

# Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 27th January, 1915.

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

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Education: University Statute.

By the Honorary Minister: Fremantle Harbour Trust, annual report for year ended 30th June, 1914.

## QUESTION—TRAMWAYS ELECTRIC POWER STATION.

### Extension and Penny Sections.

Mr. SMITH asked the Premier: 1, When does he expect the new electric power station to be handed over completed? 2, Is the department taking steps to have the necessary extensions to the system finished at the same time? 3, If so, will the Premier indicate the proposed extensions? 4, Will the extra rolling stock be ready to cope with the increased traffic? 5, May the tram users look forward to the introduction of penny sections when the new service is established?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Owing to delay occasioned by the war, it is not expected that the new Power Station will be completed before June, 1916, but

it is hoped that sufficient plant will be installed by the end of the present year to enable current to be supplied. 2, Owing to the state of the finances and the inability of the present power house to supply any additional current, it has not been possible to proceed with any extension save that along Mounts Bay road. 3, See answer to No. 2. 4, The provision of additional cars is now receiving attention. 5, The question of fares generally will be reviewed as soon as additional power and rolling stock are available. The Government, however, announced its intention to introduce penny sections and other alterations in fares, etc., long before the hon. member made this the first plank in his platform.

## QUESTION—EDUCATION, HEAD TEACHERS AND ASSISTANTS.

Mr. SMITH asked the Minister for Education: 1, How many transfers of (a) head teachers and (b) assistants were made during the recent Christmas vacation? 2, How many in each division (a and b) were notified of their transfers prior to the commencement of the vacation? 3, How many head teachers and assistants are employed at the present date?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, (a) 159; (b) 209. 2, (a) 59; (b) 56. 3, Head teachers, 595; assistants, 731. In a very large number of cases transfers depend upon the classification of the schools and the classification of the teachers. Until the final figures of the attendance are received for the year, the reclassification of the schools cannot be completed, and until the final inspectors' reports are received the reclassification of teachers cannot be completed. It is therefore in most cases impossible to give notice of transfer before the end of the term.

## QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL LAND TAXATION.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, In view of the partial failure of

crops this harvest, does the Commissioner of Taxation intend to reduce the valuations of agricultural land for the purpose of land taxation, in those districts that have suffered from the drought? 2, Will the Government have such a reduction made for this year, on a basis corresponding with the proved reduction of the productive capacity of the land, as evidenced by the returns for the past season?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The unimproved values of country land are based upon, among other things, the productive capacity of the land under normal conditions, and the Commissioner of Taxation does not intend to reduce such values because of the temporary abnormal conditions now prevailing. 2, See answer to Question 1.

#### QUESTION—HORSE RACING, LEGISLATIVE CONTROL.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce legislation for the purpose of controlling and reducing the number of race meetings held in the Metropolitan Area?

The PREMIER replied: It is not the intention of the Government to introduce such legislation this session.

#### QUESTION—GRAIN AND FOOD- STUFF BOARD, PERSONNEL.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, What remuneration is being paid to Mr. A. J. Monger, the President of the Farmers and Settlers' Association, for his services on the Grain and Foodstuff Board? 2, Why was not an experienced and practical farmer, with a knowledge of the conditions of the settlers in the dry wheat areas, appointed to this important Board?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Two guineas per sitting, with the regulation public service travelling allowance based on the assumption of a £750 per annum remuneration. 2, Mr. Monger amply fulfils the conditions mentioned. It was

agreed that each Party should nominate a representative on this Board, and Mr. Monger was the Country party's selection.

#### QUESTION—YILLIMINING- KONDININ RAILWAY.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, On what date is it expected that the Yillimining-Kondinin Railway will be handed over to the Working Railways Department? 2, How far is the telephone along this railway completed? 3, Cannot this section be opened for traffic at once? 4, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, End of February. 2, No mileage completed. 3 and 4, Answered by No. 2.

#### BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPOR- ATIONS ACT, AMENDMENT.

##### *Third Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle): I move—

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

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [4.41]: It is somewhat unusual, I admit, to speak on the third reading of a Bill; but my excuse in this instance is the importance of the measure we are passing. Owing to circumstances over which, unfortunately, I have no control, I was not present at yesterday's sitting of the House when an amendment to this Bill, which I had on the Notice Paper, was dealt with. The present is not the time to go into the question of amendments to a Bill; but in speaking to the third reading of this measure one can speak directly to the subject of amendment because the measure deals only with the question of amendment of the principal Act. I do not know whether the suggestion I offered was made clear to the Minister. I quite agree with the principle of the Bill. The principle is an excellent one, and I congratulate the Minister on having introduced the measure so as to establish control over the proportion

of the land which the building shall occupy as a whole. The principle is very good, and has my hearty support. My present object, however, is to point out defects in the measure which will prevent its object from being attained, or, if the Minister's end be attained, will cause the attainment to be at unnecessary expense to all parties concerned. All that is needed to make this an excellent measure is to give the municipal authorities power to make by-laws under this Bill. That power is at present wanting in the Bill; and unless that power is provided, the measure, when it becomes an Act, will prove so cumbersome as to be practically unworkable.

The Minister for Works: It is workable at the present time.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: If the Minister is open to reason, I wish to point out to him what the position is. His intention is simply to assist the municipal authorities in the direction mentioned by him when introducing the Bill. While, however, the Bill provides for a proportion of ground, and only a proportion of ground, being restricted to the building, it does not lay down what area of ground is to be used for buildings. Buildings are of all classes: house, office—

The Minister for Works: It is at the discretion of the Council.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Quite so. That is the very point. I submit the Bill is at fault in this respect, that it does not permit the councils individually to prescribe exactly what they want for each class of building, say, or what they want in a particular street. What happens under a measure of this kind is that plans are submitted. I speak now more particularly of the portion I represent pertaining to the City of Perth. The Perth City Council has a building surveyor, as have—

The Minister for Works: Strike out the appeal to the Minister, and you will suit the City of Perth right away.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The city of Perth has no objection whatever to the appeal to the Minister. Indeed, the appeal to the Minister is regarded

as more commonsense really than appeal to the court, because the matter of building is a technical matter, and the Minister has resources such as the advice of the Engineer-in-Chief, and, more especially, the advice of the chief architect, and therefore can decide such questions very much better than any court can. On the whole, I think, the appeal to the Minister represents a decided improvement; but it is to the first portion of the measure that I wish to address myself this afternoon. Under this measure an architect will not have the faintest idea as to what proportion of the land he might cover with the building. He might prepare a plan for a big block of offices worth several hundreds of pounds, and the council would not be in a position to tell him what proportion the building should bear to the land. Under section 335 of the Municipal Corporations Act, power is given to make by-laws to provide for light and air, but in this case the question is the proportion of ground which the building can occupy. The measure would be a good one if it provided for the councils making by-laws to carry out the principle, for their by-laws could then be published and every owner, engineer or architect, would know exactly what provision had to be made. In regard to the light and air by-laws, the Subiaco Council, for instance, stipulates that houses must be two feet from the boundary of the block. If a shop or other building is being erected, it can be taken right out to the boundary. In Perth houses must be kept four feet from the boundary, and in another municipality the provision is three feet.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: That is not so.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is so. The Minister should agree to give the councils power to make by-laws in this direction. I do not desire to delay the Bill. It will be possible to give effect to the measure if time and expense are not taken into consideration, but it might mean that half a dozen sets of plans will have to be prepared for a particular building. The Minister should look into the clause once more and if

he agrees with me, as I am certain he will do, the amendment should be made in another place, so that the Bill, which is a very good one, will be made workable.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

#### BILLS (7)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Church of England Lands.
- 2, Licensing Act Amendment Continuance.

*Passed.*

- 3, Lunacy Act Amendment.
- Returned to the Council with amendments.

- 4, Yillimining-Kondinin Railway Extension.

- 5, Pinjarra-Dwarda Railway Extension.

- 6, Katanning-Nyabing Railway Extension.

- 7, Boyanup-Busselton Railway Extension.

Transmitted to the Council.

#### BILL—DIVIDEND DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT.

*Report Stage.*

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [4.56]: I move—

*That the report of the Committee be adopted.*

I desire to explain that I have considered the question raised by the hon. member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) of amending Clause 5, and I propose to have made in another place an amendment which will maintain the principle of the clause and at the same time give effect to the suggestion of the hon. member. If it were done in this House by recommitment, the measure would have to be reprinted and it is my desire to avoid that.

Question passed.

#### BILLS (2)—RETURNED FROM THE COUNCIL.

- 1, Esperance Northwards Railway.
- 2, Postponement of Debts Act Amendment.

Without amendment.

#### MONEY BILLS, PROCEDURE.

*Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had appointed a select committee of five members to inquire into the procedure on Money Bills, with power to call for persons and papers and confer with a similar committee of the Assembly and report on Tuesday, 2nd February.

#### BILL—BLACKBOY AND ZAMIA PALM LICENSE.

Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Lands) and read a first time.

#### MOTION—EXPEDITIONARY FORCES AND GOVERNMENT EM- PLOYEES.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [5.0]: I move—

*That in the opinion of this House all employees of the State Government, inclusive of members of the Police force, whose commendable patriotism prompts them to volunteer for service in the expeditionary forces, should have permission to do so, and should have their positions kept for them pending their return.*

I regret that the Government have not made the motion a formal one. As they have not done so, I intend to be very brief in moving it, for two reasons, first because I realise that the Premier, the Government, the Opposition, the Country party, and all the members of the House are in accord with the wishes of the people of the State that the whole of the resources of the State should be at the disposal of the military authorities in the war that is unfortunately being waged. Secondly, I do not wish to be responsible for a controversial political debate on a matter affecting the war. The announcement was made through the Press when the war broke out that any Government employee who wished to do so had the right to enlist and that his position would be kept for him when the war

was over. Subsequently, it appears the Commissioner of Police came along and promulgated a regulation that has had the effect of preventing members of the police force from enlisting if they wish to do so. I may say this was not the case in the previous war that took place in South Africa. Members of the police force of Western Australia were then permitted to enlist and many distinguished themselves very much at the front, and it is only natural they should do so, when it is remembered that the police force are trained men. The House will remember quite lately the Premier told us that the reason he did not permit the payment of the difference between the military and state salaries to be made to civil servants who enlisted was because at the Premier's Conference the other states of Australia decided that that course should not be followed. The only exception was the State of New South Wales, there the Labour Government in power, I am glad to say, are paying the difference. The point I wish to make is this, that the Government are adopting a different attitude from that adopted by other State Governments in regard to the restriction on the enlistment of police officers. I have some letters here, which I would like to read. Here is one from the Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Office, Sydney, dated 29th December, 1914, which reads as follows :—

In reply to your letter of the 17th instant, seeking information as to the conditions under which members of the police force of this state are permitted to enlist in the expeditionary forces, I have the honour to inform you that the places of the members of the New South Wales police force who have joined the expeditionary forces will be available to them upon their return, and they will receive payment at a rate equal to the difference between their present pay as members of the police force and the pay allotted to them for military service by the Imperial or Federal Authorities. Should the military pay in any case exceed that received as a

State employee, no remuneration will be payable by the State.

I am glad to say that a great many private employers, in fact all private employers, as far as I know in this State, have given their employees absolute permission in this respect and are keeping their positions open for them when they come back.

Mr. Foley : Are they paying them while they are away ?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON : In some cases they are being paid full salaries and in other cases they are being paid the difference between the military pay and the usual salaries. Many of the banks are doing this ; the A.M.P. Society is paying full salary and other companies are paying the difference. I have a letter here from the Chief Secretary's Department of Victoria, and the Under Secretary writes as follows :—

With reference to your letter of the 17th instant, I am to inform you that members of the Police Force in this State are permitted to enlist in the Expeditionary Forces on the conditions that they resign, and, if still medically fit, be reinstated on return with former number and status in respect to seniority, etc.

The South Australian reply which I have is not quite on the same lines. The Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Office writes as follows :—

In reply to your letter of the 17th instant, I am directed by the Chief Secretary to inform you that on the outbreak of war two British Army Reservists, who were members of the Police Force of this State, were called upon to report themselves to the Military Authorities for duty and are being treated as on leave without pay. Only one other member of our Force has joined the Expeditionary Contingent and as he left his station and joined the contingent without permission he was required to resign his position in the Police Force. Members of the Police Force have not been encouraged to enlist in the Expeditionary Forces in consequence of the dislocation of the Department, but in the event of any others being

permitted to enlist they will be treated as on leave without pay.

Then I have a letter from the Chief Secretary's Department in Hobart, dated 13th January, reading as follows :—

I am instructed by the Honourable the Chief Secretary to inform you, in reply to your letter of the 17th inst., that members of the Police Force are permitted to enlist in the Expeditionary Forces. They are granted leave during their absence without pay.

So that members will see that in all the Eastern States from which I have been able to get replies the police are permitted to enlist if they wish to do so. I have only to point out that the police are trained men, their services are particularly desired, and many of these men have been very dissatisfied at being placed on a different footing by the Government to other State employees. I trust this motion will commend itself to the good sense of the House, particularly since the Premier said that he must fall in line with the other States in regard to the payment between the military and State pay. Since he is anxious to coincide with them in that respect I urge him to follow the example of the Eastern States and give the police here the same rights they have in the other States to enlist if they desire to do so.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [5.10]: I second the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [5.11]: I think the hon. member is quite correct in his statement that every member in this Chamber is desirous of rendering every facility to the military authorities in Australia for the purpose of protecting the Empire, and that we should allow all our resources for this purpose, but the hon. member seems to forget that there are certain responsibilities that devolve on us while the Government exists, inasmuch as we have at the present time a great number of alien subjects in Western Australia, and we have also quite a number of water supplies, barracks of different descriptions, magazines, conduits—there is the main pipe to Kalgoorlie—all of which require protection. We have to utilise all our

ordinary police force and to swear in quite a number of special constables—at present we have, I think, 30—to do these special duties. I want the hon. member and other members to appreciate the position. At the present time our police force is running at high pressure, and is short-handed, and the operations of the police force are of such a nature that we cannot put anybody on at a moment's notice and expect them to do justice to themselves, the department, and the public. They must have a certain amount of training. All the members of the police force have to pass through a probationary training, and if we allowed the members of the police force to join the expeditionary forces we should have to fall back on raw recruits, and we should find ourselves in chaos and in difficulties. We have to consider the position, as the Home authorities have to consider it to-day. Members of the police force in London are not permitted to join the forces there. It is a matter of life and death to the community. The authorities at Home have retained the police because there is required expert knowledge on the part of the police to protect the interests of the people at home, so that after all we cannot send all our resources to the front. There is a certain amount to be done at home, and it is being done well to-day by the police force, and we cannot guarantee that it shall continue to be done if we allow the best of our men to join the expeditionary forces. If there was a lack of recruits to join the expeditionary forces and we were up against the position that we required our last man, I do not think there would be found any objection on the part of the Government or Parliament to allow members of the police force to join the expeditionary forces. We have to remember our interests at home, and it is just as necessary that these interests should be protected as the sending of expeditionary forces away. It is not because we have a desire to be unfair to the members of the police force, but we consider their duty at the moment is at their posts at home. Under these circumstances, I do not see it reasonable to permit them to join the forces: we

cannot of course prevent them. Actually it is only a matter of giving them certain facilities to join the expeditionary forces.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You will not keep their positions.

The PREMIER: Because we cannot keep their positions. We have to train their successors, and we have to carry on the force according to the Police Act. A police constable cannot be removed at a moment's notice without consideration. There are so many difficulties surrounding this matter, but if a man desires to join the expeditionary forces we tell him that his first duty is to remain at home at his post. If the position arises and we consider it the duty of Western Australia to allow the men to join the expeditionary forces because of a dearth of recruits, the hon. member need not worry about the attitude the Government will adopt then, but there is no dearth of recruits. The military authorities are getting as many as they require, at any rate as many as they can equip, and they are equipping them. Why should we disorganise our own forces and perhaps bring about a certain amount of chaos here? It might be pointed out that the London metropolitan police were refused leave to go to the front on similar grounds, and there had to be engaged 30,000 special constables to serve the metropolitan area of London. Only recently, in a Home paper sent out by the Agent General, it was shown that the military authorities, where representations had been made by the railway companies, had also refused to accept men who had been engaged by these companies on the grounds—much the same as we are objecting to the police force going from here—that it is essential to keep the arteries of the country open to cope with the services that were demanded of them. Disorganisation would certainly follow if they were permitted to leave the railway service in any great numbers. Seeing that the military authorities there have adopted this attitude, and are making provision for protecting the interests of the country by preventing those men from joining who are in the employment of rail-

way companies, it would be absurd for us, unless it was a matter that was absolutely inevitable and we had come down to the last man, to allow our permanent men in the police force to leave the State. If we were to say, "If you join the Expeditionary force we will keep your positions open," probably they would go to the front. Hon. members must remember that if we have to swear in other constables and have to train them to their duties, when those whose places they are taking return to their positions, the special men who have been sworn in to fill the vacancies must get out. I do not think we are entitled to do that under the conditions prevailing at the present moment. Owing to the war conditions that are prevailing there is a greater demand on our police force than was hitherto the case. We have, indeed, had to swear in a number of special constables. In other branches of the civil service, however, owing to the war and other conditions, there is less demand upon the services of officers than was previously the case, with the result that our departments are able to spare these men who have volunteered, and we do not require to fill their positions. This, however, as I have pointed out, is not the case in regard to the police force. That is all I want to say by way of explanation. I do not want the hon. member who has moved this motion, or anyone else, to imagine that we have adopted this attitude out of hostility to the police force, or out of a desire to place any obstacle in the way of the military authorities obtaining all the men they require. But we have adopted this attitude out of a desire to have regard to our own forces at the same time. Where it has been possible we have been only too glad to render the assistance which the hon. member suggests. In this case, however, we say that it is not practical or fair, or just to the people of Western Australia, that we should practically deplete our police force unless occasion warrants it, and we consider that this action is not warranted at the present moment.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [5.18]: I think every hon. member will

agree with the generally expressed view that if our civil servants or employees of any description in the State volunteer to serve the Empire at the front with the sanction of the authorities their positions should be kept open for them on their return.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why should public employees have the pull over private employees? No positions are kept open for these.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. Minister does not know what he is talking about, as usual. He has not the slightest idea. He does not know what the private employer does. As a matter of fact the private employers are keeping billets open, and, in many instances, are paying a proportion of the salaries.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You are absolutely wrong.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: In many cases they are doing so.

Mr. Allen: One firm is paying the full salary for six months, and half salary subsequently.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If the hon. Minister would only get some definite information we should not find him labouring under these erroneous impressions.

The Premier: What guarantee does the private employee get?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): None.

The Premier: If he has a definite promise how is he to enforce it?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He gets something more definite than a guarantee in many instances. He is being paid a part of his salary.

The Premier: What recourse has he to enforce this promise?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The word of the firm is its bond, just as the word of the Government ought to be their bond.

The Premier: The word of the Government is that of the Executive Council, and that binds us.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If a private firm gives an undertaking to its employee that it will retain his position this promise is all that is required.

The Premier: Why, the firm may not be here when he gets back.

The Minister for Lands: They give promises, but they break them.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Will the Minister give one instance in which a promise of this sort has been broken?

The Minister for Lands: I will give two or three.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I will give two or three thousand.

The Premier: There were numerous instances in connection with the South African contingents.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not care what Ministers say. There are black sheep in every flock, and sometimes this applies to the Government themselves. One dishonest employer does not brand all other employers as dishonest. I will undertake that in 99 cases out of 100, firms of repute who pass their word on to their employees that when they return their positions will be kept open for them, keep these promises.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): What about the miners, the timber workers and others?

The Premier: Is there very much difference after all between the man who joins the Expeditionary Force and the man who is called up by the military authorities to do military duty for the time being?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There is a considerable difference. The man who is called out for military duty is only filling a temporary position.

The Premier: Should not his job be kept for him?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is kept for him in every case.

The Premier: Nothing of the sort. It is absolutely incorrect: scores of them could not go back to their work, and we have to feed them.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I know scores of young fellows who—

Mr. Foley: I could mention cases where this has not been so.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I know men who have gone out from their positions more than once and have gone back. That is not the point. The point is as to whether we can approve of a principle



that the Government at any rate should set an example to the other employers of labour in Western Australia and that they should say to any of their employees "If you are patriotic enough to go to the front, with our permission, we will see that your positions are kept open on your return." There is another point that makes it desirable that we should take that stand: that is the question of seniority, which does not apply to private employment, I admit, but it applies emphatically to the Government Departments. A man leaves a Government Department to go to the war, and he is, we will say, lucky enough to get back in two or three years, but when he gets back he finds that he has lost his seniority.

The Minister for Lands: That is guaranteed by Executive Council minute. You are trying to make out that the employee in private firms is as secure in his position as the civil servant.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I never draw comparisons. I only stated what private employers were doing. I cannot answer, of course, for every employer in Western Australia, but I know firms of repute that are dealing with their employees in the way I have stated. If it is absolutely detrimental to their undertakings, of course, they cannot be expected to do it, and they must ask their employees to remain. Numbers, however, are doing it, and are even contributing money to enable these men to go.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Have the navvies any guarantee that they will get their positions back?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: A navy has not a permanent job. How does the hon. Minister propose to protect the navvies?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I do not propose to do so.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The navy is engaged on a job which is by no means permanent, and he, therefore, has no security of employment.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): A navy will fight just as well as the best of your men.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not want to make invidious comparisons, but the Honorary Minister does. The highest in the land are sending their flesh and blood to fight, and they fight just as well as the lowest in the land. It is regrettable that the Honorary Minister should infer that there should be any comparison at all. All patriotic citizens of the Empire will go to the front and do the best they can, and many do it at a great sacrifice. I admit that there is plenty of men offering for service now. I do not say there is plenty of men in view of the Empire's needs, because I think the Empire needs every man who is fit to assist in bringing to a conclusion this terrible war which is now being waged. We are in fact training as many men as, I believe, we can equip and handle.

The Minister for Mines: There are more men coming forward than the military authorities can take.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There are as many as there can be found instructors for. It is not therefore a matter of urgency that the Government should permit members of the police force to leave their occupations, which are very important so far as we are concerned at this present juncture. If we were to pass a motion giving the general opinion of the House that all employees of the State Government—and "all employees" covers the police force—who with the permission of the military authorities volunteer and desire to go to the front will have their positions retained for them on their return, this would be a very proper thing to do. I have no desire to embarrass the Government at all, or to deplete our police force and the protection that is required within our own borders at the present time. There is plenty of work to perform. I know railway companies in Scotland whose servants had volunteered to such an extent that the operations of those railways were practically hung up, and they had to appeal to the authorities to refrain from accepting their employees as volunteers. In other walks of life the same thing has occurred. In clothing factories and coal mines and other in-

dustries they have had to limit their operations. It is just as essential that the Empire should keep its industries going as it is that it should send men to the front. Both are necessities. I would like to see the Premier accept a motion couched in general terms that will affirm and endorse the principle that the civil servants, when they do volunteer with the assent of the authorities, will be protected on their return to Western Australia. We have heard very much of unemployment. Indeed, when we opened Parliament we had a demonstration in front of Parliament House of some 300 strong. Many of them were young men, and I thought then it was a pity that we could not form them into a company and march them up to Black-Boy Hill for service.

Mr. Foley: A hundred of them have gone away since.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is a grand thing for those who are fit to take part in this great struggle. I hope the motion will not be discussed with the warmth that the Honorary Minister wishes to impart to it, and that the Premier will agree to some amendment in the general terms that I have suggested.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister—Pilbara) [5.29]: I do not desire to speak at any great length on this proposition, but merely to point out that the Government employee should take his chance with the ordinary private employee. We have read Kipling to the effect that it is—

Tommy here and Tommy there and  
Tommy run away;

But it's a "this red line of heroes" when  
the band begins to play.

It is a discredit to the Empire that we have never treated our regular soldiers as they should be treated, but when there is a war on the band begins to play and Tommy is a great man. All who go to the war should be treated alike, whether miner, navy, timber worker or a clerk in the Government employ. The members of our contingents are reasonably well paid, but a class that deserves much more consideration than the civil service

is that composed of workers who have come out to Australia and who are reservists in the British Army. Immediately the war broke out the British military authorities picked up hundreds of men from Western Australia who will go to the war on something like 10s. a week. They are reservists and have been called out of our timber country, our mines, our police force and even our football clubs. These men have no guarantee and no pay either, or only 1s. 2d. per day, whereas our men get 7s. and 1s. for reserves or, roughly 50s. a week and found—the best pay Australia has ever offered for ordinary labouring work. The Army reservist is treated contemptuously in time of peace, but in time of war he gets 1s. 2d. a day, and is compelled to go to the front. There is some extra allowance of 2d. or 3d. a day for his wife, and a similar allowance for his children, whereas the civil servant is well provided for. We are not looking at this question as we ought to. The navy will fight just as well at the front as the finest civil servant, in fact there is no difference between the two at the front. Therefore, why should there be any difference when they come home again?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: This motion includes the navy.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Nothing of the sort. Coming from the hon. member, I admit it must include a platitude or two, but it does not include the navy if he is working for the Government.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I particularly drafted it with that object in view.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Then you missed the object. The navy's claim expires at a moment's notice. He is not being attended to in the slightest degree, but those who have had the advantage of permanent employment all their lives are now to be catered for, while the casual who has had to battle all his life is to be again neglected. Therein lies my opposition to the motion. The one will not go without a guarantee that he will find his job ready on his return, but as for the casual, it is a case

of "Oh, let him go and be shot like a dog." As to the police, the department is undoubtedly short of men, and a duty to the Empire may be done as well at home as at the front. Take another phase of it: if we allow a large number of the police to go to the front, we must put other men in their places, and must train these other men, and so dislocate the whole service by letting the permanent officers go. When the war is over and those who went to the front return, the service must be again dislocated by the throwing out of those recently trained to re-admit those returned from the war. Such a proposition does not deserve the serious consideration of the House. Not only should the civil servant be looked after, but every man who goes to the front ought to have his share of attention, the navy as well as the civil servant.

The Premier: Whenever we permit a man to go we keep his position open for him.

Question put and passed.

#### MOTION—WHALING LICENSE, TO DISALLOW.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [5.38]: I move—

*That (1) the exclusive whaling license to the "Aktieselskabet Australia" be disallowed and, (2) a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the applications for the granting of exclusive licenses over the area, or portion of the area (previously reserved as a breeding ground) from Capé Lambert to the North-Eastern boundary of the State.*

I am doing this in an endeavour to bring about improved conditions in regard to the granting of these leases. Some time ago I took up this matter on information received, and I am now satisfied that the present method of administration in respect to these matters is not in the best interests of the State. There are several reasons why this license should not be granted. In the first place, the State is losing a considerable amount of revenue by not throwing open the leases to public

competition, while in the second place the area covered by the lease under consideration has been for many years past regarded as a breeding ground for whales. There is nothing on the files to show that any inspection has ever been made, the result of which would lead us to believe that it is not a breeding ground for whales, and that therefore it should be thrown open. I am not in a position to say whether or not it is a breeding ground for whales, but from information I have received, and from the result of personal inquiries made during the past two months, I am convinced that the fullest inquiry in this regard has not been made. But there are additional reasons why the license should not be granted. For instance, certain promises were made—and we all hold that a promise should be fulfilled. Again, here is the question of interference with those who have already pioneered the industry in this State. The first information I received in regard to this question was on or about the 6th November, 1914, when I was met by Mr. Stang, who is interested in this matter. I have known Mr. Stang for many years, and having heard his case, I concluded that there was certainly room for inquiry. I took from him a great deal of information dealing with the industry, practically from its inception. Having heard Mr. Stang, the first thing I did was to wait upon the Minister interested. On the following day, Saturday, I called on the Colonial Secretary, explained the position to him and urged him to conserve the best interests of the State by getting as much revenue as he could in return for the proposed concession. I used other information at the same interview and placed several matters before Mr. Drew, showing him the inadvisability of granting this concession in such a hurry. I reminded him that several applications had been made for this area in past years, a proof that the area was regarded as a valuable one. I mentioned that great efforts were then being made to secure possession of the area, and argued that there must be some good reason for it. I pointed out to him that if the area had become en-

banced in value the State should secure the whole advantage of that increased value. I had certain information in regard to a company fortunate enough to be successful with its application for this area. The files show exactly how much time was taken in considering that application, and what method was adopted. Representatives of the Australia Whaling Company, which has secured the concession, were on the West Australian coast some time ago. They left this coast and went to the East, and I believe that the present position of the company is not satisfactory.

Member: What authority have you for that statement?

Mr. HOLMAN: I will give you the authority; I am satisfied that it is practically correct.

Member: I am not.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not care if the hon. member is or is not. He may be like some others who are satisfied before they know any thing about it. That was one of the reasons why, in my opinion, it was wise to go into the whole question and have every inquiry made, in order to find out exactly where we were. We should not jeopardise the interests of the State because certain people were fortunate enough to have friends.

Mr. Heitmann: In what way were the interests of the State jeopardised?

Mr. HOLMAN: In the first instance by our not securing a fair financial return.

Member: We are securing more.

Mr. HOLMAN: I know we are; and in all probability, had I not made that visit, the concession would have been granted without further inquiry. I will probably come to that point later. This company came to this State some little time ago. They made application for a concession.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): No, for an exclusive license.

Mr. HOLMAN: An exclusive license. To my mind it is a concession. They applied for a concession held by another company but were not successful. It would be necessary to peruse the file, to go through a number of files, in order to get at the complete story. I endeavoured to get what information I could on this mat-

ter and to get some idea of the value of this company, as to what position they were in. From what I could find out, the company's position was not too good. If that were so, and I presume my information was correct, quite possibly this company endeavoured to get this special license so that they might be able to obtain financial assistance on the share market, or possibly for the purpose of trading that concession on to somebody else. There is ample information on the file to have a select committee on this matter.

Mr. Heitmann: You said the concession would probably be traded; would not the agreement prevent that?

Mr. HOLMAN: The agreement does not. So as to get the fullest information possible I got a gentleman who has taken a most active part in this matter to obtain for me information as regards this company. That was a point we wanted to get at. He cabled to Norway for certain information and he got this reply—

Company practise no fishing. Factory ship let out. Market value shares beginning year 35 per cent.; at present no buyers. Company has debt. Heard of liquidation.

That is 65 per cent. below par.

Hon. Frank Wilson: From where did that information come?

Mr. HOLMAN: From Mr. Stang, a barrister at home.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He is also an interested party.

Mr. HOLMAN: Of course he is; and we want to find out exactly whether this is correct. I advocate that this concession should not be granted at all.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Who moved you first?

Mr. HOLMAN: Mr. Stang; and the information I received is well worth getting further information on. It shows that the position of the company was not too good. Whether or not any value can be placed on that I, of course, am not in a position to say; but if this concession had been granted I believe, from this information which has been sent out, that the Australia Company would have been—

Member interjected.

Mr. HOLMAN: That is a matter of opinion which could be got at by inquiry. This information only came quite recently. I cannot vouch for it but give it to the Chamber just to show the possibility of this company having come here and got a concession for its own purposes.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The other companies got their concessions for their own purposes.

Mr. HOLMAN: If we find several companies, one, two, or more, coming after a certain concession, I maintain it is the duty of the State to get the best possible return they can for what they give away.

Member: Have the Government not got enough?

Mr. HOLMAN: In my opinion they have not. If the license had been put up to public tender they would have got considerably more than they are getting at the present time. The Australia Company called a meeting to be held on the 28th inst., and the subjects to be submitted to that meeting are: (1) The state of assets, (2) Chartering of vessels to others, (3) Whether the company shall commence whaling in Western Australia. I do not blame the Australia Company for getting the best terms they possibly can; but I think we in this State should not give away anything of value until we find out whether we have got the best possible terms or not. One most remarkable feature of this matter is that the representative of the Australia Company in this State was in a better position even than the Minister himself to know that the area was going to be thrown open. That to my mind is remarkable. The Minister, so late as the middle of October last, as shown on the file, stated definitely that the Government were not going to throw this area open at all. But Mr. Fallowfield came along with the information. I should like to know how this information came out.

The Minister for Mines: How did Mr. Stang get the information that the area was approved on the day after it had been approved?

Mr. HOLMAN: I cannot say, but probably the man who had the concession might have given out the information.

The Minister for Mines: No. The Minister received a letter from Mr. Stang the morning after.

Mr. HOLMAN: Quite possibly. In all probability the first man to know the concession was to be granted would be the applicant. That is another good reason why we should inquire and find out why this information was given out on both sides. To my mind a select committee is required in that direction, but not only in that direction but also in connection with the whole matter.

Mr. Hudson: If the select committee were appointed would you agree to the cancellation of all the licenses?

Mr. HOLMAN: As for the other licenses, so far as I am personally concerned I would not trouble my head in the slightest if the whole of the licenses were cancelled. That is a question for people in a better position than I am to decide. If a select committee recommended the cancellation of these licenses I would have no objection to their being cancelled. When I saw the Minister I asked him if the information was correct. He informed me that it was and that the papers were at the Crown Law Department, and would be put through Cabinet on the Monday. After I had given him the information I had I told the Minister I would like to see the papers. He replied that the papers were not there at his office but he would let me know on the following Monday if they were available and I could then see them. I asked him to ring me up, but that was not done. I placed before him facts which to my mind showed good reason why the concession should not be granted and told him that I proposed writing to Cabinet Ministers on the subject. Mr. Drew said he had no objection to my writing. Now let us take the letter I wrote on the 7th November in connection with this matter. It was sent to Mr. Drew, and also to the other members of the Cabinet. I put the case before them briefly as follows:—

It has come to my knowledge that it is the intention to grant a portion of the reserved area north of Cape Lambert to a Norwegian company for whal-

ing purposes. After continued refusals, covering several years, it is surprising to find this has been decided in a week or two, without in any way observing the promise of the department to grant consideration to other applicants. The full explanation would take too long to write, but I take this early opportunity to strongly protest against the granting of the whaling concession to the company, who, I believe, have, within the past week or two, applied for and, I am sorry to hear, had same approved of, despite all previous transactions. It is not possible, as previously stated, to dwell fully on the matter in a letter, but I have not the slightest hesitation in stating that the matter should be held over until every possible enquiry has been made. I therefore take this opportunity of urging: 1, That the State retain all rights over the waters from Cape Lambert to the north-eastern boundary of the State. 2, Failing this, to give priority, if the Government are anxious to give away immediate control, to the applicant who has the written promise of the department on more than one occasion that if at any time it was intended the area be thrown open, he should have priority of claim. It is only right and just that this should receive the consideration it merits. 3, But in view of the increasing value of the proposition and the fact that in the very near future the scarcity of whales in the areas throughout the present known fishing grounds will ensure a continual increase in value, there is no reason why the State should not receive the benefit. The finances are bad enough. If any financial benefit is to be derived the State should secure it and not hand it over to a company who have, to say the least, been fortunate in having their interests pushed forward in such a speedy manner.

The application made by this company was dated the 29th October, a Thursday. The matter was completely passed through by the 5th November; and the entire subject was to be submitted to Cabinet, as Mr. Drew himself states, on

the following Monday. Various matters cropped up, but at that time neither the rent nor the conditions had been fixed. In all probability one of the reasons why higher rental has been imposed is my drawing attention to the matter. This shows that the interests of the State were not considered sufficiently.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Whom are you blaming for it?

Mr. HOLMAN: The Colonial Secretary.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Blame the Government.

Mr. HOLMAN: The matter was pushed forward. As I stated in my letter, there are various considerations of vital importance to which attention should have been given before the concession was granted.

Mr. Heitmann: There are two statements made. You say that you mentioned the interests of the State, but the Colonial Secretary says you did not mention them until after those for whom you acted, had failed.

Mr. HOLMAN: That is absolutely incorrect. To show that my statements coincide, I will mention that I visited Mr. Drew on the Saturday, and that practically on the same day I wrote him that letter making to him the same application, namely, that the State should conserve the greatest advantage for itself, and that if there was any financial benefit to be secured the State should secure it. Further, I wrote to every other Cabinet Minister in the same sense. I met one Minister—the Attorney General—who said to me, "I received your letter, but have not had time to deal with it." He acknowledged it afterwards. In the course of that conversation I mentioned to Mr. Walker that to me this appeared to be a valuable proposition, and one that the State should retain. I have taken the same attitude all along, that if this area is to be granted at all, it should be granted to the people to whom certain promises were made. But there is another aspect of the matter. The statement has been made that this area is a breeding ground. No doubt, it may be urged that reports have been made on that

point. Up to the 29th October, the Colonial Secretary knew nothing about that aspect of the case. I maintain that if the Government intended to throw open the area, they should have thrown it open to public competition, and let those prepared to make the best return to the State have the area.

Mr. Heitmann: That is only a matter of opinion.

Mr. HOLMAN: True; and I am expressing my opinion.

The Premier: It is not provided for in the Act.

Mr. HOLMAN: The fact that it is not provided for in the Act is not a good reason for refraining from taking steps to effect it, or for refraining from seeing that the Act is altered so as to allow of such steps being taken. The position as regards a mining lease is altogether different. The first applicant for a mining lease secures it. In this instance the position is altogether different. For a fishery license there might be 20 applicants, and the very worst of the lot might be granted the area.

The Premier: But you object to any mining company taking more than one area?

Mr. HOLMAN: Certainly not.

The Premier: These three whaling companies are absolutely combined.

Mr. HOLMAN: The hon. gentleman may know that.

The Premier: Mr. Stang said so.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not think that is correct.

The Premier: The other day I received from him a cable stating that all the companies were acting together.

Mr. HOLMAN: I read that cablegram, and I do not think that is what the message stated. The message was in broken English.

The Premier: This is a combine.

Mr. HOLMAN: The companies may have combined for the sending out of material, or for putting their product on the market, or for the purchase of ships, in the same way as Bewick, Moreing & Co. act for perhaps a dozen or twenty mining companies—buying machinery and so forth. In that way these

three whaling companies may be acting together. So far as this particular whaling company is concerned, however, I have been informed, and I have reason to believe my information to be absolutely correct—if it is not it can be controverted very speedily—that these three companies are entirely distinct as regards their directorates and shareholders.

The Premier: You have generally been opposed to combines?

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes. I am always opposed to combines.

The Premier: This is a combine.

Mr. Heitmann: You are advocating a combine now.

Mr. HOLMAN: That is not so. I am advocating, and have from the very start advocated, that the State should retain the concession, that the State should not give it away on such terms.

Mr. S. Stubbs: The State should start a new industry, whaling. Are the Government going to keep that industry for themselves?

Mr. HOLMAN: Not under present conditions. But I maintain that the Government can do a great deal better than they have done under the proposed license.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The State Fish Stall might start the whaling industry.

Mr. HOLMAN: In all probability that may be done later. The Minister in his reply twitted me with writing to the other Cabinet Ministers, and said that it was an unusual procedure to adopt. But I myself practically arranged with the Colonial Secretary that I should write to the other Ministers. I arranged it when I was with him, and no dissent was expressed by him. He admits himself that this procedure was spoken of.

Mr. Heitmann: But there are two parties to an arrangement, you know.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Colonial Secretary knew I was going to take this course, although he did not say "Very well" when I mentioned the matter to him. Whether or not the Minister regarded the matter in the same way as I did myself, is an utterly immaterial point. In his letter to me, dated the 11th November, the Colonial Secretary says:—

Equally with every other member of Parliament, or even private citizen, you have an undoubted right to protest against any action of a Minister which you consider contrary to the public good; and on that score I make no complaint—not even at the somewhat unusual course you have adopted in circularising the whole of the members of the Cabinet on the question.

I considered it my duty to do so. I did not want to see the State lose what it had. In the same letter, addressed to me, the Minister himself writes—

You allege that one of the applicants who had a written promise of priority of claim did not receive the consideration merited. The files show that during my absence in connection with my electioneering campaign on May 6, 1912, a letter was written to Mr. Aug. Stang informing him that should the area Mr. C. Stang had applied for be thrown open it is considered reasonable that Mr. Stang should be given priority of claim.

The Minister denies that that is so. He denies that any promise was made. I have extracted from the files the minutes dealing with that phase of the matter, and I will read those extracts for the information of the House. Various applications were made for this area some time in 1912, and copies of these applications appear on the file. The Acting Under Secretary sent the following minute to the Chief Inspector of Fisheries—

I should be glad to discuss this matter, in view of the fact that other exclusive licenses have been granted in areas where the potentialities of such have not been definitely determined. If you subsequently recommend that the area in question be thrown open, would you advise that this application be given priority of claim in view of the date they applied for the license? (Initialled) J. R. C., A.U.S., 2nd May, 1912.

This was sent on to the Colonial Secretary with a minute as follows:—

I have discussed this matter with the Chief Inspector. The area applied for may be a breeding ground, and until the Chief Inspector makes further inquiry into the matter, he considers it very undesirable to grant a license. Should, at a later date, this area be thrown open, it would be fair to give the present applicant priority of claim. Shall we advise the applicant accordingly? (Initialled) J. R. C., A.U.S., 2nd May, 1912.

That is a minute.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Where is the justification for it?

Mr. HOLMAN: That is countersigned by the Minister, "Yes."

Hon. Frank Wilson: Who was the Minister then?

Mr. HOLMAN: The minute is signed "W. C. Angwin."

The Premier: But what did Mr. Drew say?

Mr. HOLMAN: I will read Mr. Drew's minute presently. Here is a letter written by the Colonial Secretary, a letter to Mr. August Stang—

In answer to your letter of the 19th ultimo, inquiring whether the Department is now prepared to deal with the application of Mr. C. Stang for an exclusive license of certain coastal waters for whale fishing purposes, I have the honour, by direction, to inform you that the Honourable the Minister is not prepared to further consider the application until the result of certain inquiries now being made is known. Should the area be thrown open, however, it is considered only reasonable that Mr. Stang should be given priority of claim, and I would suggest that you again communicate on the subject during September next.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What date is that?

Mr. HOLMAN: It is dated the 6th May, 1912.

The Minister for Mines: But that does not last for all time.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Who signed that?



Mr. HOLMAN: It is signed by the Acting Under Secretary. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, that letter promised priority of claim. Now, what is priority of claim?

The Premier: The first consideration.

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes; there is no doubt in the world about that. This letter promised the company that its claim should have priority over the claims of others. Hon. members will see exactly what has been done.

The Premier: But you are fighting against any claim at all being granted; so you cannot use that argument.

Mr. HOLMAN: Certainly, I have voted against the granting of any claim; but I am now dealing with the correspondence which passed between the Minister and myself, correspondence in which the Minister makes certain accusations against me. I admit what the Premier has interjected; but, at the same time, I expressed my desire that no one at all should get the concession.

The Premier: That is all right; but you have a double-barrelled gun, you know—either Stang or no one.

Mr. HOLMAN: I say, if the area is to be thrown open let the highest tenderer have it.

The Premier. Let Stang go there whaling if he wants to. We have no rights outside three miles.

Mr. HOLMAN: That is so.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The State has control only over territorial waters.

Mr. HOLMAN: Later, a letter was sent, signed by Mr. North.

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

Mr. HOLMAN: Before tea I was dealing with correspondence in connection with the promise of priority. I did so to show that I went to the Minister and merely placed the whole position before him, so that the matter could be fully considered. There were no further applications in this direction for some time afterwards. The correspondence with the Minister in reply to me stated that when throwing open the area the priority of claim would be borne in

mind. The Minister also stated that Mr. Stang's application was borne in mind, but was not granted. It might have been borne in mind, but after the promise had been made something further should have been done. I do not say for a moment that the area should have been granted, and I would oppose the granting of it to any person until full inquiry had been made. To show that matters had not been fixed up properly at this time, I would point out that the Minister said the whaling company would have to pay a higher rent. No rent had then been fixed, nor had any conditions been made. Still, the license was granted. The Minister went on to say in the concluding paragraph of his letter, after quoting my statement that the company had been fortunate in having their interests pushed forward in such a speedy manner—

In this sentence there is a skulking innuendo directed either at me or at my officers. Why not have the common manliness to drag it out, whatever it is, so that it may be examined and assessed at its true value?

When I waited on the Minister I explained the position fully to him, and the fact that so many issues were involved shows that my attitude was the correct one. There is no doubt regarding the speed with which matters were pushed on, but I maintain that before the license was granted the bona-fides of the company should have been inquired into, so as to ensure that the interests of the State would not be sacrificed. The fact that no rent was fixed at that time is shown by the information given by the Colonial Secretary on the file. It is quite possible that Mr. Fallowfield may have known before the letter was received that the area would be thrown open, and he may have known early in the proceedings that this license would be granted. The information might have been given out from those who were to get the license. But there was a definite statement from the Government that they would not throw the area open up to the middle of October. There is nothing on the file to

show that any definite information had been received to prove that the area did not comprise the breeding grounds for the whales. I maintain that the first care should have been to see that the State obtained a full return for the area. In my reply to the Minister on the 16th November I told him that in dealing with questions of a public nature, it might be necessary to take what he termed an unusual course to protect the interests of the State or prevent an injustice being done. I have explained the question of the papers. The Minister should have telephoned me to say that they were available. This, I am sure, was the impression when I left his office. The Minister admitted that he promised I should see the papers, and I was waiting to receive notice from him that they were available. The Minister went on to state—

I am most anxious that the truth should be placed before the public, and that the garbled version of the matter which is now being diligently circulated in the corridors of Parliament House should receive its death-blow.

That was a skulking innuendo that I was circulating information in the corridors of this House in order to endeavour to do harm. I had not been near Parliament House for five or six weeks prior to that, nor had I spoken to any member of Parliament, outside of a brief conversation I had with the Attorney General. One day we met in the street, but I do not think more than a dozen or twenty words passed between us. This statement by the Colonial Secretary is unfair to me, because neither before nor since had I spoken to any member of Parliament in connection with this matter. Only when the correspondence appeared in the Press did I discuss the matter with any members. The whole of my efforts were directed towards doing all I could to protect the interests of the State, and to see that we obtained the best possible return for the license. I replied to the Minister's letter in a strain which I would not hesitate to adopt again under similar circumstances.

The letters, however, have been published in the Press, and it is not necessary to quote them again. One or two matters, however, require explanation. The statements I made at that time have since been amply borne out and proved to be absolutely correct.

[*The Deputy Speaker (Mr. McDowall) took the Chair.*]

Mr. HOLMAN: During the whole of the correspondence, the Colonial Secretary persisted in misquoting my letters, and on every occasion endeavoured to show that I desired to secure the concession for Mr. Stang, whereas my only consideration and desire was not to have the area thrown open until the fullest possible inquiry had been made to ensure that we would not disturb the breeding grounds of the whales, and that the State received the highest possible return for the concession. The files are on the Table of the House, together with some minutes dealing with the matter. In file No. 2817 the question of monopoly is dealt with by the Under-Secretary. The question had then cropped up as to whether there was a monopoly, but the most important papers on that file are those minutes from the Chief Inspector of Fisheries. I do not know Mr. Aldrich; I do not remember ever having met him, but from what I have heard I believe he has a fair knowledge of the industry and is a very good man for the position he occupies. Writing in connection with this area on the 16th December, 1911—I will quote only his reference to the probability of this being the breeding ground of whales—he stated—

Whilst I have every desire to encourage whale fishing in the coastal waters of Western Australia, and, further than that, favour the operations being carried on under the terms of an exclusive license, I do not at the present time feel disposed to recommend the granting of this or any other exclusive license for the exceedingly large and practically unknown area embraced in this application, until steps have been taken to ascertain its

possibilities and value as a whale fishery.

Then he continued—

As previously stated, I cannot at the present time recommend the granting of this exclusive license; but should this concern be desirous of going further into the matter at a later date I would be pleased again to review the position.

That is signed by the Chief Inspector of Fisheries.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: He has changed his mind since then.

Mr. HOLMAN: On the 29th April, 1912, the Chief Inspector wrote again—

In a minute dated the 16th December, 1911, I pointed out that though I had every desire to encourage whale fishing in the coastal waters of Western Australia, I did not feel disposed to recommend the granting of this exclusive license, covering, as it does a practically unknown area, until steps had been taken to ascertain its possibilities and value as a whale fishing centre.

Then he referred to the application received and the letter dated the 22nd January, 1912, from Mr. Haynes, who was informed that at the present juncture the application could not be favourably received, but, should the application be renewed at a later date, it would be considered. On the 23rd Mr. Haynes wrote asking that information be given to Mr. Stang. The Chief Inspector then stated—

Although some months have since elapsed, and a certain amount of information has been obtained, there is still much wanting, and I do not yet feel justified in making a recommendation in favour of granting an exclusive whaling license covering all or part of this particular area. On the other hand the more I have studied the question the more convinced have I become that any hasty action in this direction is unwarranted. In explanation, I must, at the risk of taking up your time by the perusal of a lengthy minute, state it is recognised that the migration of fish is generally associated

with the provision for the next generation. This may be called periodic migration. A second form, which we may call sporadic migration, is noticeable, but is generally brought about by abnormal circumstances. Although cetaceans—whales, etc.—should not be confused with fish, it is a recognised fact that annually, during practically identical months in successive years, numbers of whales are found on the west or north-west coast, travelling first in a northerly direction and later, after an absence of a month or two, returning in a southerly direction. Although I am not at present in a position to definitely state that this northerly migration is associated with the breeding season—a desire to reach a suitable known locality as a breeding ground—in the absence of proof to the contrary I cannot say it is not.

I have perused the file very carefully. I see nothing to show anything to the effect that this is not a breeding ground. If it is a breeding ground and it is granted it is going to do a serious harm to the industry in this State. If they are allowed to erect a whaling station there and to operate from that base then it is certain that it will disturb the breeding ground. I think a novice could be quite sure on that point.

Resolved: That motions be continued.

The Premier: Are they not on it now? Look at the map.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not know.

The Premier: They have the right to erect shore stations abutting on it.

Mr. HOLMAN: The supposed locality was thought to be further north again. This is going considerably further north even than that. I am of opinion that the breeding ground of whales will be disturbed. That should not be allowed to happen. If whaling is worth fostering at all—and it may be the means of a large amount of money being spent in Western Australia—we should do what we can to protect the breeding grounds and at the same time get the best return to the State that we can.

Mr. Robinson: Is there no evidence as to where the breeding grounds precisely are?

Mr. HOLMAN: I can see no evidence. We have only the inference that has all along been drawn by the Inspector of Fisheries and other experts who have been up there. We have only what they tell us. I think full inquiries should be made to find out if we cannot protect the breeding grounds when we know just where they are.

Mr. Heitmann: The Colonial Secretary took the word of the expert officer who had examined the license.

Mr. HOLMAN: I will read Mr. Aldrich's minute upon that question. He states—

If it is the case, then in all probability these grounds lie somewhere in the waters of our north-west coast, and I certainly consider that more definite information should be obtained before any further whaling licenses are granted over these particular waters. I cannot see anything on the file to show that the information has been secured. We know that in a few days the matter was dealt with. He then states—

Under these circumstances I would recommend, etc. . . . In the meantime I hope to be able to go much farther into this highly interesting and perhaps very important question.

On the 16th November, 1912, the Inspector of Fisheries wrote as follows:—

The advisableness of granting a license to take whales from all or part of the waters extending from Cape Lambert to the north-eastern boundary of the State is, in my opinion, a matter needing a considerable amount of consideration. I have already pointed out that it is highly probable that in this particular area a breeding ground for these cetaceans is situated. Inquiries made go to support the views I have previously expressed, but in this as in many other matters pertaining to fisheries one can only arrive at a conclusion after a close inquiry extending over a considerable period of time. Until this particular question, one

likely to have an important bearing upon the future of the whaling industry in our waters, has been finally solved, I am not prepared to recommend the granting of a license covering the waters referred to, but at the same time I consider it only reasonable that, should it eventually be determined to grant such a license, Mr. Stang's application should be given priority.

That was the recommendation of the Inspector of Fisheries at that time. Mr. Aldrich, who, it is said, is known as the best authority, has been followed latterly. He then stated that Mr. Stang's application should be given priority. The Minister was not prepared to follow that advice at that time, and he had a perfect right, if he so desired, not to do so. Then the Under Secretary wrote as follows:—

I would suggest replying to Mr. Stang that we are not prepared at present to deal with this application, but that if at any time it is intended to throw open this area, priority will be given to its application.

Then follows a minute by the Colonial Secretary as follows:—

Approved, but make no definite promise. Say his prior application will be kept in mind.

There is not the slightest doubt about the minute that the Colonial Secretary wrote on that occasion. The minute is dated 10th October, 1914—this is in connection with Mr. Stang—and is as follows:—

I note letter from Mr. Stang (Attorney for the West Australia Whaling Co., Ltd.) hereunder. In so far as this department is concerned the position is as follows:—Recently I drew Mr. Stang's attention to the fact that the framing of the licenses of the three whaling companies he represented was practically on the same lines, and I pointed out that, whilst from my own personal knowledge I knew that one—The Spermacet Whaling Coy.—had almost completed the erection of a shore station at Frenchman's Bay, Albany, I would like further information as to what had been done in that direction by the West Australia Co. Mr.

Stang stated that whilst he had been advised by the company's solicitors, Messrs. R. S. Haynes & Co., that it was not obligatory on the part of the company under the terms of the license to erect a shore station he (Mr. Stang) was using his utmost endeavours to have this work completed, and there had been ordered a guano plant which should be erected as early as the difficulties of securing a suitable site would permit.

That was in connection with the application made for the forfeiture of a certain area over which this company had a right. The minute goes on—

Without admitting anything in this direction I threw out the suggestion that as they argued that the license was faulty in certain respects, but that they had stated that they all along intended erecting a shore station, it might be advisable to have a supplementary agreement drawn up and signed, which would set at rest any doubt that might exist. Mr. Stang stated he was prepared to agree to this. His letter under review confirms this statement. On another file I have stated that in my opinion a doubt exists as to the obligations cast on the company by Clauses 3 and 4 of the license, and I certainly think that the opportunity should be taken and a supplementary agreement be drawn up placing it beyond doubt that the company must within a stated time—say 18 months—erect, either on the mainland, or an adjacent island, a station or factory of a value of not less than £5,000 for the treatment of the carcases of whales taken and the preparation of guano or other by-products. I recommend that this course be followed. I have every reason to believe that the statements made by Mr. Stang relative to the difficulty in securing suitable harbours on the area comprised in this license are substantially correct. In the face of these difficulties, I consider the company has shown considerable enterprise. At the present time three large factory ships and six steam whalers of

an approximate value of £130,000 are operating at Point Cloates, and considerable improvements in the direction of a jetty, windmills, tanks, wells, motor driven pumps, pipe tracks, etc., have, I am informed on reliable authority been erected at a cost of some thousands of pounds.

Mr. North wrote a minute to the Minister thus:—

Submitted for your approval. I think Mr. Stang's readiness to sign a supplementary agreement and not to take any advantage through a possible flaw in the original agreement is to be highly commended.

On the 29th October, 1914, an application was sent in signed by Mr. Andresen, that shows what the company was prepared to do. There was a further report from Mr. Aldrich bearing date 3rd November, 1914, as follows:—

Please see hereunder application lodged by Capt. H. B. Andresen, representing the Australia Whaling Co., Ltd., of Tonsberg, Norway, for a license to take whales from the coastal waters of this State lying between Cape Lambert (the eastern boundary of the area held under exclusive license by the West Australia Whaling Co., Ltd.) and the 120th meridian; that is a point on the east line approximately 200 miles eastward of Cape Lambert . . . . . You will remember that since 1911 inquiries have been made by different firms on behalf of the Norwegian companies for whaling licenses, one application lodged by Mr. R. S. Haynes, then consul for Norway in this State, on behalf of Mr. C. Stang, of Christiania, Norway, being for a license covering all the coastal waters extending from Cape Lambert to the North-Eastern boundary of the State. In dealing with this application I pointed out that I did not at that time feel disposed to ascertain its possibilities and value as any other whaling license over this exceptionally large and practically unknown area until steps had been taken to ascertain its possibilities and value as a whale fishery, and Mr. Haynes was informed that it was re-

gretted that the application at that juncture could not be favourably received. On the 19th April, 1912, Mr. A. Stang, then consul for Norway, wrote and asked if the department was then prepared to deal with the matter. In a letter dated the 6th May, he (Mr. Stang) was informed that the Hon. Minister was not prepared, until the result of certain inquiries then being made were known, to further consider the application, and it was suggested that Mr. Stang again communicate during the following September. On the 8th November, Mr. Stang wrote, and on the 25th November was advised by letter that the Government was not at that time prepared to deal with the matter, but if at any time it was intended to throw open the area the priority of Mr. Stang's application would be borne in mind. Although the application now under review covers only approximately 200 miles, it certainly embraces that extent of the southern portion of the area applied for by Mr. Haynes. When dealing with Mr. Haynes' application I pointed out that, in my opinion, it was highly probable that in the waters situated off our north-west coast certain breeding grounds for whales were situated. I still hold this opinion, but am prepared to admit that I think they are further north, and outside the area mentioned in Captain Andresen's application.

Then there is a minute from Mr. North to the Colonial Secretary dated 4th November, 1914, as follows:—

1, (a) I recommend that this area be as applied for from Cape Lambert to 120th meridian be thrown open and that the application of Captain Andresen be granted. 2, No promise is contained in the letters to Mr. Stang of priority of refusal but merely of consideration. In considering the matter, one cannot lose sight of the fact that Mr. Stang's people already own three licenses. Secondly, two years have elapsed since anything has been heard from them. Thirdly, the area applied for is but a small portion only of that applied for by Stang. Finally, that the

same objection exists to-day to throwing open that larger area as obtained in 1912. The above reason shows that consideration to Stang's previous application has been given, even though the promise to do so may be held to have lapsed by effluxion of time. I advise, therefore, no further reference to Mr. Stang's application.

Then there is a minute by the Minister dated 5th November, 1914, as follows:—

I fully agree with you. Approval of (a) and (b) of your recommendation will mean the introduction of new blood and be useful as a check. Nothing could be gained by a reference to Mr. Stang, as I think he already controls quite enough. I approve of your recommendation.

Then Mr. North minutes the chief inspector of fisheries on the same date as follows:—

Please take prompt action to give effect to the Minister's approval. I have spoken on phone to Mr. Bolton.

The rental will have to be fixed.

Thus showing that no rent had been fixed, and the matter had not received the consideration warranted. Then there is a further minute from the Minister, dated 10th November, 1914, as follows:—

I think we should have some evidence of the registration of the company and of the authority of Mr. Fallowfield to act on its behalf. It would be well to follow the advice of the Crown Law Department on these points. I would like to be satisfied in this respect before next Cabinet meeting, when the papers will be submitted. The rental has yet to be fixed and the sooner this is done the better, so that Capt. Andresen may decide as to whether he is prepared to go on. I am of opinion that the rental should be much higher proportionately to the area than was fixed for Mr. Stang's companies who, it must be remembered, were responsible for pioneering the industry.

That was some days after I had seen him, before anything was mentioned about rental. That shows the position as it was, and even up to the present time

there is not any definite information to the effect that the breeding grounds will not be interfered with if this area is thrown open. Then Mr. Drew wrote his memo. to Cabinet, which has appeared in the Press. Mr. Drew had previously stated that in the granting of earlier licenses one of the conditions imposed had been the erection of the shore factory at a cost of £5,000. Mr. Drew's own minute shows that that was not a condition, and that it was a mistake not to have laid down the conditions. On the 10th October, 1914, Mr. Drew wrote the following minute:—

The company have done good work, but I am anxious that the erection of a shore station for the treatment of the carcasses of whales and the preparation of guano and other by-products should be definitely provided for. At present I have considerable doubt as to whether they can be compelled to do this under the present agreement.

Although the Minister said he intended to do this, yet, in his own minute, he states that the company was not compelled to erect those stations. Again we read—

As the company have done much towards the establishment of the industry, I am prepared to grant them 18 months in which to erect the shore station on the lines set forth, provided they sign an agreement to that effect and deposit with the Colonial Treasurer £250, or provide monetary security to that amount in a manner to be approved of by the Under Treasurer, as a guarantee that the work will be carried out.

He also stated that the Fremantle Company were not carrying out their agreement. In my opinion, if the agreement of any of these companies was not carried out the license should have been forfeited. No concession should be granted if the agreement is not being carried out.

Mr. Heitmann: It is often not the fault of the concessionaire.

Mr. HOLMAN: Of course not, and I only ask what is reasonable. If it is a flagrant transgression of the agreement, forfeiture should be insisted upon. The company were not compelled to erect

the shore factory; the Minister himself agrees with that.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): They offered to do the lot.

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes, but it was not put in the agreement. Then in a supplementary agreement they agreed to carry out everything the Minister asked. They should be commended for that. Mr. Drew in his minute to Cabinet considers that the agreement was badly drawn. That is shown in Mr. Aldrich's report of the 10th September, 1914. In a letter to Mr. Stang Mr. Drew said he appreciated the manner in which the agreement had been carried out, and he thanked Mr. Stang for what he had done. Mr. Drew in his minute also stated as follows—

Unsuccessful in their attempts to secure a cancellation, Mr. Fallowfield approached me with a request to grant portion of the waters north of Cape Lambert to the Australia Whaling Company. I told him, as I had told Mr. Stang and Mr. Swan some days before, that the area was closed as a breeding ground for whales. Mr. Fallowfield stated that from what he could learn it was not the intention of the Fisheries Department to keep all this area closed.

Again, he stated that Mr. Fallowfield told him that the area was to be thrown open. The minute says that when the matter was placed before Cabinet the case was not set out as fully and clearly as it should have been.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is that a minute you are referring to?

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is it not accurate?

Mr. HOLMAN: It is not accurate in every respect. In connection with the erection of shore factories Mr. Drew thanked Mr. Stang for what he had done to meet his wishes. Previously Mr. Drew had declared that the erection of the factory was one of the conditions imposed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then how could he forfeit the license?

Mr. HOLMAN: No, he could not, but I say that if he transgressed the agreement the license should have been forfeited.

Mr. Robinson: You say the clause should have been more stringent?

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes.

Mr. Hudson: It was intended to be inserted; but it was found that it would be inoperative.

Mr. HOLMAN: They made a further agreement and put up a substantial deposit as a guarantee that the work would be carried out later.

Mr. Robinson: How many of those depôts have they erected?

Mr. HOLMAN: One, at a cost of £15,000 or £20,000.

Mr. Robinson: That is a factory for treatment?

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes.

Mr. Robinson: Where do they treat the bodies in the North-West?

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not know how they have been treating them; they may have been throwing them away. I do not know that they have made any guano at all, but they have fulfilled the terms of their agreement. In his letter to Mr. Stang the Colonial Secretary said—

I wish to place on record my appreciation of the manner in which you met my wishes in regard to the signing of a supplementary agreement in connection with the exclusive whaling licenses held by the companies represented by you in Western Australia, and also the readiness with which you complied with the conditions I saw fit to impose in the interests of the State. I have never had any doubt as to the genuine intention of the companies to develop the industry in which they have embarked to the fullest extent possible, and I desire to state that my action must not be taken as indicating any lack of confidence in their bona fides.

Mr. Robinson: Was that written voluntarily by the Minister?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): No, on request.

Mr. HOLMAN: In another minute the Under Secretary said—

No promise is contained in the letters to Mr. Stang of priority or refusal, but merely of consideration.

I think there was a prior claim; at all events I do not think it should be granted

at all until complete and full inquiries have been made. Again he said—

One cannot lose sight of the fact that Mr. Stang's people already own three licenses. Secondly, two years have elapsed since anything has been heard from them. Thirdly, the area applied for is but a small portion only of that applied for by Stang. Fourthly, that the same objection exists to-day to throwing open that larger area as applied in 1912.

That is hardly correct, because Mr. Swan, in company with Mr. Stang, visited the Colonial Secretary. At that interview the Minister made a definite promise that the area would not be thrown open, and the inference was that it was made on the consideration that they would proceed to erect their shore factories. There is a letter on the file from Mr. Swan, late member for North Perth. It is written to Mr. Stang—

Dear Sir,—On the 9th October last I accompanied you to the Honourable the Colonial Secretary's office, and was present at the interview which there took place between you and the Colonial Secretary. During that interview the Minister was seeking to obtain your consent to the introduction of new terms in the license granted by the Government to your company. Before consenting, I distinctly remember you asking the Minister whether it was proposed to throw open the northern area of the coast for whaling, and he replied that the Government had no intention of doing so, and you thereupon stated that you would agree to the terms suggested by the Minister.—Yours truly, H. G. Swan.

That was a promise that the area was not to be thrown open. I maintain that a promise having been made it should be carried out. He goes on to say that the three companies had failed to complete their obligations to the Government. The Minister wrote that minute on the 15th November, and yet he wrote on the 5th October to Mr. Stang stating that these things were being done to his satisfaction. It is necessary to deal with the



two propositions together in order to show that I do not wish to see anything done to protect Mr. Stang's interests, but merely that the interests of the State should be protected. Just to show the value of this I may say that offers have been made to pay—

Mr. Robinson: Who were prepared to pay?

Mr. HOLMAN: The other companies.

Mr. Robinson: How much were they prepared to pay?

Mr. HOLMAN: It is on the papers. The word "monopoly" has been mentioned. I am opposed to monopoly as strongly as any member of this House.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The three companies have the same manager.

Mr. HOLMAN: Under the same management. I think I have shown the House sufficient grounds for further inquiry. I do not desire that any motion I have to move shall be taken as a motion against the Government. I think every inquiry should be made by a select committee so that we would be in a position to know exactly what to do with the whaling industry, which is an important one. As showing its value I may state that the companies are prepared to erect factories costing thousands of pounds, and I maintain that we should not allow such an important industry to be petered out in a short time, but should get expert advice in the matter in order that we might be in a position to keep the industry going. I have been compelled to quote to a greater extent than I desired this evening in order to show that the action I took in this matter, when I approached the Minister, was taken in the best interests of the industry, and not to serve any purposes of my own or anyone else. I do not advocate the interests of the companies which Mr. Stang represents, but have taken up the matter because I am of the opinion that he was given a promise of prior right or claim. Personally, I think the companies have sufficient already. But they appear to have assets to the value of £300,000, and have spent a considerable sum in the State for stores,

coal, etc., as well as £15,000 in the erection of a shore factory. On the question of monopoly I would like to ask, seeing that the oil is not required by the people of the State, how the question of monopoly can come in, so far as that commodity is concerned. It may be true that the three companies have worked together in the past, but I believe that has been done with the object of keeping the industry going. The question of monopoly can only come in as affecting the people of this State, when it comes to the question of making guano and fertilisers. I think we should endeavour to get as much as possible of the fertiliser manufactured for the benefit of the people of this State. I think the best way to do this would be to have a clause put in the agreement before any concession or license is granted, that the companies shall make a certain quantity of guano and fertilisers, and that they must be sold at certain prices. I think that the maintenance of this industry would be of great benefit to the State as it would mean the spending of thousands of pounds of money here for the benefit of the people. For this reason we should endeavour to obtain a valuable report on the question and all the information it is possible to bring before this House. We could then decide ways and means of dealing with the question. I hope the committee will be appointed, and that some of the ablest men of the House will be placed upon it. I should like to see the leader of the Country party on the committee. We have heard him speak in this House on several occasions during the present session, and I think he has proved that he is possessed of ability. And if the Opposition would appoint one of their best men, I do not care who it is—the member for Canning would be a good man from his legal knowledge—and two from our own side, I think then that a great deal of valuable information could be obtained. My sole desire is to see every inquiry made before this area is thrown open, and to see a select committee appointed to inquire into the whole question, in order to enable future Governments to see that in

all agreements made in the future the interests of the State are properly protected. I desire to move—

*That (1) the exclusive whaling license to the "Aktieselskabet Australia" be disallowed; and, (2) a select committee be appointed to inquire into the application for the granting of exclusive licenses over the area, or portion of the area (previously reserved as a breeding ground) from Cape Lambert to the north-eastern boundary of the State.*

I have combined this motion so that the two matters may be discussed together and so save time.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister—Pilbara) [8.28]: I desire to assure members that I will oppose the motion. We have heard a good deal about the agreement and a considerable amount of rather heated language has been used. As members know, I deprecate heated language and endeavour always to avoid it. I hope unseemly interjections will not be made. The grounds which the mover advanced for the carrying of this motion are two. One is that the Government ought to get more money for the lease, and the other that the Government should not grant the lease at all until further inquiries have been made on the question whether the part of the coast which is concerned is a breeding ground for whales. As to obtaining higher fees for the license, I think the House will agree with me that the sole object of the Government should not be to obtain high fees for these exclusive licenses.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But you should get proper value.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Exactly. We should get proper value. The mover has said that we should put these licenses up to competition; that, I presume, we should call for tenders from persons prepared to pay for these exclusive rights. But that, I may point out, is not a policy generally followed in any of the dealings with State property in Western Australia; and I am certainly not in favour of the introduction of such a po-

licy. It has never occurred to anyone to suggest that, for example, the pearling banks in Shark Bay should be put up to auction. It has never been suggested that mining leases should be disposed of by auction.

Mr. Holman: A mining lease is not an exclusive license.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The hon. member points out that a mining lease does not constitute an exclusive license.

Mr. Holman: The first application gets it—the first man to put his pegs in.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell)—I believe he was the Minister who did the work—granted a large area on the same coast—in fact, some of this same water—for turtle fishing under exclusive right. No suggestion was heard then of putting the area up to competition. I should also like to remind the House that it is not always beneficial to the State to charge the highest possible rates. For instance, a few years ago the Government raised the price at which Crown lands would be sold; and people were induced to pay high prices for conditional purchase lands. The result is that to-day we have to introduce legislation for the reduction of those rents. The increase, in my opinion, did not work out satisfactorily in any way. I may explain to the House that whaling licenses are held under an amendment of the Fisheries Act passed by a previous Government, which provides that the Government may grant exclusive rights to fish in given areas. Undoubtedly, that is a very important right to grant, and one not to be granted without due consideration for the interests of the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Was there not a limitation in that Act as regards the length of coast line?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): No. Speaking from memory, the limitation was that if over 70 miles of coast line was granted, the license must be laid on the Table of the House. That, I believe, is the only limitation contained in

the Act. In other respects, it is quite competent for the Government to grant a license for the whole of the waters of Western Australia; and I may point out that if the Stang family had got their way they would have had the exclusive right to take whales throughout the whole of the waters of Western Australia. The parts coloured green on the map hanging on the wall are held by, let us say, the companies for which Mr. Chris. Stang and Mr. August Stang are representatives and directors. The little piece coloured red on the map, by Port Hedland, is the subject of the license with which the House is now dealing. The Stangs hold practically all the waters of Western Australia from Israelite Bay to Cossack. The application now under consideration is for 200 miles of coast between Cossack and Broome, and the granting of that would still leave about 800 miles of coast line as a breeding ground for whales.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It would be all right if you could instruct the whales to go there. We might pass an Act to that effect.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Returning to the question of putting up these rights for competitive tender, I have to point out that it would certainly be necessary to give those tenders a wide range of advertisement. The whaling companies now operating here come from Norway. There is whaling done, I think, on the West African coast, and some, I believe, on the American coast. It would be necessary to call for tenders not only from the Stangs and those interested with the Stangs, but from other whaling people who might possibly come in. Nor, as a matter of fact, before Captain Andresen came into the business had there been any competition asked for. In the absence of Captain Andresen, the fee for this exclusive license would simply have been what the Stangs liked to give for it. That would be the case now unless tenders were advertised for in other parts of the world besides West Australia. A considerable amount of capital has been

made out of the fact that a promise was given to Mr. Chris. Stang, that he should have a prior claim to the whole of the northern waters of Western Australia. The member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) having read the minutes on the file, it is not necessary for me to go over them again; but I wish to explain that Mr. Stang and his companies undoubtedly put forward a most extraordinary proposition. They said, "We want exclusive rights for 1,000 miles; we have already exclusive rights over about 2,000 miles; and if you do not like to give us the other 1,000 miles, will you grant us a prior right to it, so that whenever it is thrown open it will belong to us?" That was the proposition they put up, and I am surprised indeed at its being even entertained. The Stangs should have put a factory there instead of a ship. They did not consider the breeding at all. They were prepared to start whaling, start a shore factory, and treat the whales just as other companies did. The Stangs did not think of the breeding ground when they had it. Now as to the promise which the Minister put up through the Inspector of Fisheries. That is run through, in the usual style, by the Acting Under Secretary, and passed on to the Acting Colonial Secretary. The then Acting Colonial Secretary, Mr. Angwin, said "Yes" to the proposal. I am afraid the Honorary Minister of that day was caught in a weak and tired moment. But even if Stang had a promise, I contend that the proposition was one which should never have been put forward. A man who would have the impudence to ask what Stang asked, is entitled to any sort of treatment that he gets. Why should Stang have that 1,000 miles? Why should he come and ask such a thing as "We have got all the coast of Western Australia that is thrown open; and when the Government decide to throw open the remainder, it is to belong to us"? I do not think such a man is deserving of much consideration.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why did you give the promise?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Let me go further; and this is the point I wish to stress. The Colonial Secretary, Mr. Drew, was away at the time, I understand. The matter did not come forward again for six months, but immediately the Colonial Secretary sighted the file he altered the position. There is no shadow of doubt as to that. He said, "Give Stang no definite promise; do not tell him he has a claim; tell him his claim will receive consideration or will be borne in mind"; which shows distinctly that the Colonial Secretary himself gave no promise. In point of fact, as soon as the Colonial Secretary saw Mr. Angwin's mistake—and it was apparently a mistake—he issued a distinct instruction to his Under Secretary to give no definite promise.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why did he not at once write to Stang withdrawing the promise.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): He did write to Stang telling him that he, Stang, had no prior right, but that his prior application would be borne in mind.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But Stang had that letter.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Stang got two letters.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Stang got Mr. Angwin's letter saying that he, Stang, would have a prior right.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Mr. Angwin said "Yes" no doubt. Anyhow, there is another point in regard to this promise: neither the Minister nor any other person can give a binding promise.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Minister can bind the Government.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): As a matter of fact, the Minister cannot possibly do that. It does not matter what the Minister promises; the promise binds neither the Government nor this Parliament.

Mr. Male: That won't wash.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It does not bind Parliament, but it binds the Government.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): As a matter of fact the

Minister cannot promise absolutely and definitely. All he can do is to promise his own individual support and interest as regards the proposition. The member for Roebourne (Mr. J. P. Gardiner) says the Minister's promise is no good. I will show directly that whatever the Minister's promise may be, Stang's promise is not worth much.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What about the promise of the Government?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I have told hon. members about the promise of the Government.

Mr. Taylor: These promises are apparently like piecrust.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): There is another point of view. As I have said, it does not matter what is promised to a man who asks for an impossibility. One is not morally bound to keep a promise which has been obtained in that way. However, there was no promise to Stang. Stang was told that he had no promise.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He has produced that letter, though.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Stang is producing dozens of letters, but that does not give him the right to this area; nor would the production of thousands of letters give him that right. However, I hold that a Minister of the Crown, like anyone else, should keep a promise. On the other hand, if, having given a promise, he finds that to fulfil it would not be in the interests of the State, then he is entitled to guard the interests of the State absolutely.

Mr. Holman: The Minister should have withdrawn the promise, then.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): It is no use for the hon. member to sit there repeating that remark, like a parrot. I have told the hon. member half a dozen times that the promise was withdrawn. Are we morally bound to keep a promise to one who has broken his promise to us? It seems to me there is an impression abroad that the Government are to do all the keeping of promises, and that the people dealing with the Government are

to be permitted to evade by every possible means the carrying out of any undertaking they have given to the Government. I am not in favour of that way of doing business. There is another point I wish to impress upon the House, and that is the question of the combination of these companies. Right through the file there is evidenced an attempt to deny that they have anything to do with each other. It is said they have different directors and different shareholders, but that Mr. Stang is merely their representative, and it has been stated that they are worked similarly to some of our gold mines under Bewick, Moreing & Co. There is absolutely no analogy between a whaling and a gold mining proposition. When working a gold mine the lessees are entitled to all the gold within the four corners of their leases. There is no possible chance of the gold running out into any one else's lease, and the utmost quantity of gold is produced without affecting the market. In a whaling proposition a combination might lead to limiting the output in order to maintain the price, and there is also this fact that the whales not caught go right through the whole of the leases and return again, so that they frequent the waters of both companies. Therefore, to say that this proposition is anything like that of a gold mine is absurd. In regard to the letters of August Stang, representing the company which has all the water north of Steep Point, he continually presses the Government to grant that lease to his brother, Chris. Stang, urging that they are not the same company. As soon as the Government offered to grant that lease to someone else, August Stang objected on the ground that this area is a breeding ground for whales. If it is the breeding ground for whales, if we can put one iota of reliance on the word of August Stang, he was trying to get the Government to give his brother an exclusive right to whales in their breeding ground in this State. Again, it appears from the file that the whole of the ships of these three companies belong to one owner—Chris Neilsen Coy., of Norway.

The Norwegian shipping *Gazette* is on the file and a translation will show that this is correct. Again, we have Chris. Stang's own words. The following is a translation of a Norwegian report of the West Australian Whaling Co. for the year ended 1913, and it makes very interesting reading:—

We decided to arrange with the Spermacet Company, whose fleet at that time was in West Australia, that we, without any risk for possible loss to that company, should have a part in this company's net profit made on our concessions in Western Australia. We therefore renewed our previous agreement with the Spermacet Company to divide the possible profits of this company after the Spermacet Company had first taken off 15 per cent. of its capital and the percentages which the Norwegian Government compels its companies to put by every year.

The report continues—

By these arrangements you will admit that our risk of loss on the West Australian coast was brought down to a minimum at the same time, as we hope, by the combination of the two companies, to show a small profit.

Another portion explains—

We have decided to work together. There is Mr. Stang's report to his own shareholders and what is the use of anyone telling us that he lied to his shareholders and would not lie to us. If he would lie to his shareholders he would lie to us.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Has he lied to anyone?

The Minister for Mines: The inference is that he did if the statements made are correct.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Has it been denied that the companies are working together?

Mr. Hudson: Yes.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The file provides most interesting reading. Mr. R. S. Haynes, K.C., came into the matter. There is a very interesting paragraph in one of his letters in reply to the Colonial Secretary's statement that he could see through Mr.

Haynes's little game. Mr. Haynes took the Minister to task for making rude remarks. I deprecate Ministers of the Crown making rude remarks.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You do not live up to it?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): And I think the Colonial Secretary was wrong in writing as he did. I contend it was unnecessary to point that out at all. The fact that there was some combination was so obvious.

The Minister for Mines: It stares every one in the face.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Yes, and so open was it that even a military censor would have seen it. In regard to the question of the combination Mr. C. Stang wired to some people in this State and sent a cable to the President of the Legislative Council, which stated—

Solely on faith Government's promises priority north stretch here published I succeeded start Western Australian companies. If been risk competition sufficient shares never been drawn because competition means companies shortlastingness and great losses shareholders.

Long before there was any talk of priority and long before the present Minister for Works sighted these documents, these companies were floated in Norway. The shares of Norwegian companies must be paid up before they can get their charters.

Hon. Frank Wilson: From where was that cable sent?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): From Chris. Stang, Larvik, in Norway. This gives an idea of the sort of man we are dealing with. One minute he pretends that he had priority before the companies were floated. His own application was in and was refused and the companies were floated long before the area was dealt with.

The Minister for Mines: A deliberate lie.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): He admits in the cable that the company agreed to build shore stations. There is a famous letter written

to him by the Colonial Secretary, and I will explain how it came to be sent to Mr. Stang. Mr. Drew had been considering the question of forfeiting the areas for the non-fulfilment of the conditions at the request of Mr. Fallowfield and Captain Andresen, and others. The Minister came to an understanding with Mr. Stang that if he signed another agreement and put up £500 as a guarantee of good faith—he had evidently lost some faith in him—he would give him a certain extended period in which to erect the shore stations. Having fixed that up Mr. Stang said he wanted to stand well with the shareholders in Norway and would not like it to get abroad that there had been a disagreement between his company and the Government, and if the Colonial Secretary could give him a letter which would show he was satisfied with him, and which he could show his shareholders, he would be very pleased. The Colonial Secretary naturally replied—"Yes, I do not want to do anything to injure the company," and gave him the letter. Right through the whole of his dealings with Mr. Stang the Minister has shown his sole object to be the promotion of the industry with due regard to the best interests of the State. This explains how Mr. Stang got the letter and ever since he has had it he has been using it as the reason why he should be granted the 1,000 miles of coastline on our northern shores. There are one or two other points in regard to the license worthy of notice. The main object in granting exclusive licenses is to establish the whaling industry, but the essential feature of the industry is the production of fertiliser, the using of the whole of the product of the whale.

Mr. J. P. Gardiner: There is very little lost by the companies now working.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The hon. member may know but our information might be as good as his. At any rate it shows that a very large number of whales taken at Point Cloates were, after the blubber had been removed, pulled out to sea and left to go to waste. A number were treated for oil, that is to say, the bodies were cut up and put through a boiler and oil was obtained

from the balance of the carcase as well as from the blubber, but no attempt was made to produce fertiliser. This is proved by the fact that there is not a bag of their fertiliser to be found in the State to-day. It is absurd to say that they produce fertiliser when they cannot show an ounce of it, whereas, according to the number of whales taken, there should be a few tons of fertiliser on the market at present. The essential part of the industry should be the production of fertiliser and, viewing the case from the knowledge we have of the present companies, we find they have avoided their deliberate undertaking to erect shore factories for the production of fertiliser. I believe it is impossible to produce this fertiliser without shore factories. As a matter of fact, in every letter and in every application which has been made for any of these licenses it was stressed by Mr. R. S. Haynes that they intended to produce fertiliser and erect shore stations. There was a possible doubt as to the drafting of the agreement, which they signed. The gentleman who drafted it possibly could tell us why he did so, but it is not altogether certain that they were not compelled, under their agreement which they signed, to erect these factories. What is obvious is this: To obtain the exclusive rights they made distinct promises, and assuming that they got their exclusive license they sheltered themselves under the State in verbiage under their agreement. When we are dealing with people who are prepared to take every possible advantage of us, even in the face of their definite promises it is well that we should endeavour to get some competition against them. In leasing this part of our foreshore we are, I believe, providing a company which will come into competition with the existing companies, and will, further than that, be some means of protection to the State in as much as this company will not be allowed to wander all over the waters of Western Australia. There are one or two other small matters that perhaps require a little clearing up. A great deal of stress has been laid on the point that Mr. Aldrich reported some years ago that this was likely to be a breeding ground for whales. Since then,

however, he has made inquiries into these matters and has come to the conclusion that if the breeding ground is in this particular area at all it is further north than the waters given to the Australian Whaling Co. That is an opinion which he was certainly entitled to come to. In the first place he said it should be held open until inquiries had been made. He says he inquired—

Hon. Frank Wilson: He says "I think"; he only thinks.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): He only thinks; he only thought to begin with.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Perhaps he will go on thinking.

Mr. Allen: Some people do not do that much.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I think that an officer is entitled, after enquiries, to come to a different conclusion. Bear in mind there was never a definite statement—by Mr. Aldrich that it is a breeding ground. The definite statement he makes is that if it is a breeding ground the breeding ground is further north than the waters to be granted in this particular license; that is the only definite statement.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Has he been there?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): He has not been there. He has made enquiries as far as it is possible for him to make them, more particularly from the pearlers. There is no doubt that those who are pearl fishing on that coast are likely to have as much information regarding the breeding ground of whales as anybody in the country.

Mr. James Gardiner: At the time he made the report he had just come back from a trip right through.

Mr. Holman: His first report?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Possibly. His first report was made three years ago, and it is said after a trip up there. His report was that it might be a breeding ground. His later report is that he does not now think that the waters connected with this particular license do form breeding grounds. We have to bear in mind that if we do

not grant this particular license the company already operating will have that water to work on. As a matter of fact, the Stangs are prepared to pay almost any money even to keep it closed. It is as good to them closed as it is open. What they fear is competition, and that some other company will come in and produce fertiliser in competition with them.

Mr. Hudson: And show what really can be done.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Yes. I claim it is in the best interests of the State that we should have some competition against the three companies which are now operating on our coast. To grant this license would simply be to hand that water over practically to the control of Mr. Stang. Mr. Stang does not care whether he gets it himself or whether it is closed against everybody else. There is this point which I wish to impress upon hon. members; that those who are now advocating the looking after of the interests of the State and the keeping of these waters closed in the interests of the State previously advocated that the license should be granted to Mr. C. Stang. That is a position that makes one think on a matter of this description. Every one of those who are now asking the Government to leave these waters closed have advocated the granting of the license to Mr. C. Stang. When they cannot get it for Mr. Stang they want to prevent anyone else obtaining it. Another point which has been made on several occasions is that this particular application was dealt with in a most hurried manner, and that it was rushed through without consideration. It may be interesting to give hon. members the particular times. This particular application was some considerable time in getting through the Colonial Secretary's office. to Cabinet. Here are the times with regard to the other companies. The original application of the Spermacet Whaling Company is dated the 18th December, 1911. It was approved of by the Colonial Secretary on the 26th January, 1912, and approved by Cabinet on

the same date. That was fast enough. It was approved by the Colonial Secretary on the day that it reached him and was approved by Cabinet on the same day. The whole business was therefore completed in one month, eight days, after the application had been lodged. It was something new at that time to the Department which had to consider the details of the agreement. That was the first application dealt with in these matters and there is the time it took to put it through. The next instance is that of the Fremantle Whaling Company. The original application is dated the 4th January, 1912. It was approved by the Colonial Secretary on the 19th January, 1912, and approved by Cabinet on the 22nd January of the same year. It therefore reached Cabinet eighteen days after the date of the application. The West Australia Whaling Company's application is dated the 8th December; and Cabinet approved, subject to satisfactory agreement, on the 11th December in the same year. That is the pace at which the other leases were put through. It is said that these were long enough in getting through, and yet Mr. Drew is charged with rushing this particular license through, the suggestion being that he had some particularly good reason for getting it through in a hurry. Many have suggestions have been made in regard to the Colonial Secretary in this direction; yet if anyone goes through the file I will defy him, if he is of an unbiassed mind, to say that there is one shadow of suspicion attached to the character of Mr. Drew.

Mr. J. P. Gardiner: It is merely asking for an inquiry.

The Premier: It is not merely asking for an inquiry.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I would just point out that it does not matter to the Stangs whether it is delayed, or refused, or granted to them. It is said this is merely asking for an inquiry. What does this mean? Who is going to inquire? This House will have risen before a select committee could hold its first meeting,



and, as hon. members know, when the House goes into recess all committees are finished. The proposal for a select committee is one more plainly to be seen through than some of the other dealings of the Stangs in regard to the passing of the leases. As a matter of fact the idea of the motion is—win, tie or wrangle—to refuse the license altogether, and if it cannot be refused let a select committee inquire further into it. I say that this House with the facts before it—if hon. members have perused the file—must come to the conclusion that the Colonial Secretary is looking after the best interests of the State and that it is absolutely in the best interests of the State that this license should be approved by Parliament. I have very little more to say except in reply to some of Mr. Holman's remarks. He read from letters by himself and letters written by Mr. Drew to him. All I can say is that most members have read the letters and, so far as I am concerned, can take their choice as to which they like best. I think I have dealt fully with all the points brought forward by the member for Murchison. I may say that I regret to have to oppose that hon. gentleman on a motion of this description, yet, at the same time I am absolutely convinced, not because I am an Honorary Minister, or because I am in the Ministry and therefore with Mr. Drew, that after a careful perusal of all the matters connected with this license, and a careful perusal of the file, that it will be seen that Mr. Drew has done everything possible to establish the industry and also to safeguard the best interests of Western Australia.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [9.15]: I think the Premier ought to give the House some supplementary information. We have heard most remarkable statements from the Honorary Minister (Mr. Underwood), which of course are characteristic of him, in reply to the member for Murchison. But the House has no definite knowledge in regard to this agreement, no definite knowledge as to how the agreement compares with previous agreements.

Mr. Heitmann: They have all been on the Table.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I know. There are many papers on the Table. Here we have the direct charge that this agreement is not in the interests of the State. It is up to the Premier to say something in connection with the business. The charge is not made against the Colonial Secretary, but against the Government; because Cabinet has indorsed everything the Colonial Secretary has done in this respect. I for one must confess that I have been, not only entertained by the remarks of the Honorary Minister, but amazed to learn to what extent the coast of Western Australia has been already granted away to the representatives of these companies.

The Premier: That is an admission that you are not attending to your business.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have not had time to go through these papers.

The Premier: You should have made time; you are paid for it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier is paid for many things and, I am sorry to say, very much overpaid. If we look at the map we find that over 2,000 miles of our coastline marked in green—

The Minister for Mines: Only 1,800 miles.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Honorary Minister says 2,000 miles, and I accept this statement. Those 2,000 miles have been reserved for nominally three companies.

The Minister for Works: Almost verging into one.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: All under the control of one attorney, Mr. Stang. I think some inquiry is necessary as to why those 2,000 miles of coastline have been already granted, to say nothing of the proposal to grant a further 100 miles to a new company.

The Premier: They are not going to fish for whales on land. We catch only sharks on land.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am not experienced in the habits of sharks, but I can see that the object of giving the

lease of that coastline is to prevent anyone else coming in to catch whales, and I want to know why we should give so much of our coastline to any one company, or even to three companies under one management. I cannot understand the position. It looks to me as if all that it is necessary to do in connection with this whaling industry is to grant a sufficient area for the shore factory, a few miles, five or 25, as the case may be, and then of course all will have equal right to go beyond territorial waters; and it is outside our territorial waters that most of the whales are caught.

The Premier: Both yourself and the member for Murchison were here when the agreements were laid on the Table.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It only shows the misplaced confidence we have in the Government. I have often said that every agreement entered into by my friends opposite has been a bungle from the State of view. We have the notorious powellising agreement, which we have never got to the bottom of yet. Then we have the agreement in regard to the Bovril cattle, and similar agreements, every one a bungle and a loss to the State. And now we have this question brought up. I was rather amazed when the member for Murchison said he was not attacking the Government or the party to which he belonged. I want to know at whom he is aiming his motion. Is it directed against a single Minister of the Crown, or is it directed at hon. members on this side of the House? Is it a motion which the Government consider as complimentary to them for the manner in which they have administered the affairs of the State in the interests of the State in the action they have taken in this connection? I cannot quite understand the attitude of the hon. member. He says he is not going to be drawn by me into a statement that he is attacking the Government. I do not wish to draw him into any such statement; but neither am I going to be drawn by the hon. member into the position that I am unduly attacking the Government in connection with this; in other words, I am not

going to support any motion of no-confidence moved by the hon. member at this juncture. However, the hon. member did say that the administration of these matters—referring to all these whaling leases—had not been in the best interests of the State. What graver charge can be brought against members of the Government? If it has not been in the best interests of the State, then I think we are entitled, if the hon. member proves his case, to know fully on what evidence he bases his charge, and whether the Government have failed to protect the State, whether they have failed to get a proper return for the concession granted. Undoubtedly the matter appears to have developed into a dispute between the mover of the motion and the Colonial Secretary in charge of the department controlling these affairs. The publication of the correspondence which passed between these two gentlemen was a great shock to me.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If they were in agreement would the papers have published the correspondence?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Does the hon. member object to the newspapers publishing the correspondence? Is it not a matter of public interest?

Mr. O'Loughlen: There are more important matters available on the Table.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: All the matters of importance to the public are dealt with in the newspapers.

The Premier: Is it not of public interest that the public should know the position of the *West Australian* newspaper under the Dividend Duties Act? The paper did not publish anything of that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I did not mention the *West Australian*. The Premier is obsessed with a perverse antagonism to the *West Australian*. He imputes thefts to that newspaper, accuses it of dishonourable tactics and of having defrauded the Taxation Department, and on every possible occasion he makes personal attacks, not only on that newspaper, but also on the newspaper controlled by the member for North Perth. I should advise him to stop that method of procedure; it is indecent behaviour, and is not in

keeping with the high and responsible office the Premier holds.

The Premier: I do not take any direction from you in these matters.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then be quiet. I have the floor. The hon. member drew the retort, and must put up with it. As I remarked, the correspondence between these two gentlemen gave me a great shock. The language is beautiful in some of those letters, and even the Minister's language is something that may perhaps arouse admiration in the minds of those not accustomed to embellishing their correspondence in this way. I notice the member for Murchison makes very serious charges against the Colonial Secretary. He says, for instance, "That company has been very fortunate in having their interests pushed forward in such a speedy manner." Then he goes on to accuse the Colonial Secretary of having failed to keep a promise made to Mr. Stang, that his application for the exclusive right to whale in these waters would receive prior consideration. The Colonial Secretary is not behind in nice language, because he accuses the member for Murchison of having indulged in skulking innuendoes in his letters, and he further challenges him to make some of his statements outside the House, and refers to the motion asking for the papers, and says they will be grateful where the hon. member, under the protection of the House, can give rein to his imagination without personal risk. The member for Murchison comes up to the scratch and indulges in further language. He says the Minister's word cannot be relied upon, and further he goes on to infer that the Minister has not any sense of decency or honour if he tries to get away from the promise he has given to Mr. Stang. Then he characterises the Minister as a shuffler. Not content with that he goes on to say that a statement of the Colonial Secretary's is a detestable lie, and another statement is described as the outcome of a diseased imagination.

The Premier: We take it as read.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Right through the correspondence we have this

tone going on. He says later on that he cannot even be fair, clear, nor truthful, to give the full context of the conversation. It seems to me that the position has been wrapped up by the heat engendered by correspondence of this character. It seems a pity that language of this sort should be indulged in either by any hon. member of this House or by a Minister of the Crown. The motion is that we shall disallow an agreement which has been entered into by the Government. I do not intend to refer to the Colonial Secretary because his action has been endorsed by Cabinet, which has agreed to the license. The motion goes further and asks that a select committee shall be appointed to inquire into applications for the granting of exclusive licenses in the area. In moving his motion the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman), so far as I have been able to gather, tried to discredit the company to which this license has been granted. In other words, he quoted certain information which he obtained from the opposing company to show that this company was in a rather parlous condition.

Mr. Holman: I said that was information received.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I know. But I presume that the Government satisfied themselves on that point before they granted the concession, satisfied themselves that the company is capable of carrying out its obligations and undertakings.

Mr. Heitmann: They have laid down conditions which will require that.

Mr. Holman. It may be possible for a company to get a concession and make a great deal out of it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of course they may. The hon. member does not expect any company to operate without making profits out of it.

Mr. Holman: I meant without working it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What we have to consider, therefore, so far as this company is concerned, is, first of all, have we got a fair deal, are we getting a sufficient remuneration, are we going to benefit by their operation in

Western Australian waters, are we safeguarding the requirements of our own State as regards fertilisers, and so forth; and are we in any way interfering with the alleged breeding ground of whales? That is distinctly the point. I do not believe in making a scapegoat of a company which is evidently out to develop an industry on fair terms to the State, because the hon. member has some complaint against the Government for having broken some alleged promise to another party.

Member: The Government never made any promise to another party.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It seems to me that if to disallow the agreement of the one company is all that is required, it is penalising the company and not touching the Government at all. I think that is the position which the hon. member wishes the House to take up. So far as reserving the alleged breeding ground of whales is concerned, I must admit that if we have conclusive proof that this is a breeding ground for whales, and that whaling operations would interfere with future supplies, then we ought to be careful indeed before we do anything of that kind.

The Minister for Mines: The Chief Inspector of Fisheries says he is satisfied that it is not a breeding ground.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not think he is. I have read his report. The evidence, I must say, seems to me to point in the other direction. The Chief Inspector of Fisheries, I should imagine from the wording of his report, is very doubtful himself on the point.

The Minister for Mines: That was some time ago; he was doubtful then.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It seems to me that he had not the requisite knowledge to give a decided opinion in this connection, and I have heard it stated that whales do not have any specific breeding grounds, that calves may be dropped in the Northern waters or in other waters where the whale is at the time, and during the proper season of the year. I have been advised that whales with calves have been seen as far south as 52 S. If that be so, it is hard

to understand how any particular spot on the coast 100 miles in extent can be claimed to be a breeding ground. The Honorary Minister, I must say, seemed to have a pretty fair reply to that statement. He points out that those people represented by Mr. Stang already hold the coast line from east of Esperance right up to Point Sampson, and that at Point Sampson they can establish their factory and then send boats forth outside the territorial limit to operate to their hearts content. He then made—and in doing so he indulged in some of his usual facetious language—this point undoubtedly, that the reason why the companies represented by Mr. Stang were so anxious that this license should not be granted was simply that they might continue a monopoly which they already possessed in Western Australia, and I think that he fairly well proved his contention, because the fact remains that Mr. Stang applied for the very area, and more of it, that it is proposed to grant to this applicant. So far as the point of monopoly goes, hon. members opposite are always crying down monopoly. They were horror stricken when we were in power at the bare suggestion that we intended to give to any one a license to gather turtles in this State. My friends opposite created the monopoly by granting those licenses.

Member: You introduced the Bill yourself.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This only goes to show that those hon. gentlemen preach one thing when they are out of power and practice quite another thing when they get in power. The Honorary Minister replied to the charge which the member for Murchison has made with regard to the rushing through of this application, and I must say that the hon. member, with the facility for couching his thoughts in ambiguous language, has indeed succeeded in conveying a very nasty innuendo, a suggestion of underhand work. I am not one of those who are prepared to find fault with any one for doing things in a businesslike way. I do not think any complaint can be brought against the Government for com-

ing quickly to a decision. All we are concerned to know is whether we have got the right to make that decision. The whole thing seems to me to be, boiled down, a question as to whether we are justified in asking for an inquiry, and of going further to see what reason there may be to close up the whole coast.

Member: Make it a royal commission.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And we have further to consider whether we would be justified in disallowing this license. I say at once that a promise made by a Ministry ought to be carried out. I cannot distinguish between a Minister of the Crown representing the Government, and an individual, as the Honorary Minister has done. The Honorary Minister says it does not matter what promises are made by Ministers; that if it is found the promises cannot be carried out the Government are absolved from them. That is a position I cannot accept. I consider that a promise of the Government, or of a Minister representing the Government, is just as binding as any promise made by a private individual—it ought to be more binding. If the Minister finds that he has, in his absence, been committed contrary to his judgment by someone representing him, as evidently the Minister was on this occasion, then the Minister's first and manifest duty is to communicate at once with the people concerned, saying, "I must withdraw that promise; I cannot hold to it." Thus the Minister would give the recipients of the promise an opportunity—

The Minister for Works: Stang was not promised anything; he was promised priority of claim. Alterations might take place.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is quibbling. The Minister knows that if I had a certain property and he applied to me for a lease of it, and I said, "Mr. Angwin, I do not intend to lease that property at the present time, but if ever I do lease it, you, having put your claim in, shall have the first opportunity of leasing the property"—

The Minister for Works: But conditions might alter in the meantime.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: One can stipulate the conditions if one pleases; but in the case I have put I could not get away from the promise I gave.

The Minister for Works: I would do the same thing again to-morrow.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If the hon. gentleman did that in commercial life, he would be tabooed by honest business men. I hope he will not take that attitude.

The Minister for Works: I would, every time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The position is that the Minister ought not to make such a promise if he does not see his way to carry it out. There is no need to give a definite promise in a matter of this sort, if there is any doubt. I cannot quite see why the hon. gentleman made the promise; but, the promise having been made, I do not like the manner in which the Honorary Minister suggests that the Government are not bound by it.

Mr. Heitmann: Are you stonewalling?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If the hon. member does not like my speech, he can go home.

Mr. Heitmann: I ask the question quite seriously.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I never stonewall; I never follow the bad example of the hon. member interjecting. I do not like the idea of penalising one company because it is thought that some injustice has been done to another company, or to the representative of another company. If this is a bona fide transaction—as I believe it to be—if the Government have satisfied themselves that the company is financially sound and capable of carrying out this undertaking—as to which I presume the Government have satisfied themselves—if the State is getting a fair return for the concession which has been granted, and, further, if the Government are satisfied that the granting of the concession will not interfere with the breeding ground of whales and thus interfere with future supplies, then I should be sorry indeed to support a motion to disallow the agreement. If, however, the agreement can be held over,

or suspended for a time, until a select committee can inquire into the subject—the mover says the inquiry will not take many days—I do not see that the Government can object to the proposed inquiry by a select committee into the whole of the circumstances connected with this license. Furthermore, I suggest that the Government ought not to raise any objection to inquiry into the circumstances of previous leases. The fact that one company has not carried out its agreement is not sufficient ground for condemning the company embarking on this further enterprise. Surely, the letter which was indited by the Colonial Secretary to Mr. Stang—notwithstanding that it was written, apparently, at the request of that gentleman—is quite sufficient to exonerate Mr. Stang, at all events in the eyes of the Government, from having done anything—

Mr. Holman: The copy is on the file.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That letter is quite sufficient. That would be sufficient to any outside person.

Mr. Holman: The report of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries is on the file, too.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That letter would be quite sufficient evidence that the Government are satisfied with the manner in which the company has carried out the terms of its agreement. If the file and reports thereon do not bear out the letter, then, of course, it is a charge against the Minister that he should have written the letter. If that be so, then it is matter for inquiry, I admit. The fact that the Government agreed to make a subsidiary agreement in connection with the establishment of shore factories by Mr. Stang representing certain companies, and stipulated for a deposit—which I believe has been put up—for the due fulfilment of the subsidiary agreement is not, I think, to be construed by any Minister—I do not care who he is—into a statement that the Colonial Secretary had evidently lost faith in Mr. Stang when that gentleman asked for this new agreement. The fact, however, may be construed into proof that the original agreement was loosely drawn, and did not

sufficiently bind the representatives of those companies with regard to the establishment of shore factories, which the Government thought they were in a position to enforce. Agreements of this description are being entered into without due examination, evidently, and without due consideration. I admit, of course, that Ministers individually cannot go through every agreement made by their various departments; but the responsible officers of the department should be held answerable for any laxity. The departmental experts should be made responsible for seeing that the interests of the State are properly safeguarded, and that the intentions of the Government are set down in unmistakeable language which can be enforced in any court of law. In my opinion, the mover has not proven his case for the cancellation of the license which has been entered into by the Government with the Aktieselskabet Australia; but I do think he has put up a *prima facie* case for some inquiry; and if he can amend his motion so that, whilst we do not disallow the license which has been granted, and granted in good faith, and upon which I presume these people have taken some action in preparation for carrying out their portion of the agreement, if he can amend the motion in such a manner that, whilst not disallowing the agreement and thus not injuring the company, still a select committee can be appointed to inquire into the whole position with regard to these leases, I should be one who deemed himself to be carrying out his duty in supporting the appointment of a select committee.

The Premier: Do you want the leases granted to the other companies inquired into?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes.

The Premier: How can that be done, when Mr. Stang is in Norway?

Mr. Holman: He is here.

The Premier: We had a cable from him, at all events, from Norway.

Mr. Holman: That cable is from his brother.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I doubt very much the information forthcoming with regard to the breeding grounds. That is a point, also, which I think should form the subject of inquiry.

The Premier: The Government have no objection to that.

Mr. HUDSON (Yilgarn) [9.55]: I have listened with considerable interest to the concluding observations of the leader of the Opposition. During the greater portion of his remarks I was somewhat in doubt as to what conclusion he would arrive at. Surely his observations regarding the controversy between the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) and the Colonial Secretary have very little to do with the subject so far as this House is concerned.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They have a lot to do with it.

Mr. HUDSON: I agree with the leader of the Opposition that this motion is one that should be separated in form. The proposal of the member for Murchison is that the exclusive whaling license should be disallowed, and that a select committee be appointed to inquire into certain matters. These two propositions do not coincide; and I think that, at any rate, the motion should be divided. The leader of the Opposition, however, has made a practical suggestion: that the license with which we are dealing to-night, and which has been granted to the company, should not be disallowed, but the inquiry should be made into the whole question of the granting of exclusive licenses on the coast of Western Australia for the capture and treatment of whales. It appears to me that the member for Murchison is to be commended for his interest in the welfare of Western Australia—interest shown in bringing forward a subject of this description. But it seems to me also that his action is somewhat belated, and that it is noteworthy that he should take upon himself to make such inquiries into the granting of a small length of coast of 200 miles, whilst he would sit back and allow 2,000 miles to be granted.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He did not know of it, any more than I did.

Mr. HUDSON: The reason which the hon. member has advanced in the public interest is that the area for which the license is now about to be granted is a breeding ground for whales. The leader of the Opposition has shown from the correspondence that this has not been justified; and if we go into the question, taking words out of the mouth of the opposition companies, as they might be termed, the companies represented by Mr. Stang, and look at a letter written by Mr. Haynes, the Consul for Norway, on the 13th December, 1911, when he applied, not only for this area of 200 miles, but for the whole 1,000 miles of the North-West coast, is there any suggestion that it is a breeding ground for whales? The proposal is to take a lease of that area for three years, to pay a license fee, to carry on the business of whaling within the area, and to employ in that business steamers of an aggregate tonnage of at least 5,000 tons. If the area were a breeding ground, it would not, I think, be the policy of Mr. Stang's companies to indulge in wholesale disturbance of that description. The other point raised by the member for Murchison, in the public interest, was that this agreement for 200 miles with the new company was not one favourable to the State; that is to say, that a greater price might have been obtained if there had been competition. But competition, as was pointed out by the Honorary Minister (Hon. R. H. Underwood), would be limited to whalers in our own State; that is to say, limited to the companies represented by Mr. Stang and the new company. Now, an examination of existing agreements will show that this new agreement is much more stringent than any agreement made with the three original companies, which I may describe as represented by Mr. Stang.

Mr. Heitmann: And under the new agreement the company is compelled to pay more.

Mr. HUDSON: No suggestion has been made that the agreement was corruptly entered into. The member for Murchison does not say that the Colonial Secre-

lary acted otherwise than in the best interests of the State within his purview. He does not complain of anything except haste, and, as the leader of the Opposition has pointed out, there was a necessity for urgency, and the Minister did not use any undue haste in concluding the business with this new company. Having dealt with the question of public necessity, the member for Murchison raised the point that there was a prior claim on the part of those other companies to this grant. There is not very much in the proposition, because we have control of the water for only three miles from our coast. The Act brought in by the Liberal Government in 1911 contained a provision for the definition of the waters of Western Australia to include the sea for three miles from high water mark; so we are only granting the right to catch whales for three miles from the coast along a coast-line of 200 miles. All the area shown white on the map is still open, although it is in Australian territory, to the four companies. The leader of the Opposition pointed out that the new company only required to get a station and they could have caught whales over the whole of that territory. It may be necessary in their business to come within territorial waters, and so they applied for an exclusive license over the particular portion constituting a base for their operations. But what was the position of the company which had that northern portion running up to Cape Lambert? What was their position a few months ago? They had an exclusive license granted to them under particular conditions. They were expected in the ordinary course of business to carry out the conditions of their license. They did not do so. They secured an extension of time in which to perform their part of the contract. Still they did not perform it. Then this new company came into the Western Australian arena. They had closed their operations in the Eastern States and Captain Andresen came to Western Australia. The Stangs got busy. They came to the Colonial Secretary and said, "We will do anything now if you grant us an extension of our concession."

The Premier: You think the Stangs have been stung.

Mr. HUDSON: I do not know Mr. Stang; he has not been to see me. The point is that Captain Andresen, representing the new company, came to Western Australia and made inquiries. Then the company represented by Mr. Stang, got to the Colonial Secretary and asked for an extension of time. The Colonial Secretary possibly looked at the agreement and found that he was not in a position to forfeit or to exact terms for this extension. He knew also that Captain Andresen was looking for a license for the new company. But I would like to point out that the Stangs took every advantage of the agreement that existed between them and the Government, of which they had committed a breach, inasmuch as they had not fulfilled the terms of that contract. They took advantage of a loophole in it to escape responsibility, but when Captain Andresen came in they said, "We will do anything, even put up a deposit of £500 as a guarantee that we will do within the next 12 months what we should have done during the last three years." A new set of circumstances then arose as between the Colonial Secretary and the Stang companies, for they entered into a new arrangement in regard to that lease. The Colonial Secretary had in mind their conduct during the previous year or two, and consequently it should not be expected of him that, entering into new negotiations in regard to that lease, he would, unless there was an application then made for a renewal of any conditions that might exist in respect to the northern portion, bring that into the negotiations. He made a new contract with the Stang Company, and entered into an entirely new contract with the others. A good deal has been said of the promise made by the Colonial Secretary. I am not sure that his own minute has been read. I have it here. It is dated the 22nd November, 1912, and reads as follows:—

Make no definite promise; say his application will be borne in mind.

Mr. Drew said, "Approved, but no definite promise. Say his prior application will



be kept in mind." What claim has Mr. Stang upon such a minute as that?

Mr. Holman: You should read the letter following.

Mr. HUDSON: Yes. Here it is, dated 25th November, 1912—

In reply to your letter of the 8th instant, relative to the application of Mr. C. Stang for an exclusive license to fish for whales from Cape Lambert to the north-eastern boundary of the State, I have the honour by direction to inform you that the Government is not prepared at the present time to deal with the matter. If, however, at any time it is intended to throw open the area in question, the priority of Mr. C. Stang's application will be borne in mind.

That was the last communication sent to Mr. Stang, and if he did not understand it he ought to have. However, I am quite prepared to fall in, to some extent, with the suggestion made by the leader of the Opposition that there may be a necessity for some inquiry, but that if there is an inquiry it should extend to the granting of the whole of the existing exclusive whaling licenses in Western Australia. To my knowledge some of the operations of these companies have not been of such a character as would justify an extension of their licenses. They were given these privileges for the purpose, not so much of returning revenue to the State, as to secure fertilisers for our farmers. They were compelled to sell those fertilisers, but they have not made the best use of the whales captured. It is known to shipping men that the bodies of whales have been allowed to float about on the sea, not only to the north, but round south, between Albany and Eucla, and that they are a menace to shipping, inasmuch as if the huge body of a whale were to get mixed up with the propeller of a steamer, some damage would be done. However, I think an inquiry might be made, but it should be of a comprehensive character, and should not be confined within the limits suggested by the mover of the motion. I think the new company, having been granted this small concession of 200 miles, and having gone

to some expense in consequence, and being prepared to carry out the contract they have made, should be given the opportunity, and that possibly it will be to the advantage of the State that the two companies should be operating in opposition, that possibly they will police one another.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [10.10]: As the member for Murchison disclaims any attack on the Government in respect of their administration, I am not concerned at the correspondence that has passed between him and the Colonial Secretary, or the acrimonious tone of that correspondence; nor am I concerned with the efforts between these rival companies and the new-comers as to who shall have the right to take the whales. But I am concerned with the facts brought out in this discussion by the member for Murchison, showing that very large quantities of whale are caught in our seas. It seems from the correspondence that a large amount of money has been sunk in these enterprises by these Norwegian companies. They would not have done that unless sure of an adequate return for their capital, as well as good interest on it. That means that large quantities of whale are taken on our coast; and what we are concerned to see is that these whales are put to the best advantage, that the people who take them take the oil and the bone and the various products they export, and that those parts fit for the manufacture of fertilisers are used for that purpose, that proper stations are established for the turning of those products into fertilisers suitable for our use. At the same time it seems to me from what has been said that no one in this State knows too much about this whaling industry. It is rather a good thing that it should have been ventilated. People now will set to work to inquire into a very valuable industry lying on our shores. We should conserve that industry for the greatest benefit of the people of the State. Whilst, therefore, they are inquiring into it, it may be possible to find out where exactly the breeding grounds are situated, and when

found to conserve them, or to make regulations which will conserve the industry in that direction. I do not agree that there is sufficient evidence before us to cancel this or any license. I would like to have something precise on the subject. It is possible that if a select committee is appointed to inquire into the matter, something definite will be learned, and surely the report of that committee will decide the House as to whether the license should be continued or cancelled. I think therefore the House should agree to the motion, couched however, only in terms of inquiry into the whaling industry and the holding over of the consideration of the contract until that report is received.

Mr. J. P. GARDINER (Roebourne) [10.13]: I support the motion. The speech of the Honorary Minister, though somewhat eloquent, was absolutely devoid of facts and bristled with inaccuracies. One or two instances are sufficient to go upon, but taking the whole trend of his speech that speech is worth very little. After all, the mover of the motion has said that all he desires is that we should disallow this license until a select committee has inquired into the matter. I say if this thing will not bear scrutiny there is something wrong. I am not casting aspersions on any one Minister, but clearly if the question will not bear a searching inquiry by a select committee—

The Premier: Who said it will not?

Mr. J. P. GARDINER: Well, the Government are opposing it.

The Premier: No. Who said we are opposing a select committee?

Mr. J. P. GARDINER: I presume from the speech of the Honorary Minister that the Government intend to oppose it.

The Premier: You presume too much.

Mr. J. P. GARDINER: I do not know where the Government stand. May I presume then that the Government will agree to the appointment of a select committee?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes, the Premier said he would.

The Premier: Yes but not a restricted select committee. I want one to inquire into the operations of the people most concerned.

Mr. J. P. GARDINER: I am not interested in that. I do not know anything of them, though this question affects my district. All that has been asked for is an inquiry. When the Honorary Minister was quoting from the report of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, I interjected that he had been in the service six years and the Minister for Works said I was wrong. I have made inquiries and I find that he joined the service on the 13th July, 1911.

The Minister for Works: You said three years.

Mr. J. P. GARDINER: No, I said six years.

The Minister for Works: You said when the licenses were granted he was not in the department.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Yes.

Mr. J. P. GARDINER: The Honorary Minister said Mr. Aldrich had not been in the district. As a matter of fact, I travelled with him on a boat part of the way to Broome and subsequent to his return the report on the file was submitted and the inspector then said this particular place was a breeding ground for whales. I do not wish to labour the question. I support the motion and I hope that the license will be disallowed until a select committee inquire into the whole question.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [10.17]: As I have been mentioned in connection with a promise given while temporarily controlling the department, I wish to say I do not admit having made a mistake. What I did at that time I would do again.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then stand by your promise.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Just prior to the application by Mr. Haynes, K.C., for an exclusive license over a thousand miles north of Cape Lambert, two or three licenses had been granted to what were considered to be separate companies and companies which would

not form a monopoly in regard to the whaling business. Mr. Haynes was informed early in January that his application would be re-considered. At that time the Chief Inspector of Fisheries was of opinion that this area should not be thrown open at all and later on the Colonial Secretary had occasion to leave town, I think in connection with his election campaign, and was absent for some time. This matter was brought forward during his absence and after the Under Secretary had discussed the question with the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, he stated—

I have discussed this matter with the Chief Inspector. The area applied for may be a breeding ground, and until the Chief Inspector makes further inquiry into the matter he considers it very undesirable to grant a license. Should at a later date the area be thrown open, it would be fair to give the present applicant priority of claim.

If it was always in the mind of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries that this was a breeding ground for whales, it would not be thrown open at any time and so the claim was useless. The Under Secretary asked, "Should we advise the applicant accordingly?" And on the 4th May, 1912, I replied, "Yes." If a man makes an application he should receive priority of claim, but circumstances have altered continually since that time, and instead of there being several companies they have almost merged into one. I do not admit having made a mistake. I did what I considered was right and fair to the applicant and to the State.

**Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [10.20]:** After listening to the discussion it appears to me that there is a big principle involved. The motion asks not that the exclusive license be disallowed until a select committee shall have decided whether it is right or wrong to grant it, but distinctly asks this House to say firstly that the exclusive license shall be disallowed, and secondly that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the question.

**Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister):** Disallow it first and appoint

a select committee to inquire afterwards!

**Hon. H. B. LEFROY:** The honour and credit of this country rest in the hands of the Government of the day, and when the Government of the day grant a license of this sort, this House should be very careful about expressing any opinion with regard to disallowing it. It is the duty of members on this side of the House, although opposed to the Government politically, to help them to uphold the honour and credit of the country. If the license has been wrongly granted, the Government have to bear the responsibility, but the license having been granted we should be very careful about disallowing it. I have heard nothing to lead me to suppose there has been anything dishonourable on the part of the applicants.

**The Premier:** That is the only ground on which you could ask for the license to be disallowed.

**Hon. H. B. LEFROY:** And I have heard of nothing dishonourable on the part of the Government in granting the license. The Government have made certain promises but they were couched in such ambiguous language that I do not hold that the Government definitely stated the license should be granted to someone else if a license were granted at all. The House should be careful about disallowing a license granted by the Government in all good faith, because the honour and credit of the country are involved, and I would not like it to go to the outside world that after the Government had granted a license, it was disallowed by this House.

**The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [10.25]:** Earlier in the evening the leader of the Opposition asked whether I had considered the effect of the motion in relation to the Government. I want to reassure the hon. member by saying I have considered the effect of it and asserting that I know of no motion which could have any greater effect in the direction of a vote of no-confidence or want of appreciation of the honesty and integrity of the Government than this. The Act provides that exclusive licenses

shall be granted for certain purposes. The Act was passed in 1905 and amended in 1911 and consolidated in 1913. Under that Act it is provided that an exclusive license may be granted amongst other things for the taking of whales, but no one would say it was intended to give a license to fish in waters over which we had no jurisdiction. All that the licenses provide is that over a certain portion of our shore and for three miles adjacent to it, no other person than the holder of a license shall be able to fish or treat whales—the treating of whales being the particular purpose of the license. This was necessary because it was essential to give security to the company carrying on operations. Just as we limit a mining area held by one company but give them exclusive right to take all the gold from that area, so we say that within a certain area of our coast line we shall grant a license for a company to carry on whaling operations and not permit anyone else to operate upon that area. This license is merely to give security of tenure and to protect the interests of the company putting capital into these operations. There is a provision under Section 30 of the Act that if the Government grant an exclusive license it shall be laid on the Tables of both Houses and remain there 14 days. If the license is not disagreed with by both Houses in that time, it shall take effect. This is not the first license granted under this section by the present Government. It is the fourth, and this particular license covers less of our coast line than the other three.

The Minister for Mines: And the conditions are more strict.

The PREMIER: Yes. Members can see by the map—

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is a wonder you do not allow them to extend right around the coast.

The PREMIER: Under the three licenses previously granted we gave to the three companies the right over something like 1,800 miles of coastline for exclusive whale-fishing. Each of these licenses was likewise placed on the Tables of both Houses and not a

single member—not even the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) or the leader of the Opposition, who now complains—took the slightest exception to all three receiving effect.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But we had such implicit confidence in you.

The PREMIER: No. I will tell the hon. member the reason. His notice was not drawn to it. The three companies were then working in perfect harmony. In fact, the person who applied for the first license says he was responsible for the flotation of the three companies.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You should have taken that into consideration.

The PREMIER: Yes, but we could take it into consideration only when we discovered as we have done recently and positively that the three companies are working in combination. When the Colonial Secretary discovered this he was pleased, as every hon. member should be, at the opportunity of getting a fourth company to bring about a little healthy competition. Mr. Stang cabled to the Colonial Secretary his objection to the granting of the license. The first paragraph in his message is deliberately untrue. He says:

Solely on faith Government's promises priority north stretch, I succeeded starting the Western Australian companies.

Solely on the definite promise that we would give him the balance of our northern waters he was able to float those three companies. As a matter of fact, he had the three companies in operation before it was suggested that the area should be closed and before any question of allowing it to be thrown open, or of giving him priority was ever discussed or considered. And now he tells me, as if I have not the particulars available, that he was only able to float these three companies because we promised to give him the balance of the coastline. If, as we now know, we knew that the three companies were going to form into a combination is it likely that we were going to give them a monopoly of the coast-

line, practically one-third of the coast line of Australia, to the exclusion of everyone else? I do not think hon. members would like to see us do that. I am prepared to admit that if there be any reason why members should take exception to these whaling licenses, it is not to this one, but to the three previous ones. In this particular case we have not granted a single mile of waters where the breeding of whales takes place. The member for Murchison will admit that even no schoolboy will assert that the breeding of whales takes place within three miles of the shore. As a matter of fact, the companies do not carry on their operations there at all. This license merely gives them the right to establish a shore station. The companies represented by Mr. Stang, which are objecting to this license, can establish a station right on the most northerly point, where this concession commences, and from there they can operate over exactly the same waters as can the holders of this license except within three miles from the shore, and they are not likely to operate there. There is only one reply to those who object to this license and it is that the Stangs who are interested in the three companies are undoubtedly anxious to prevent any other company from coming in to institute what would be healthy competition. Let me say, moreover, that Mr. Stang himself, in the statement he has made in the report as a director of one of the companies, for which he acted, distinctly asserted that they had, by arrangement with the other companies, provided that they would "carry on operations with their ships in our area, treat the whales they caught and we would get a percentage of the profits." That is as good a combination as I know of. If ever there was a combine, it is this arrangement which one company makes with another company to make application for a license—perhaps for the purpose of getting an additional area they would not allow anyone else to have—and instead of putting capital into a shore factory to arrange for the first company to carry on operations. It is the simplest

thing in the world to bring about a monopoly on those lines. The member for Murchison is the last man I should have thought would be responsible for urging a continuance of a monopoly such as this will be if we disallow this license. I do not believe the member for Murchison appreciates the position, otherwise he would be the last man in the House who would urge that we should continue a monopoly in whale fishing in Western Australian waters. All the member for Murchison has asked for in his motion is that this area should be reserved as a breeding ground for whales. Let me tell the member for Murchison we cannot possibly do it. All we can do is to reserve our foreshore against a shore station being erected thereon. But the other companies can erect shore stations on the northern portion of their area and operate all the waters except within three miles from the shore under the existing licenses. All we are doing is granting another company permission to come here to operate under stricter terms, and giving them the right to erect a shore station, and protecting them over 200 miles, as against 1,800 miles granted to the other companies. These are facts. I am not going into the question of whether a promise was made, or kept, or broken. I am satisfied that the hon. the Colonial Secretary never gave any such assurance. I agree with the Minister for Works when he says that when he wrote that minute he had one intention only and that was that Mr. Stang should be informed that if we were throwing open those waters, we would not forget that he had made application.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The wording of the minute is very distinct.

The PREMIER: We gave no priority of claim; they could not come along and make any prior claim and say, "I shall have it." We have the right of review. What the Minister intended was that they should be informed that if it was intended to throw open that area, he would be considered as having made application, just in the same way as in connection with mining, prior application is recognised. The member for

Murchison has tabled a double-barrelled motion. That is an unfair attitude to adopt, because he brings to bear two barrels. If the first misses the second may have the desired effect. The member for Murchison, whether acting for the purpose of assisting Mr. Stang or not, I am not going to assert, but that undoubtedly is the effect. His action in this matter will certainly assist Mr. Stang. Mr. Stang is just as anxious as anyone to get this license, but he would be satisfied so long as the area is not thrown open. The other companies do not want any more of the foreshore; they have got all they can manage and all they can pay for. They only want a few acres on which to build a shore station. But they want everyone else to be excluded.

Member: They have got far too much already.

The PREMIER: I am not saying that Mr. Stang has not got enough. What Mr. Stang says is that it should not be granted to anyone else. He says "If I cannot have it, nobody else shall." The member for Murchison, to all intents and purposes, wants Mr. Stang to have an exclusive area. That is what it amounts to, if this area is not granted to anyone else. It is a monopoly for Mr. Stang and he already has sufficient. I believe the House would be doing an unwise thing from the point of view of conserving the industry and keeping it healthy if we agree to this motion. I was rather surprised at the remarks of the member for Roebourne (Mr. J. P. Gardiner). He did not use a single argument in support of the motion but came along with innuendoes.

Mr. J. P. Gardiner: I asked for an inquiry.

The PREMIER: The hon. member need never worry about this Government not being prepared for an inquiry.

Mr. J. P. Gardiner: Why are you opposing it?

The PREMIER: I am not opposing it. I want to know whether you want to oppose this license and to continue the present monopoly. If all that is wanted is an inquiry, we will have it. We have nothing to hide, If anyone has anything

to hide it is the Stangs and their companies. I suggest that we amend this motion by deleting all the words after "that" in the first line down to (2) in the third line, also all words after "the" in line 4 and insert the following words in lieu thereof:—"Whaling industry, the granting of licenses for whaling under Section 30 of the Fisheries Act"—that will cover this license as well—"the obligations imposed under such licenses and the standing and operations of the companies to whom such licenses have been granted." That will embrace all the licenses, and all the obligations imposed by those licenses. I want to ask hon. members, irrespective of their feelings, to seriously consider the question as to whether they are not doing considerable injury to the interests of the State if they prevent this company from getting this license. This is nothing more or less than granting half an acre of land in order to put a shore station on it and closing it against any other company from coming in and operating on the same land. I do not propose to move the amendment myself without the consent of the hon. member for Murchison (Mr. Holman). The amendment I have to move is:—

"That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the granting of licenses to whaling companies under Section 30 of the Fisheries Act, 1905-13, and the obligations imposed under such licenses and the operations of the companies to whom such licenses have been granted."

If the hon. member is prepared to accept that I am prepared to move it. If not, I do not intend to proceed further. We have nothing to hide; our actions are perfectly open. I think that some of the transactions of some of the companies are hardly in keeping with the spirit and intention of the licenses when they were first issued. If the hon. member desires an inquiry to be made, here is his opportunity to have it done.

Mr. Holman: Will that embrace the full extent of whaling generally?

The PREMIER: Yes. The question of whether the license is granted under fair conditions to the State is one for the

committee to go into and report to the House upon. There is no need to discuss it at this stage. The conditions imposed under the present license under discussion are strictly within the conditions imposed under the provisions of other licenses. Under these circumstances there could be no complaint on that score. It is merely a matter of deciding whether we are going to give Mr. Stang the entire control of the whole of the coast line or whether we are prepared to allow any other company to operate and bring about healthy competition. I desire to amend the motion in this way. I move an amendment—

*That all the words after "Inquire into the" in par 2 be struck out and the following words be inserted in lieu, "whaling industry generally and the granting of licenses for whaling under Section 30 of the Fisheries Act, 1905-13, the obligations imposed under such licenses, and the standing and operations of the companies to whom such licenses have been granted."*

The Minister for Mines: I second the amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER: To the motion moved by the hon. member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) the Premier has moved an amendment, "That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the whaling industry generally and the granting of licenses for whaling under Section 30 of the Fisheries Act, 1905-13, the obligations imposed under such licenses and the standing and operations of the companies to whom such licenses have been granted."

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison — on Amendment) [10.50]: I intend to be very brief. From the very inception of this matter, my sole desire has been to prevent the doing of any injustice and above all to guard the interests of the State. Whether in respect of whaling or anything else, we must protect Western Australian interests. I think it is necessary that I should make some observations in reply to the Premier's remarks. Personally, I am satisfied that the best course was not taken in connection with these special licenses. As regards the other special license

previously granted, we shall, of course, be able to obtain all information if the amendment is carried. We shall examine into cablegrams which have been received from Norway, into the position of the companies there, and also into past transactions. The statement has been made that this company represents a monopoly. If inquiry of the full scope promised by this amendment be made, there will be ample opportunity for going into that phase of the question. As it is possible that the further period over which this session will extend, will not allow of complete investigation by a select committee, it may be as well to merge the select committee into a Royal Commission. If I sit on either the committee or the commission, I shall be prepared to do the whole of the work absolutely free of cost to the State. It may be found necessary for the members of the committee or commission to visit certain places, but I think members would, in connection with such a matter as this, be prepared to make those visits in return for reimbursement of travelling expenses. I have placed my views fully before the House, and, as both the Government and the Opposition have decided that it would be unwise to disallow the present license, I realise that it is no use going on with that part of my motion. I do, however, absolutely desire that the fullest inquiry should be made, so that Parliament may know the exact position, and so that, if mistakes have been made in connection with the granting of licenses in the past, those mistakes may be avoided in the future, and the fullest benefit obtained for the State from any concessions or licenses granted henceforth. We shall be able to prevent the practice of sale or barter of or traffic in concessions or licenses without any benefit whatever to the State. I am sure it will be in the best interests of the State if the amendment is carried, because ample information will then be laid before the House for its future guidance.

Mr. HEITMANN (Geraldton) [10.55]: I have listened to the speeches delivered on this question during the present

sitting, and I must confess that I have become rather tired of hearing the hon. member who moved the motion protest 50 times, if he protested once, that his sole desire was to protect the interests of the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Let it drop at that. A select committee has been promised.

Mr. HEITMANN: The hon. member can speak for himself, as he did some little time ago.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why did you not speak then? We want to get home.

Mr. HEITMANN: The hon. member and myself cannot speak at once.

Mr. Taylor: You get pretty close to it.

Mr. HEITMANN: I was indeed surprised at the extremely poor case put up to-night by the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman), in support of the charges published in the *West Australian* a few days ago.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That was only a correspondence, you know.

Mr. HEITMANN: In that correspondence were charges, undoubtedly.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Oh, yes!

Mr. HEITMANN: No one can get away from the fact that the charges meant one of two things; either that the Colonial Secretary had been receiving inducements, improper inducements, to act improperly in the interests of this whaling company, or that some officer in the Colonial Secretary's Department had received such improper inducements. None can read the correspondence without coming to that conclusion. Then, why this hypocrisy? Why this hiding of it all to-night? Why not mention what is implied in the correspondence?

Hon. Frank Wilson: I did not hide it.

Mr. HEITMANN: The leader of the Opposition, I will admit, was the only speaker who made mention of it. Next, I wish to say that if I had accused the Colonial Secretary in the same way as that hon. gentleman was accused during the last week or two, I would stand up in this Chamber and support my charges. There would have been no ignominious back-down; there would have been no pretence, no endeavour, to say at this stage that the matter was purely impersonal.

Only a week or so ago the Colonial Secretary was accused of receiving a bribe; or rather it was insinuated against him that he had received a bribe, that he had been improperly induced by certain people to hurry on this license I ask is there anyone in this Chamber who, having read the correspondence, can say otherwise? Why are not facts now brought forward to support the charges which were made against the Colonial Secretary? I say it is unfair, it is degrading to public life, for a member to rise and accuse another member after the fashion in which the Colonial Secretary was attacked. We have no mention, however, of those charges to-night. In the tamest of all possible tame speeches, the member for Murchison put forward a case which is absolutely the weakest I have known to be put forward in this Chamber, in support of the charges which he had made against a Minister of the Crown—a gentleman whose straightforwardness has been known to this country during his 25 years of public life.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I quite agree with that.

Mr. HEITMANN: Not one word is advanced, not even an effort is made, to support those charges or to substantiate them. We have heard the member for Murchison saying that this is not a personal matter; but I should like to ask the hon. member what is personal, and what is impersonal, if the attack upon the Colonial Secretary was not personal, if it was not an accusation against his honesty, if it did not charge him with, vulgarly speaking, working under the lap? Nothing else could be deduced from the letters of the member for Murchison. Now we are told by the hon. member that he had nothing but the interests of the State at heart. Let us see what was, according to the Colonial Secretary, the hon. member's entrance into this controversy. In a minute sent to Cabinet Mr. Drew stated, *inter alia*:—

The next occurrence in this connection was the appearance of Mr. J. B. Holman, M.L.A., on the scene. He produced a number of letters written by the department to Mr. A.



Stang relative to an application by Mr. C. Stang for the whole area from Cape Lambert to the eastern border.

Can we appreciate the mind of a person who would go to a Minister of the Crown with the sole object of protecting the interests of the State, and whose opening remarks were devoted to the furtherance of the interests of some other individual?

Mr. Holman: That was absolutely incorrect.

Mr. HEITMANN: The hon. member denies it.

Mr. Holman: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. HEITMANN: There are denials on both sides. The member for Murchison says that the Colonial Secretary is telling untruths.

Mr. Holman: Absolutely.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Colonial Secretary denies that.

Mr. Holman: I wrote my letter the same day.

Mr. HEITMANN: Here are numbers of letters introduced by the hon. member, which have reference to Mr. Stang. Is it likely that the member for Murchison is going to the Colonial Secretary to advocate the interests of the State and bring along as introduction a budget of letters written to Mr. Stang by the department? Numbers of people who have read the insinuations in the published correspondence have told me that the first question arising in their minds after the reading was, "What are certain people getting out of it?" No case has been put up for Mr. Stang.

Mr. J. P. Gardiner: Nobody tried to put up a case.

Mr. HEITMANN: Then what was the trouble?

Mr. J. P. Gardiner: That the State retain the advantage.

Mr. HEITMANN: We are told by the Colonial Secretary that no mention was made of the State, that Mr. Drew merely said he would not consider Mr. Stang's application.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes. It was a promise to Mr. Stang.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Colonial Secretary denies that he made such a promise.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Minister for Works made the promise.

Mr. HEITMANN: Mr. Stang was given a certain promise, I believe, that his application would be considered, but Mr. Drew was particularly careful to say that priority of claim would not be considered, that his claim would be considered with others if they came along, and that consideration would be given also to the action of this party who are now endeavouring to appeal to the country as injured persons. The case put up was for Mr. Stang and not for the State. The hon. member himself does not deny that he advocated the claims of Mr. Stang.

Mr. Holman: On the promise made that if the area was opened his claim would have priority.

Mr. HEITMANN: But the hon. member has failed to convince the House that Mr. Stang ever received a promise that his application would be approved.

Mr. Holman: I have the promise here.

Mr. HEITMANN: The public has not yet seen it. Even if Mr. Drew promised that Mr. Stang should have priority of claim and it was afterwards learnt that the action of these individuals was such that the claim could not be recommended, he would be failing in his duty to the State if he fulfilled that promise. The Colonial Secretary has been entirely open in the matter. There is nothing on the files to indicate that he had anything to hide. I resent the accusations, the insinuations and innuendoes that have fallen from a member of the party to which I belong and been directed against another member who has proved by many years of strenuous public life that he can be trusted entirely. In conclusion, I may say I am opposed even to the committee being appointed on the motion moved by the hon. member. While that hon. member has pleaded to-night and declared that his motion is impersonal, no one can get away from the personality of the attack which we read in the *West Australian* of January 15th. While on more than one occasion in this Chamber I have crudely criticised

my opponents I think the level to which public life has been dragged by the correspondence in this case is such that the average man will refrain from entering public life, and Western Australia will not get the best men into her public institutions, the men that are required and should be welcomed by all parties.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison—in reply) [11.10]: I am sorry that the member for Geraldton (Mr. Heitmann) has left his seat without giving me an opportunity to reply to him. I have often noticed a similar action on the part of some members after having made statements in this House. In dealing with the correspondence which passed between the Colonial Secretary and myself, I stated on more than one occasion that I was still of the same opinion at the present time, and that the Colonial Secretary had deliberately mis-stated what had taken place. I also pointed out that this was proved by my correspondence. So far as the member for Geraldton is concerned I have no desire to back down one iota from any stand I have taken, because I realise that the whole of the transactions between the Minister and myself, and all other parties connected with the propositions, can be elicited when the select committee deal with the matter. This will achieve my object and is all I desire. The hon. member stated that I had pleaded on 50 occasions for a certain thing, but my remarks, as reported by *Hansard*, will show clearly the stand I have taken. We all realise that it is only a little time since the Colonial Secretary took the hon. member for Geraldton off the streets of Perth or somewhere else and placed him in a position in his own office, and in all probability the hon. member feels called upon to repay the Minister for what was done for him on that occasion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HOLMAN: Before the member for Geraldton first entered this Chamber I travelled the whole of his district and was practically responsible for the success of his candidature. Then, on another occasion, when he was ill and could not—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will not refer to those matters. The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Mr. HOLMAN: I admit it is not worth while discussing a man who makes certain statements and then leaves the House, but this is in keeping with the breed from which he sprang.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will take his seat. I do not wish to interrupt the hon. member but I must call him to order when he embarks upon a discussion of this character. Such statements would not be made by an hon. member when in a calm mood.

Mr. Taylor: The member for Geraldton did not appear to be too calm.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Geraldton did not say anything to make it necessary for me to call him to order. I hope the hon. member will not proceed further on these lines.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not desire to proceed further, seeing that the hon. member has disappeared from the Chamber. I am satisfied that the whole of the information will be elicited during the course of an inquiry. I only wish, however, that the member for Geraldton had remained in his seat to give me an opportunity to reply to him.

Mr. Heitmann: I am sorry.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

Ballot taken, and a select committee appointed consisting of Messrs. James Gardiner, Hudson, Robinson, B. J. Stubbs, together with the mover, with power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to report this day week.

*House adjourned at 11.26 p.m.*