 1A .. .. .	591
Naval and Military Absentees' Relief, 1A ..	591
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, 1A ..	591
Grain and Foodstuff, Council's Message ..	610
Stamp Act Amendment, 3E .. .. .	625
Local Option Vote Continuance, 2A, Com. ..	625
Industries Assistance Board, 2E .. .. .	627

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

#### ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Supply, £668,270.
- 2, Wagin-Kukerin Railway Extension.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Papers relating to the proposed issue of an Exclusive Whaling License to the Australia Whaling Company.

#### QUESTION — COOLGARDIE STATE BATTERY DRIVER.

Mr. McDOWALL asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is he aware that an engine-driver, who was employed at the Coolgardie State battery during the inquiry into the case of one Hosking, on presenting himself for re-engagement just before the present run of the battery was commenced, was informed that his place had been filled? 2, Also, is he aware that the driver selected to take his place is a German to whom very pronounced anti-British sentiments are attributed? 3, Will he cause inquiries to

be made:—(a) as to whether it is a case of victimisation or not; and (b) as to whether at this juncture it is advisable to employ Germans in the public service to the exclusion of Britishers, thereby stirring up bitter racial feelings?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, Inquiries are now being made.

#### QUESTION—HANSARD, COMPARATIVE COSTS.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Premier: 1, Has he seen a statement in the *Sunday Times* which conveys the impression that a saving of £25,000 could be effected by abolishing *Hansard*? 2, What is the actual cost to the State of *Hansard*? 3, How does the cost of *Hansard* in Western Australia compare with the cost of *Hansard* in the other State Parliaments and in the Federal Parliament? 4, What is the strength of each staff?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No; but I am prepared to accept the hon. member's implied assurance that such a ridiculous and misleading statement was made. 2, The amount provided on this year's Estimates for the reporting, printing, and distribution of *Hansard* is £4,656. 3, The cost of the printing and distributing of *Hansard* in the Commonwealth and the other States is not ascertainable, the cost of the printing of *Hansard* not being kept separate from the general printing vote. The total cost of the *Hansard* reporting staffs in the Federal Parliament and the other State Parliaments is as follows:—Commonwealth, £8,042; New South Wales, £7,262; Victoria, £5,090; Queensland, £3,022. In South Australia an official *Hansard* staff was established in July of last year, and the Estimates are not available. 4, Commonwealth, 11 reporters. This staff is to be increased by two reporters, who are being advertised for at the present moment. New South Wales, 12 reporters. Victoria, six reporters and two reporters for Select Committees. Queensland, seven reporters. Western Australia, six reporters. South Australia established

an official *Hansard* staff last year with seven reporters. This number has been found inadequate, and an additional reporter is to be appointed.

#### BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

1, Postponement of Debts Act Amendment.

2, Public Service (Temporary).

3, Control of Trade in War Time Act Amendment.

4, Naval and Military Absentees Relief.

Introduced by the Premier.

5, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Works.

#### PAPERS—LANDS RECLASSIFICATION BOARD, REPORT ON POISON LANDS.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [4.40]: I move—

*That the report of the Reclassification Board that recently inspected the poison lands west of the Great Southern railway be laid on the Table of the House.*

If this motion had been reached before the Christmas adjournment I might have had to speak on it in somewhat emphatic terms. Yesterday, however, the Minister for Lands cut the ground from under my feet very largely when he gave the House an assurance that it was the desire of the Government that the reduction in the price of Crown lands forecasted by the Premier in his Policy Speech would be carried into effect at an early date, and if possible, by the introduction of a Bill for that purpose during the present session. At the same time I wish to draw attention to the unsympathetic administration under which the settlers in the poison districts west of the Great Southern railway have suffered at the hands of successive administrations during the past six years. During this period undoubtedly high and unreasonable prices have been put on the land selected by the settlers in the poison areas. Just before the general election in 1911 a Commission, known as the

Poison Commission, was appointed to go through these districts. They spent five weeks immediately before the elections largely in my electorate, and subsequently to the elections a report was produced by that Commission. I think the Government acted wisely in not taking that report very seriously. The recommendations made in it were not those desired by the settlers in that district. Subsequently a second commission was appointed, and it is significant that it also was appointed almost on the eve of the following general election. That commission also submitted a report which has never been made public and it is this report which I wish laid on the table of the House. Subsequent to report of that commission the Premier delivered his policy speech and expressed the intention of the Government to revalue all the land granted in Western Australia since the 1st January, 1910, on the basis of a maximum price of 15s. an acre for the best land.

The Premier: That was subject to our policy being endorsed.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The fact that the hon. member is still Premier shows that the policy was endorsed. The whole of the country is with the Government in this matter and I am satisfied the Premier's policy will be supported by the Opposition and by the new element in politics, the Country party. All members of this House, including the representatives of goldfields electorates who have any knowledge of our agricultural areas will agree with the Premier's policy in this respect. The people intimately concerned and particularly those in the poison districts are tired of the succession of promises from various Ministers, and it is high time something was done.

Mr. Taylor: Do you expect the present Government to keep all those promises?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I have sufficient faith that the Government will promptly put their policy into operation. Although the report of the Commission has not yet been made public, the Premier specially referred to the difficulties

of the people in the poison districts and promised that the survey fees on small areas of land would be reduced. At present the man who selects a small block pays a big survey fee per acre and the man who selects a block of 2,000 acres pays a much smaller survey fee per acre. This is one of the anomalies which the Premier promised to rectify. The member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) in speaking on the Wagin-Kukerin Railway Extension Bill, stated that after inspecting the poison districts he was satisfied it would be wise if the Government moved some of the settlers from these districts and put them on to better land east of the Great Southern railway. I disagree with the hon. member whose opinion indicates that a little knowledge is sometimes a dangerous thing. If the Government will give relief in regard to the price of land in the poison districts, a great many settlers will be able to pull through with success, particularly as the districts where the poison is worst have in this year of drought shown good returns. Generally speaking, the poison districts west of the Great Southern are well watered, and once the poison is eradicated the land will carry stock well.

Mr. Willmott: It is so well watered that they never get rid of the poison.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It takes many years before the poison can be eradicated and often when settlers have thought they had got rid of the poison they have suffered loss. The poison might be eradicated in one paddock and storms or accidents might occur and break down the fences with the result that the stock gains access to an adjoining paddock and is poisoned. More perhaps than in other parts of Western Australia, the settlers in the poison districts have hardships to contend with in winning through to success. When a goldfields member, a man of some judgment, advocated the removal of these settlers from their holdings—a proposal with which I disagree—it should be sufficient to convince the Government that the settlers should receive the relief they desire. They do not desire to be removed to other

areas, but ask that the land should be given to them at a reasonable price. If the price of first-class land selected at 20s. to 30s. an acre is to be reduced to 15s. an acre, how much more urgent is the necessity for an adequate reduction to the men who have taken up land in the poison area at prices from 10s. and 15s. to 20s. per acre! During the last three years I have directed the attention of the Government to many cases of hardship as a result of over-valuation, and I regret that although in some cases a little sympathy has been given, no relief has been afforded them.

The Premier interjected.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: A man who is trying to develop his holding while struggling under a load of debt will be much relieved if he is told definitely what the reduction promised by the Government will represent in hard cash. There is a provision in the Land Act under which settlers can apply for a re-classification, but there is something almost uncanny about the way in which the second or check inspector generally hits upon the same price per acre as the first inspector put on the block. Generally, when two outside values of a block are obtained they disagree, but when these applications are made for re-classification, rarely do they result in any reduction of price to the settler. Men have told me that they would apply for the re-classification and pay the fee which is only forfeited if the application is not upheld, but they contend that it is no good paying the fee because it means they are only contributing a little towards the reduction of the deficit. The reason for this is pretty evident because no alteration in the basis on which Crown lands are valued has been made since the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) was Minister for Lands. I understand that land inspectors are still valuing on the high basis laid down by that hon. member and I blame the Government for not having altered the system. The late Minister for Lands (Mr. Bath) said that in no case had he increased the price recommended by the inspector who saw the land, but that is the only respect in which the ad-

ministration of the present Government differs from that of their predecessors. The officers are still valuing the land on the same high basis laid down by the member for Northam, and the sooner the new Minister alters that basis to the one outlined by the Premier or even something lower, the better it will be for the people and the greater will be the prospect of contented and happy homes being established in our dry areas and in these poison districts.

Mr. Heitmann: It is asserted that the member for Northam used to increase the prices in the office.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We have had three years to alter the system and it has not been done.

Mr. Robinson: Do not the valuers exercise their own judgment?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: They have to act on the basis of 30s. an acre being a fair price for good land. There is great dissatisfaction among the people who take up land in this State. At present there is no encouragement for settlers to apply for small areas of poor land near their holdings. If they do so, very poor land composed of gravel hills and suitable only for grazing is valued at 9s. to 12s. an acre.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are not their holdings big enough?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, in many cases they are not. We want small holdings and close settlement at fair prices to the State and to the man who takes up the land. The policy of the Government shows they have concluded that the prices put on the land are altogether too high. I ask the Government to relieve this injustice as quickly as possible. If the Government do not give effect to their policy quickly—I have no reason to think they will not—they can depend that any vote I can give in the direction of having their policy put into operation or even securing greater reductions, will be given. The Government's policy on the hustings contained a ray of hope to some people in the districts west of the Great Southern railway.

The Minister for Mines: I was wondering what accounted for our big success, amongst the farmers.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If the Minister had visited other agricultural districts and explained the position as lucidly as he did in my electorate, we on this side of the House would have been returned in greater numbers. In conclusion I wish to say that the people in the poison districts are tired of promises; they are tired of repeated visits of commissions on the eve of an election, and they desire that the Government policy, or something better, should be put into operation as soon as possible.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin) [5.1] : In supporting the hon. member I am not for one moment going the length of excusing the Ministry. I was present when the late Minister for Lands was on a tour of the Great Southern last year in company with the member for Leonora and several other members of Parliament, and the Minister took considerable evidence from the farmers directly interested in the matter which is now before the House, and he told the farmers in answer to questions put to him that the evidence adduced during his trip showed that the land had been too highly valued. I am not going to blame the present Administration or the past Administration for the high prices placed on the land, because I am led to believe on good authority that these particular areas were disposed of by the Moore Government some years ago; therefore no blame can be placed on the present Government or the administration of Mr. Mitchell. The point I wish to emphasise is that a number of English emigrants have been placed on holdings and charged 18s. per acre for land that is not worth 5s. an acre, and in addition to not being worth more than 5s. per acre, it costs from 15s. to £1 per acre to eradicate the poison.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Can they do it then.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If the members will allow me I will explain how much they have got rid of. Some farmers who have been five or six years on their holdings told the Minister (Mr. Bath) last year that they had grubbed and regrubbed and

ploughed to a depth of 12 inches before sowing a crop of oats on their areas; but after having spent 12s. per acre the poison grew nearly as thick as the crop. It appears the bushes of York road poison especially have been growing for hundreds of years in the sandy soil around Coben Soak and Dinninup and the fibrous roots have got so embodied in the sandy soil that no amount of clearing will prove effective.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why not take the "cocky" off it altogether?

Mr. S. STUBBS: All these areas are not full of poison, there may be half a block of 800 acres or 1,000 acres full of poison, but on the other half the poison has been dealt with effectively. Still to charge a man 18s. per acre for the land is nothing short of a crime. The Minister for Lands promised most faithfully that the settlers would get relief. He said, "as to what form the relief will take I shall have to consult Cabinet, but you may depend upon it the price will be reduced and some method of redress given to you almost immediately." He promised that exactly 12 months ago. Nothing has been done and I have in my possession piles of correspondence from people concerned with the high price, asking when the Government are going to give them the relief which was promised by Mr. Bath. That is the position in a nutshell. Have not the people good cause for complaint when they have stated their case so fairly and proved conclusively that the prices charged them were too high? There is not a man on those areas who desires to be removed from his holding; all the people are asking for is that five years exemption should be given them or some period of exemption to enable them to get on their feet and make the bomes they desire to make there permanent, but in the state of unrest at the present time and the demands made on the settlers they are getting tired of promises.

The Minister for Works: They are perfectly satisfied with the prices, then.

Mr. S. STUBBS: They are not satisfied with the price, they think the price

should come back to 10s., and if it was reduced to 5s. it would only be fair. The person responsible for fixing the price at 18s. per acre ought not to be allowed to value any more land for the Government of the State. I do not care whether it was a Minister of the Crown or a civil servant who valued the land, he did not know his business.

Mr. Willmott: He should be sentenced to live on it.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Will the Government give the settlers the relief promised or a gross injustice will be done them. If something is not done a stigma will be cast upon members of Parliament if they allow the present prices to remain. A number of settlers live on these areas and are rearing families under distressing circumstances.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [5.7]: While I desire to support the motion I think something might be done in a more effective manner and in another direction. It is all very well to recommend the laying on the Table of the report and when that report is produced it may recommend a reduction of the price in the land; but this land is in a well watered region and is worth in many cases 30s. per acre if the poison is eradicated.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Never!

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is in a district safe from climatic conditions. If the land had not the poison, the land would be rushed. We will only perpetuate the present difficulty if we give relief to settlers by a reduction in the price of the land. I think the Government could do more in another direction by trying to find out some effective means of eradicating the poison. With the chemists at work in the world something might be done in that direction. A man in my constituency took up a piece of poisoned country in the Midland district. He experimented with a liquid which he prepared and used it on several acres of country; it was effective. He cut off the tops of the poison and sprinkled the bush with the liquid. No poison has grown there since.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Is that the York road poison?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, and it has effectively eradicated the poison. He brought the matter under my notice and I took him to the Agricultural Department. He experimented 12 months ago and there have been two wet seasons since. The land is at Chittering. I took this settler to the experts, Mr. Connor and Mr. Sutton and one or two officers in the department. They went into the process and inspected the district. Mr. Connor said he would take a sample of four gallons of the liquid to Queensland and apply it to the prickly pear, which is such a nuisance in Queensland. It is no use trying to eradicate the poison by grubbing, when it will come again year after year. The Agricultural Department might do something tangible and beneficial to the settlers by offering a bonus so that chemists could get to work. I have indicated how one man succeeded with an experiment. He was advised by the late Minister for Lands to patent his invention and he did so and it is protected by patent rights to-day; but the preparation of the liquid is too costly. I think it pans out at about 1s. 2d. per acre.

Mr. S. Stubbs: That is cheap if it is effective.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I know that Mr. Connor intended to take a sample of this liquid to Queensland to see if it would eradicate the prickly pear there. If it is effective in one case it should be in another. The prickly pear problem has been a very costly one in Queensland. It is unfortunate that the poison militates against successful farming in our favoured areas. If the Government were to reduce the land to 2s. 6d. per acre, still there would be the same difficulty in the future as there has been in the past. The settler would not get much relief.

Mr. Taylor: Give him the land.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It would pay in some instances to even give the land away, but many settlers would not touch it even at that. I throw out this suggestion for whatever it is worth. Whatever form of relief is given to settlers, the Agricultural department should be got to work. We should encourage the chemist to go further with this experiment; a bonus might be offered so that the experiment already ini-

tiated could be followed up. I think the Government through the Agricultural Department might aid their experts in endeavouring to evolve a process to get rid of this trouble.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [5.13]: In 1911 before the general election, a board was appointed, but that board had nothing to do with the elections and the member for Williams-Narrogin knows that is so.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I did not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member has chosen on more than one occasion to point out that this board was designed more or less to defeat me. The Government had not the hon. member in mind when the board was being appointed. I had been in the district a few months before and I saw that it was necessary that something should be done. What struck me most was the smallness of the areas and the unsuitableness of the land. Small areas in this State, except as regards the South-Western portion, have always been wrong. A wheat farm of 500 acres, for example, is not a wheat farm at all. Accordingly, I selected not politicians but practical farmers, good men, who were interested in the country, and men who knew their work.

The Minister for Works: All good Liberals.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Just as good men as the Minister for Works. They prepared a report, which came to hand after the general election of 1911.

The Premier: They were there during the election campaign.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That may be so, but will the Premier not give these gentlemen some credit for honesty of purpose? Some months ago the Premier appointed a board, it might be said, to help the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston). The report I refer to was put up by men who knew their business; but it has never been printed, let alone acted upon. The board recommended areas of 3,000 acres, and estimated the cost of eradicating poison as from 3s. to 3s. 6d. per acre, and further advised that this cost should be taken into consideration in

fixing prices. They submitted their recommendations after inquiry of the late Mr. C. A. Piesse, who knew most about the subject of all men in Western Australia, and after inquiry of other gentlemen familiar with the subject. My desire is to move not merely that the report be laid upon the Table of the House but that it shall be printed. I have made similar endeavours previously, but without success. If wrong has been done, that wrong should be righted. To my mind the question is not one altogether of price, but rather of facilities and of cutting the land up into farms—not half farms or quarter farms. The policy of our Government was to provide roads and railways and harbour facilities, to cheapen freights, and generally to encourage men to develop their holdings. Recently, the custom has been to offer the bribe of cheaper land to the farmers. What is the use of land, no matter how low its price, at too great a distance from the railways? With proper facilities, land of suitable quality cannot be dear. A man would be a fool who said that he was prepared to take up land at a great distance from means of communication. I advise hon. members who want to get the votes of the people to go as low as ever they can in price, from 10s. to 7s. 6d., and from that to 5s., according as one is underbid by another. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) was quite wrong when he said that the recommendations of the board in 1911 did not meet with the approval of the farmers in the districts affected. Those farmers agree with the report, and wish it to be acted upon. There have been, and unfortunately there always will be, unsuccessful farmers. There is no country in the world that can give us experienced farmers to settle our broad acres. We have waited for those experienced farmers during a period of 75 years, but they have not come along, and never will come along, because experienced farmers are wanted in practically every country of the world. It is largely because we have had to settle inexperienced men on the land that we encounter this difficul-

ty. I repeat that it is not a question of price. The member for Williams-Narrogin was for a long time an officer of the Lands Department, and his views during that period were not quite the views of the present politician from Williams-Narrogin.

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

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I remember his saying that.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That is absolutely untrue. I defy you to produce that recommendation.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Williams-Narrogin will withdraw the word "untrue."

Mr. E. B. Johnston: In accordance with your request, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the word "untrue"—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And substitute "incorrect."

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I wish to remind hon. members that when they are asked to withdraw they must withdraw, and not add or substitute other words.

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

Mr. O'Loghlen: Has the member for Northam any proof of his statement?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not carry the files of the Lands Department with me in my pocket. If the hon. member will inquire at the Lands office he will, with the assistance of the Under Secretary, find that my statement is perfectly correct. However, the member for Williams-Narrogin was then doing his duty as a Lands Department official, and was not seeking votes.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You are drawing upon your imagination. The member for Williams-Narrogin never did such a thing in his life.

Mr. Thomson: That settles matters.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The member for Williams-Narrogin did make that recommendation.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I did not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: He asked that I should produce the papers, or said that I

sent up instructions regarding the price of the land.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Is the member for Northam not obliged to accept the denial of the hon. member against whom he has made an accusation?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has no business making a denial.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): The member for Northam can say what he likes, then.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! May I point out that hon. members do generally say what they like?

The Premier: Some do.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It seems to me the other side do.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If I were to call upon an hon. member to accept another hon. member's denial, there would be no end to such interjections.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It has been done many times.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Northam is expressing his opinion.

The Premier: He is making a definite statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I am addressing the House. The member for Williams-Narrogin will have the opportunity of replying, and he can then deny the statement of the member for Northam.

#### *Point of Order.*

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I rise to a point of order. I contend that by the rules of the House, so far as I know them, if an hon. member claims that a statement made concerning him by another hon. member is not correct, that other hon. member has no right to persist in making that statement. That, I understand, has always been the rule of this House. The member for Williams-Narrogin has denied the assertion of the member for Northam, and the member for Northam therefore is not entitled to continue to make that assertion. I submit that proposition, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I submit the proposition that the member for Williams-Narrogin has not offered any denial.



Mr. E. B. Johnston: I beg to say that I did, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Order! Does the member for Williams-Narrogin desire to make a denial? If so, he should rise in his seat and ask the Speaker whether he, the hon. member, may make a statement denying, and, further, asking that his denial should be accepted. The member for Williams-Narrogin, however, has merely interjected; and an interjection is not in order at all, absolutely not in order.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: In accordance with the kind advice you have given me, Mr. Speaker, I rise in my seat and deny emphatically the unjustified statement—

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The unjustified statement that has been made.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member can only rise in his seat by permission of the House.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I move—

*That the member for Williams-Narrogin be now heard.*

Mr. Speaker: I require a seconder to that motion.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I second the motion.  
Motion put and passed.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Availing myself of the kind permission of the Chamber, I beg to deny the statement which the member for Northam has made.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What statement?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The statement made by the member for Northam.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What is the statement?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The statement to the effect that I have endeavoured to get the price of land increased, that I as an officer of the Lands Department recommended that the price of land be increased beyond the price desired by the member for Northam when Minister for Lands. I not only deny it now; I have denied it in this House before. I denied it soon after first entering this Chamber. I would like, further, to say that I do not know of any officer of the Lands Department who ever wanted the prices of Crown lands raised

beyond the prices fixed by the member for Northam.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. E. B. Johnston: At any rate, I deny the statement made by the member for Northam.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member must not abuse the rules of the House. He gets up to deny a statement, and then he undertakes to make other statements. The whole of this discussion is out of order. The member for Northam will proceed.

### *Debate resumed.*

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The member for Williams-Narrogin asked that I should give some information to this House regarding my instructions as to prices of land. I wish to say that some time ago I had a copy of my minute on the subject, and, so far as my memory serves me, that minute was to the effect that the highest price for wheat lands in the best areas should be 20s. per acre. I think I instructed, further, that the highest price of land in the South-West should be 30s. per acre. It is unfortunate that I have not a copy of the minute. The copy was in my drawer, but it has been removed, and by the kind permission of the Minister for Lands I am unable to obtain a further copy. However, I am perfectly willing to accept the responsibility for every action of mine in regard to fixing the price of land. The Government of the day have continued my policy right down to the present time. It would be ridiculous for this House to say that a block adjacent to the railway station, even in poison areas, is not worth more than a block ten miles away from the railway station. There must be some discrimination in prices. In my opinion, the only fair system is that which has been adopted. Value is influenced not only by the quality of the land, but by the facilities available, and by proximity to market and to railway stations. I shall not discuss the price of land further, but would urge that something must be done as soon as possible for settlers remote from railway communication. Like other hon. members, I recognise that this discussion

will not have much effect. The laying of the report on the Table of the House will not influence the Government one iota. However, the responsibility now rests upon the Government. They have known what to do since the report of the board was furnished. Let there be no further delay. The one hope of this country is in land development, and it is largely owing to the Government's failure to realise that fact that the country is not prosperous at the present time. I move an amendment—

*That after "railway" in line 3 the words "and also the report of the board of inquiry on poison eradication and settlement of poison lands, dated 10th October, 1911," be inserted.*

Mr. FOLEY (Mt. Leonora) [5.32]: Even the members who represent electorates containing poison areas are not unanimous in regard to this question. In supporting the motion I am going to adhere to my opinion, expressed on many occasions in the House, that when we gave assistance to agriculturists there is another party to be considered, namely, the general taxpayer. Whilst wishing to assist the men and women endeavouring to develop the poison areas, I honestly think it would be better to shift some of the people off those poison areas than to endeavour to shift the poison. In this opinion I am backed up by the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs), who said it would be a good thing to reduce the price of the land to 5s., or even to give it rent free; while the member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott), who represents some of the worst poison lands in the State, in an interjection declared that a fitting punishment for certain men would be to sentence them to live on the poison lands. Again, the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) says it would be a good thing, not only to reduce the land rents, but also to assist those settlers in other directions. Another hon. member said that shrewd settlers would not go on those areas at all. I am afraid, however, that those expressions of opinion from gentlemen having an intimate knowledge of the poison lands will not carry much weight with others who have had no opportunity of going over those areas,

and who know nothing whatever of the conditions. After having seen the poison lands and the class of men endeavouring to work them, and having seen the conditions under which those men are working, I say it would be a good thing if the anticipated report contained a recommendation that some of the men should be taken away and put on the Lake Grace country.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): But they do not wish to be shifted; they desire to extend their areas.

Mr. FOLEY: If that is so—and the member for Wagin said they did not wish to be shifted—is there anything in the argument of the member for Nelson, who regarded life on these lands as an equivalent to punishment for wrongdoing? Some of the poison lands in the Dinninup and Cockburn Soak areas are not worth any man's while to endeavour to farm. Some of the men on those areas at present are physically unfit to work them. They were put there in years gone by, not necessarily by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell)—I was once of the impression that that gentleman was concerned in it, but I have since found that I was mistaken. Lands Ministers preceding the member for Northam put them out there. The people were put there by land guides who cared less about finding suitable land for the newcomers than they did about finding easily accessible land, with the consequence that much of it first taken up contained the worst poison it would be possible to find. The object of this was that the land guides employed by past Governments should get big fees out of the men who came later on and whom they placed on better land.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You are wrong.

Mr. FOLEY: I am positive it is right. If the anticipated report recommends that these men should be further assisted, I say the assistance should be given on lines similar to those followed in cases of assistance in respect to mining. In dealing with applications for assistance regard should be had, first, to the question of whether the land is good enough to make a living on, while the next consideration should be the

worthiness of the man making the application. The vast bulk of the money given by way of assistance to agriculturists generally in this State has been wasted, because a wrong class of man has been given this money, especially in the poison areas. Lower down the district, about Slab Hut on the old Albany-road, we find big areas of poison lands worked as grazing holdings. Those working them have got rid of the poison. The late Hon. C. A. Piesse went out into the same area, and his place to-day is a shining example of what can be done in regard to poison lands; but the late Mr. Piesse was not of the class of men to be found on other poison areas. If in the allocation of assistance we are going to take into consideration the quality of the land, our duty is also to discriminate as to the men whom we are going to assist. If we do that there will be more money left for those deserving of assistance, and who wish to avail themselves of the assistance of the Government. When I was down in that area there was very little land under cultivation. Yet some of the people there have hearts as big as those of working bullocks. Those people are worthy of every assistance, but there are others there to whom the giving of money by any Government would mean the wasting of money and the doing of injury to every part of the State. As I have already said, it would be better and more profitable to shift some of the men from the worst of our poison lands than to endeavour to shift the poison.

Mr. HICKMOTT (Pingelly) [5.42]: Every hon. member knows that a block of land overgrown with poison is no good, either to the Government or to the man who holds it. Some system of leasing, as has been adopted in the other States, would provide the best means of dealing with these poison lands. Twenty-five years ago the mallee country was let on leases of 16 or 20 years at a peppercorn rental of about half a crown per square mile, conditionally on vermin, such as rabbits, dingoes, and foxes, being kept down. If the Government were to let these poison lands on five or 10 years'

leases, conditionally on the lessee eradicating the poison, the land would be of some good, both to the State and to the lessee. It has been said that it is almost impossible to eradicate poison; but along the Great Southern we have many instances of poison land having been cleared. Of course if men take it up in large areas they have very much more to contend with than if their areas were limited to 500 or 600 acres. If this land were cut up into small blocks it would be a valuable asset to the State and to the people who hold it. Under present conditions it is no good at all. The person who goes on the land can keep no stock on it. There was an instance the other day in the Pingelly electorate of a man who is in poor circumstances—and I daresay he will be an applicant for assistance in the shape of seed wheat and fodder—who sold two head of cattle to a butcher in Pingelly on the condition that he delivered the stock, but on the way one of the beasts died, and he turned back. On the way the other beast became ill and died on arrival home. Apparently the beasts had been poisoned along the road and the poison had circulated through their blood and so an end was put to the contract.

Mr. Taylor: That is the trouble with all poison country.

Mr. HICKMOTT: Poison land in its natural state is no good to anybody. It would be much better if the Government would adopt some means of letting the land out in smaller areas than thousands of acres, so that men would be in a better position to free the land from poison. Reference has been made by the hon. member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) to the question of spraying. I remember when stinkwort was very bad in the Goulburn Valley of Victoria that the system was introduced of spraying there. Arsenic sprays were used and these got rid of the poison, but it was some three or four years before the land would produce anything. The arsenic had a bad effect upon the ground so that the land would not grow anything. That has to be considered in connection with spraying poisoned land. If the spraying is a suc-

cess it may be worth while allowing the ground to lie idle for three or four years in order to allow it to go back to its original fertility. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The amendment is being discussed and not the motion. There is not a very great deal of difference I will admit, except that the report of an inquiry by another board is to be added to the motion.

Mr. HICKMOTT: I have very much pleasure, then, in supporting the amendment because I think some redress ought to be made to those people who are taking up poison land, people who are suffering loss and who are not able to pay their rent for the land.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [5.48]: We have heard the remarks of different hon. members who have dealt in their own way with different poison areas. The hon. member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) mentioned the Dinninup area, and the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) also commented on the same area as being one of the worst in the State so far as poison is concerned. I can quite bear out the latter hon. member in that respect. The trouble with the Dinninup area is that for the most part the soil is of a very loose and light nature, and that after the poison has been grubbed there is no possibility of tamping the soil as may be done with richer or stiffer soils, and no opportunity of smothering the roots for you cannot smother them in soil of this nature. Consequently the trouble goes on year after year. I have known some of the land to have been ploughed and cropped for six years, and yet to-day it is covered with poison. I know of an instance in which the unfortunate owner of land has a wife and children. They have worked from daylight to dark for seven years, but a fortnight ago they had to come to town and hand over their farm to the Agricultural Bank. For seven years they have been struggling and putting every penny they possessed into their properties, but now they are penniless and homeless. This land was recommended to them in Eng-

land at our Agent General's office. They came out here. The land was again recommended to them by the Lands Department, and the guide recommended it to them when they went on the land. Surely those responsible should have known better than to have put people on to such country as this. They have lost their all. They have lost their faith too. It is bad enough for one to lose his money, but when one loses faith, it is worse still. This land ought never to have been used for farming; it is only fit for grazing. The soil is poor, and the land is only third class and unsuitable for farming. One hon. member has stated that it would be advisable to lease these lands. He evidently is not aware that these lands were leased at 1s. per acre. If the poison was eradicated, the land was to become in seven years the property of the man who cleared it of poison so that it would carry stock. But how much of this land has been cleared? I venture to state that nine-tenths of the poison areas which have been leased in this way have reverted to the State. Take the case of the Mundaring reservoir. The man who had that country never attempted to clear it of poison until we wanted it for the purposes of a reservoir.

Mr. Taylor: For a catchment area.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Men were crowded on the land to clear it when it was thought there was a chance of getting at the Government.

Mr. McDowall: They always do that.

Mr. WILLMOTT: It is absolutely wrong to lease land at a low rental. The system has been tried and found to be useless, and something very different to this will have to be thought out. I think myself it will mean that some of these farmers will have to be shifted, and I agree that in some cases they will have to be taken off. They are on small areas—too small for them to make a living. It is not farming land. Take them away and put them somewhere else if possible. I think the Minister for Lands will agree that there are cases in which this is the only thing to do.

The Minister for Lands: That is righting itself; they have left already in some cases.

Mr. WILLMOTT: There is another poison which has not been touched upon to-day which has done more damage to the cattle industry of the South-West than all the York-road poison put together. The York-road poison has affected sheep, but the cattle industry has been absolutely ruined by the zamia palm.

The Minister for Lands: And sheep.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The zamia palm has been the ruin of the cattle raising industry in Western Australia. It is the worst poison in the Warren district. I know personally of a herd of cattle of some 1,500 head that was running in this country. When the cattle once took to eating the poison, they were reduced in five years to less than 300 head. It is perfectly useless to talk of eradicating this palm, for it is found over millions of acres, and none of the methods recommended by spraying are of any use. I have tried them, but they are too expensive. The best method of all which has been discovered yet, is to pour a little kerosene on the palm, but it is absolutely useless to talk about eradicating the zamia. The hon. member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) says, "Hand the matter over to the scientific man, and let him discover something that will destroy the poison." I say let us hand it over to the scientific man and let him discover something by which we can inoculate both sheep and cattle, and make them proof against this poison. Prevention, after all, is better than cure.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Is not Mr. Rowley extracting the poison and making whisky from the palm?

Mr. WILLMOTT: The hon. member may know. Possibly in the early days people were more proof against these things, and we know that they made arrowroot out of the palm. Since then this has been tried on pigs and cattle dogs first, but the only effect was to kill them. I would not attempt to destroy the palm. I would hand the matter over to the scientific man and let him find out

some method of inoculating young stock, and then I am sure we will find that they will be rendered immune. The palm has the worst possible effect on stock in the Warren district right through to Albany, far worse than the York road poison has on sheep to-day. As the railways are extended into these areas it will be found that my words will be proved to be absolutely correct. Let us take time by the forelock. Let us find something that we can inject into the cattle now. The losses that are being sustained are appalling. Meat to-day is 6d. per lb. on the hoof. It cannot be brought down from the hotter portions of the State. We could raise hundreds of thousands of head of cattle in the South-West if it were not for the zamia palm. The water is there and the feed is there, but unfortunately the palm is also there. I strongly recommend this to the notice of the Minister.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [5.55]: I move a further amendment—

*That after the word "House" the words "that both reports be printed" be added.*

The Minister for Lands: You will not get that; it is an absolute waste of money.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think that these reports, which are very valuable, should be printed and should be made available to every hon. member.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I say that the reports ought to be available. Although the reports have been made for some three years, there are very few hon. members who have had an opportunity of perusing them. It is advisable that there should be a permanent and indelible record and a typed copy is not sufficient. The printing is a small matter. There are many new hon. members here and each should know what has happened from time to time. It is all very well to say that the newspapers have published them. That may or may not have been so, but it is not sufficient. We ought to have copies and copies ought to be available to hon. members who may

wish to send them to people who can advise them in the matter. A great deal of good may come from the printing of the papers. I hope the Minister will agree to the printing of both these reports.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [6.0]: I regret that I was absent from the Chamber during the greater part of the discussion on this motion. I looked upon it as purely formal. Before leaving the Chamber on other business, I informed one of my colleagues that there would be no objection to the motion, and consequently did not anticipate any discussion. As hon. members are aware, only last evening, in reply to a question, I stated that the matter of introducing a Bill for the purpose of dealing with the reductions in the price of land was now receiving consideration, and that that would put into practical effect some, if not all, the recommendations of the report, not only in regard to the poison lands, but what are known as the drier areas, the prices of which were unduly increased in 1910. In view of that, I thought that there would be an opportunity of discussing the question pretty fully when the Bill came before members. It is all very well to print reports if by doing so those reports are going to be circulated, and the people are thus to be educated on a question on which they have no knowledge, but in this matter, unfortunately, the settlers have more knowledge than members of Parliament, and it is because they are experiencing a bad time that the Government of the day appointed a Commission to investigate the position. There is, therefore, no need from the settlers' point of view, to publish the report. If the report had been in favour of the conditions prevailing, and did not advocate reform, then it might have been wise to try and prove to the settlers that they were wrong, and that nothing should be done. The reports, however, go to the extent of advocating reforms, and those reforms will take practical shape on the introduction of the Bill. What on earth, therefore, is the use of printing the report when the recommendation of the re-

port is going to be given legislative effect? I trust the hon. member will see his way clear to withdraw the amendment. I repeat I regret I was absent from the Chamber during this discussion, but, as it has taken place now, I trust that hon. members will not repeat what they have said when the Bill comes before them.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You could have made the motion a formal one.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That would not have been altogether advisable, but the hon. member knew there was not to be any opposition to the papers being laid on the Table of the House. I understand the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) has made a long speech on this subject, and, therefore, we shall not hear anything further from him when the Bill is before the House.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You will hear something on the dry side.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am also prepared to take the remarks of the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) as the opinions he would have expressed on the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Are the farmers at Cockburn Soak going to get redress?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think that matter was investigated by the Commission, and so long as it is a poison area, they will get the same consideration as the others. I am glad that we have made some progress this afternoon on this question. All the speeches which have been made, I have no doubt, are those which we might have heard on the second reading of the Bill.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question as previously amended put and passed.

## MOTIONS (2) WITHDRAWN.

### *Magistrate's Retirement, Mr. Foss.*

Notice of motion by Mr. Gilchrist read, "That all papers relating to the retirement of Mr. Foss, Resident Magistrate of the Gascoyne District, be laid upon the Table of the House."

Mr. A. GILCHRIST (Gascoyne) [6.7]: The Attorney General has very courteously made available, in his office, the information I required in regard to this matter, and while I deeply regret the fact, and the method of the retirement of Mr. Foss, I desire to ask for leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

#### *Perth-Fremantle and Karrakatta Roads.*

Notice of motion by Mr. B. J. Stubbs for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into and report upon the basis of apportioning the cost of the reconstruction of the Perth-Fremantle road, and Karrakatta road, having been read,

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco) [6.8]: I desire to ask permission of the House to withdraw this motion. I do so because it has been represented to me that the session will be so short that it will be impossible for the work of this select committee to be completed by the time the session ends. While I desire now to withdraw the motion, I wish to intimate that it will be my intention to submit it again early next session.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

#### PAPERS—GOLD MINING LEASES, RENEWAL.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [6.9]: I move—

*That all papers in connection with the renewal of the gold-mining leases (which have already been renewed) be laid on the Table of this House.*

I do not know whether the Minister for Mines is disposed to treat this motion as formal; if it is his intention to do so it will obviate the necessity of my giving reasons for submitting it.

The Minister for Mines: I will decide when I have heard your reasons.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: As most hon. members are aware these gold mining leases were granted some 21 years ago in accordance with the then existing Mining Act and Regulations. That period of 21 years has just about expired. It was provided in the then existing Act, and it is also provided in the Act of to-

day, that these leases shall be renewed under any conditions and any regulations that may be existing at the time. I want to make myself clear on this point, that I recognise it as the right of these companies to receive a renewal of their leases, but they had only the right of renewal under conditions that the Government or Parliament might seem fit to impose. True, they have been renewed in some countries without consideration, but in almost every instance of latter years, I think they have paid a substantial premium for the renewals. The leases I am more particularly going to refer to are those on the Golden Mile; those which have paid substantial dividends to their fortunate shareholders. For the information of hon. members who are not so well acquainted as others with the facts concerning these leases, I might mention that the amount paid to the Mines Department by the mining companies is not very much; it is only £1 per acre per annum. A lease like the Great Boulder which is rather a large one—speaking from memory I think it covers 90 acres—pays to the State £90 per annum. In 21 years, therefore, it has paid to the State roughly £1,800 for the use of the 90 acres of ground from which they have extracted a great amount of gold and the company have paid about five million pounds sterling in dividends. The leaseholders are entitled to a renewal of their properties. They are entitled to fair and just treatment, but they are not entitled to the exceptional treatment, as I learn from the answers to questions which have recently been given by the Minister for Mines, they have received. They have had their mining leases renewed without any consideration whatever being paid to the State, and the treatment has been different from that which has been accorded to other mining companies in other parts of Australia.

The Minister for Lands: That is not so; not in all the States.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I will give particular instances directly. It cannot be said, by any stretch of imagination, that these mining companies are

entitled to any special consideration from the State. Western Australia does not owe these companies any special consideration. The companies came to this country and they have obtained some 24 millions of money by way of dividends, and they have given the State little or no consideration whatever in return.

Mr. Foley: What mining companies have not?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am making these remarks because it has been the custom of members opposite to call the late ministry and members generally who are now on the opposite side of the House "The Chamber of Mines party."

The Minister for Mines: So you were.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I will show before I sit down that I never held a brief for the Chamber for Mines, and that, in fact, the majority of the companies constituting the Chamber of Mines have been worthless companies so far as Western Australia is concerned.

The Minister for Mines: I hope you will read your second reading speech on the Mines Regulation Bill.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Before tea I made reference to some of the mining companies and their want of sympathy towards the State. I could give a good many reasons why these leases should not have been renewed without certain considerations being given by the dividend-paying companies to the State. It is within the memory of hon. members that numerous mining swindles have taken place with the connivance of the directors of some of the foreign mining companies.

Mr. Holman: Which companies?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Boulder Perseverance and the Boulder Deep.

Mr. Holman: Were the directors concerned?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Some of them were and so were shareholders. These swindles, as was the case in many instances, were due to the mines having a London board and not a local board.

Mr. Foley: That has been obviated since, has it not?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No, certainly not.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You are a judge of mining swindles, are you not?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not pretend to be but I will give my opinion on the swindles in this State, which have done more to damn mining than any legislation.

The Minister for Mines: You were six years in office; why did not you legislate against them?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I did not hold the office of Minister for Mines, or I might have done so. The late Paul Kruger was a very much maligned man. No doubt he deserved it in some respects, but he had very good mining laws and if we had had them, Western Australia would be better off than it is at present.

Mr. Foley: They allow blacks to work the mines there.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not agree with black labour and there is no necessity for it in Western Australia. There was one law which made South Africa, and that was the insistence upon local directors, instead of having directors sitting in London, composed largely of share jobbers and share brokers. In 1906 Sir John Forrest set out to amend the Companies Act in this direction. It is a thousand pities this was not done. It may have been too late, even then, because the companies were already formed. It should have been done a few years earlier. Sir John Forrest dropped the proposal and it was never carried out.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why did not you do it?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: For the same reason that it was too late. The companies were formed under other conditions and it would have been a serious matter to interfere with them. It would have shaken the confidence of the investing public in mining. If this provision had been made in time we would have had wealthy people on the boards of directors investing their money and the people would have been legitimately investing in our mining, which has never been done.



Mr. Foley: There has been some legitimate investing.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Unfortunately very little, because there was no reasonable prospect held out to the investor. I have had some very sad experience and although it was good enough for me to hold the shares, they were taken from me. I had no redress except to go to London and fight the matter in the courts there. I have not time to make more than brief reference to this phase by saying that this would have been an opportune time to enact that law and give Western Australia something to which it has been entitled during the last 20 years. It would have also given the industry a fair run which it, on the whole, has never had. At the conclusion of the 21 years' term the matter should have been taken in hand. The Companies Act and the Gold Mining Act should have been amended in the direction I have indicated and the leases should have been renewed under these conditions. Thus the mining companies would have started on a new basis. They could not possibly have objected because they would have been taking a new term under the conditions laid down. If it had been attempted previously to impose these conditions, we would have been interfering with the 21 years' term which had been acquired under other conditions. I mention this as one reason why these leases should have been made subject to further conditions before being renewed. When the Government, of which I was a member, were in office the time was approaching when the tenure of these leases would expire. These companies were extremely anxious to have the term of their leases renewed.

The Minister for Mines: Do you know for what reason?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I will tell the Minister presently, and I will want to know the reason why the present Government did not follow our recommendation.

The Minister for Mines: Was not it because they were afraid your Government would be beaten at the election and we would deal unfairly with them?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Possibly, but I do not know anything about that. They were entitled at the time to a renewal of these leases. For the good of the industry they were entitled to know at least two years beforehand whether the leases would be renewed and in all fairness they should have been told, and as far as we were concerned, they were told that they would get a renewal under certain conditions.

The Minister for Mines: You could not prevent a renewal.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No, but the Government could have imposed any conditions they liked.

The Minister for Mines: Parliament could.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Yes, but Parliament, unfortunately, was never asked to impose such conditions as we intended to ask should be imposed if we had remained in power, conditions under which the mining companies were willing to accept a renewal of their leases. Speaking from memory the position briefly was this: About 1910-11 these companies became anxious about the renewal of their leases.

The Minister for Mines: In 1909.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Possibly it was in 1909. Hon. members not acquainted with mining might ask why they were anxious, seeing that the leases would not expire until 1913, 1914, or 1915. The reason was that mining work has to be kept going; mines must be developed for many years ahead, and it is not likely that the companies would have continued to spend a good proportion of their earnings in the development of the mines if they had thought they would be unable to get a renewal of their leases, or obtain such conditions as would make continuance of operations worth while. Therefore, it was reasonable for them to ask for a renewal of the leases some years before the existing leases had actually expired.

Mr. Foley: The Chamber of Mines had been in communication with your Minister for Mines on the subject for many months.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I referred to the period as 1909-1911.

Mr. Foley: If your Government had intended to do anything, they had plenty of opportunities to do it.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am explaining the position. I want to know why the course, which was fair, and which was admitted by the companies to be fair, was not adopted.

The Minister for Mines: I will give you all the information you desire when I reply, and some more in addition of which you have not heard.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I only wish to see the papers. I do not wish to pre-judge the matter.

The Minister for Mines: You did pre-judge it in your election speech. You spoke as with a knowledge of the whole matter.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I will repeat what I said in my election speech. I have a copy of a minute by the Minister for Mines. I discovered it among certain papers and have refreshed my mind upon it. The Cabinet minute was circulated, but I do not know whether anything has transpired since. I have a very clear idea of the whole matter. Being interested in mining I took a deep interest in the department and acted on several occasions as Minister, although I did not control the department.

Mr. Munsie: You did take an interest once in a mining constituency.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Yes, and I take an interest in the constituency I now represent. I hope the hon. member does the same.

Mr. Munsie: Yes, and I will not run away from it either.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But it will run away from you.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Mining leases have been renewed in other countries in consideration of the mining companies paying a royalty. In South Australia when the Wallaroo copper mines leases fell due, the company agreed to pay the Government £15,000 for the renewal of their leases.

The Minister for Mines: Was that information in that Cabinet minute?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Yes. I could show the Minister a copy of it.

The Minister for Mines: You know pretty well what is on the file.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I had a copy of the minute and went through it.

The Minister for Mines: You went through it all right.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: When in office I made myself cognisant with the matters before Cabinet prior to expressing any opinion.

The Minister for Mines: You have a good memory.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I have a copy of the minutes which were circulated. In South Australia the Wallaroo copper mines paid £15,000 for a renewal of their leases. The New South Wales Government in 1901 renewed the Broken Hill mineral leases on condition that the companies paid royalty to the extent of one per cent. on the first £50,000 of dividends, two per cent. on all dividends over £50,000 and under £100,000, and 2½ per cent. on dividends exceeding £100,000 per year. On these conditions the leases were renewed for another 21 years, and I believe the companies there are working under those conditions to-day.

Mr. Foley: The labour covenants are not the same as in our gold-mining districts.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: What is the difference?

Mr. Foley: They have to comply with conditions here which are not imposed there.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The conditions are very similar and include check inspectors.

Mr. Foley: They have not got check inspectors here.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: This State owes nothing to the English gold-mining companies. The State is entitled to justice. The companies have received all and taken all the money they could possibly extract from the mines. We have had the benefit only of the wages paid; the dividends have been taken to London. These companies have paid 23 million pounds in dividends during the last 20 years, and I doubt whether they have spent £10,000 legitimately in the development of mines outside of their own. Some time in 1911 the then

Minister for Mines (Mr. Gregory) put before Cabinet a minute recommending that the gold-mining leases be renewed on exactly the same terms as in the case of the Broken Hill leases, namely, that the companies earning £50,000 a year in dividends should contribute one per cent., those earning £50,000 to £100,000 a year two per cent., and those earning over £100,000 a year 2½ per cent. This would have meant, as I think is mentioned in the minute, £20,000 per year to our State. Let me say that I know from my own knowledge that the companies were agreeable to these terms. Cabinet approved of them early in 1911, I think. Unfortunately for the country, the Government went out of office—unfortunately in this instance because the country lost £20,000 revenue. All that was needed to secure that revenue was a small amending measure, which we intended to bring in during the session of 1911-12. Thus an additional £20,000 per annum would have been obtained from the mining companies.

Mr. Foley: Was there not at that time some talk of giving the companies the freehold of the mining leases?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Not at all. In conclusion, I merely wish to say that that was the condition, as stated by the Minister for Mines of the then Government, which applied to the renewal of the leases at Broken Hill. The then Minister for Mines proposed that leases in this State should be renewed on exactly the same conditions, that the mining companies should pay a tax on their dividends of from one per cent. to two and a half per cent; and that would have given £20,000 a year to the State. Hon. members opposite need not trouble about the clock.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The time has elapsed for the discussion of motions.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: May I continue my remarks at another sitting?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may do that if a motion to that effect is moved and carried. Under the Standing Orders, however, the time for the discussion of motions has now elapsed. Whatever action is taken is now a matter for the House.

The PREMIER: As the hon. member is desirous of completing his address, I move—

*That the discussion of Notices of Motion be continued until the member for Perth has concluded his speech.*

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I second the motion.

Motion put and passed.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The condition laid down by the Minister for Mines of the Wilson Government was briefly, as I stated, that the mining companies should pay from one per cent. to two and a half per cent. The mining companies were agreeable to pay that percentage. The reason why that arrangement was not carried out was that the companies had merely a right of renewal under then existing conditions and regulations. It was necessary, therefore, to introduce and carry a small amending measure. The Liberal Government went out of office in October, and I wish to emphasise that the whole matter is set forth in the Cabinet minute to which I have referred. The present Minister for Mines in answer to a question put by myself has said, although he had that Cabinet minute before him for two years previously, that no consideration whatever has been paid by the gold-mining companies for the renewal of their leases. That is the reason why I wish to see the papers. I may also mention here the further suggestion of the Minister for Mines in the Liberal Government that the revenue of £20,000 should be spent partly on the upkeep of a phthisis hospital and partly on a geological survey of our mining country. These two proposals also could have been carried into effect if the Act and the regulations had been amended.

Mr. Foley: Do you think the companies could have stood £20,000 further annual taxation?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Let me remind the hon. member that the taxation would have fallen on only a few wealthy companies.

Mr. Foley: Could those paying dividends have stood it?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Of course they could, and they were quite willing

to bear it. The tax would apply only to companies making profits of £50,000 and upwards per annum. Moreover, the one per cent. represents a very small tax. The Great Boulder, for instance, has paid very nearly £4,200,000 in dividends. That company would have had to pay under the proposed arrangement additional taxation amounting to about £5,000 a year.

Mr. Foley: Do you think the Great Boulder mine, after yielding such dividends and in view of its being willing to pay the further proposed tax, would have suffered excessive financial loss if our Mines Regulation Bill had been carried?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Mines Regulation Bill was a different proposition altogether. My opposition to the Mines Regulation Bill had no reference to the companies on the Golden Mile, which could have stood the expense. My objection was made on behalf of the small prospecting mine, and on behalf of the small local companies.

Mr. Foley: Can you tell me of one prospecting mine in the State which objected to the Bill?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I know that no small mine could have existed under that Mines Regulation Bill.

Mr. Foley: Tell me one small mine that objected to the Bill.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I say that the Bill passed by the Moore Government—

Mr. Heitmann: Was never administered.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It was administered, and it did not affect the large mines at all. I do maintain, however, that no good whatever resulted from it to the small mines. I maintain that it would have been very much better for the mining industry if even the existing Mines Regulation Act had never been brought into force.

Mr. Foley: Did not your late leader use the stuff prepared for him by the Chamber of Mines?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: My late leader, who happens to be my present leader, need never get any Chamber of Mines, nor any man, to prepare his stuff for him.

Mr. Foley: You used the same stuff in the Legislative Council.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No. I spoke from my own knowledge and experience of mining. Let us take the case of the Great Boulder mine, to which the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) has referred. That mine paid last year the sum of £270,000 in dividends and the whole of the tax that mine would have been called upon to pay under the proposed arrangement is £5,000 a year. And, by the way, the Great Boulder was quite willing to pay that tax.

Mr. Foley: Under the Mines Regulation Bill the cost of ventilation to the Great Boulder Company would have been £500 per annum, and yet they refused to agree to that.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. Foley: You voted that the motion should not be put in the Legislative Council.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No. I objected to the absurd system of inspectors and so on.

The Premier: Did not we collect 1s. in the pound?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No doubt you collected 1s. in the pound. You collected it from a private company that had to pay on hundreds of thousands represented by its property in Perth. The Great Boulder Company, however, pays about £90 a year to the State, and it has paid nothing more than that for 20 years, while it has returned to its shareholders over five million pounds in dividends from the £90 per annum leasehold. Nevertheless, the present Government considered it too much to ask the Great Boulder to pay £5,000 a year for the renewal of its lease, though the company was making out of its £90 per annum lease a profit of £270,00 per annum.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Yet it is too much to compel that company to give ordinarily healthy conditions to its workmen.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Honorary Minister is now speaking about a totally different matter. Allowing, for

the sake of argument—I do not allow it otherwise—

The Premier: Why did you not make these remarks previously?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I have made these same remarks about the London-owned mining companies on many occasions. I condemned times out of number the want of patriotism shown by these companies towards the State. I had no quarrel—

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You had a chance to test their patriotism with the Mines Regulation Bill.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That is a different matter altogether. I want to get something for the State from these mining companies in a legitimate way, something which they are justly entitled to pay.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): But the money required for the miners' health, you do not want to get. When we proposed to safeguard the miner's life and health, you told us it would cost too much.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I said the proposals of the present Government would harass the small companies. One of the conditions proposed by the present Government in their famous Mines Regulation Bill was that there should be so many main shafts. As a matter of fact, the Great Boulder is working with several main shafts to-day. That, however, would have been a condition involving great hardship on a new mine, and therefore I objected to that condition. Then, as regards night shift, the Great Boulder is working without night shifts because that mine has several hauling shafts. But it would never suit to apply that provision to a prospecting show. Briefly stating the case, I say that these companies were willing to pay the State £20,000 per annum for the renewal of their leases; and yet the Government renewed without receiving any consideration whatever. I asked for these papers to be laid on the Table in order to see whether the Minister can justify his action after having that information before him for two years, in renewing the leases without obtaining any consideration for the State.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [7.55]: In moving the adjournment of the debate, I am not permitted to make any comments, but I wish to say I regret very much that time will not permit of my replying to the hon. member straight away. I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

Motion passed; the debate adjourned.

## BILL—GRAIN AND FOODSTUFF.

### *Council's Pressed Request—Money Bill Procedure.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it pressed its request for Amendment No. 4.

Mr. SPEAKER [7.57]: I desire to point out that this is a money Bill, and that the action of the Legislative Council in pressing its amendment is irregular and constitutes an infringement of the privileges of this House. But this House has taken its own course on several occasions previously in respect to these matters, and whilst I individually wish, as Speaker of the House, to express my dissatisfaction with the action of the Legislative Council, I feel that my better course will be to allow the House to take that action which is deemed expedient.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill—Ivanhoe) [7.58]: May I be permitted to make an explanation on the point? I understand the Legislative Council holds that in accordance with its Standing Orders, which that Chamber is empowered to make for the conduct of its business, the Council is permitted to insist on a request to make an amendment, just as the Council is enabled to insist on an amendment which it has actually made. After discussing the matter with some hon. members of another place who voted for insistence on this amendment, I am satisfied that those members took that action with a clear understanding that we would be empowered to receive the message and ask for a Conference. I regret exceedingly that such a position has arisen. If the Standing Orders of the Legislative Council permit of that House taking such a

course, and if our Standing Orders do not permit of our meeting the Council in such a course, it is a great pity. As there is now a joint Standing Orders Committee of both Houses, the matter could be adjusted. On two or three occasions previously we have had to go beyond our Standing Orders in order to meet such cases as the present one. This message is, therefore, an important one; although the pressed amendment in itself is of little or no consequence. To the Government it is a most serious matter to lose an important measure because an unimportant amendment is pressed by another place. After discussing the position with some hon. members of another place, I am perfectly satisfied in my own mind that they still consider there is no great importance in the amendment and are of the opinion that, in view of their Standing Orders providing differently from ours, the loss of the measure is not involved. We cannot continue on this basis, permitting them on every money Bill to insist on their amendments. There are other important measures, but none so important for the purpose of helping us over a trying period. We have really anticipated the passing of this measure and taken certain essential action. Had we not done so we would have been up against chaos. We must now legalise that action. I know the amendment is not a vital point, is indeed only a matter of difference of opinion, and, as I pointed out when the amendment came here, I was prepared to accept it. However, the House ordered otherwise, and now we find the Council have insisted upon their requested amendment in contravention of our Standing Orders.

Mr. Taylor: But in keeping with their own.

The PREMIER: Yes, that is our difficulty.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Well, this is just as good a time as any other to get to them.

The PREMIER: I think it would be better to meet the difficulty which has arisen by agreeing to the amendment now, and afterwards to submit the whole matter to a joint Standing Orders commit-

tee, so that the differences between the Standing Orders may be adjusted.

Mr. SPEAKER: May I guide the Premier in this? It is not a matter of Standing Orders at all; it is a section of the Constitution Act, dealing with amendments to Bills introduced with the Governor's Message. The Council is quite competent to provide any Standing Orders they desire for the government of their own Chamber, just as this House may do; but the point under discussion is not a question of the Standing Orders, but of the Constitution Act. This House has from time to time insisted upon its right to control money Bills and to object strongly to the action of the other House in pressing amendments to such measures. The leader of the Opposition will remember that, when he was leader of the House, Mr. Speaker Quinlan disallowed the Perth Town Hall Bill, and later on, owing to friction between the two Houses, the question was referred to a committee of which Mr. Daglish, a former member of the House, was chairman. It might be well to read the report of that committee, which was adopted by this House on the 8th August, 1907. Mr. Daglish moved—

That in communications between the two Houses with respect to Bills in which amendments are requested by the Legislative Council this House cannot agree to take into consideration any Message in which a request is pressed or insisted upon.

The motion was agreed to unanimously, but since that time this House, when a Bill of special import was under consideration, without departing from its right, as provided in the Constitution Act, has waived that right for the time being. In the session of 1912, on the Workers' Compensation Bill, when objection was raised by the Speaker, the Attorney General moved—

That in view of the lateness of the session, and the necessity for this Bill this House does not insist upon its privileges in the matter of receiving Message No. 60, but does not wish by this to establish a precedent.

Having allowed the House to take this action in the past I am prepared to place the matter in the hands of hon. members so that they may take whatever action they deem expedient.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I hope they will not knuckle down again.

The PREMIER: Whether it is a matter affected by the Constitution Act or by the Standing Orders of another place it has occurred on previous occasions, and we have had, for the time being, to pocket our privileges in order to ensure the passing of an important measure. If we stand on our rights and refuse to deal with this Message the Bill will be set aside, and we will have to immediately prorogue Parliament and hold a new session for the purpose of reintroducing the Bill and passing it through all its stages; and not only this Bill but every other measure which has been proceeded with so far. I do not know that it is desirable to adopt that action. There is no tinge of party politics about the measure, and nothing which should lead to friction between the two Houses; therefore I think we should follow the course adopted on previous occasions. Taking into consideration the rather difficult position in which we find ourselves owing to the fact that we have anticipated the passing of the Bill, and have attended to essentials in order to be prepared to exercise the powers provided in the Bill, it would be preferable for us to adopt an action similar to that adopted in regard to the Workers' Compensation Act. I regret exceedingly the necessity for this. Sooner or later some important measure will be lost, but I doubt whether the Bill we are discussing is one which we should select as a test case in standing upon our rights.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [8.7]: Under the exceptional circumstances I am inclined to agree with the Premier that we ought to endeavour to secure the Bill by passing a resolution such as he has suggested. I agree with him that the rights and privileges of this Chamber, as set forth in the Constitution Act, must be preserved, and it seems a

policy that we should have had to give way even on the one occasion you have referred to.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Not one occasion, but several.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): The longer we give way the longer we will have to give way. We must stop some time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The question is, is this the right time to stop? The Honorary Minister wants to stop at once, but the Premier is more anxious that we should get over the difficulty with which we are faced. I am anxious also. A certain measure of legislation has passed this House. We know very well that the amendment which is insisted upon is merely of a formal nature, one which I presume the Government are prepared to accept. Having on several previous occasions recognised the urgency that we were under, and having foregone our rights, I think that we would be wise to do so again on this occasion.

Mr. Heitmann: Could they not withdraw the Message?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not think they could. Here we are, faced with a late session, and I do not think any hon. member wishes to have Parliament prorogued and a new session called specially to reconsider this Bill.

The Attorney General: Not only this Bill but all the others.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, everything now pending would have to be re-enacted, unless we made some arrangement by which we could delay the matter until the Notice Paper was cleared. Even then it would be a wholly unnecessary delay. I do not like to back down again and apparently desert what is our undoubted right, but still I think, under the circumstances, having regard to the fact that we need this legislation, and that the Government have taken certain steps in connection therewith—

The Minister for Lands: The other fellows should have thought of this.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, but was it put to them? Did the Minister in the other House represent the position to those members.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Send it back to them.

Mr. Taylor: We cannot.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): We can.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What I want to know is why did not the representative of the Government in another place put the case clearly before those members?

The Premier: He is not supposed to do that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Certainly he is. It is jeopardising a Government measure.

The Premier: I would not like the task of leading the House, and having, at the same time, to keep procedure in mind.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But it is the duty of the Government to keep in touch all the time with what is going on.

Mr. E. E. Heitmann: The Clerks up there are not well enough informed.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Oh, yes they are. However, I hope the commonsense of members will lead them to adopt the suggestion of the Premier and ignore the bellicose attitude of the Honorary Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: The discussion is irregular; I require some motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [8.14] To put the matter in order I move—

*That in view of the urgency of and the necessity for this Bill, this House does not on this occasion insist upon its privileges in the matter of receiving Message No. 7, but emphatically desires that this course should not be taken as a precedent.*

This is not a Government matter although naturally, as leader of the House, I am expected to submit the motion. The privileges of this Chamber do not rest with the Government alone, but with every member of the House, and I want every member to view the motion, not as a Government motion, but as one concerning himself. Every member must think out for himself whether it is desirable that we sacrifice our privileges. I am viewing it as head of the Government,

with a knowledge of the importance of the Bill, and the desirability of putting it on the statute-book as early as possible. I regret exceedingly that this Bill was not passed by another place on the third reading, through the rather hasty adjournment of the Council before the Christmas holidays. Judging by the present price of wheat and other food-stuffs that we will have to secure to tide us over the present season, it will probably mean an additional expenditure of from £40,000 to £50,000, which would not have been rendered necessary if the Bill had been passed. This is not a matter that the country has to pay the piper for; it is a matter for those for whom the produce is purchased. That will mean that there will be a few who will get a handsome profit out of the many and that there will be the many who cannot afford to lose that additional amount of money. It is no doubt due entirely to the fact that the leader of the House in another place was not made acquainted with the necessity of keeping that House until such time as a Message had been dealt with by this Chamber and transmitted to them. They went away without considering the matter at all. It is the duty of the clerks in either place to keep in touch with the business of the Chamber and to inform the leader of the House from time to time of what is essential. It was essential that this Message should have been dealt with by the Council and returned to this Chamber, but the Legislative Council adjourned and could not be recalled. These are the difficulties. I ask hon. members to consider whether it is a desirable thing under these circumstances that we should adjourn the matter and probably prorogue Parliament, meet again and go through all the forms of opening the session, and pass the Bill through all its stages in this Chamber, so that it may go on to another place, and in the meantime lose further money. This loss of money is not cast on the general taxpayer except in the first instance when the responsibility is his. The persons who will benefit are those of the farming community which will be called upon to carry the additional burden. Under these



circumstances I am prepared to place the rights of the Chamber in my pocket for the time being because I consider that under the abnormal conditions prevailing we must be prepared to forego our rights and privileges for the rights of others. The rights of the community are greater, after all, than the rights of this Chamber. I know perfectly well it is a serious matter. It will be a case of either throwing the measure out or of further dealing with it. Between the two I am prepared to take the lesser of the two evils by setting aside our rights for the time being and allowing the measure to become law as early as possible.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [8.17]: There are one or two matters about which I am not quite clear. I must confess that I am new to the procedure in this House. I cannot understand, if this is an infringement of the Constitution, as to how it can be got over by the formal consent of members of this Chamber. I understood that any amendment of the Act was a cumbersome process. If it can be got over in this simple way I think the Premier is right in the motion that he has moved. I would like to ask the leader of the House how many precedents make a rule. It is rather funny. I have some knowledge of this matter for I was a member and leader of another place for many years. I think this has occurred about half a dozen times within the last three years. It is rather ludicrous to continually tack on the words, "This must not be taken as a precedent." Whilst I was a member of another place I always upheld the privileges of that House.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): And you always put the acid on us.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I was always for the privileges of that House, perhaps more so in view of the fact that I am a firm believer in the existence of that House. I may say that whilst I am a member of this House I will always do my utmost to support the privileges of the House.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why support this motion?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I will explain. The Honorary Minister asked why I support the motion. I would, whether I believed in the matter at stake or not, put the privileges of this House before anything else. If I believed, as members of the Government seem to believe, that this is giving away the privileges of the House, I would not support the motion moved by the Premier. On the question of money Bills I can hardly remember since I have been in Parliament any Bill which is not a money Bill in the same respect as this has been called a money Bill. I think the Attorney General knew a good deal about that. I think it is a rule that has only come into existence since the Attorney General occupied the seat he now occupies. I have a recollection of the hon. gentleman, when we tried to meet altogether in a general Standing Orders Committee, five or six years ago, taking up a certain attitude. I think it is due to him that this consistency of money Bills has come before the House. I question if this is a money Bill in the sense that the framers of the Constitution Act intended. If it be a money Bill in that sense, I certainly would not support the motion if it infringed any of the privileges or any of the powers contained in a money Bill proper. If it was a question of taxation in any form, or interfered with any right of taxation, there should be no question whatever of the attitude that every hon. member of this House should take up. It would be ludicrous in the extreme if we were to lose this important Bill for this so-called infringement of our rights. There is no infringement whatever of our rights. If there was any infringement it must have passed away with these six or seven so-called precedents.

The Premier: This is a money Bill in the true sense.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I have looked at the financial clauses, and I still question whether it is a money Bill or not in its true sense. A money Bill must directly appropriate a certain sum.

The Premier: It does not say a certain sum in this instance.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That is the difference that came into my mind. I say it does not interfere with the privileges of this House or I would not support it. I think, if the privileges of the House have been endangered, they have been given away by those numerous so-called precedents. There are one or two other matters which the Premier has referred to. For instance, I deeply regret that this has cost the country £40,000 to £50,000. The Government must accept that responsibility. It is extremely unfair.

Mr. Allen: A clerk in the Council is to blame.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in proceeding on that line of discussion.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Have I not a right to reply to anything the Premier has said?

Mr. SPEAKER: Not that I know of.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not dispute your ruling, Sir. I rose to speak on this motion and I thought I could reply to the Premier.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss the matter on these lines.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not intend to pursue that line. I wish to say that I regret that this has taken place. I do not think the Premier is justified in making the attack he has on the poor clerks in the other House. Either the Minister in another place has neglected his duty, or the Government have neglected their duty.

The Premier. May I point out—

Mr. SPEAKER: Is there no other member who wishes to speak?

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [S.22]: If the Premier's motion is carried we will take the question into Committee and the Committee may accept the amendment of another place. That is the procedure.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): That is the result.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is absolutely the result beyond dispute. We cannot get beyond you, Mr. Speaker with this measure, unless we take the course suggested

by the Premier. If the House adopts that attitude and if the House accepts the resolution moved by the Premier, what will follow? We go into Committee and we accept the amendment, or the Committee may reject the amendment. If the House feels it is maintaining its privileges in this way it may as well reject it where it stands.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Hear, hear! Right out.

Mr. TAYLOR: Without all this side issue of a resolution saying that "We waive our privileges or our rights and that we will concede the point to you on this occasion," I have been in this Chamber for some 14 years and every session we have had to concede a point and these concessions are only forced upon the Chamber by another place upon Bills which are urgent, Bills which it is necessary should be passed. It is for the House to consider whether the importance of this measure is so great that we will accept the amendment and waive our privileges on this occasion. If the House thinks that the measure is of such importance that we must waive our claims and allow the Council to enforce these conditions on money Bills which this Chamber says they have no right to do, and which they have often done and will continue to do, unless this House asserts its rights and privileges, that position will have to be attacked if the integrity of the Chamber is to be maintained. Whether it is wise to take that position on this measure, or not, is for the House to consider. I am prepared to attack them on this measure. This is a measure which affects a very large proportion of the members of another place and their constituents. I think it is a very fine opportunity for this House to tell another place that it is about time they began to slow up on these pressed amendments and ceased to force measures of this kind. I hope the House will consider it. I am prepared to test the position on this Bill. I am prepared to test it on any measure if the House thinks that it is unwise, and that it will sacrifice too much to a section of the community financially, to reject this measure.

If the measure be rejected there is no possibility of its being reintroduced this session, unless Parliament is dissolved and we call a new Parliament together and go through the whole performance of a fresh session—that is if the Bill is of such urgency that this has to be done. Perhaps it is not wise to fight it on this occasion but it will have to be done, and the sooner the better.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER (Irwin) [8.29]: I am placed in rather a peculiar position in regard to this measure, because I cannot quite free myself from a certain amount of responsibility in that two members of this party practically brought about the position which exists. Whether it is that I should have kept in closer touch with those members, or whether they ought to have kept in closer touch with me is probably one of those things which will sift itself on a later occasion. This is the position we find ourselves in to-night. I say without fear of contradiction that no man has a more jealous regard for the privileges of this House than I have. I had occasion when I was Treasurer of the House to take up a very firm stand in regard to money Bills and the majority of the House supported us, and I think we made the Council realise that we were going to keep control of the purse of the State. But this is the position to-day. As the Premier has stated, this was an urgency measure which had for its object the relief of a large number of people. Members who were not interested in the matter gave us every possible assistance to get it through, because they realised that every day's delay meant an increase, not to the general taxpayer, but to the people who were to come under the operations of the Bill. I said on the occasion of the adjournment on Christmas Eve that I reckoned the farmers would have to pay something like £30,000 extra as a result of the other house adjourning. The Premier says it is more. Are we in this financial position to-day that we can afford to adjourn this House probably for another fortnight and cause the farmers to lose another £30,000 or £40,000? No member of this House feels

more sore on this subject than I do. The question to me at the present juncture is, which is of the most importance, that the dignity and the privileges of this House should be maintained or that the lives of families should be maintained, because I venture to say that the cost of commodities is becoming so high that I much question whether those people we want to help to derive some benefit, will come out much better at the end of the year, and if we continue this for another fortnight the probabilities are that the people the measure is intended to relieve will find the cost so high that it will be better for them to get off the land altogether. I want the House not to weigh this particular position from the standpoint of offended dignity or offended privilege. I realise how sore hon. members feel at having to give way, but there is a greater responsibility thrown upon us, the responsibility of thinking about the men and women out back who want to know almost immediately where they stand, or else they will not be able to do anything at all, and who want to get the necessary supplies to enable them to carry on their avocations. I want the House to be a little forgetful of its dignity and privileges and say there is a higher dignity, the dignity of allowing these people to be put in a position of some security in regard to next year.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister—Pilbara) [8.38]: I desire to oppose the motion, lock, stock, and barrel. I rather appreciate the Premier's statement that there is no party significance in it because I would oppose it if there were. This is not the first time, nor the second time, nor the third time that this House has allowed the Legislative Council to force amendments which they have no right to insist upon under the Constitution Act. We should be used to it. If we are here as men we should stand by our Constitution which has given the people representation in this Chamber, which is not the case in the other. Those who are prepared now by continued precedent to make this rule are absolutely giving away the birth-

right of the people of Western Australia. I claim that we have got past the position whether we shall consider the effect of our motion. The leader of the Country party says that we should think of the farmers who are going to buy wheat, but I would point out that the motion goes further than the present year. It goes right on to the end of Constitutional Government in Western Australia, and I contend it would be better to lose for the one year than to allow the Legislative Council to usurp the functions of this Chamber.

Mr. Willmott: Can you get hungry for a year?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Yes, and possibly a bit longer. We are told by the leader of the Country party that we must show forbearance. We have shown forbearance, we have shown it again and again, and we have had this experience, which the leader of the Country party has not, that every time we are stuck on an important Bill the Legislative Council deliberately insists on its amendments. In the present instance the amendment is not important. That has been admitted by the Premier and by another place. It has been put in simply to belittle this Chamber and another place does not agree—

Mr. Male: Is the hon. member in order in reflecting on the attitude of the Upper House by stating that they are belittling this Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: I shall always object to this House reflecting on another place, but the distinction here is so fine that I find myself in a difficulty to judge of any reflection.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I am sorry that the member for Kimberley thinks I am reflecting on another place. We are told that we should show forbearance, that we should think of the effect that this is going to have. It is the same old tripe we have had ever since this Government have been in power. Every session since the Scaddan Government took office we have had the same stuff dealt out to us that we should think of the result and pocket our dignity. I have no dignity in the

matter. I am here to uphold the rights of the people who elected me, and those people have no voice in electing another place. The leader of the Opposition stated that the Colonial Secretary should have looked after this matter, but I agree with the Premier that it is absolutely impossible for the leader of the House in another place to look after his business and also look after the officials of the House. I want to say that if the Premier thinks the clerk of the Legislative Council can look after anything, he is making a big mistake. We are asked to think of the abnormal conditions that are existing, but should not another place think of the abnormal conditions? Have they no capacity for thinking of abnormal conditions, and are they to be thought of only by this House? Is it not up to the representatives of the farmers and settlers who are going to suffer if we delay this Bill, to think a bit? Should they not remember that there are abnormal conditions? I contend that there is a party feeling in this State which absolutely ignores all conditions and that the only aim is to belittle the Labour party. This very motion is not a reflection so much on this House as it is on the Scaddan Government and those who sit behind Scaddan. I want to tell the Country party, that notwithstanding our diminished numbers, we are not feeding out of hand like the milk-er's calf, at least I am not, and when it comes to the farmers the Country party will do the protecting, because they represent them. The leader of the Opposition said he was deeply regretful and that he was very sorry. I was called to order once before for speaking of snufflesome hypocrisy, but I am not going to apply that to the leader of the Opposition now; it does not fit the case; it is not strong enough. I trust this House will now assert its rights. The result will be, according to the Premier, that we will have to prorogue Parliament and call it together again. It will mean a loss perhaps of a week. I contend that a loss of a week is absolutely a circumstance compared

with the loss of the rights which are conferred upon us by the Constitution. The member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly) says that notwithstanding what the other place has done, the Government are going to take the responsibility. That is just the position.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Why are they not men enough—

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): We are men enough for anything like you.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Order! Behave yourself.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): He says that we are to submit to these annoying insistencies of the Legislative Council. Insistencies which have been passed for the purpose of belittling this House, and then the Government have to take the responsibility. I say throw out the amendment, pass out the Bill and let the Legislative Council take the responsibility of it.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [8.42]: I propose to ask leave to withdraw the motion for the purpose of substituting another which I think will meet the wishes of all hon. members. We did it on a previous occasion in connection with the Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Bill which was a money Bill of a similar nature. The Legislative Council eventually withdrew and the Bill became law. Whether they consider the amendment they have made is of sufficient importance so as to lose the measure, is for them to say. The motion I propose to submit is as follows:—

That a message be transmitted to the Legislative Council, that in view of the operation of Section 46 of the Constitution Act, 1889, that a message be transmitted to the Legislative Council, acquainting them that there is a difficulty in the way of consideration by the Legislative Assembly of a message in which a request is pressed, and requesting that the Legislative Council do further consider the message transmitted by them with regard to the Grain and Foodstuff Bill.

If the House will give me permission I will withdraw my previous motion and

substitute that which I have just read. I want members to understand the position. If the motion is withdrawn and the one I have outlined is submitted in its place, and if the Legislative Council refuse to withdraw the message and insist on the amendment, the Bill will be lost; there is no getting away from that. They will have no alternative but to withdraw the message and not insist on their amendment.

Mr. Robinson: Can you send it back?

The PREMIER: Of course.

Mr. Robinson: Would we not be just as wrong as they have been wrong in sending it to us?

The PREMIER: We might be; but we will be merely drawing attention to the fact that we cannot receive their message.

Mr. Robinson: They might as well have sent you a blank sheet of paper.

The PREMIER: That is their responsibility. It is outside the Constitution, and is a matter of more importance than a mere difference between the two Houses. We are drawing their attention to the fact that their insisting on pressing an amendment is tantamount to doing something which is not permitted under the Constitution. If they consider that their pressing the amendment is more important than the Bill they can press it, and the measure will be lost, but the responsibility will be with another place. If members would sooner see their rights set aside they should refuse me permission to withdraw my motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Premier desires (that the motion of which he gave notice in the first place be withdrawn.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [8.50]: I should like to speak before the question is put.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, it is a very important matter.

Mr. ROBINSON: I would like to ask the Premier to reconsider his proposal to withdraw the motion before he is actually committed to it. If the Premier insists upon the latter course it seems to me that the Bill will be lost if the Upper House maintains its position.

The Minister for Lands: The responsibility will be on another place.

Mr. ROBINSON: It does not matter on whose shoulders the responsibility lies. The country may have too many legislators, and the farmers may starve while the legislators haggle and squabble over a few words or a few forms and ceremonies. I agree with the Premier that the time has come when our privileges have to be weighed against the needs of the farmers. Because we concede for the moment our privileges we do not lose or abrogate them in the slightest degree, and on each occasion I would be prepared to weigh our privileges on the one side with the loss on the other.

Mr. Carpenter: It is a question of the Constitution.

Mr. ROBINSON: Then it is a question whether by accepting the Premier's first suggestion we do not overcome the difficulty. When all is said and done, the only question between the two Houses is whether the market price is to be fixed or whether the price is to be fixed having regard to the market value—in other words whether we shall call a particular thing a shilling or twelve pence.

Mr. Taylor: That is not the position; it is whether the Council has the right to insist.

Mr. ROBINSON: Yes, I am coming to that, but, throwing away all the technicalities the amendment—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss that.

Mr. ROBINSON: Coming to the constitutional aspect, it is clearly set out in Section 46 of the Constitution Amendment Act. I am assuming that this Bill is a money Bill. I am not going into the question whether it is or not. I take it the Speaker has ruled it as such.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. ROBINSON: Taking it as a money Bill, Section 46 governs the case. That section gives certain powers to the other House, and to this House, but it does not say that those powers shall be repeated *ad infinitum*. Section 46 states—

In the case of a proposed Bill, which, according to law, must have originated in the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Council may at any stage return it to the Legislative Assembly with a

message requesting the omission or amendment of any items or provisions therein; and the Legislative Assembly may, if it thinks fit, make such omissions or amendments, or any of them, with or without modifications.

The position, therefore, is this: A Bill has been passed and sent to another place. The other House, if it is a money Bill, may return it with a message requesting an omission or amendment; that is all they have power to do. All we have the power to do is to accept it or reject it. When that is done the statute gives no more power.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): They have no power to insist.

The Minister for Lands: They have gone beyond that power.

Mr. ROBINSON: Quite so.

The Minister for Lands: We have done all we can.

Mr. ROBINSON: If we refuse to accept their amendment or omission the matter is closed so far as this Chamber is concerned.

The Premier: No; we must send back a message saying what we have done.

Mr. ROBINSON: I admit that. Therefore those regulating the procedure in another place, I think, are going beyond the statute law of the country when they send back a message insisting on an amendment. The difficulty in giving them an opportunity to put a wrong right is that in the procedure the Bill might be lost.

The Minister for Lands: That is their responsibility.

Mr. ROBINSON: As a representative of the people of Western Australia, I do not see why we should prejudice a measure of this sort, which was brought in as an urgent case, and detailed in the opening speech of the Governor as one of the urgent matters to be considered. It is a matter which has appealed to every member of this House to whichever side he belongs or whatever creed he professes, and every member has thought it a proper Bill to be placed on the statute-book. Therefore, why should we—

Mr. McDowall: Why should they?

Mr. ROBINSON: Why should we—

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why should they?

Mr. ROBINSON: The Honorary Minister has had his say. We here represent on a broad franchise the people of Western Australia.

The Premier: Do you consider you were logical when you read statute law and said we could proceed only so far, and now suggest that we should go further.

Mr. ROBINSON: I am using this as an argument to save the Bill, and I am endeavouring to support, to the best of my ability, the original suggestion of the Premier. It is wiser than his second suggestion. The first suggestion of the Premier will save the Bill, and will save the country if the Bill will save it. In connection with the second suggestion, there is a possibility of losing the Bill.

Mr. Taylor: The responsibility would rest with another place.

Mr. ROBINSON: Never mind that; it is a question of curing a patient of a dread disease. One way will cure it for certain, but the other way will kill it. Why adopt that method?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): We want to cure Western Australia of the Legislative Council.

Mr. ROBINSON: I appeal to hon. members and to the common sense of the Government to give effect to the remarks of the Premier in his opening speech on this matter. I think his first thoughts on it are the best, and we are not approaching this matter in any party spirit. We are approaching this as ordinary common sense individuals representing the people on a broad franchise. I am agreeing with the Premier. There is no party spirit about anything I have said. All I have said is perfectly logical, and I think this House would be quite safe in adopting the first proposal. I therefore again suggest to the Premier that he should still retain the first proposal he made to the House. I urge this because the matter is entirely in his hands.

Mr. McDOWALL (Coolgardie) [9.2]: I trust the House will not take the advice of the last speaker. It is all very well to

come here and preach nicety to us, and to tell us what we ought to do in order to avoid friction of this kind. But when the hon. member has been here a few years longer he will realise that this kind of thing is constantly happening. For my part, I believe that in this instance it has been done with the deliberate intention of flouting this House. The first proposal of the Premier, which the hon. gentleman desires to withdraw, would place us in the position of absolutely knuckling down to the Legislative Council in a matter which they have been told, year after year, they should not interfere with; in a matter, therefore, with the nature of which members of another place are thoroughly conversant. The proposal which the Premier desires to substitute for that which he has moved, is one telling members of another place that we cannot give way to them; but, at the same time, the proposal which is to be substituted will afford the Legislative Council an opportunity of rectifying the wrong. As it is, the Legislative Council have placed us in this position—

Mr. Bolton: Purposely.

Mr. McDOWALL: And we are sweetly and suavely told that it is by pure accident that the Legislative Council have done so on this occasion. As we are told this year after year on every occasion when such a position is created, and members of another place say every time, "Oh, we are so sorry, hon. gentlemen and members of the Legislative Assembly; we did not mean to do it, and it was only by some accident we sent this down to you," I ask, are we to be a lot of jelly fish, a lot of cravens, and agree to do anything we are asked by another place to do? I, for one, have had enough and too much of this kind of thing; and I do not think we have any right to be placed in such a position. As I have already stated, the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) has told us that by adopting the motion of the Premier now before the House the Bill is certain to be saved—saved because we shall be knuckling down. But the member for Canning tells us that if we send the amendment back to the people who are supposed to represent

the Country party, there is a possibility of the Bill being lost. If there is a possibility of the Premier's second proposal being rejected by the Legislative Council, which is understood to represent the landed interests of this country, then the people of the State, in the event of a rejection by the Council because of an amendment universally admitted to represent merely the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee, will recognise that the responsibility must rest upon the champions of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association and of the Country party and so forth. I did not intend to get warm over this question—

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You are not warm yet.

Mr. McDOWALL: I like to hear the Honorary Minister use his nice, frivolous interjections at the present time. When the Honorary Minister was speaking he did not exhibit so much calmness and collectedness even as I display. The member for Canning says, "Let us exercise our common sense." Well, we are exercising our common sense. We are exercising our common sense by saying that the rights and privileges of this Chamber shall not be infringed beyond the extent to which they have been infringed up to the present time. But why should we be blessed with all the common sense of Parliament? On other occasions we are told—we were told so even by the member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly) this evening—that members opposite believe most firmly in the Legislative Council, that it is a House which accords with the opinions of hon. members opposite. I have no objection to those hon. members' expressing themselves to that effect; but if common sense is to be exercised, why not afford the Legislative Council an opportunity of exercising its common sense over this matter?

Mr. Bolton: Impossible.

Mr. McDOWALL: I am not going to argue that phase of the question. I leave it to the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Bolton). I have no desire to trespass further on the time of this Cham-

ber; but I trust that the course which has been indicated by the Premier will be the one which the House will follow, because to my mind it affords the only fair way out of the difficulty. We did not seek the difficulty; it is not of our making, but it is of the making of another place. Therefore, let the other place take the responsibility if this Bill is of the importance that we are told by the leader of the Country party it is, and also told by members on the Opposition side of the House. Legislative Councilors must exercise their common sense and agree to the measure if it is of such importance. I do not yield to the leader of the Country party, or to anyone else, as regards feelings of humanity, as regards sympathy with the suffering farmers and settlers of this State who are affected by the Grain and Foodstuff Bill. Therefore I sincerely hope that the measure will become law. I realise to the full the necessity for its becoming law, but I realise equally that the obligation to overcome the difficulty rests upon another place, and not upon us. I therefore sincerely trust that the second proposition of the Premier will be carried unanimously by this House.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [9.6]: I do not desire to say much on this matter. Like previous speakers, I trust that the second suggestion of the Premier will be adopted, and principally for this reason, that up (till some few moments ago I was under a misapprehension so far as amendments of the nature now before the House are concerned. If you will permit me, Mr. Speaker, I wish to say that I was formerly of the opinion that if such a motion as that moved by the Premier were adopted by this Chamber, it would give us the right to meet another place in Conference, with the object of overcoming the difficulty. Had that been the case—and I remember that on one occasion such a course was followed—I should have been prepared to support the original motion of the Premier. Seeing, however, that such is not the case, but that the carrying of the Premier's original motion would simply mean that this House would have no alternative but



to accept the amendment requested by the Legislative Council, I trust that the Premier's second suggestion will be adopted. Even apart altogether from the rights and privileges of this Chamber, I would not agree to the motion before the Chair, because I personally would rather lose the Bill than accept the amendment pressed by the Legislative Council. The position now, I take it, is as follows: The leader of the Country party has said that if this Bill does not become law the effect on the farmers and settlers will be serious. I realise that if the Bill is by any means lost at the present juncture, the farmers will be seriously affected. But I am considering other people as well as the farmers. The rejection of the measure will, to my mind, affect every individual in this State, inasmuch as I believe that if the Bill should be lost, then within the next two months we shall have an increase in the cost of living. In the metropolitan area there has been to-day an increase in the price of bread. On the goldfields that increase was made on the 1st January. The reason advanced for the increase is that the commodities with which the present Bill proposes to deal have been increasing in price. Now, if the Bill is lost, the price of those commodities will rise still higher. I will not, however, persist in that line of argument. I trust that the House will agree to allow the Premier to withdraw his first motion and submit that which he has indicated, so as to give another Chamber an opportunity of rectifying the wrong that has been done. There is just one other point I wish to emphasise in connection with the remarks of the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson). That hon. member contends there is a possibility of the Bill being lost if the Premier withdraws his original motion and the second one is adopted. But I wish to point out that there is also a possibility of the Bill being lost even should the Premier adhere to his original motion, since I believe that many members of this House are not prepared to reverse the vote they cast in this connection previously. With these few re-

marks I hope the House will allow the Premier to withdraw the motion now before the Chair; and, further, I trust that the suggested motion of the Premier will be carried.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco) [9.10]: The information which you, Mr. Speaker, gave to the House when this question was first raised, namely that the matter was governed by the Constitution Act and not by our Standing Orders, placed the whole of the position, to my mind, in an entirely different category from that in which it would have fallen had it been governed by the Standing Orders. The point with which I think this House should concern itself now is whether we, as a Chamber, as a House of Parliament, have any right more than a private individual of the community would have, to disregard with impunity an Act of Parliament by which we are governed. I know that this has been done on previous occasions, but I wish to put this question to hon. members: have we acted rightly, have we acted in accordance with the laws of the country when we have deliberately disregarded the Constitution Act, by which we are governed, for the purpose of giving way to the other Chamber? I am somewhat astounded to see the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson), an eminent King's Counsel, rise in this Chamber to say that he is not at all concerned with whether or not we break the Constitution Act, and that all he desires is simply to get the measure through, because a crisis has arisen. I wonder what privileges the people either of the British Dominions or of Great Britain itself would have possessed had the great leaders of English thought adopted the same attitude when, for example, the basic principle was being fought for that the Commons were to be supreme in financial matters? If the leaders of that day had knuckled down to the King instead of standing up for the rights of the people, if they had not gone the length of even cutting off the head of a King. I wonder what privileges we should be enjoying to-day? It is because those leaders insisted upon the rights of the

people that we should insist here to-day. Too often during the time that I have sat in this Chamber have we given way on these questions. I want to express the opinion that even the method now suggested by the Premier as a means of overcoming the difficulty, is illegal. I am clearly of opinion that once these requested amendments of the Council have been refused by this Chamber and have been sent back to another place, and thereupon have been insisted on by another place, it is your bounden duty, Sir, to rule that the measure must be discharged from the Notice Paper. I throw that out as a suggestion. I believe that you, Sir, are placed in your position as the custodian of the rights of this Chamber; and I believe that it constitutes an illegal act for you, Sir, to allow any further debate on the matter at all. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that your bounden duty in such circumstances is to rule that we have no further right to discuss the matter and that it must be discharged from the Notice Paper. I hope, with other members who have spoken on this side of the House, that the present will be the last occasion when this Chamber is to knuckle down to another House on a question of privilege. I am convinced, with other members, that these difficulties crop up only when the matter under discussion is of some vital importance to the country; that when the measure is one which the Ministry are anxious to get through, those who are undoubtedly opposed to the Government, those who are members of another place, take the opportunity of harassing the Government as much as ever they can.

Mr. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [9:15]: After hearing some of the remarks of the previous speakers I am inclined to come to the conclusion that this is being made somewhat of a party question. I maintain that the situation is too serious for any party issues to be raised. Possibly members on another side of the House are smarting under the sting of a previous action of another Chamber; but, speaking for myself—though this is the first occasion on which I have had to deal

with a matter of Parliamentary procedure—I would point out that there are thousands of people in the country to-day waiting upon the successful carrying through of this Bill. If any action of ours should in any way jeopardise the passage of the measure, we should be deserving of the censure and disapproval of the people who are looking to us to do something to help them through a most serious crisis. The member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) judiciously pointed out to the House the situation which might arise if we referred this measure back to the other Chamber. Possibly, the measure may not be lost. I am personally inclined to think that when another place brought about the present situation, members there were unaware of the fact that they were violating the Constitution. Probably if they have an opportunity of again reviewing the situation, they will fall in with our suggestion. However, I am not clear whether we can again submit the measure. If they condescend to accept our suggestion, will the Bill become law or will it be again referred to us?

The Minister for Lands: No, we will then have finished with it.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: I very much regret the situation. I was hopeful that the better sense of the Chamber would lead to the acceptance of the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [9:18]: According to the law of the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) it is impossible for us to take this Message into consideration. He has proved to my satisfaction that the Council is the body to make an amendment. That comes down for our consideration. We decide that we cannot agree to the amendment. It then goes back to them, and that finally settles it. If they say they must have it, they defeat the Bill, but they have no right to send it down here. The hon. member has proved that they did a wrong thing in sending it here. He says another place has done a wrong and we endorse that wrong. I question

whether we have the power to endorse that wrong.

Mr. Male: We have done it before.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If they have no right to send it down, we have no right to consider it, and certainly no right to endorse it. However, I agree that the other Chamber has no right to send it down. Surely then it is our duty to point out to those people their duty, and give them an opportunity for profiting by the greater wisdom of this Chamber. It is for them to realise their mistake and do what they think best with the Bill. I wish to point out to the country that a grave injustice has been done to the consumers already. The leader of the Country Party estimates that injustice at £30,000, while the Premier puts it at £50,000. As a matter of fact, not even the greater figure will cover it. Had the Bill passed when it was first under consideration, when another place adjourned instead of completing their work, we should have purchased and supplied wheat to the farmers at something like 6s. a bushel. To-day wheat is over 7s. When we were buying in the interests of those who wanted seed wheat, the millers were buying against us, competing against the officers of the Agricultural Department. Thus we found the millers would offer 6s., whereupon our experts would offer 6s. 3d. and so it went on.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If I allow the Minister this discussion, I must allow it to everybody else.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is only fair that the importance of the position should be realised. At present it is only known to those who come into contact with the expert officers of the department. If you will allow me to proceed I may say that £50,000 would not cover the difference, because the wheat that is bought to-day at 7s. fixes the price for the wheat bought previously at 4s. or 5s. The price to-day is 7s. and the miller will not sell his flour on the basis of the 4s. or 5s., which he paid for wheat some weeks ago, but fixes the prices on the maximum of the 7s. being paid to-day, with the

result that it is hard to estimate what the delay in the passage of this Bill means to the consumers of bread and to those who require seed wheat. We have to-day a certain amount of seed wheat, but not nearly enough.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Consequently it will be seen that the Bill is of very great importance, and I sincerely trust that another place will re-consider their attitude and pass the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am going to confine discussion to the terms of the motion.

The Premier: I have asked leave to withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Leave has not yet been given. Hon. members desired to discuss it.

Question (that leave be given to withdraw the motion) put and negatived.

Mr. SPEAKER: The discussion must continue on the motion.

Mr. McDowall: Cannot the suggestion of the Premier be moved as an amendment?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder): I move an amendment—

*That all the words after "in view of" be struck out with a view to inserting "the operation of Section 46 of the Constitution Act a Message be transmitted to the Legislative Council acquainting them that there is a difficulty in the way of the Legislative Assembly considering a Message in which a request is pressed and requesting that the Legislative Council do further consider the Message transmitted by them with regard to the Grain and Foodstuff Bill, 1914."*

The SPEAKER: To the motion moved by the Premier the Minister for Mines has moved an amendment—To strike out all the words after "in view of" in the first line with a view to inserting the following words—"the operation of Section 46 of the Constitution Act a message be transmitted to the Legislative Council acquainting them that there is a difficulty in the way of the Legislative Assembly considering a Message in which a request is pressed, and re-

questing that the Legislative Council do further consider the message transferred by them with regard to the Grain, and Foodstuff Bill, 1914." The motion before the House reads as follows:—

In view of the urgency of and the necessity for, this Bill this House does not on this occasion insist upon its privileges in the matter of receiving Message No. 7, but emphatically desires that this course should not be taken as a precedent.

If the amendment is agreed to the motion will then read as follows:—

In view of the operation of Section 46 of the Constitution Act a message be transmitted to the Legislative Council acquainting them that there is a difficulty in the way of the Legislative Assembly considering a Message in which a request is pressed, and requesting that the Legislative Council do further consider the Message transmitted by them with regard to the Grain and Foodstuff Bill, 1914."

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	30
Noes	..	..	..	9
<hr/>				
Majority for	..	..	..	21
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#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Munste
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Foley	Mr. Smith
Mr. J. Gardiner	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Green	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Johnston	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. McDowall	Mr. Heilmann

(Teller).

#### NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Male	Mr. Gilchrist
Mr. Mitchell	

(Teller).

Amendment thus passed.

Question as amended put and passed.

#### BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### BILL—LOCAL OPTION VOTE CONTINUANCE.

##### Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker—Kanowna) [9.40] in moving the second reading said: It is unnecessary to weary members by a long dissertation upon the principles of this measure. As a matter of fact it is a continuance of the measure we introduced in 1913, which then provided that the Local Option poll should not be taken, and we postponed the taking of that poll in consequence of the consideration of a Local Option Bill which was being dealt with by the chamber in another place. The Bill provided for the full measure of local option, which was defeated. We now propose to continue this postponement as no good can be effected by taking a local option poll in 1915. We cannot effect any good; we cannot in any way do more than increase the existing evil by taking a poll. The vote as it stands is satisfactory. The decision of the people taken is already, I say, satisfactory to the majority of temperance reformers, and those who do not wish to see any increase in the drink traffic. Under the law as it stands local option is practically regulated by the Licensing Act of 1911. The present measure proposes that we shall not take the local option poll until the year 1918. In 1921, by the law as it now stands, the security of tenure for the sale of intoxicants will have disappeared by the operation of the law; we shall have given the time compensation that was provided in the measure of local option and which is now on the Statute Book. Therefore we shall be able simultaneously with the coming into operation of that provision in 1921

to take our local option poll, and then see what is the will of the people.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Do you intend taking a local option poll in 1921?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In 1918. At the present juncture there is a further reason why we should not take this local option poll as provided for 1915; it would cost, at the very least, to the people of the State a sum of £8,000. We can ill afford to spend that amount of money on a proceeding which can effect little good. In fact, it will have no effect whatever. As hon. members understand the purposes of the Bill, I think without further word we can carry the second reading. I move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

Mr. Robinson: Will the Attorney General inform us when the last local option poll was taken and what the result was?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was taken in 1911 and with the exception of in two licensed districts the poll was against increase and in favour of State hotels.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [9.47]: I do not wish to take exception to any action on the part of the Premier which will result in saving expenditure which may be unnecessary, but I confess that I am not quite conversant with what this Bill means. We had a local option poll and the bulk of the different districts were against any increase in licenses. I think there were one or two which were in favour. The passage of this measure will maintain that poll until 1918 and then if we take a poll again in 1918, do I understand that that will hold good for 1921?

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And will be acted upon?

The Premier: Yes, it must be.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If there is a poll for decrease of licenses?

The Premier: There cannot be a poll until 1921.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Can we take a poll for a decrease in 1918?

The Premier: Not until 1921. We cannot take a poll to test the question of a decrease until 1921.

The Attorney General: That is the law as it stands now. I tried to alter it but I have not been able to do so, and the consequence is that the law stands. The time compensation until 1921 we cannot decrease.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And we cannot take a poll for a decrease until 1921?

The Premier: That is the position.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not see that there can be much exception to a postponement of the consideration of the measure, but I should have liked the Attorney General, when bringing in a Bill of this description, to have included in it the promises he made to our temperance friends last year.

The Attorney General: In the meantime we must avoid what the law imposed upon us in 1915.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I shall not oppose the second reading but I shall expect the Attorney General to bring in a measure to deal with the three matters we had before us last session.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [9.53]: I am not quite clear in regard to the statements made by the Attorney General. I take it that this Bill will continue the results of the poll of 1911.

The Premier: Precisely.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Under Section 77 the poll to be taken was on the question of increase, and that was the only thing that a poll could be taken on until 1921.

The Premier: That is not so.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: And an expression of opinion as to whether all new licenses should be held by the State. The main question to be put to the electors at the present time, if a referendum were taken, would be in regard to the number of licenses. At the last poll, in 49 cases out of 50 they voted "No." This Bill further enacts that for three years. The Attorney General says that he will next year introduce a local option poll.

The Attorney General: It is my desire to do so.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The objection that I see to this Bill is enacting it for three years. I would not object so much to enacting it for a year on account of the cost, but I think it means that we are enacting it for six years.

The Premier: No, only until 1918.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It seems unlikely, having gone for three years, that Parliament will refuse to re-enact it.

The Premier: It will be possible to amend it at any time.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: We would not be likely to amend it. Having altered it to 1918 it would be hardly likely that Parliament would amend it to 1921. I believe in local option, but at the same time I respect existing rights in the liquor trade, but we are giving the present holders an increased monopoly. There are places in Western Australia to-day which for the last three years have increased in population to a great extent.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They are getting new licenses every month by transfers being effected from other places.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: There are certain districts that may require a new license, but under this Bill we take from the people the right to say whether there shall be a new license in a district or not. I think the debate ought to have been adjourned so as to give members time to grasp the real meaning of the Bill.

The Attorney General: I do not think there is any one who does not know what it means.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

### BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE.

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [10.2]: This is one of those unfortunate urgency measures we are called upon to

deal with from time to time, particularly unfortunate, for, owing to the bad season of last year, the agricultural industry is in trouble, and we have to consider the best means to help those engaged in it. The agricultural activity in the State will depend upon this measure as we pass it, and I hope what we pass will not be the measure which is now before us. The Minister gave some information in moving the second reading, but it was altogether inadequate because of the very wide nature of the proposals contained in the Bill. This has been called a Bill for the assistance of the farmer, but it is much more like a Bill to protect the trading of the Government. Before dealing with the provisions of the measure I propose to set forth my ideas of what should be done to help the farmer. We have to admit that assistance is urgently needed, and we have to determine what that assistance shall be. The assistance should be as general as possible. It is not in the mind of the Ministers to make it general. Their idea is to make it as restrictive as possible. It should be the aim of the Government to have as large an area cropped as can be well cropped during the coming season.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That will be pretty difficult with chaff at £11 a ton and wheat at 7s. a bushel.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It may be difficult but not for the Government who have just arranged to borrow something like seven millions of money. In the administration of the fund set aside there should be no uncertainty as to the nature of the assistance to be given. It is the uncertainty of the Government's intentions, and the delay which discounts the value of the assistance given from time to time. I do not deny that assistance has been given but it has always been tardily given, and the good which might have been done has often been lessened considerably in consequence. In determining the policy to be adopted, we must decide what is necessary in addition to our existing laws. There should be no overlapping. The Agricultural Bank Act covers a great deal in the direction of

assisting farmers. Under that Act provision is made for clearing, fencing, and other improvements, and for the purchase of horses and machinery. This measure also provides for the purchase of horses and machinery. It seems absolutely wrong to have two measures providing for the same purpose. I do not understand why the Minister for Lands desires to make this second provision.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Farmers may have drawn up to their limit under the other Act.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The limit is £2,000, and I think only one person has reached that figure, and it is not likely that farmers have drawn up to their limit. It is to the discredit of the Government that they have not given effect to the Agricultural Bank Act as we passed it in order to assist the farmers. To the bank and other institutions should be left the supply of horses and machinery, and assistance under this measure should be restricted to necessary things, such as fertiliser, seed wheat, horse feed, and sustenance for man. Horses and machinery form a tangible security, and having that tangible security there is very little risk to the lender. The law further provides for the hire-purchase agreement in the case of machinery, and a bill of sale may also be taken as security for horses and machinery. Thus provision is made for those cases where lasting security is available, but it is totally different when it comes to a matter of advances on fertilisers to be put into the ground. We are helping established farmers, and there should be little need to advance more than is done in normal years for the purposes I have mentioned. We should keep before our minds the fact that assistance is needed to buy seed, fertiliser, horse feed and food for the farmer. If the seed and fertiliser are found it will cost something like 10s. per acre, and it will cost 5s. an acre to cover seeding operations, including the necessary food for man and beast. The crop last year covered an area of 1,500,000 acres. If we are to crop the same area

again this year, I believe assistance will be needed in the case of 800,000 acres. This represents the additional area cropped since 1910, and the greater number of the farmers needing help will be new men. More than half of this area has only recently been put under crop, so that the need for assistance will be easily understood. The greater number of these men requiring assistance will be Agricultural Bank customers. Assuming that the Government can help in the matter of cropping the 800,000 acres, they will have to find £600,000. Will the Government find this money? The Premier said the other day that it would mean a matter of three-quarters of a million of money, or £2 10s. per head of the population. I think the Government ought to find the money. They have the means, because they have arranged to raise a very large loan. All of it will not be needed at once, but the expenditure may be spread over some months. I doubt very much if the Government contemplate doing anything of the sort.

The Minister for Works: If that were so, we would not have introduced the Bill.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister in moving the second reading of the Bill made no mention of the nature of the assistance to be given or of the amount. This House should know just what the intentions of the Government are. I repeat that there should be no uncertainty. I ask the Minister to state whether the assistance is to be general or special.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You know it must be general.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Is the policy under this measure to be one of assistance to put in every acre which can be well sown, or to help only those who, by tedious process, convince the board of their want of money? I have little faith in these boards, and less faith in the methods they will adopt if this inquiry is insisted on.

Mr. O'Loughlen: When you were Minister you appointed more boards

than anyone else. There were boards all the time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I never appointed a board except to make a special inquiry, and certainly never appointed a board to assist the farmers, because there was never any need to do so.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There were no droughts.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I was never guilty of the method adopted by the present Government in rendering assistance to the farmers. Their method has been to make a man prove his poverty before assistance would be given. It would be better to help a few who were really not in need of help rather than inconvenience the many, as has been done so often.

The Minister for Lands: And make the many pay for it, as you did with the cows?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, the many did not have to pay for the cows.

The Minister for Lands: The general community had to pay for the cows.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The general community paid very much less than under Bethell's agreement which the Minister entered into.

The Minister for Lands: The timber is paying for that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is not.

The Minister for Lands: It is, and more than paying for it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister for Lands has wasted more money than all the Ministers for Lands in this State put together, and he knows it. That is why he is now in the Lands instead of in the Works Department. I have very little faith in these boards, particularly in boards called upon to deal with farmers scattered all over the country from Geraldton in the north to Albany in the south, but I have unbounded confidence in the trustees of the Agricultural Bank, Messrs. Paterson, Richardson, and Cooke. If assistance is to be given the bank trustees should control the work. They have the staff, they have the knowledge and many of the men needing help are very well known to them. They are the

bank's customers, as the Minister is aware. This knowledge would be of very great help indeed. I want to urge that this special help should not be confused with the ordinary work of the bank. If we are to achieve our object to help the farmers and encourage them to put the largest possible area under crop, we must take some risks. It should be made clear to the trustees, that when the work is ended any loss should be covered by a vote of Parliament, and not taken from any of the bank's funds or from the present accumulated profits of the bank. In taking security, it should not be necessary for the Minister to insist upon a first mortgage. I will show how wrong it is to make this suggestion under which the Minister, to achieve his object, intends to get a first mortgage over the freehold or the landed property of the borrower. Our security would be sufficient if the farmer gave a crop lien. The Minister would have the security of the land after the existing claims were paid, and it is to be remembered that the debt would be a continuing one against the borrower. In addition to the assistance which must be given to enable the crop to be put in, there must be added assistance to fallow as large an area as possible for the following season. At present we have 754,000 acres of land under fallow. The Minister knows that a great many people in the back country will not be able to fallow unless assistance is afforded them. We had crop failures, crop trouble, over the whole of the State. I am referring to fallowing in January, 1915.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Let us get a return first.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: "Let us get a return first," says the hon. member; but how can we expect that in the next year unless we have some fallowing this year? The matter will need another £140,000; and thus I arrive at a total of £740,000 for providing the seed and fertiliser necessary to do the fallowing. The Premier himself estimated the amount at something like £750,000, in replying to a deputation recently. I think it would be better if the authority



necessary to give the trustees of the Agricultural Bank power to do this work, or—if the Minister insists upon his Board—the necessary authority to that Board, were created by a short Act of Parliament dealing only with the agricultural side of the Minister's proposal. I do not think it is wise to mix up assistance to various industries under this measure.

The Minister for Lands: Are you opposed to assistance to other industries?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Just now I am not opposing anything; I am agreeing that assistance should be given. We should be absolutely wrong if we discriminated, for the purposes of this measure, between lands held under lease from the Crown, or from others, and land which is held by purchasers from the Midland Railway Company.

Mr. James Gardiner: We fixed them up there.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I must repeat that by this measure the Minister should take absolute security over the crop, free of any claim which may be set up by any person whatsoever. A man leasing land, of course, would be liable for his rent to his landlord; but the Minister should have absolute security over the crop against all who may claim. Whatever safeguard the Minister may adopt to secure himself, it is by no means probable that all to whom helends will be able to repay; on this crop, or on some future crop, a small loss must be faced. Against that, we have to remember that we invited these people to risk their money in the development of our lands. We have done that for many years, as we are doing it to-day. We advertise the world over for farmers; we have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds in bringing settlers to our State. The House should remember that our duty is to keep on the land the people we now have upon the land. That is very much cheaper and better than to bring in others to take up abandoned or forfeited holdings. We all admit that if there is any bright future before this State, it depends upon agricultural development. I have nothing to say against the gold-mining

industry, which is a magnificent asset to the State, or against the timber industry, or the many other industries of Western Australia; but the only possible chance of great things for this community must come from agricultural development; and it is right that we should go to very great lengths in order to promote that development. It seems to me absolutely certain that unless we make very special efforts our State will never return to the prosperity it is entitled to enjoy. In setting forth what I think should be done, I have voiced the opinion of every member of this party, and I hope I have also voiced the views of my friends of the Country party. Accordingly, I trust that when we come to divisions on some of these proposals of the Minister, this party will obtain sufficient support from among his own followers to enable us to amend the Bill in the directions I have indicated.

The Minister for Works: You want to be a little more sound than you generally are.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am absolutely sound, always; it is the Minister who is unsound. Let us now turn for a moment to the speech of the Minister and to his Bill. The hon. gentleman's statements were very general indeed. He avoided—I think, deliberately, as he seemed to be afraid—giving the necessary information. The intentions of the Government by this Bill were not made clear. Among the Minister's statements was one that the mortgagee would be consulted before the Government made an advance to the farmer.

The Minister for Lands: No. The mortgagee would not be consulted by the Government, but by the man in want of assistance.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister made it quite clear that the Bill provided at least that measure of protection to the man who had already advanced money. As a matter of fact, however, the Bill does nothing of the kind. The measure provides that Government claims shall rank before any mortgage now existing upon any holding within the State. . . . .

Hon. Frank Wilson: And in respect of assistance already given.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes. The Government are to rank first, not only in regard to assistance to be given, but in regard to moneys already owing to them.

The Minister for Works: Assistance already given is not much good to the farmer now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Government are to rank first in respect of some machinery possibly made and supplied by the Minister for Works. To me this Bill seems a confused attempt to set up authority for the purpose of aiding various industries, as well as the agricultural industry. Mining and other industries are to be assisted. I repeat, it is an impossibility for one measure to provide the machinery necessary to help all these different industries. One Bill cannot contain all the provisions necessary to cover the varying conditions of all the industries to be assisted. Just as in the Agricultural Bank Act we have the machinery necessary for helping the farmers to develop their holdings, so, under the Mines Development Act, we have the machinery necessary to assist the development of mining. I doubt if the Government can do more than finance the assistance which the farmers will need; and that, I think, should be the Government's first consideration. If they have money over after assisting the farmers, and can assist other industries, then they may well do it. One thing that occurs to me is that if jarrah sleepers cannot be exported they might be cut for stock. Having been cut, they would certainly improve by keeping. Again, the Government might erect two or three small saw mills in the York gum district to cut felloes and spokes for wagon wheels. Assuming that the Government have money to assist other industries besides the agricultural, they might well take steps in that direction. It would mean utilising the timber, and there would be considerable advantage to the people buying the manufactured articles. Further, in making advances to these industries, we should be keeping

employment going, while we should be running very little risk. It appears to me, however, that it will be a matter of great difficulty for the Minister to advance in the case of these other industries against anything but the marketable article. Further, it would be entirely out of the question for the Minister to attempt in these cases to advance anything like the full value of the article. I doubt whether the Minister will be able to do more than help the farmer; but, if he is able, let him help other industries. I say again that we are not justified in legislating for mining development, since, under the Mines Development Act, the Minister already has the necessary authority. Another objection which might well be taken to this measure is that it wears an air of purpose. The Minister is trying to persuade us that this is a temporary measure, and that when there is no further need to assist the farmers he will disband the Board and cancel the measure. It would be wrong, I think, to imagine for one moment that in regard to this Bill we can take the Minister's mere word as to its duration. The Board, I venture to say, will live just as long as the Government have any need for it. When we consider carefully the provisions of the Bill we may freely admit, at all events to ourselves, that the measure is intended to live for a very considerable time. I am of opinion that if this Bill does become law, it should have a determining date—a date not later than some time during the present year. The measure asks us to interfere with the ordinary course of business. That is a dangerous proceeding, and a particularly dangerous one when it is remembered that the effect of the Bill will be to destroy credit. If the measure as it now stands becomes law, most assuredly the farmer will not get credit from banking institutions, because they would not be safe for a moment.

Mr. Heitmann: And yet, in the next breath, you will ask the Government to do business under the same conditions! You say the Government should not take the first mortgage.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I have no objection to their doing so where no mortgage already exists; but I do object to the Government making their claims rank before registered mortgages, and I believe every right thinking man in this House will join with me in protesting against the Minister's proposal.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Except as regards the crops.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Except as regards the crops, of course, and as regards anything supplied to the farmer. We have to remember that in destroying credit we shall make the carrying on of this and other industries almost impossible. How much more is the credit that is granted to our industries worth than any money that can be supplied by the Government! Hundreds of thousands of pounds of credit are given every year.

Mr. Heitmann: What has made this Bill necessary, then? Where is all the credit now?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Government destroy credit they will have to assist very much more freely than they now propose. I desire especially to point out that under this Bill advances may be granted for the purpose of paying Government accounts, land rents, rates and taxes, water rates, for machinery already supplied by the Government or to be supplied in future by them, and any existing claims of the Government for seed wheat and fertiliser. All such claims of the Government will rank even before a registered mortgage. In my opinion the House is not entitled to say that the Government should hold such a position.

Mr. James Gardiner: Are not rents part of the purchase money of land?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Rents may be part of the purchase money.

Mr. James Gardiner: They are. It is not a question of "may be"; they are. In fact they are not rent, but part of the purchase money.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes; in most cases that is so. In the case of repurchased lands the rent, however, is not purchase money. Still, why should the Government have the right to take

their water rates, or payment for agricultural machinery prior to payment being made to the man who has already assisted in the development of the holding? It is to be remembered that in many cases the security held over the land is in respect of money actually paid to the farmer.

Mr. James Gardiner: Let me clearly understand you. Do you mean that the Government shall take all the risk, leaving the security of the other people intact? Is that your contention?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not know that I understand what the hon. member himself means. Apparently, he means that the Government should under this measure be empowered to take security in respect of anything they have advanced in the past, or may advance in the future, and that, in taking such security, they are to rank before the man who has already advanced under mortgage. I do not think that would be at all fair. It is now for the House to say whether the Government are to lend money for the purpose of getting in this year's crop; whether they are to advance under lien over the crop, as the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) knows is done in many cases now by such firms as Dalgety & Co., for example. There is now a great deal of money advanced on the security, really, of the crop.

Mr. James Gardiner: The South Australian Act is, to a great extent, on all fours with this Bill.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That may be so. I have no knowledge of the South Australian Act, but I do know that if the credit of our people is to be maintained, if financial institutions are to be encouraged to lend money on the security of our broad acres, then their claims under mortgage must be absolutely respected. I will show the Minister in a few moments how much it is proposed to do to assist these people. I object to the Government ignoring the fact that cash has been already lent, more even than is proposed under the Bill. What right, then, have the Government to come in before the man who has already loaned his money?

Mr. James Gardiner: Which is the better, to let the farm lie idle or add the additional cost to his mortgage?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This money to be advanced is not merely for seed wheat and fertiliser, but is for all sorts of purposes. The Government are to be made absolutely safe. They have some contingent liabilities in connection with the farms, and they propose that these shall all be taken at the expense, not of the man who owns the land, but of the man who has loaned the money. Is it not right that we should continue to encourage the man who is lending assistance, together with him who is working the land? Would it pay the State, or the farmer, or the Government, to make advancement against broad acres a risky investment? Of course it would not pay. The Government must take some risk. In getting an absolute lien over the crop sown they will be perfectly well secured. Apart from helping the farmer, we assume the Bill is necessary to enable a decent area to be put under crop. The country is suffering a depression to-day, but it will be a thousand times worse if the crops are not put in next year. We have to meet extraordinary circumstances by extraordinary action. We must take the responsibility, and I hope hon. members, when they are facing their responsibilities in this connection, will see to it that they are not too exacting in the matter of security. The Minister was very emphatic on the point of security, and declared he would not advance unless he got the first mortgage. It must be remembered, too, that the Minister can supply all sorts of things. In addition to seed wheat and fertilisers he can supply machinery and horses, and anything else that is required. Imagine the case of a man who has advanced £1,000 against some of the existing plant. The Minister could advance for the purchase of horses and machinery and seed wheat, and if the crop happened to be a failure, the man who had previously advanced would be bound to lose. The Government would be the last to lose, because the last to advance. Of course, if these people were nearly all customers of the Agricultural

Bank, it would be different, but I know a great number of those farmers have been helped by outside people and I want these people to continue to advance. This, however, will not obtain if the security already held by mortgagees is to be placed in jeopardy.

Mr. James Gardiner: Do you not think that if the mortgagee refused to assist, and if the Government also refused, there would be a terrible depression in the value of the security?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not know that there would be. Even a farm lying uncropped this year would be saleable again next year. There are, of course, one or two instances of land rapidly going back, especially in the South-West. However, if I had a mortgage I would rather take that risk than allow the Minister to come in before me. I regard credit as being of the utmost importance to the farmer; indeed, I do not see how the farmer can continue on his holding unless he gets the necessary credit. I approve entirely of the proposed cancellation of contracts made before the 1st October for the sale of the product of the farm, but I think the cancellation must extend to all concerned. Nothing short of a general cancellation of contracts will suffice. I think, too, when we remember the special circumstances, we should have no hesitation in cancelling those contracts. Before October a great many people sold their wheat, unwisely it is true, but in accordance with the usual practice, not knowing what they were to get. I believe it would be better to cancel the contracts altogether and leave everyone just as he was before. In these unusual times no one can expect a very great profit.

Mr. James Gardiner: Were not a number of those contracts made long before October?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes. I would include all made before October. But the Minister says that the farmer may go to the court for relief, and the court may relieve him to the extent which he is unable to supply, but if he can supply he must supply. That would be sound enough if the conditions were normal.

Mr. James Gardiner: Is it not rather inequitable to cancel?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, but we must afford relief where relief is necessary. If the contracts are to be cancelled at all it may as well be done in a satisfactory manner, and nothing short of a general cancellation will prove satisfactory. The Minister said wheat had gone up. Perhaps he thinks I have sold wheat. I have done nothing of the sort.

The Minister for Lands: But you are making a special plea for those who have wheat and should supply, because you are arguing that they should get the increased value instead of the other fellow getting it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It has been bought and sold right through to the baker. If we make the farmer deliver a portion of his wheat at the lower price, we will have to make the merchant deliver to at least that extent to the miller, and the miller to deliver to at least that extent to the baker. How is the proportion to be arrived at? Many difficulties will surround anything short of a general cancellation. The man at the end of the line, the baker, who is entitled to get cheap flour from cheap wheat, will not get it. I think the financial clauses in the Bill are bad. Parliament would certainly lose control if the Minister were allowed to set up a continuous fund from which he could draw any money he decides to advance. In regard to regulations, there is the same old trouble. It is provided that both Houses of Parliament must disapprove of regulations made by the Minister. Obviously, it should read that regulations disapproved of by one House shall be disallowed. I approve heartily of the clause which provides that the registration of liens and mortgages, or other charges, shall be made without cost to the farmer for registration or stamp duty. These fees press heavily on the farmer. I think, however, the registration should be made in the usual way, and that the Registrar of Titles should be used to set up registration against a lien. It would be altogether unsatisfactory to depend upon a record kept in one department of the advances made. I am satisfied we

cannot do better than keep our industries going. I want to assist the Minister to this end, but I think we would be unwise in legislating as the Bill proposes. We must remember that apart from money advanced under mortgage by the Agricultural Bank and other money lenders, private people have provided at least £20 of credit for every pound provided by the Government. In the year 1912 1,200,000 acres produced in crop the very satisfactory sum of three millions of money, and this is apart altogether from stock, wool, and other small adjuncts of the farm. If we can get put in that amount next year it will probably realise five millions of money, with the price that we are likely to get for the produce. I hope that the Minister when he is advancing will remember that this sum is likely to be realised by the farmers, and that it is possible for him to get a lien over the crop and a first charge against anything produced. I do not wish for a moment to infer that he will have the right to call any part that he chooses of this five million pounds. It has been proved by the experience of 1912 that our land is capable of producing even under very lax methods of cultivation, such a satisfactory amount as I have mentioned, which gives an average of about £2 10s. per acre. I want to remind hon. members that two months from to-day the seeding operations must be under way. If we are to set up the new board with a staff of inspectors we shall be doing something which will be fatal to the wishes of the House, and close inquiry into every case will be impossible.

The Minister for Works: Close inquiry has already been going on in this connection.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I notice in the Bill that there is provision under which the farmer may be brought down to confront the board. Inquiry may have been going on for months, but not such inquiry as to determine the assistance that it is proposed to give. Unless a broad and general scheme is adopted and an established department is used, much of the land will, I am certain, lie idle. We

have to remember also that the State's revenue will suffer very considerably if the land is not cropped. We must remember that if the land lies idle and we produce less wealth we shall make employment even more difficult than it is to-day. We must remember that the interests of every section of the community will be served if as much of the land as possible is put under crop. There is no workman in the State who will not have opportunity given to him to work by the assistance of the board to the man on the land. Every storekeeper and business man and the Government itself will, I hope, directly or indirectly, reap advantage by this policy of assistance. The Government should at any rate realise that this is no time for a halting policy. The future of the State is to some extent in the balance, because farmers even with the help of the board, will take many years to recover from their present losses. Parliament has of course the right to say what has to be done, and members should say in no uncertain voice what their desires are in connection with this matter. I would like to suggest that this Bill should be sent to the select committee. I believe that the Bill would more speedily become law if that course were followed. If we had a select committee to go into the matter and suggest amendments, I think that we would be acting wisely. In this connection there is so much information that can be given by hon. members that a select committee could go through the work in a very short time indeed. When we get into Committee I propose to move an amendment to Clause 23. I will read the amendment if I may. This amendment is in regard to contracts, and I want to have no uncertainty about the attitude we should take up. I am going to move to strike out Clause 23 and to insert in lieu the following words :—

No action or other proceeding shall be brought or continued against any person for the performance of any contract before the first day of October, 1914, for the sale of wheat or any product of wheat or hay or chaff,

and for the recovery of damages for the breach of any such contract, and the provisions of this section shall be sufficient defence to any such action, whether commenced before or after the passing of this Act.

I have already dealt at some length with this clause, and I do not propose to say anything further in connection with it. To-day a circular issued by the National Bank has come into my hands, and from this circular it would appear that the fear of the Minister for Lands that the banks are not going to assist is ill-founded. I do not propose to read the circular to-night, but I hope it will be read by some hon. member before the debate closes. It is a very interesting circular and shows that the Minister was quite wrong when he supposed that our financial houses were not in sympathy with the farmers. The circular, to my mind, sets up a most generous attempt in the way of assisting farmers, and I think the House should recognise that our financial institutions are more than willing to take their share of the burden. I am not going to say anything more upon the measure now. When we get into Committee I shall endeavour to have the Bill more materially altered. There can be no gainsaying the fact that the Bill is not what we want, and I think we may have some doubt as to whether under the provisions of the Bill assistance will reach our farmers in time to enable them to do their work in connection with cropping. We must see to it that the Bill does not destroy any of that credit which is so useful to many of our people to-day.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER (Irwin) [10.53]: I do not propose to say very much at the present juncture on the merits or demerits of the Bill. I have never known of an occasion where there have been so many knotty points as I find in this Bill. We have had them practically for breakfast, for dinner, and for tea, and we know the various phases from both sides of the many subjects that this Bill is intended to deal with. I do say, however, that I think this is an honest attempt to grapple with a very difficult

problem. It is an honest attempt to give relief to the settlers who have been affected by the recent drought and previous droughts, and who were placed in a position to-day, when unfortunately they are not only without the wherewithal to meet their engagements, but in many instances without the wherewithal to buy the very commonest necessities of life. In these circumstances one does not want to be hypercritical. One rather wants to look at the strong spirit underlying the measure and the desire of the measure to give legitimate and honest relief. I am one of those who honestly believes that where the Government go out to give relief and recognise their responsibility they should not suffer to any greater extent than the private individual. I think, therefore, that where they have got to take a reasonable security themselves, this as a business House has a right to realise that position and to say that we do realise that owing to the locations in which many of these men are settled we are going to take a risk. As far as possible those administering this measure have a right to make some provision and some safeguard against that risk. We know the difficulties confronting these people. We are beginning to realise that, with the present cost of necessities of life and the prices that are being obtained to day, it is going to be a difficult thing indeed for the farmers of this State to make any headway even with the assistance given by the Government and that at 6 per cent. I venture to say if we go carefully into the question that we will find it is probably going to cost a man something like 45s. an acre to put his crop in, without his own labour. There are grave doubts on the part of these people as to whether or not we are not going to get the supplies to meet the demands that are being made by them upon the Government. I think the hon. member for Northam unduly laboured some of the points. The question of the mortgagee and the question of the man who has advanced money against this man, and the question of the banking institutions who have first security, is one with which I am very well acquainted, because I ven-

ture to say that I have lent more money on agricultural land in this State during the last two years than probably any other man in it. Whilst, therefore, I want to see the mortgagee absolutely protected as far as possible, if he is not prepared to assist that settler and the Government come along and take the responsibility and keep that security alive, at least the Government ought to be protected, for, if the thing is a certainty, as the hon. member for Northam says, then there is no risk at all. The first person, the mortgagee, is taking little or no risk whatever. If, on the other hand, he is prepared to say "I am going to stand on my security, you can get off my land lock, stock, and barrel," I venture to tell him that the depreciation on his securities is going to make a vast deal of difference to him. That is the position, and that is what the Bill, I think, is trying to recognise because it is practically on all-fours with the South Australian Act. We come to several knotty questions here, and there is one thing that strikes me very pointedly. I think the Minister will realise it. It is this. I do not see how on earth some of these people who receive assistance are ever going to pay the freight on the goods. We make provision for certain things here, but I think the Minister will have to take into consideration the paying of the freight on these things, even if he has to charge six per cent. for it. I honestly assure the Minister that there will be hundreds of men who will find it utterly impossible to pay freight.

The Minister for Lands: We recognise that. When we advance seed wheat it will be given to the farmer either at his farm or at the nearest siding.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: That is the point that quite a number of people have brought up. I have been saying to them that I am certain the Government will fix it up for them.

The Minister for Lands: We recognise that, and that those we are assisting have not got a shilling.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I think you are quite right in that position. There is one provision in the Bill that will create a very difficult position for the leader of

the Opposition and myself—both of us have looked upon a contract as being something very sacred indeed. We as business men say that if a contract has been entered into, whether rightly or wrongly, it must be adhered to. If it is in our favour well and good, and if it is against us the contrary must be the case. That I think is the guiding principle of contracts throughout the world, but there is always one thing that overrides even a contract, and that is an act of God. Where an act of God has prevented a man supplying that which he has contracted to supply, I venture to say no reasonable business man will consider that there is anything dishonourable in the cancellation of that contract. But if I have entered into a contract to supply, and I have the goods, then I say, by all the laws of honour, I have the right to supply, even if it costs me my coat to do it. It is one of the most difficult problems we have been up against. We have a man who is honest and upright and who believes that if it costs him the last shilling he will keep his contract, but there is another class who will say, "We want the Government to relieve us of this contract in order that we may benefit to the extent of 3s. or 4s. a bushel on wheat. On the question of rents and their payment, we are up against another peculiar proposition, because it looks to me as if, unless there is a specified term over which these rents should apply, we require a considerable sum in order to pay these rents to the Government to keep the properties from being forfeited. Here again the Minister for Lands will come somewhere in accord with the leader of the Opposition, because, if we are paying these rents, we are paying them in cash. If they are paid, the man who pays has to add six per cent. The leader of the Opposition says that it ought not to be charged. After all, I think we are mixing this issue when we call these payments rent. They are part and parcel of the purchase money; they are not rent. There is this reason in what the leader of the Opposition says, and it is provided for in the Bill, that if I bought a piece of land and went behind in the

purchase money, I should expect to have to pay interest. We are penalising the farmer right up to his very limit, and if we are going to do that, then we are taking some risk in the amount of assistance we shall give him. I would like it to be more clearly understood that behind this Bill is a desire on behalf of the Government to see how many acres can possibly be put under crop this year. Just see what the Canadian Government have done, and in New Zealand the Government are importing Canadian wheat at 6s. 3d. and selling it to the farmers at 5s. 9d., making a loss of 6d. per bushel. When we also see what India is doing, and that every nation that can produce wheat is giving every possible encouragement to that production, and with the knowledge that wheat next year must bring a fairly good price, I say, as a national question, we may take some little extra risk in order to get a big area under crop this year. And do not let us be too particular as to how it is put in. I have the greatest sympathy with the Board who say that they want to see the land properly cultivated. So we do, but the present is not the time to preach high-class cultivation. I go further and say that I think there were six hundred or seven hundred thousand acres last year which did not produce a bushel of wheat. I have had experiments made and I am talking with some knowledge. There is not the slightest necessity to fallow that land this year. With a cultivator put over that there is a seed bed made which will satisfy even my friend Mr. Sutton. In addition, much of that land is carrying the manure of last year and there is going to be a big saving in the amount of super which will be necessary to produce a crop there this year. That is the position. The success of this State is interwoven with the success of the primary producer for whom we have built railways, and a failure of the crops means not only the failure of the earning power of the railways, it means the failure of the earning power of almost everybody interested in all the works of the State, primary and secondary. So that when



we are giving this assistance to the farmer, taking, as the Minister for Lands is doing, a great risk in those places where men are on country with a questionable rainfall, however good the season may be, unless we are going to have a phenomenal season throughout the country, there is going to be a risk taken by the Government in making advances to those men out back. But we have to remember that in taking that risk the Government are keeping or trying to keep their securities good, because the Agricultural Bank has advanced those securities, and unless there is production the Agricultural Bank security will depreciate more than it costs to keep the men there. When the Bill is in Committee, I shall probably have something more to say, but I realise and recognise that the Bill is one desired to attain the ends that we are fighting for, and that is relief to the agriculturist. I also believe that the measure has been conceived in the highest spirit and that it has behind it the desire of the Government to follow the example of South Australia. Objections have been taken to the question of freehold and taking away a man's security, but in South Australia where a similar position obtains, not one word was raised in objection. Wheat in South Australia was not held by the merchants, but 70 per cent. of it was held by the farmers themselves, and in South Australia, too, there was no objection to that clause providing that State advances should take precedence over another man's security. Under the circumstances I trust that the Bill will speedily become law, for this simple reason. Do not let us imagine that the measure of relief is about to be started after this Bill has passed. The measure of relief has already started. I know that from the settlers along the Midland railway certain notifications have been received. When I think of the song that is being made about first mortgages, I am moved to remark that the Midland Company, after conference with the Premier, said to the Government, "Whatever else there is advanced on the land shall take precedence of the Midland Company's claims." The Mid-

land Company took this course because it realised, as every mortgagee must realise, that without the assistance of the Government the company would have to put its hand very deeply into its pocket. Without further Government assistance, a number of us may be called upon to dip our hands very deeply into our pockets at a time when possibly we cannot raise any money.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Without Government assistance, existing mortgages would not be worth much.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The Midland Company has realised that. Whatever help the Country party can give the Government, whatever advice or information we can afford to the board, will be available. I have no definite knowledge on the point, but I think it probable that Mr. Paterson will be at the head of the board; and Ministers can rely upon our furnishing that gentleman with absolutely the best advice and information at our disposal. I recognise that there are, and always must be, cases where no sensible man would grant assistance, because to do so would only be taking an unnecessary risk while in no way benefiting the settler. We are hitting against such cases every day, and consequently we realise that there must be good, solid, sound reason behind this measure. Reasonable security must absolutely be afforded to the Government. There must be reasonable security for the Government, because the Government are taking the risk. And it is this consideration that makes me feel annoyance at the prices of foodstuffs to-day—at the prices to which foodstuffs are being run up. If the Government of the State had said "We are not going to assist the settlers," then I venture to say the prices of wheat and chaff would not be anything like what they are to-day.

The Premier: That is quite certain.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: It is the mere fact of the Government stepping in, actuated by a spirit of patriotism and a desire to see that at the present juncture the people shall receive every consideration, which is sending the prices up; and I have no sympathy with the

man who, under prevailing circumstances, having a little to sell wants to ensure that he shall be permitted to see how high he can force the figure at which the other man has to buy. That is all I have to say.

The Premier: I wish you would deliver that speech in the Council. It would do much good there.

On motion by Mr. Thomson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 11.14 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 14th January, 1915.*

	PAGE
Questions: Fremantle Harbour Trust report ..	639
Subsidies to Municipalities .. ..	639
Leave of absence .. ..	639
Papers presented .. ..	639
Bills: Local Option Vote Continuance, 3B. ..	639
Industries Assistance Board, 2B., Com. ..	639

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

### QUESTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST REPORT.

Mr. CARPENTER asked the Premier: When will the report of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners for the year ending in June last be laid on the Table of the House?

The PREMIER replied: The report is at present with the Printer, and should be available early next week.

### QUESTION—SUBSIDIES TO MUNICIPALITIES.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that, by the amalgamation of the municipalities

of North Perth and Leederville with Perth, under the existing payment of municipal subsidy regulations Perth will be penalised in the amount of the subsidies now receivable by North Perth and Leederville municipalities? 2, Will he immediately take steps to alter these regulations, so as to obviate this injustice to the city of Perth, so as to provide that the city of Perth shall receive not less than the amount of Government subsidy that would have been payable to the three municipalities if the amalgamation had not taken place? 3, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, The question will receive consideration. 3, Answered by No. 2.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. GILCHRIST (for Mr. Male) leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. George on the ground of ill-health.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands: Report of the Board of re-classification of Poison Lands. (Ordered on motion by Mr. E. B. Johnston.)

By the Minister for Works: Regulations under "The Workers' Homes Acts, 1911, 1912, and 1914"—Amendment to Schedule.

[*The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*]

### BILL—LOCAL OPTION VOTE CONTINUANCE.

Read a third time and *passed*.

### BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BOARD.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day. Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.38]: In common with a good many in the agricultural districts, I have been waiting for this Bill with a great deal of anxiety, re-