

do it, and I think there are lots of others in the same case. The penalty provided in Clause 93 is altogether too severe. Instead of it being fixed at £50, I think it should read "not exceeding £50."

Hon. W. Kingsmill: That is what it means. It is the maximum. I think you will find it in the Interpretation Act.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I am glad to hear that. Then we find that if the owner does not do certain things the inspector can do them and charge the owner with the cost. So I suppose the owner will have to pay the fine and, in addition, pay for the work being carried out. Then comes the question of poisoned wheat and grain on small farms. It seems to me there is nothing to prevent valuable stock from eating this poisoned grain.

Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister): If a man does not lay poison for the rabbits, he will not be able to carry stock.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: And if the stock eat the poison, there will be no stock left, so where are we?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: On small farms there are pigs, poultry, and valuable sheep, all exposed to the danger of eating the poisoned grain. It is a point worth considering. Clause 104 provides that no person shall drive any cattle along a rabbit-proof fence. In my opinion the owner of the land adjoining the rabbit-proof fence ought to be exempt, because very often it happens that his only way out is by following the fence. I know many instances in which it is impossible for the owners adjoining the fence to get out in any other way. Clause 109 deals with the sale of rabbits. I am perfectly open to conviction, but I cannot help thinking that it would be a good thing if we could arrange for the trapping of rabbits in large quantities and the sending of the carcasses to market. I will support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 16th October, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

### BILL—PRISONS ACT AMENDMENT

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

### MOTION—GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy-Moore) [4.40]: I move—

That on Wednesday, 23rd October, and on each alternate Wednesday thereafter, Government business take precedence of all notices of motion and Orders of the Day, as well as on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

It is customary at this stage to restrict the time allotted to private members' business, and as we have been sitting for two months I find it necessary to submit this motion. It will mean that on next Wednesday Government business will take precedence of all notices of motion and Orders of the Day, and that members' business will be taken on the following Wednesday and every second Wednesday afterwards.

Question put and passed.

### PAPERS—ESTATES RECLASSIFICATION AND REPRICING.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [4.42]: Since I gave notice that it was my intention to move for the production of the papers in connection with the reclassification and repricing of the Narrattarra, Oakabella, and Bowes repurchased estates, I have invited the Minister for Lands and departmental officers to visit Geraldton for the purpose of again going into the question of the reclassification of these estates. A very large deputation of the settlers met the Minister on Friday last and the question was then reopened. If I now move for the production of the papers, the matter may be delayed. Therefore, I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

### MOTION—RAILWAY PROJECT, AJANA TO GERALDINE.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [4.44]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House, the immediate construction of a railway line from Ajana to the Geraldine mines is warranted in order to encourage profitable development and production.

In submitting the motion, I desire to say that I am sorry I am not in a position to invite the members of Cabinet to dinner and provide the comforts which usually attach to that sort of thing, and which assist in creating a feeling which would have the effect of inducing the Government to grant the request. I feel, however, that the justice of the request will meet with their approval without my having to resort to such a practice. I do not wish to recount the various leases and shows which have been developed in Geraldine, because I had an opportunity on a former occasion, perhaps against your wish Sir, of pointing out the amount of development that is proceeding in that area. I have noticed in the Geraldton papers from day to day fresh applications being advertised for the taking up of new mineral leases in this area and also, in addition, that the

representatives of some of the old Imperial freehold grants are entering into negotiations with the prospectors to develop some of the old mines, particularly the old Geraldine mine. The return, supplied to me in connection with the notice of motion which I tabled previously, for the period of six months ended 31st July last gave approximately the total tonnage railed during that time from Ajana to Fremantle as just on 1,000 tons. The whole of that ore has been won from development work. There has been no breaking down of stopes to gain that production, and the development of this area has only commenced practically within the past six months. This ore has had to be carted from Geraldine to Ajana, a distance of some 12 miles by road. The cost of carting varies approximately from 18s. to 20s. a ton. The larger parcels go at the smaller rate of 18s. and the smaller parcels from prospectors and others go at a rate of £1 per ton to the railhead. There are two roads being utilised from the mines to Ajana. I do not wish to be hypercritical of the Government in connection with the assistance they have given to the mines in that particular area, or with regard to the assistance they have rendered to the Northampton roads board in the construction and maintenance of their roads. I have on various occasions approached the Minister for Mines on deputations for assistance for the repair of these roads but have been invariably unsuccessful. The Minister for Mines has said that there was nothing in connection with the Mines Development Vote by which he could possibly assist prospectors up there in this matter, and has always passed me on to his colleague, the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works: I met you with sympathy, did I not?

Mr. MALEY: The Minister has met me with a lot of sympathy, and has always definitely stated one way or the other what he intended to do. I complain, however, that the Minister, before advancing even £100 or £150, made it a condition that the prospectors in that area should also make a contribution. The Minister took the stand that the Northampton roads board should have given pound for pound towards the construction of these roads. This development, however, is new, and the Northampton roads board is in such a financial position that it could not possibly contribute 1s. towards any Government subsidy. Although the Minister for Works granted £150 he stipulated that two of the prospectors, namely Messrs. Green and Morton, should also put up £50.

The Minister for Works: I did not stipulate that.

Mr. MALEY: I admit that we got some assistance from the Government, but it was not commensurate with the requirements of the district or of the mining people there. With the amount of ore which is going to be carted over these roads, it will cost the Government a considerable sum of money to keep them in a proper state of repair.

The Minister for Works: The obligation is not on the Government to repair these roads.

Mr. MALEY: The obligation is on the Government to assist any industry in the State which is producing. If the Government make the people repair these roads themselves and give no assistance whatever, they will be giving no encouragement.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the length of the road?

Mr. MALEY: It is from nine to 12 miles. The output of the Surprise Mine, which is the show place of the district, although it is only one of a dozen other mines, is approximately 130 tons a week. This ore has to be carted from Geraldine to Ajana over these roads. The Premier knows that the roads in this district are the worst in the State. The extension of the railway line will only mean a length of railway of nine or 10 miles. There are already in sight on the Surprise mine alone practically 50,000 tons of ore, and with the extension of this railway it will bring down the cost of production on a reasonable basis 15s. a ton, that is taking into consideration the cost that has to be incurred at present of taking the necessary supplies, such as explosives, and other goods from the railhead out to the mine. That 15s. will mean a saving to the Surprise mine of £37,500. These figures speak plainly, and I think the extension of the railway is warranted on this score alone. I do not wish the House to run away with the idea that the Surprise mine is the only mine in the district, for there are many others, and fresh shows are constantly being taken up and developed. We hope at some future date that the railway will eventually get into the electorate of the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo).

Hon. P. Collier: You want to start out on the long, long trail.

Mr. MALEY: I think it is time the North was given some consideration in the way of transport facilities.

Hon. T. Walker: What about the South?

Mr. MALEY: The South is particularly protected by the motion which the member for Kanowna succeeded in getting through this House.

Hon. T. Walker: We are not protected at all. No notice is taken of it.

Mr. MALEY: Then the motion will not be a stumbling block in the way of this railway. The resolution which was carried in this House with regard to the Esperance line was that the line should take precedence over any line authorised up to that date. I take it that the resolution does not affect any future railways that are authorised on the score of urgency. I do not think that if the Esperance line was built it would bring in production as quickly as would be effected by the extension of the line I am advocating.

Hon. T. Walker: You are mistaken there.

Mr. MALEY: In what way?

Hon. T. Walker: The production is almost unlimited in the South, as are its possibilities.

Mr. MALEY: I have no reason to doubt that eventually the hon. member's assertion will prove to be correct, but I can emphatically state that at present the production in the area I mention is an absolute certainty and is immediately available for the use of the line. The need for the line is undoubted.

If it is the opinion of the Government that production is so essential, it is equally essential that the Government should grant this extension. I have pleasure, therefore, in moving the motion standing in my name.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [4.58]: I have pleasure in supporting the motion. Through the courtesy of the Minister for Mines I had the privilege of visiting this area last January. I was astounded to see the wonderful prospects that had opened up for the development of these lead mines. It is not a pocket or a small field here in connection with these lead mines. We drove for miles, and for at least 20 miles along the river and towards Northampton we were shown new lead mines that were opening up in various centres. The principal mine mentioned by the member for Greenough (Mr. Maley) is an exceedingly rich one. I think the lead ore was something like 13 feet in width, and carried up to 90 per cent. of lead. When, on the 27th February, the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) brought forward his motion that the Esperance railway should be the first constructed, I voted against it, giving it as my reason that between the time the promise was made and the time when the Government would be in a position to build the railway, some field might come into prominence, such as this field is now apparently doing, and warrant a railway being constructed there immediately. I am glad to hear, not only from the member for Greenough but from others who are disinterested in the matter, that these mines are opening up even better than was anticipated. For that reason alone I have no hesitation in supporting the motion. There are, however, several other features I would like to bring forward. This railway would only be about 12 miles in length. At the present time the terminus of the railway ends practically nowhere, but the addition of this 12 miles will take it to a definite point, namely, the Murchison river. Immediately north of the Murchison river, and between that point and Hamlin Pool, there are at least three million acres of good pastoral country which have not even been taken up.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is that matter covered by the terms of this motion?

Mr. ANGELO: It is one of the reasons why I consider this line should be constructed. In these pastoral areas two or three lead mines have already been discovered, and it is believed that others will be found later. I feel certain that if the railway is taken there, this pastoral country, which has been reported as excellent sheep-carrying country, will be taken up; and the rent from that area alone would amount to about £3,000 per annum, which would help materially to pay the cost of construction and working of this proposed railway. It would be one of the connecting points for a new stock route from the Gascoyne to Perth.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not think the hon. member is in order in discussing under this motion a line of railway reaching the Gascoyne.

Mr. ANGELO: The Murchison will be one of the stations on that railway when completed. At present I am advocating that the line should go as far as the Murchison, with, a view, later, of its being continued further north. I men-

tion these features merely to show that the proposed railway, if constructed, will benefit not only the lead mining industry but also assist the pastoral industry by opening up vast areas of new country at present not even touched. The line now is unpayable, and the proposed extension would help to make it a payable proposition. I have great pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [5.3]: During this session we have had several discussions on the lead mines in the Northampton district, and as the mover has said, the House is pretty well aware of the possibilities of those mines. In supporting the motion, I desire to point out that but for the existence of the lead mines the railway running from Northampton to Ajana would be an absolutely unpayable proposition. It is due solely to the existence of those mines, and the working of them, that what would have been one of the most absolutely ghastly failures of our railway system has been turned into something which, if not profitable at least is paying working expenses now. If additional railway facilities were afforded there, by means of this further eight or nine miles of construction, it would mean a largely increased tonnage over the whole line. At present it does not pay to send ore to Fremantle on account of the cost of railway transport, about 17s. 6d. per ton, and £1 representing cost of cartage. With the proposed extension, it would be practicable to ship such ore. That has an important bearing on the situation of that railway as it stands to-day. I agree with the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) that the district has not merely one mine, but that there are many mines which will be opened up in the district. Details of the mining situation there have been given to the House already. If it should be impossible to construct a railway as suggested, perhaps something in the nature of a tramway might be built cheaply, say at a cost of £10,000, and thus save £4,000 annually of cartage now being paid by the lead miners. On those grounds I think the House should carry the motion.

The Minister for Works: Does the cartage amount to £4,000 per annum?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Certainly.

The Minister for Works: Do 1,000 tons of ore cost £4 per ton to cart?

Mr. WILLCOCK: There is an output of 130 tons per week from one mine alone. At £1 per ton cartage, that output would represent over £4,000 per annum. I am calculating that the railway freight would be equivalent to about one-eighth of the cost of cartage. Those are the savings which would be effected by virtue of the extension of the existing railway as suggested by the motion, which I have much pleasure in supporting.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. G. George—Murray-Wellington) [5.7]: This motion is framed in such terms as might be applied to almost any line of railway projected in this State. The Government are not adopting a position of opposing the construction of a line of this kind. They are not prepared to take the position of opposing any railway construction which can be shown to be of value to the people who

have to get their living here. No Government would be justified in doing that out of a mere spirit of opposition.

Hon. T. Walker: What about the Esperance railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But the Government are compelled to take the view that the immediate construction of this railway, or of any other railway, except the Esperance railway, cannot be proceeded with, in view of the resolution passed by this House last session, of which hon. members are well aware. That resolution has the effect of blocking this or any other line from being constructed immediately. Apart from that, a number of railways are already authorised and surveyed, but their construction is not in hand. There is the Esperance Northwards railway, in which the member for Kanowna is very strongly interested. There is the Nyabing-Pingarup line, in which the member for Katanning is interested. Then there are the Dwarda-Narrogin, Busselton-Margaret River, and the Kondinin-Merredin line. The last-named railway at present stops at Emu Hill.

Mr. Maley: Did the construction of any of those railways weigh with the Government when they built the Bullfinch line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was not in the House when the Bullfinch line was authorised. I do not wish the mover to think that I am antagonistic to his proposition. But I do wish the House to understand the situation. If any of these new railways are to be built promptly, the House will have to take some action to relieve the Government from the effect of that resolution of last session. The arguments of the mover in favour of this railway simply come down to this: there are lead mines in the district, in which mines he believes; and the Government are not prepared to dispute that there is a big probability of a large quantity of lead being produced in the Northampton district, thus affording a wide avenue for employment and for the production of wealth in Western Australia. The mover points out, as does also the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willecock), that the working of these mines is seriously handicapped by the cost of cartage. By way of illustration, I may point out that owing to the stoppage of the Kondinin line at Emu Hill the farmers in that district are handicapped to the extent of 180 miles of railway carriage, which they have to pay extra in order to get their produce to market. Further, those farmers, unless they cart over a distance of 25 miles, are handicapped to the extent of nearly 130 miles of railway haulage in getting their stores and supplies from Perth. Those are fairly heavy handicaps for a very worthy class of men.

Mr. Maley: But has not a proposition been put before the Minister?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. That proposition has been discussed now for about two years. But in the face of the resolution to which I have referred, it is impossible for the Government to give those farmers the re-

lief they need. From personal experience and knowledge, having visited the district, I can assure hon. members that there are probably 200 or 300 farmers settled in that area and handicapped to the extent I have stated. Moreover, we have the following surveys authorised but not even started: the Wongan Hills railway extension to junction with Mt. Marshall, the Mt. Marshall to Newearnie railway, and the Armadale Dwarda railway extension. Those are all railway works which have been authorised by previous Parliaments, and which have not been carried out. Unless the resolution passed last session is rescinded, there is absolutely not even "Buckley's show" of getting a survey of the line proposed by this motion, notwithstanding that the Government may be in full sympathy with the project. In the circumstances, to pass a resolution of this nature is utterly useless. It would amount to merely a pious wish of hon. members, which cannot be carried into effect. The mover was good enough to refer to the fact that a deputation waited upon me as Minister for Works in connection with road construction. I gave the deputation some assistance. I gave them what I thought was a fair thing. When the mine owners voluntarily, without any persuasion on my part, offered to give £50 or £60, I looked upon the offer as an instance justifying the proverb about those who help themselves. I thought that as Minister for Works I might be allowed to help them if they were prepared to help themselves; and I did help them. Let me mention that many roads boards in this State are now finding money for works apart from their rates, and are asking the Government to help them with a pound for pound subsidy. In such cases I am prepared to help so far as the means at my command will allow. Moreover, I know that if ratepayers furnish money in that way they will take care to see that the work is done economically and well. On the evidence brought before me as Minister for Works, I could not do more than give a small sum towards the cost of roads. I could not do as much as I would have liked to do, on account of the war. There is a difficulty regarding the survey of this proposed railway extension; and the next difficulty, and the biggest difficulty, is that we cannot get rails. Of the 60 miles of rails which the Scaddan Government had the foresight and the luck to order before they went out of office, we have up to date received 15 miles; and yet all those rails should have been delivered over 18 months ago. That is the position as regards rails. In order to get rails to carry out the sidings required by the Wheat Scheme, I almost landed myself in Fremantle gaol.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There should be no fear of that, seeing the prices charged the farmers for those rails.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am quite satisfied that the farmers do not care whether I go to gaol or not, if only I can house their wheat. However, we could not get the rails at the present time, and I do not see what advantage the hon. member will obtain if he carries the motion, except that he can then show to his constituents that he has created a dissen-

sion and so brought the matter prominently forward.

Hon. P. Collier: That is an imputation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Nothing of the sort. If it is regarded as such I will withdraw it.

Hon. P. Collier: It is unworthy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I only say that the hon. member can show his constituents, which is quite laudable, that he has done his best. I can assure the hon. member that there is no intention to cast any imputation. He will have an opportunity of showing his constituents that he has had the matter discussed, even although it is a hopeless case.

Hon. P. Collier: That he has brought forward a hopeless case for the purpose of pleasing his constituents!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think there is occasion for me to say anything further.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [5.17]: I do not wish to embarrass the Government in any sense of the word, but I desire to emphasise the necessity for carrying out promises as old as constitutional Government in this State. We have a railway commenced at Esperance, but which has been stopped. I was surprised to hear the Minister for Works say to-day that it is not within the province of the Government to object to the construction of railways. In the case mentioned, they not only opposed a railway, but stopped a railway actually in the course of construction.

The Minister for Works: That was another Government, not this one.

Hon. T. WALKER: The hon. member was Minister for Works at the time, and repeatedly said that he took the responsibility for it. And he told us then that as soon as the Royal Commission reported, he could start work within a fortnight.

The Minister for Works: Those were not my words. I said that as soon as I got instructions to go on I could start. So I could.

Hon. T. WALKER: We have heard nothing of proceeding with that line. It is scandalous that we should now hear a half promise that there shall be other railways built while that part of the State is absolutely languishing. A great wrong has been done, for which no complete reparation can be made. I decidedly object to the construction of the proposed line whilst the Esperance line is left untouched. At the same time I fully admit the justice of the case the hon. member has put up for this proposed railway. Some efforts ought to be made, and if the rails can be found for other purposes, these necessary works should be undertaken. There is no reason why I should not vote for the proposed new line, providing that it is to be placed amongst the others that ought to be constructed; there is nothing to prevent my line having its proper precedence if I vote for this proposed new line. It is a necessary work, and ought to be undertaken at the earliest opportunity. It is certainly not of the Bullfinch railway order, according to the evidence given. I will support the motion. At the same time I trust that

even these nine or ten miles of railway will not be built until I get nine or ten miles at Esperance.

Mr. Pickering: What would be the use of nine or ten miles at Esperance?

Hon. T. WALKER: It would be something.

Mr. Maley: It would be a step in the right direction.

Hon. T. WALKER: That is so. People now nine miles away from a railway are not in a very difficult position.

Mr. Maley: Even on a mining proposition?

Hon. T. WALKER: Even on a mining proposition that distance from a railway is not an insuperable disadvantage with lead at the present high price. When the war is over and lead comes down to normal, there will be even more force in the argument for the immediate construction of the line. I wish to emphasise the fact that a wrong has been done to the Esperance district and that the urgency for the building of that line is always present in the minds of the people of the district. If it came to the actual building of this proposed new line, I would have to take my stand and consider whether the circumstances warrant the building of this line in precedence to the Esperance railway. At the present time I shall not oppose the motion.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.23]: I am in the unfortunate position of representing a district that for the last 60 years has languished for a railway. While I am prepared to support the motion, I am not prepared to concede that my district should be deprived of its railway for one moment longer than is necessary.

Hon. T. Walker: Is not Busselton dead?

Mr. PICKERING: No, it is very much alive.

The Minister for Works: Where is Busselton?

Mr. PICKERING: When we consider that this railway in the South-West was one of the first to be promised—

Mr. SPEAKER: There is nothing in the motion about a railway in the South-West. The hon. member must deal with the motion for the Ajana railway extension.

Mr. PICKERING: But the member for Kanowna dealt with the Esperance railway.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member referred to a railway that was authorised by Parliament and has been actually in construction. But we cannot discuss all railway propositions under this motion.

Mr. PICKERING: This railway in my district has been passed by Parliament. I think there should be an addendum to the motion that all promised railways should be constructed in their order of precedence. The railway in my electorate should have been built many years ago, and probably would have been but for the brutal treatment it received at the hands of past Governments, and which it is now endeavoured to extend by putting other railways in priority to mine. I may agree with the member for Greenough that this proposed new line is necessary,

but certainly it is not more necessary than is the railway in my district.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [5.25]: I can realise with the member for Greenough the importance of the lead mining industry in the Geraldine district. I visited the district myself, and I know that there is much wealth already visible there, while I fully believe that there is a very large amount of wealth still hidden in the earth. We have great wealth in that district, but of course lead cannot be worked unless the cost of production is made as low as possible. That has been the trouble in the past at Geraldine, namely, that although the lead was there, the cost of getting it to market was so great that it did not pay at the price then obtainable. At the present time, owing to war conditions, the price of lead has gone up, and people have been encouraged to again engage in that industry. I am pleased to think that some important discoveries have been made in that district, because it gives hope that we shall have greater developments there in future. We have now one or two mines newly opened, and there is evidence that a great deal of prospecting is going on through the district. We have one mine in operation at Narratarra, where the residents number about 150 souls, and it is encouraging to see the excellent way in which that mine is being worked under modern methods. I know that the railway to Ajana cannot stop there, but sooner or later must be extended further north. At the present time the State is in such a position that it cannot engage in the building of new railways. I think the railway to Ajana is warranted on the present development, if only the country were in a position to build it. Ajana is about 50 miles from Geraldton, and about another 12 miles would bring the railway into the heart of the mining district. But we are surrounded by a good many difficulties, and I am somewhat surprised at the wording of the motion, in view of the position the hon. member took up in regard to a motion moved by the member for Kanowna on the 27th February last. The House will remember that the motion moved by the member for Kanowna was as follows:—

That in the opinion of this House the first railway to be constructed in pursuance of the programme of railway construction authorised by Parliament should be the Esperance Northward line.

Of course if one desired to be hypercritical, one might read that to mean that it should only apply to railways already authorised; so if the House proposed to authorise a new railway, that new railway could be constructed forthwith in the face of this motion moved by the member for Kanowna. The hon. member for Greenough (Mr. Maley) is not satisfied with that. An amendment was moved by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) to add the following words to the motion of the member for Kanowna, "That all railways should be built in order of their precedence as they were authorised by Parliament." That would lay down a distinct rule that all railways should be built in the order of precedence as they were authorised by Parliament. I pointed out at the time that difficulty would arise if we allowed that amendment to pass, and after some little

discussion it did not pass, but the member for Greenough with six other members of the House supported the amendment. The hon. member supported the proposal that all railways should be built in their order of precedence as they were authorised by Parliament. In view of that amendment which was supported by the hon. member for Greenough, but which the House objected to, the hon. member cannot now well come and ask the House, after only eight months, to really upset the amendment which he supported at that time. This railway I believe is warranted, and if the Government were in a position to build a railway to the Geraldine mining district and there was money it might be built. There are many railways in Western Australia that are warranted at the present time. There are railways which have already been authorised by this House. I know myself of a district in the Eastern wheat area north of the goldfields line, in the Yorkkrake district, where there is a large number of settlers pining for a railway, men who have been doing well opening up the country, not a few, but a large number of settlers who have been doing splendid work. These men are carting up to 25 miles to a railway. These are the people we should assist if we possibly can. These men have gone out and in spite of difficulties which they have had to surmount, have endeavoured to open up the country under the promise that a railway would be constructed—I can scarcely put it that way but there was an understanding given that a railway would be constructed there in the course of time.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I had something to do with that; I know something about it. The railway was built but was put further out in consequence of the action of a pressman.

The PREMIER: It is difficult to know what is going to happen year by year in a country like this. A few years ago one would not have thought that the present developmental work would be going on in the Geraldine district. There is only one real going-concern opened up there at the present time. No doubt the argument might be used that there is great difficulty in transport and that there is not sufficient encouragement for further work being done. That is a good argument, still it is doubtful whether the Government are justified in immediately constructing this railway to Geraldine in view of the fact that so many railways have already been authorised by the House in order to encourage the production from the soil. Production increases with work on the land and does not diminish as it does in the production from a mine, and consequently under the circumstances I am sure the hon. member will not endeavour to press his motion in the terms in which he has moved it. If the hon. member asked the House to say that a railway to the Geraldine district—an extension of the Ajana line—was warranted in order to encourage proper development and production, I do not think the House would seriously object to it. I think it is no doubt warranted and if the country was in a position to build the railway, it might do so, but the country is not in a position at the present moment unless some further development takes place

there. I told the people in that district when I was there a short time ago, and when the question of extending the railway from Ajana was brought before me, that I was sure when development took place in the district which warranted the construction of a railway, the Government of the day, whatever that Government was, would be prepared to build a railway if the country was in a position to do so. That was the proper position to take up and any Government desiring the development of this country when they find that by the construction of a short line like this that the country can be developed and encouraged, would be prepared to build the line. At the same time, I think the hon. member in view of the opinion expressed by his vote only eight months ago would not be justified in asking the House to agree to the motion in the form in which it now stands. He could not merely ask the House to say that in its opinion the immediate construction of the railway line from Ajana to Geraldine was warranted. We can scarcely say that.

Hon. T. Walker: You say you could not do it.

The PREMIER: We are not in a position to do it now. We might scrape the money together somehow but it would not be fair to other parts of Western Australia.

Hon. T. Walker: You could not get the rails.

The PREMIER: Even if we could I do not think we should do it at the present moment, if we could find money. I think the money could be spent in a more profitable way than in extending this railway. There are many industries in this country which ought to be encouraged in every possible way. I hope the hon. member will amend the motion in a way in which it will be acceptable to the House. I do not wish to throw cold water on the motion so far as to express the view that a railway to Geraldine will never be warranted, for I hope the time is not far distant when it will be warranted. If the railway was extended another 12 miles it would bring about a great deal of development work in the lead mines and also the copper mines, because there is a considerable amount of copper there as well as lead which would be of great advantage to the country. In the present form I cannot accept the motion and I trust the hon. member will be able to submit it in such a form that it will be acceptable to the House.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.40]: After listening to the Premier and the Minister for Works, I agree that the motion requires amending and I move an amendment—

That the word "immediate" in line 2 be struck out.

The Premier has told us that the railway is warranted, though it is only 10 miles from the present line. If this was in the Old Country they would never dream of building a railway for one mine nor for a dozen mines. In the district I came from there were 20 mines 10 miles from a railway and all the haulage had to be done by horses. I guarantee there are a dozen mines in that district

to-day, but when we come to this country where there is a two-penny half-penny show employing half a dozen men, at once there is an outcry for a railway. I wish merely to point out to members that no sooner do men dig a hole in the ground than they want a railway to it. The Premier has visited the district and he told us that the prospects warranted the construction at some time of a railway when the money is available and when the railway material is available.

The Premier: And more development.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: For the reasons I have stated I move the amendment.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [5.42]: I am absolutely against the carrying of this meaningless motion, a motion apparently designed to deceive people. I have in mind the fact that the Premier last year met a very representative deputation on the goldfields relating to another railway which has been urged by the member for Kanowna. If at that time the Premier was sincere, and undoubtedly he was sincere, he led the deputation to believe that when the rails were available Esperance would be connected with the Eastern goldfields by rail. I do not know whether the Premier at that time regarded his promise in the same light as he desires to regard this amended motion, but I say it would be infinitely more honest and straightforward and decent of the House if members turned down a motion of this description instead of amending it to humbug the people. The Premier distinctly promised the deputation on the Eastern goldfields that the Esperance Bay railway would be constructed as soon as the rails were available.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you think it is warranted?

Mr. LAMBERT: I am absolutely confident that it is warranted.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are the rails available?

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know, but the Premier was sincere in the promise made, or I hope he was. I have no desire to discount the claims put forward by the member for Greenough, but I say at the earliest possible date, if the Government have any regard for the mining industry of this country, they will connect the Eastern Goldfields with Esperance Bay.

Mr. Harrison: This is a mining railway too.

Mr. LAMBERT: I quite know that, and I am quite in accord with the member for Greenough in his desire to assist the metaliferous mines in his locality, but his proposal is insignificant in comparison with the building of the link between the Eastern goldfields and Esperance.

Mr. Harrison: What traffic would you get?

Mr. LAMBERT: We have at the present time the Transcontinental Railway in competition with our own State railways, and I do not think we are getting that benefit from the extension of that line eastwards that we should be receiving. We would, however, derive greater benefit by the opening up of more territory of value to the State if the Government realised the importance of connecting up Esperance by rail and carried out that work.

I am quite with the member for Kanowna in stressing that point.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are not discussing the Esperance railway.

Mr. LAMBERT: If the carrying of this motion implies that the railway asked for by the member for Greenough will be built before the Esperance line, you, Mr. Speaker, will bear with me when I contend I am in order in putting forward the claims of a railway the construction of which has already been authorised. The Premier will frankly admit that he has promised to link up the Esperance district with the Eastern goldfields.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the motion; I cannot allow him to allude to the Eastern Goldfields.

Mr. LAMBERT: If the carrying of this motion implies that the suggested railway will be built before the others which are already authorised, or which may be more necessary, I will certainly not support the motion or the amendment. If the motion is amended on the lines suggested by the member for North-East Fremantle it will only have the effect of humbugging the people in the Geraldine district. It would be more straightforward on our part if we turned down the motion altogether. I would prefer to see the member for Greenough persevere with his motion without the amendment and then, if the House should turn it down, the people interested will know the attitude of hon. members towards the proposal. But if it is going to carry an implied promise that to-morrow, or the day after, or in a century hence, the railway will be built, it will be dishonest and distinctly unfair to the people there. It will also be unfair to the people of the Eastern Goldfields because of the promise which was made, apparently sincerely by the Premier, that when rails were available the work of constructing the Esperance line would be put in hand. I hope that the first railways to be built will be those which are urgently required, and if the importance of those lines is taken into consideration, there will not be the slightest doubt about the work of constructing the Esperance line being put in hand.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough—on amendment) [5.50]: I am prepared to accept the amendment moved by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. G. Angwin). I cannot understand the logic of the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) in urging that the construction of a railway to the Margaret River Caves, or somewhere there, for picnicking purposes, is of greater importance than a short railway which will have the effect of helping in the development of the State.

Mr. Pickering: On a point of order, is the hon. member justified in referring to the Busselton-Margaret River railway in such terms?

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr. MALEY: The Premier has requested me not to press the motion. On the other hand, his colleague, the Minister for Works, was uncharitable enough to make an imputation against me, but having withdrawn it,

it would not be good form on my part to dilate on it. I absolutely detest anything of that nature. With regard to the Geraldine mines, I desire to say that they are of a wonderfully high average value. The Premier made some remarks about the mines at Baddera and Narratarra. I may state that these mines are working ore, averaging 14 per cent. I would point out that a fair average of the mines at Geraldine is from 40 to 60 per cent. taken right across the ore channel. In the future, when the price of lead must go down after the termination of the war, of course only the higher grade mines will succeed, and the mines at Geraldine will therefore have to be provided for. The residents of this State some 40 years ago were energetic enough to build the Northampton railway. At that time the population of Western Australia was only 14,000 souls, and that line was the first built in the State, the object of its construction being to encourage the lead industry at Northampton. If the people of Western Australia were energetic enough in those days to construct such a short line of railway, and if an additional nine miles now will assist to make that and other lines profitable, the work should be undertaken. If the Government do not agree to the motion they have no enterprise left in them. They are calling out for production; here is one avenue by which they can encourage it.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.53]: I have no wish to throw cold water on the aspirations of the hon. member who has moved the motion, but the House would not be justified in seriously declaring that the construction of a railway is warranted to the district in question upon the information which we have before us. Has the House been given sufficient facts and figures regarding the present development, and the prospective development, of the Geraldine district to enable us, as a set of common sense business men, to say that the construction of a line is justified. I will not say that a railway is not warranted, but I do say that the House should have more information before deliberately declaring that the line should be built. It would be wrong, too, if the House, in an offhand fashion, raised what might prove to be the false hopes of the people in that district. We know that in the list read out by the Minister for Works there are several hundred miles of railways authorised, and that the authorisation in some cases goes back several years, and also that there is no possible chance of the construction of these lines in the near future. To pass a motion such as that moved by the member for Greenough would have the effect of conveying an impression—and not only an impression but it would also be an assurance—to the people of the Geraldine district that the outcome of the passage of the motion meant that the line would be constructed, when we know full well that such would not be the case. To

pass the motion would be decidedly unfair to those other districts which have been waiting for authorised railways to be built for some years past. I am not making any complaint with regard to the hon. member's action; he has made out as good a case as he is in a position to present to the House; but I do say that the case as submitted to us is not sufficient to justify our taking action. Before a Government decides that a railway must be constructed in a particular district, it is the practice to send out responsible officers of the Lands Department to report upon the area, and the value and the quality of the land to be served by the proposed railway. Investigations are also made by competent engineers as to the cost, and other aspects of the question are taken into consideration. The railway advisory board reports upon the matter, and then after the Government have received the fullest possible information from all those sources Cabinet decides whether the facts are sufficient to justify them in asking Parliament to pass a Bill for the construction of the line. Something like that should be done in this case. I do not wish to vote against the motion. I may be doing the district an injustice. I am not in a position to judge upon the matter but the hon. member, I take it, has attained his end by ventilating in this House the need for this particular line. He has brought the matter forward prominently under the notice of the Government and I take it that the necessary inquiries will now be made. Having done that he should not press the motion; at least he should consent to an adjournment of the debate.

On motion by Mr. Piesse debate adjourned.

#### PAPERS—"ULYSSES" STRANDING INQUIRIES.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kauowna) [6.0]: I move—

That there be laid on the Table of the House all papers relating to the stranding of the "Ulysses" and subsequent inquiries dealing with the case of Pilot Williamson.

I understand there is no objection to these papers being laid on the Table of the House and therefore there is no need to make any lengthy remarks. Everybody is aware of the matter to which reference is made. It was of considerable interest at the time and I understand that Pilot Williamson is not satisfied with the treatment he has received since the inquiries, that is to say, the original inquiry and that conducted by the Royal Commission. The "Sunday Times" of the 22nd September published a statement which was made by Pilot Williamson and that in itself is sufficient justification for hon. members being placed in possession of the facts. It is not more than is sought for in the motion. I will content myself with moving the motion standing in my name.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister) [6.0]: The Government offer no objection to these papers being laid on the Table

and have had the pleasure of sailing with him on the same ship. I always found him a very good and attentive officer, and have no intention of opposing the motion.

Question put and passed.

#### MOTION—HARBOUR BOARD, BUNBURY, TO DISALLOW REGULATION.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [6.2]: I move—

That Regulation 104a of the Bunbury Harbour Board, laid upon the Table of this House on the 8th October, be disallowed.

The regulation in question is one purporting to be made under the powers given by the Bunbury Harbour Board Act of 1909. By that Act and by the Interpretation Act of 1898 it is necessary that such regulation shall be published in the "Government Gazette" and within 14 days laid upon the Table of the House. This particular regulation is on the Table of the House now, and I am taking the earliest opportunity of bringing the matter before the House to show cause why this Chamber should disallow it. The regulation reads as follows:—

His Excellency the Governor-in-Council has been pleased to approve the following regulation made by the Bunbury Harbour Board, with effect from the 27th September, 1918:—"104a. Owing to conditions brought about by the European war all wharfages (inwards and outwards), port dues, tonnage and berthing dues, are subject to a special war surtax of 20 per cent. upon the amounts of the dues or charges which may become payable under the headings mentioned. This surtax shall continue in operation during the continuance of the war, or as circumstances dictate in the discretion of the members of the board."

I will deal firstly with the wording of the regulation before dealing with the merits of the case. I think the House will fully appreciate the necessity of any regulation of this nature being perfectly definite, so that any person reading it may understand what it means and what it purports to enforce. The regulation says—

This surtax shall continue in operation during the continuance of the war.

I submit that had the regulation stopped there we would all have understood exactly how long it would be enforced, but by the addition of the words—

Or as circumstances dictate in the discretion of the members of the board.

No one can have any idea for what period the regulation will be enforced. Does it mean that the members of the board may enforce it for a shorter period than the period of the war? Does it mean that members of the board may add a period to the period of the war, and enforce it for a certain time after the war, or does it mean that the regulation will be there for all time, subject to the wishes of, or discretion which may be exercised at any time by, the members of the board? If it is not intended that the period of the war shall be the period governing that in which the regulation shall be in operation, then for the regulation to be good that period of the war could

as the period of time during which the regulation should be in existence. On the other hand, if it is intended that the period of the war shall be the stated period during which the regulation shall be in force, the latter part of it should be cut out entirely, and that should be the definite time in which the regulation should be in operation. I am sure that on the grounds of indefiniteness alone, as to the meaning of the latter portion of the regulation, this should be sufficient for it to be disallowed by the House. We are responsible when these regulations are laid before us, for their wording, and I am sure no one in the Chamber would desire a regulation of such indefiniteness and uncertainty to go forward as having been passed by us. Furthermore, when these regulations are passed by Parliament they have the same effect as an Act of Parliament, and it is therefore necessary that they should be sent forth in clear and unmistakable language. I anticipate that the Minister may be glad to have this regulation disallowed in order that it may be cleared of its present indefinite character. With regard to the merits of the regulation, I would like to remind the House that the profits of the Bunbury Harbour Board in the past have been made entirely from the dues that have been paid by the exporters of the South-West, I mean in particular the timber exporters. Not only have these exporters paid in dues the necessary working expenses of the board for some time prior to the war, but they have in addition paid the interest and sinking fund on the capital expenditure, and further, have paid a very considerable amount into the Consolidated Revenue of the State. This is in fact a very good business proposition for Western Australia. I am satisfied that in the future not only will it be as good a business proposition as it has been in the past, but that when the war is over it will far exceed any business which it has done in the past. In spite of all that has been paid into the Bunbury Harbour Board, they are now asked by this regulation to pay an extra due of 20 per cent. in the form of a surtax.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have not paid much during the last two or three years.

Mr. MONEY: I spoke of what had been paid before the war. For the five years prior to the war we paid into Consolidated Revenue no less than £49,000, which is a very considerable sum.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How much of that was interest?

Mr. MONEY: I mention this to show that we have been good customers to the State in the years before the war. I am speaking now of the timber industry of the South-West. This industry has not only made the South-West, but I am not sure that it has not half made the State as a whole. The moment that this industry was unable to supply and feed the railways with its products the revenue of the railways came down to such an extent that this circumstance has been given as an explanation in part of the financial position of Western Australia to-day. I need not, therefore, dilate too much on an industry the importance of which we all fully appreciate. Although we have done so much for

more than any other single industry in Western Australia is being hit through the absence of shipping in the required tonnage at our ports. This has necessitated the closing down of many of our mills, and the cessation of business. Is it wise, therefore, to hit us harder and to increase our losses by imposing upon us at this stage this surtax of 20 per cent.? Seeing that we have paid so much into Consolidated Revenue in the past, surely the Consolidated Revenue can help to bridge the Bunbury Harbour Board over the period of the war, without its being necessary for such an impost to be inflicted. If we had not paid that large amount into Consolidated Revenue in the past, there might have been some argument in favour of the impost. Had the amount which has gone into Consolidated Revenue been put into a reserve fund, as should have been the case, we should then have known what relief we could have looked for in these times of stress when we required a little monetary assistance.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The revenue would suffer very much if it were all earmarked in this way. There must be some departments showing a profit in order to make up for the losses in Consolidated Revenue in other directions.

Mr. MONEY: We know that the money has gone into Consolidated Revenue, and we are therefore entitled, as it were, to draw to some extent on our reserve, and to look upon that money as a reserve fund. I take it it is undenied that the timber industry to-day is at a low ebb. I mention that to show the reasonableness of the plea that the timber industry should receive fair treatment. The timber export contracts that are in existence to-day are made as a rule four or five months ahead. This surtax of 20 per cent. has been imposed without any prior notice whatever except the publication in the "Government Gazette" of 27th September, and comes into force immediately.

The Minister for Works: How much per load does it represent?

Mr. MONEY: Approximately 6d. per load.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MONEY: Before tea I was mentioning the fact that this surtax of 20 per cent. was imposed by publication in the "Government Gazette" of the 27th September and came into effect immediately. If it is not retrospective legislation it is almost equal to it. It borders so closely on retrospection that it is equally bad and detrimental and unjust to those affected by it, in this way: if I had been left to suppose that for the next three or four months a law would be in operation, I should quote accordingly and make my contracts, and if my supposition is wrong and the law is altered sooner than the three or four months, then as far as I am concerned it is equal to retrospection. From past experience in the House we know that members have entirely rejected legislation of a retrospective nature or legislation that works harshly to those whom it affects. It

paid by the timber industry, but that the surtax is wharfage. I am informed by those concerned in the industry that their contracts are to place the timber free on board, and in many cases the timber companies charter vessels, and are actually shippers. I have also been reminded that this tax is the same as that at Fremantle. That may be perfectly correct, but Fremantle is not affected in the same way as the ports of the South-West. The ports of the South-West are entirely dependant for their revenue on the export of timber—I say that approximately—and I think the Minister will agree with me that, if a mistake has been made at Busselton by having a tax imposed there, the Minister will see that the tax is removed.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It was never on.

Mr. MONEY: I accept the Minister's statement. It only shows the House how much the timber has suffered because the Minister says that at one port it does not matter how much the tax is, because they do not notice it. It shows the smallness of the trade. If the industry is suffering that is all the more reason why we should relieve it, instead of increasing the burdens. In reference to this retrospective legislation, if it has the slightest idea of retrospection, I may point out that 13 or 14 years ago it was decided to increase freights on timber carried in Western Australia. It was then pointed out that there were existing contracts, and, immediately it was recognised by the then Government that the increase was affecting the contracts in existence, all the timber which was supplied to the existing contracts was exempt from the increase in freight. There is no difference between an increase in railway freights in one case and an increase in harbour dues in the other. It is exactly the same, whether an increase of railway freights or harbour dues. I remember, when discussing the Land and Income Tax Bill, what a cry there was when it was suggested that there should be a retrospective tax, and it must be within the recollection of the House that one tax was abandoned and another repealed because it was supposed to be wrong in principle. In a case like this, where there is a recognised hardship, I cannot see how any Government—and I do not think the present Government intend it—can desire to impose a tax of this nature if it will work a hardship and where it works an injustice to the people concerned. It may not be a large matter, it may only affect 15,000 or 16,000 loads of timber, yet if the principle is right, and if we desire to do right, I am satisfied the House will not allow a regulation that works a hardship in any shape or form to stand. Reverting to what I said in opening, that it would be wrong for the House to pass legislation, because this is equal to legislation—I submit, on reading this regulation, especially that portion that refers to the period of time during which it shall be in existence, I venture to state there is not a member who can say how long it will be in

existence. There is an attempt made to be definite, but it ends up by being very indefinite. It is wrong in principle and in every shape whatever. I think I have said sufficient to prove to the House the necessity for the regulation being disallowed.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [7.40]: In view of the financial position that exists in the State, I take it that all members are reluctant to take any action that will deprive the Treasurer of revenue, but I think the Treasurer in his financial methods is desirous that we shall secure as much revenue as possible and at the same time be just.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is justice in this.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That may be the opinion of the member for North-East Fremantle, but I think the member for Bunbury has made out an excellent case. I am not going to challenge his opinion as to the retrospective character of the regulation; I do not know how it can be retrospective, but he has a better knowledge of the definition of terms than I have.

Mr. Nairn: I think the hon. member means the effect on contracts.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There is a vital difference between a taxation measure and a regulation. Taxation that is injurious and that will affect existing business is foreshadowed, and in the various readings of the measure and the subsequent passage there is some indication or warning given. Take as a parallel case those engaged in the liquor trade. Those people know for a definite period ahead what is the proposed law, and as a consequence they enter into their contracts accordingly.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): This has been in existence at Fremantle for years.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It may be in existence at Fremantle, but if the Minister had intimated that it was going to come into force at Bunbury, there would have been an element of justice about it. All the hon. member asks is that some should be allowed in regard to future contracts. I do not think the Minister, however keen he may be to get revenue, desires to be unfair in bringing in a new impost.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): This was held up for a long time.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the shippers had no knowledge on entering into existing contracts and those contracts are subject to the surtax, then I claim they had no warning.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Who pays the tax?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The general assumption is that the consumer at the other end of the world pays, but that does not apply in this case. The hon. member knows that this primary industry has had a severe trial.

Member: Do you think you will get your shipping freights any cheaper?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I know one man engaged in the timber industry who occasionally is able to secure a small order from South Africa to enable him to keep going in the smallest possible way, and I know how difficult it is for him to get those occasional ship-

ments to keep his plant at work. If he can secure higher prices from overseas, then let those overseas pay for it. I have never stood in the way of people operating in this State.

Hon. J. Mitchell: They pay less in South Australia.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am not dealing with South Australia; I am dealing with people overseas.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But this affects South Australia.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not think it does. I think the whole position has been altered in the Eastern States. There has been during the last six months something approaching a famine in the Eastern States and the prices have gone up on two occasions. At the present time there is a keen demand for what timber can be shipped away, but the ships are so scarce. Still I believe the biggest company operating in the State has secured two sailing vessels to call at Bunbury. I know one contractor who occasionally gets a small shipment away; he has received no warning as to the imposition of this regulation. I put it to the Government that no serious result will accrue to the Treasurer by giving the required 10 or 12 weeks' notice before the regulation shall take effect. Instead of operating from the 27th September, why should it not operate from the 1st January next, then those entering into contracts overseas will know they are going to be loaded with the additional impost and make provision for it. I believe any man of business would say that that was only a fair proposal.

The Attorney General: Is the timber sold f.o.b. Bunbury?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes. The member for North-East Fremantle, of course, will say that this regulation obtains at Fremantle. That is quite true. But the bulk of the timber shipments from Western Australia go through the port of Bunbury. That port has been practically dead as regards shipping.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But it is the ship that pays those charges.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There is no shipping of any consequence going on at Bunbury. In fact, there are very few ships available to lift timber at any of our ports.

Mr. Pickering: Some timber is being shipped from Busselton.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The regulation will not affect the port of Busselton to the extent of £40. But, as regards the port of Bunbury, the imposition of such a regulation without notice is utterly unfair. The men engaged in the shipment of our timber know pretty well what tonnage they will be able to secure during the next 12 months. Let me point out that the timber industry has had the hardest row to hoe of all industries in this State. I am not pleading for timber shippers further than this, that if the new taxation is to be imposed the Government should, in all fairness, give some notice or warning, in order that provision may be made by shippers for the increased imposts. One could deal extensively with the disabilities of the timber industry. It would have paid the mill owners, when the war broke out, to shoot dead a thou-

sand horses, a thousand of the finest horses in this State, which, in the belief that the war would not last more than 12 months, the mill owners sent to the Murchison to be paddocked. Absolutely it would have paid the mill owners to shoot those horses. True, the position of the industry has improved; but I do not think the Government should impose further burdens on an industry which has suffered so much. Therefore, I say it would be a good principle not to impose regulations such as this without notice. Why was not this regulation made at Bunbury simultaneously with Fremantle?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Because the Bunbury Harbour Board did not recommend it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: What do they say now?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): They recommend it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Then I do not think they are recommending it in the best interests of the industry affected.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): The timber industry is comparatively infinitesimal, so far as this increase applies.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the amount involved with respect to the timber industry is so insignificant, why oppose the motion; why refuse three months' notice of the new regulation? The amount may be insignificant to the Treasurer, with his gaping deficit; but it may be very important to those working on the very narrowest margin of profit in getting an occasional shipment away.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Some of the stuff handled by the Bunbury Harbour Board pays 6s. per ton, while timber pays about 10d.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Notice of the regulation should undoubtedly be given, and I shall be surprised if the board do not recommend that notice be given.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): The Government intend to go into the matter again.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Could not the Government accept the mover's suggestion, namely, disallow the regulation and then make a new regulation?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I intend to move the adjournment of the debate. I want to think the matter over.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The matter is so simple that it should not require much thinking over. I am not desirous of preventing the Treasurer from getting a little more revenue wherever he can, provided he lets us know where and when he is going to get it. No taxation measure comes into force before it is gazetted. In this case, the regulation comes into force immediately it has been made, without any notice being given.

Hon. J. Mitchell: How do prices f.o.b. at the present day compare with prices before the war?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I dare say there has been a decrease in prices, for the reason that competition has cut the trade to the bone, competition entered into with a view to keeping going. Some firms have complained that in the

matter of prices they have been almost annihilated, and that it is utterly impossible for them to show a profit, although they have kept their mills at work in order to hold their men together and employ their plant. I know that the tendency everywhere is to put up prices, but in this connection I am speaking of the necessity the firms are under to retain their oversea markets. The mill owners have a few vessels coming, and they have contracted at small margins of profit in order to fill those boats. Therefore, any further impost would be entirely unfair.

Mr. Teesdale: Did not the mill owners know of the regulation when making those contracts?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No. Those contracts now to be shipped were made as long as six months ago. Consequently, I trust the Government will consent to the disallowing of this regulation, and in the interests of fair play accept the substitution suggested by the member for Bunbury. I have pleasure in seconding the motion.

Resolved: that motions be continued.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [7.50]: Last session I dealt with a motion somewhat similar to this one. The difference between myself and the mover, however, was that I had no objection to the surtax, but that I objected to the discretionary power of the Fremantle Harbour Board as regards the duration of the surtax.

Mr. Money: We do not object to this surtax after a certain date.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I then pointed out to hon. members that this House could not get a certain taxation measure passed through another place without the insertion of a definite date. Such imposts are always subject to disallowance by members of this Parliament. We have power to disallow charges sent here by the Governor. For my part, I object to the latter portion of the new regulation, which sets forth that the surtax is to continue until the end of the war, and, at the discretion of the board, thereafter. I certainly object to that. There should be no differentiation in the matter of harbour dues and wharfage charges. Throughout Australia the port authorities have found it necessary to impose a surtax during war time. Fremantle did it some time ago, and it has been done elsewhere. During the last three or four years several hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent at Bunbury.

Mr. Money: And interest and sinking fund was paid on that expenditure up to the war.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The interest and sinking fund have to be met. In 1916-17 a revenue of £10,000 was expected from Bunbury, but the actual receipts were £6,000.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Who made the estimate? The man who made it had no idea of the depression in the timber industry.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The estimate was made by the Bunbury Harbour Board, who should have known what was likely to take place. Three or four years ago the interest bill of the Bunbury Harbour Board on capital expenditure was between £8,000 and £10,000.

Mr. Money: They paid that, and had a surplus.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What is the use of going back 10 or 12 years to look for a surplus? The same thing applies to the Bunbury Harbour Board as to the Railway Department. The revenue received by the Bunbury Harbour Board in 1917-18 was £4,750. The Consolidated Revenue had to find the balance required for interest and sinking fund. This year the Treasurer expects to get £6,000 from the board. Then the board will again be short of the amount they require for interest and sinking fund. Again, if a tax is imposed in one port, it should be imposed in all the ports.

Mr. Money: We do not object after the 1st January, after notice.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The mover and the seconder stated that contracts were made six months or more ago. Can any member believe that shipping arrangements for those contracts were made six months or more ago?

Mr. O'Loghlen: Yes, certainly.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I guarantee that the Minister for Works has timber now lying at Big Brook and Manjimup for which orders were taken before the war.

Mr. O'Loghlen: That supports our argument.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: By no means. The cost entailed by this regulation is charged to the ship. The charges for machinery and everything else used at Bunbury is debited to the ship, as part of the operation of loading the cargo.

Mr. Money: But when timber is delivered f.o.b.?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When a ship uses the harbour board's machinery in lieu of its own, it has to pay for that.

Mr. Money: I am assured the shippers pay wharfage.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not take so much notice of the shippers. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Brown) can bear me out in the statement that these charges are paid by the ship. What does it mean? There may be a ship, or a couple of ships, coming into Bunbury during the next three months; and this motion asks us to place the port of Bunbury in a position of advantage to the extent of 20 per cent. over other ports of this State for the next three months.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Did not Bunbury have that advantage before this regulation was gazetted?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The corresponding regulation came into force at Fremantle immediately it had been made. Do the Federal Government let us know beforehand when Customs duties are raised?

Mr. O'Loghlen: But you provided for 10 years' notice to the liquor trade.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. I provided 10 years for compensation, which at that time I considered just and right.

Mr. O'Loghlen: I agree with you there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But in this case we are faced with the fact that the Consolidated Revenue, which is at present almost bankrupt, has additional interest and sinking fund to meet in respect of the Bunbury harbour. It is necessary that that increased interest and sinking fund should be met, and the increase is due to expenditure which is taking place or has taken place at Bunbury.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): There are heavy dredging charges.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There has been a new breakwater built there and there is a demand for new berths at the end of the wharf. Who is going to pay the interest? Are the people in the State to pay it, or those who use the harbour?

Mr. O'Loughlen: It will be paid when times are normal.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It will make no difference so far as the timber trade is concerned. If we are going to give the timber trade a bonus, we may as well give it straight out, but not in this way.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It has not had a bonus yet.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I did not say it had, but the Minister for Industries said so the other night.

The Minister for Works: I suppose you know they are paying extra railage.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That has nothing to do with the shipping. I think the Minister should agree to alter the regulation by striking out the words "at the discretion of the board." That should be a matter for Parliament to decide.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): If the words are left out it will come to the same thing.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. If the charges are fixed to a certain date, at the end of that time they automatically cease, and in order to continue them there must be the approval of Parliament. In this regulation, although it is set out "to the end of the war," there is also stated "or at the discretion of the board," and that is what I object to. I raised a similar objection in connection with the Fremantle regulations, and the Minister agreed to an alteration being made. I hope he will do the same here, but I would ask hon. members whether they can expect the country to go on expending money in the manner that is being done at Bunbury to-day, and has been done for a considerable time past, without the people who use the harbour contributing towards the interest and sinking fund on that expenditure?

Mr. O'Loughlen: We are not disputing that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: To do that we must cover the whole period of the war.

Mr. Money: We are only asking for three months.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member says that it affects the timber industry. It does not affect timber, it affects shipping. Even if we do knock this off, I do not believe that the timber industry will get anything out of it or that the shipping rates will be reduced one penny. The berthing charges will go on to the ship.

Mr. Money: If it is left it will increase the losses.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know that there is any loss to-day. Do hon. members mean to tell me that when the State fixed the rates to Port Said at £13 a ton for

the "Kangaroo" they took into consideration the harbour charges there?

The Minister for Works: Of course they did.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They never thought of it; they would not worry about the rates at the present time. When these were low, about 35s. a ton, the question might have been considered, but when we have to pay £13 as we are paying to-day, no consideration whatever will be given it. I would ask hon. members whether they think it advisable to reduce this surtax which is paid in other ports, and indeed all over Australia, when we realise that we have to face a considerable increase in the payment of interest and sinking fund.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [8.5]: I have very little to say on this question, but I would point out that the bulk of the timber which is shipped from Bunbury at the present time is timber which in ordinary circumstances is difficult to get away, that is scantlings. This timber goes to Adelaide and Melbourne, and I hope it will also go to Sydney. It goes to those places in competition with timber from other parts. Although the impost on it may not be very large, at the same time all these things have to be considered in making up the price at which the timber can be sold. When it comes to a question of fixing freights, I know from my own experience in chartering vessels that all these points, such as harbour charges, are taken fully into account. I remember many years ago when the railway freights on the carriage of timber were increased by the Government, of the day, it was recognised as an act of justice that where it could be proved the timber companies had taken orders at prices governed by the old railway freights they should be allowed to have that timber carried at such freights. That was done. There was some little difficulty, of course, but that was overcome in a manner which was fair to the State and fair to the parties interested. I could say a good deal about this question as it affects my electorate considerably, but I am somewhat hampered by my Ministerial position.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [8.8]: I did not anticipate when the motion was introduced that the port of Busselton would be referred to in the course of the debate. A certain amount of shipping has gone from Busselton since the war started, sleepers having been loaded there for South Africa, and latterly to the Eastern States, but of course not nearly so much as we would have desired. It was news to me that Busselton had been labouring under this disability of 20 per cent. The position seems to me to be that only those ports that are controlled by a harbour trust can get the advantage which is derived by the port of Bunbury. The Government seem to have the power to impose this extra disadvantage on the port of Busselton without the people concerned having the right to appeal, by reason of their not being protected by a harbour trust.

Mr. Money: The members of harbour boards are nominees of the Government.

Mr. PICKERING: They have some voice at any rate in looking after their own port, whereas a port like Busselton is controlled by the Government direct. There are only two points we have to consider in regard to the motion moved by the member for Bunbury, and those relate to forward contracts and the limitation of this particular regulation. So far as forward contracts are concerned, they cannot be of a very important nature, as illustrated by the orders coming forward. With regard to the limitation of the regulation, I think if it is made to apply to Bunbury, the same consideration should be extended to every other port which has not the advantage of a harbour trust. I do not desire to take any undue advantage of the port of Bunbury, neither do I desire that Bunbury should take an undue advantage of Busselton. I will support the motion if the limitation only applies to forward contracts, and if it is made to apply to Busselton as it is to Bunbury.

On motion by Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister) debate adjourned.

#### MOTION — PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION, REDUCTION OF MEMBERS.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [8.11]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the time has arrived when it is expedient to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly to thirty-five, and of the Legislative Council to twenty.

I do not know whether hon. members in applauding me as they have just done are doing so ironically or whether they are sincere. However, I will give them an opportunity of showing whether they are sincere when the motion is put. In submitting the motion to the House I do so for several reasons. The first is that I am pledged to a reduction in the number of members of Parliament. During the last general election this was one of my planks, and I feel that I would be wanting in my duty if I did not endeavour to carry it into effect. My second reason for submitting the motion is that I honestly believe that the country desires to see a reduction in the number of members of Parliament, and if we brought that about there would be a consequent reduction in the cost of administration. I also desire to give members an opportunity of directing the Government as to their wishes, because a reform of this nature cannot come about unless it be by direction of the House. I honestly believe that we have too many legislators in Western Australia.

Mr. Harrison: How many would you have?

Mr. THOMSON: If the hon. member will read my motion he will see. If the House in its wisdom desires to bring about a greater reduction than the number I have suggested, an amendment can be moved. I consider it is costing too much—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot anticipate the next motion, which deals with the cost of administration. The hon. member must confine his remarks to the motion he is now moving—that there is a necessity for a reduction in the number of members of both Houses.

Mr. THOMSON: Surely I am entitled to submit reasons why I believe we should reduce the number of members? I was going to say that we have a very large deficit.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must defer those remarks until he moves the next motion.

Mr. THOMSON: I submit I will not be able to deal with that aspect of the question on the next motion. If we are going to reduce the number of members by 25—15 in one House and 10 in the other—the reduction must have a beneficial effect on the deficit. I am quite serious in my motion, and I am sorry hon. members are treating my remarks with levity, because I believe the country sincerely desires that the number of members should be reduced.

Hon. T. Walker: It may desire to see us wiped out altogether.

Mr. THOMSON: Perhaps it could well do without us for a little while. In reducing the number of members, we would not be running any risk of overwork. The Legislative Council last session sat on 38 days for a total of 124½ hours, or an average of three hours ten minutes per sitting, while the Assembly sat on 50 days with a total of 365 hours, or an average of seven hours 18 minutes per sitting. Therefore I do not think we are likely to be overburdened with work, even if the motion is carried, for I think we should still be able to give efficient legislation. In respect of the Council, the State is subdivided into 10 provinces, each returning three members. My proposal is to reduce the representation by one member in each province. Seeing that the bulk of the work is done in the Assembly, I think those 20 members left in the Council would be able to carry out effectively the work placed before them. And by reducing the Assembly to 35 members, we should get just as efficient work as under present conditions, and would save considerable expense in the cost of Parliament. In New South Wales there are 142 members of Parliament, or one member for every 13,024 of population. Of course not all the 13,024 are adults, for I am going on the population basis, and not on the basis of electors.

Mr. Nairn: How many members are there to the square mile?

Mr. THOMSON: I am not aware that we consider the mileage at all. If we were to do that, the metropolitan area would not have as many members as it has to-day. If hon. members are prepared to take the question of mileage into consideration, I am quite willing to do all in my power to have that standard set up. If my electors are not satisfied with me, they can have their remedy at the next election. In the meantime I am going to carry my election pledges into effect. In Queensland there are 110 members of Parliament, or one member to every 6,189 of popu-

lation. South Australia has 66 members, or one member to every 6,570 of population. Tasmania has 48 members, or one to every 4,165 of population.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Tasmania is only about the size of one of our sheep runs.

Mr. THOMSON: Yet we have a considerably smaller average of population to each member of Parliament than they have in Tasmania. Victoria has 99 members, or one to every 14,121 of population. In Western Australia we have 80 members, or one to every 3,860 of population. We have the largest State in respect of area, but also we have the largest representation in Parliament. If my motion were agreed to, it would simply mean the increasing of the average of population per member from 3,860 to 5,616, practically an addition of 1,756.

The Minister for Works: Have not we a larger proportion of adults in our population than is to be found in any of the other States?

Mr. THOMSON: Whether or not that is so, I sincerely think we have a superabundance of members of Parliament. I am not in any way decrying the Legislature of Western Australia, because I believe it is equal to any in the Commonwealth. If other hon. members are afraid of losing their seats, at all events it does not worry me.

Mr. O'Loghlin: Some lose their deposits at times.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not ashamed of the fact, if the hon. member is jeering at me. There are many good men in this State who lost their deposits, but there are others who did not lose them, and whose election to Parliament was rather a discredit to the constituencies which returned them.

Hon. P. Collier: You are a popular chap!

Mr. THOMSON: As I have said, my motion would increase our average of population per member from 3,860 to 5,616. We would then be ahead of Tasmania by 1,451 per member, but would still be below Queensland. For that reason the member for Forrest ought to support me, because I have heard him refer to Queensland as the ideal State of the Commonwealth. We would still be below South Australia by 945.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Your motion, if carried, would mean a reduction in the number of country members.

Mr. THOMSON: That would be a matter for adjustment. A few minutes ago members wanted to know the mileage. If there is to be any shearing off, some of the metropolitan members would have to take on a little larger area than they represent at present. If my motion were carried it would mean a saving in salaries to the extent of £7,500, and if my second motion also is carried it will mean a total saving of £9,290. In all seriousness I say we are pledged to economy, and I think we could with justice to the State reduce the number of members of Parliament as I suggest. I will not debate the question any longer, but will leave it to the wisdom of the House. If hon. members will but vote as I believe the country desires them to vote, my

motion will be carried by an overwhelming majority.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [8.27]: I second the motion. It is about the only thing I promised my constituents. Therefore I will support the motion, and I do not care what the result may be.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [8.28]: During the last election, so far as I am aware, every candidate in my constituency was in favour of reducing the number of members of Parliament. I was one of them. I was speaking then as one of the people; I am speaking now as a member of the House, and I am still of opinion that we could do with fewer members of Parliament. My election pledges in this regard and, in fact, on any other question of Parliamentary reform, will be carried out, as far as lies in my power. I do not know exactly about the numbers mentioned in the motion, but in the absence of any amendment, I will support the motion.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [8.29]: I was very pleased to hear the high note of sincerity struck by the member for Katanning. It has been popular for some time that people outside of Parliament should belittle Parliament. Apparently it is now becoming the custom inside the House also to belittle Parliament.

Mr. Thomson: I did not belittle it. All I did—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon member has spoken.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is also popular at present upon every platform in Western Australia, and possibly throughout Australia itself, to favour reform in the political machinery of the country.

Hon. P. Collier: Who said this was reform?

Mr. LAMBERT: It is economic reform.

Mr. Smith: It is retrenchment.

Mr. LAMBERT: I would urge members to vote with the member for Katanning upon this subject. In matters of a popular nature, coming before this House, particularly in motions of an abstract character carrying with them a good deal of popular sympathy, I fancy he has had a fair monopoly. To be fair to ourselves, as well as to the country, it is only reasonable that we too should claim a fair proportion of that popularity, irrespective of whether the motion is likely to be carried or not.

Hon. P. Collier: Let us all be in it.

Mr. LAMBERT: Let us all get up as one furious body in Parliament. Speaking seriously, I venture to say the member for Katanning knows, or should know, that it is practically impossible to carry this resolution into effect. In the first place, Western Australia is a State of large dimensions. For my part I find my own constituency quite big enough to look after without having some other constituency hooked on to it. I am also of opinion that members of Parliament are low enough paid at present.

Mr. Thomson: We are not discussing that.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can discuss that question on the next motion.

Mr. LAMBERT: I only desire to deal incidentally with the economic side of this ques-

tion. The hon. member knows, if he knows anything at all—

Mr. Munsie: And that is doubtful.

Mr. LAMBERT: That constitutional reform is required in our legislature. Possibly our own constitution requires a great deal of reconstruction, but certainly not on the lines that will merely pander to the very selfish demands of an element which makes itself apparent in every community, particularly at election time. Whilst I am just a desirous as any other member of having constitutional reform, which will not only make for economy but efficiency as well, I will not, even at the sacrifice of my seat in Parliament, pander to that element. The hon. member would have been better advised if he had gone on the lines of reforming the Constitution in a direction which is far more necessary than the one he proposes. We have another branch of the legislature, which is a standing disgrace to the intelligence of the people. It should not be tolerated for one day.

Mr. Smith: It is a democratic House.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is particularly democratic. I will admit that this House is possibly not as useful as it might be, and that possibly some of its members are not as useful as they might be, but I do think they do some little work for the money they receive from the State. That is more than one can say of a large proportion of the members of another place. I should like to hear members express a definite, logical, and reasonable opinion upon constitutional reform in that direction. The people of Western Australia are ready for it. I have still sufficient faith in the people to believe that they do not subscribe to pandering to the apparently popular idea, which is generally put forward at election time by men who have no knowledge of Parliament, of the work that has to be done, or of the expense which has to be incurred in the representation of the people in Parliament. It is to be regretted that members, like the member for Bunbury and the member for Roebourne, are so ill advised as to rush in without having the slightest knowledge, and upon the slightest pretext, and promise almost anything when standing for Parliament.

Mr. Teesdale: I only made one promise to my electors, and that was it.

Mr. LAMBERT: If the hon. member had added a promise that he would not interrupt in Parliament, he would be an ideal member. Many of these motions arise because of the absence of knowledge on the part of the people concerned of the expenses that are involved in taking a seat in Parliament, and the sacrifices that often have to be made by members, particularly those representing the far flung constituencies of the State, to get round which requires much travelling and the expenditure of a good deal of money. If members were not so ready to make these promises, these barren, useless, and stupid motions would not be brought forward.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [8.25]: Although I sympathise to a certain extent with the motion I cannot support it at present.

Mr. Teesdale: You have to make up your mind to-night.

Mr. ANGELO: In Western Australia and possibly throughout the Commonwealth we have too many politicians. In this State we have one politician to about 4,000 inhabitants. In the Commonwealth we have one to about 6,000 inhabitants, but in England there is only one politician to 45,000 inhabitants.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): How many are there in China?

Mr. ANGELO: In Java with 36,000,000 people the whole of the legislature of that wonderful place contains only five men.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Let us go to Java.

Mr. ANGELO: The present is not a favourable opportunity for bringing a matter of this kind forward.

Hon. P. Collier: The time is not opportune.

Mr. ANGELO: No, for this reason. If members will only look round the country electorates they will find that a great number of our people have come to the city. The wage earners of these families are away fighting for them, and those who are left behind find it cheaper to live in the city. Later on when the war is over, and the wage earners return to their proper centres, and the homes that are now vacant are filled again, it will be a good opportunity to bring forward this motion. At present I cannot support it.

Mr. BROWN (Beverley) [8.37]: I support the motion, because I have always been an advocate for the reduction in the number of members of Parliament. If the discussion has done nothing else it has increased the roll call of members of this Chamber very considerably to-night. It is one of the few occasions when I have seen a really large number of members in their seats.

Mr. Munsie: Particularly on the Government side of the House.

Mr. BROWN: They are all interested in seeing what is going to happen, and if anything should come about to deprive them of their seats. In my opinion half the number of members of Parliament could do the same amount of work. The electorates would be somewhat larger, but would be represented by divisions instead of, under the present method, by single electorates. If the number of members is reduced to 30 we could have the State divided into six divisions, comprising a Goldfields division, metropolitan division, a South-West and agricultural division, a North-West division, and a suburban division. If the people were represented in this way under the proportional representation system we should have every class in the community represented in the House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There would be a nice representation from the metropolitan area.

Mr. BROWN: There will be quite as much representation as there is now. I consider that would be the only method to adopt if we brought about a reduction in the num-

ber of members. It is proposed to reduce the number of members in the Legislative Council.

Mr. Munsie: We could do without any there.

Mr. BROWN: The cost of Parliament in this State is somewhat excessive. In New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland the members of the Councils are nominee members and receive no payment. In some instances the members are there for life, and in the case of Victoria for six years. Here we have payment of members in both Chambers. As stated by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) there are members in the Legislative Council who have very little work to do, but receive the same remuneration as members of this Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not deal with that point on this motion.

Mr. BROWN: In my opinion many members of another place are not required, and could be considerably reduced in number. The representation of metropolitan electorates is easy. Any member in the metropolitan area can walk over his electorate before breakfast. It is only an appetiser for him to do so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I would like you to try my electorate.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BROWN: In the case of country electorates it takes at least ten days of solid travel to traverse them.

Mr. Lambert: It takes a fortnight.

Mr. BROWN: So far as I am concerned I consider that I could equally well look after two such electorates as I could look after one, and the same thing must apply to metropolitan members.

Mr. Hardwick: And say "good-morning" to the sheep.

Mr. BROWN: If such a system were adopted the number of members of Parliament could readily be reduced. So far as the work inside the Chamber is concerned, if the number of members was reduced by half the work could be done as well, if not better than, it is now being done. Many discussions and much cross firing take place, which lead to further discussion and to a considerable amount of time being taken up. Members speak on almost every subject with the result that hours are spent unnecessarily in that way, and very little business is done. If the number of members was reduced it would avoid a good deal of that, and save expenditure to the State.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why not wipe out the lot on that score?

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [8.42]: I move an amendment—

That all the words after "House" in the second line be struck out and "it is expedient to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council" be inserted in lieu.

The reason I desire to strike out the words "that the time has now arrived" is because I believe the time has not arrived. As stated

by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo), the abnormal conditions under which we are living have displaced our electors. This must be taken into consideration in deciding the question on a population basis. The question of area must also be taken into account. In spite of what has been said to the contrary I hold that any member who desires to retain his seat in a country electorate must attend to every portion of it. It is with the greatest possible difficulty that I can cover my electorate during the year. I was one of those who promised to work for a reduction in the number of members in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I know three people who voted for you on that score, and the majority was two.

Mr. PICKERING: I am quite of the opinion that there is room for reduction, but I am not prepared to say that the House is at this moment in a position to declare that 15 represents the right reduction. Whether the number is 15, 20, or four, is a question which should be decided by a proper authority, and not on a motion submitted by the member for Katanning. No doubt the member for Katanning has proposed this in the hope of gaining popularity. As stated by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert), the hon. member knows very well that there is no possible hope of the motion being carried in its present form. But at least he will gain, by moving it, the kudos after which he is seeking.

Mr. Thomson: You ought to talk like that.

Mr. PICKERING: Whilst quite prepared to support any reasonable proposition submitted at the proper time to this House, I must ask hon. members to support my entirely reasonable amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is there any seconder to the amendment?

Mr. O'LOUGHLIN (Forrest) [9.47]: I second the amendment.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [9.48]: It is a rather notable fact that the support for this proposal has come mainly from the new members of the House. Each one in turn has testified that he was only endeavouring to give effect to a pre-election pledge. I entirely absolve those hon. members from any blame in this connection, because we know that a man, when first seeking Parliamentary honours, is wont to emit promises of this nature. Unquestionably there is a certain section of the community always prepared, on any and every occasion, to belittle Parliament and all its works. I am not now referring to members of Parliament. The section I refer to can best give effect to their desire by, in some cases, urging a reduction in the number of members, by, in other cases, urging reduction of members' emoluments, and generally by advocating that this institution be stripped of its power and influence and dignity. Our new members, with the very best of intentions—seeing that the object they had in mind was the attainment of a seat in this Chamber—sought to capture as many as possible of the votes of that section. New candidates, I repeat, are apt to give expression to such pledges as we have heard of this evening. Looking at the matter strictly

on its merits, I must say that no case whatever has been made out—not even an attempt at a case, having regard to the general welfare of this State—by the mover of the motion or its supporters.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): But if a good case were put up, the motion might be carried.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There may be something in that. What is the case which has been put up? First of all, the mover relies upon a comparison between the number of members of Parliament here and the numbers in the Eastern States' Parliaments. That of itself means nothing at all. There is no reason why we should follow a course which would bring us into line, as regards representation, with the Eastern States of the Commonwealth. But, besides that, the mover failed entirely to take into account many matters of vital importance—matters of comparison as to area of the country, density or sparsity of population, and other factors of prime importance in determining the representation of the people in Parliament. The mover having made no reference whatever to those aspects of the question, the comparison he drew is, to my mind, of very little value indeed. The only other reason advanced in support of the motion was that the proposal would effect a saving of about £7,500 per annum. Does the mover contend that the proposal is justified upon the sole ground that its adoption would reduce the Treasurer's worries to the insignificant extent of £7,500 annually? Why, that is a mere drop in the ocean of our financial difficulties. From that point of view the proposal is not worth a moment's consideration. It might prove a case of putting a drop in the bucket on the one hand, and letting out a jugful on the other. I am surprised, too, to observe that the motion has obtained support from all the members of the Country party, or at all events, from all members of that party who have spoken. Indeed, the motion has received its main support from Country members. But do not those hon. members realise that if effect be given to this motion, and the number of members of this House is reduced by 15, those 15 must, on the present basis of our redistribution of seats, come entirely off the districts represented by Country party members and by goldfields members?

Mr. Thomson: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But yes. If we take the number of electors in the 50 different seats, we shall find that, in order to reduce the seats to 35, and still retain anything like equitable representation, representation equitable with regard to equal political power no matter where an elector may reside, anything approaching equitable representation, it would be absolutely essential to cut out all those 15 members from mining and agricultural constituencies. There is no question about that.

The Minister for Mines: And from the North-West.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. From the outback districts generally. The metropolitan districts, from Guildford to Fremantle, would not suffer a reduction of even one member. It is the country and the mining districts that would have to suffer. Do our friends of the Country party consider that that would be a good thing

for the State? Would they call it a measure of reform to double—in many cases it would be that—the areas of our agricultural and outback electorates?

Mr. Thomson: It would apply in the metropolitan area, too.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member is talking nonsense. The people of this country will never agree to a redistribution of seats in this House unless it is on something like an equitable basis. No redistribution would go through on to-day's basis, with metropolitan seats of 7,000 or 8,000 electors and some outback seats of 700 or 800 electors.

Mr. Thomson: Why not have proportional representation?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Proportional representation even enhances the weight of my argument. On a proportional representation basis the hon. member would not secure greater representation for the country districts than for the metropolitan districts; in fact, not so much. We have not proportional representation now, but in order to attain anything like proportional representation there would have to be a considerable reduction in the number of members representing country and outback districts. An examination of the numbers of electors in the various constituencies will reveal that fact to any member at a glance. It is quite apparent. Is that what our friends of the Country party want?

Mr. Thomson: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But that is what the effect would be. Under a proposal of this kind, it is the producing districts that would suffer.

Mr. Thomson: That would be for this House to decide.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course; but neither this House nor any other House, neither the people of this country nor the people of any other country, will go back so far on the democratic principle of approximately equal representation as to leave to the agricultural and mining districts their present representation on the figures as they are now. The hon. member must know perfectly well that the only effect of his motion could be to reduce the standing and influence in this House of this portion of this State, namely, the agricultural and the mining districts, representing the life blood of the community. With all due respect to city members, it is not the congested metropolitan districts that are carrying on the industrial and commercial life of our community, but the producing portions of the State, as represented by members from agricultural and mining districts. The last redistribution of seats took place in 1903, and the Parliament of the day considered that a fair and reasonable number of Assembly members to attend to the Parliamentary duties of this country was 50; and at that period our total population numbered 225,000. The Parliament of that day considered that a total population of, in round numbers, 225,000, would not be over-represented by 50 Assembly members. To-day our population is 325,000, showing an increase of 100,000; and yet members to-day contend that we can go back from 50 members of this Assembly to 35. If there was any justification whatever in 1903 for 50 members,

surely it stands after an increase of population by no less than 100,000 during the intervening period.

Mr. Smith: We could afford 50 members then.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The difference in cost is represented by £7,500 annually. That amount can be swallowed up in one day by a jam factory.

Mr. Smith: But we must make a start some time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Are we starting in a direction that is going to be of any value by reducing the number of members? A saving in the expenditure of £7,500 a year does not necessarily mean reform. The hon. member described it as reform. There is no justification for saying it is reform; it may be quite the contrary. It cannot be genuine reform at all, and we do know that the success and progress and the development of this country depends absolutely and entirely upon the measure of help and assistance that is afforded through the primary industries of this State, mining, agriculture, and timber, and all are in the outlying portions of the country. No matter how willing to work the member for Beverley and others may be, we who represent the country constituencies know that it is not possible, with satisfaction to the electors, to represent areas double the size of those they represent to-day. It cannot be done. There are districts on the goldfields and in the agricultural portions of the State as well which require a whole fortnight or even more to traverse.

The Colonial Treasurer: I have nearly 400 miles of railway travelling in my electorate.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Where there are innumerable small scattered hamlets hon. members know that it is impossible to keep au fait with the requirements of the people by correspondence; it is necessary to visit them occasionally and those visits cannot be satisfactorily carried out if we are going to increase the areas over which members will have to travel. In view of those facts, and that it is recognised that nothing should be done in this critical period of our history to give a set-back to the development of agriculture, mining, and other producing portions of the State, we should not take the retrograde step of reducing the number of members. There is also another aspect. We are facing at the present time the most critical period of our history in regard to our relationship with the Commonwealth. If hon. members desire to see unification brought about, if they are willing to submit to control by government or administration from Melbourne, they will, of course, take all the steps necessary to reduce the power and influence of the State Parliament. With the times that are immediately ahead of us and the fight we shall probably have with the Federal Treasurer with regard to our financial position in 1920, and indeed the many problems and difficulties which exist now and which may arise from time to time, will any hon. member say that the Parliament of Western Australia should proceed to reduce its numbers, and consequently reduce itself in status, strength, and intellect in the aggre-

gate? Will anyone say that such a reduced Parliament will be better able to stand up against a centralising and unifying influence than a Parliament composed of 80 members?

Mr. Thomson: What greater power than 35 would 50 have? None at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Does not a reduced number mean weakness at any time? Does the hon. member mean to tell me that 35 men on a battlefield would be expected to exercise the same strength and fighting power as 50?

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): And of what use are our six members in the Federal House?

Hon. P. COLLIER: None at all.

Mr. Smith: Let us separate.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is another question. But by reducing the number of members, reducing our salaries, and reducing our status, is not the way to combat the centralising influence that is abroad in the Commonwealth to-day. I think it would be a false step, and I am certain that to reduce our numbers would have the effect of weakening our influence and power. So far as the great North-West of the State is concerned, it has been pointed out to us over and over again that that great portion of the Commonwealth is languishing for development. It has been contended that development has not resulted on account of the fact that the majority of members who have constituted the Parliament of Western Australia are unacquainted with its great potentialities. Now, if we reduce the number of members, we must inevitably cut down the North-West representation. We cannot have 35 members in the Assembly and four of them representing the great North-West. In the past, Parliament has been willing to extend to the north-western portion of the State what might be described as special representation according to numbers, because it has always been felt to be a good thing for the State that the North-West should be so represented. If, however, we are going to reduce our numbers, that condition of things cannot continue, and the representation of the North-West will have to come down with that of the other outlying portions of the State. Therefore, from whatever aspect we may view it, the proposal is a retrograde one. In British communities the question of area has always been the determining factor in the representation in Parliament. We know that Western Australia is the biggest State of the Commonwealth; it is almost one-third of Australia, and it is absurd to make a comparison between this State and Tasmania, or even a small closely settled State like Victoria. A comparison of that description is of no value whatever in deciding a matter of this kind.

Mr. Thomson: There is a big difference in the representation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The State of Tasmania could be put into one little corner of Western Australia, that corner between Bunbury, Busselton, and Albany.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): And we would never know it was there.

Hon. P. COLLIER: To make a comparison between the great areas of this State, with its scattered population with Tasmania, is utterly

ridiculous. The same thing applies to Victoria, and to a lesser extent to New South Wales, and perhaps to a still lesser extent to Queensland. In these times of crises and difficulties it is, if I may use the term without being offensive, a school-boy method of reform to suggest anything like that contained in the hon. member's motion. We are faced with the greatest problems and difficulties the State has ever been confronted with, and the hon. member wants us to reduce our numbers in Parliament, so as to be better able to cope with those difficulties.

Mr. Draper: They never have a working majority in Tasmania.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We are to save £7,500 a year and all our difficulties will be solved! With all due respect to the hon. member who submitted the motion, this is a proposal which perhaps would appeal to men who have not given much thought to the question. If when Western Australia with a population of 100,000 less than it has to-day considered it wise to have 50 members in the Legislative Assembly, the argument is doubly strong to-day for not reducing that number. After all, there is a minimum beyond which it is not sound business or common sense to go. One cannot have representation on a uniform basis according to population, or make comparisons between Western Australian and the number of members of Parliament in England or the number of electors represented by members in England, or even Victoria or New South Wales. Such comparisons are valueless.

Mr. Money: We have the Federal members as well.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is an entirely different proposition. Federal members only deal with a few big questions. We have a hundred and one subjects which are intimately associated with the daily life and welfare of the citizens of this community which have to be attended to by the State Parliament. I might be prepared to say something in favour of unification if we increased the number of our local Parliaments—if we had more local self-government, but that is an entirely different proposition. The member for Katanning is not getting along towards that condition of things by moving the motion he has submitted. He could reduce the number of members to a dozen, but he would be no nearer his ideal. If we view the matter in the right way, that is in the interests of the welfare of the State generally, I feel satisfied hon. members will reject the motion.

Mr. BROWN (Subiaco) [9.13]: I desire to congratulate the member for Katanning on bringing forward this motion. I will certainly be castigated for supporting it, but I recognise this fact, that in the last redistribution of seats, as mentioned by the leader of the Opposition, Parliament itself decided what would be a fair number of members, and 50 was the number fixed upon to meet the requirements.

Hon. P. Collier: And they were not fools. Mr. BROWN: Possibly they were wise people, but it is just one of those things that members of Parliament themselves decide. It is difficult to say what should be the proper number of members of Parliament according

to the population or even to area. There is one guide which we have in regard to representation, and that is the Federal Constitution, which decided by convention that 111 members of Parliament would be sufficient to govern the Australian Commonwealth. That only affected, as was pointed out, certain departments, but in view of the fact that these departments were practically the main departments in the Commonwealth and in the States, it also proves that there was a sufficiency in that Parliament.

The Colonial Treasurer: They were the main revenue departments.

Mr. BROWN: With regard to Western Australia, we have an area of 975,000 square miles, and we have a population of 320,000. The result is that we have representation which is altogether improper so far as its value is concerned. In South Australia they have 380,000 square miles of country, with 479,890 of population, 46 members in the Assembly and 20 in the Upper House.

The Colonial Treasurer: In South Australia the number of members has recently been increased.

Mr. BROWN: It may have been so within a month or two, but until quite recently they were able to carry on satisfactorily with the numbers I have mentioned; and, seeing that our population is 100,000 fewer, I think there are reasonable grounds for a reduction in our number of members of Parliament. It has been said that people outside of Parliament show an inclination to belittle Parliament. I do not believe that. I think it is that people outside realise that a Parliament of too many members represents a loss to the country. The only way in which it would be possible to satisfactorily learn the views of the people in regard to the number of members of Parliament, would be by a referendum.

Mr. Munsie: Why not hold a referendum on the question of the abolition of another place?

Mr. BROWN: I would agree to a referendum on any such question of Parliamentary reform; but we are not discussing that now. In regard to the number of members of Parliament, one difficulty is due to the fact that the electors are prone to pester members with a view to getting their sons and daughters into the public service. This tendency leads to the over-staffing of our public service.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: To enter the public service it is necessary to pass an examination.

Hon. P. Collier: No country in the world is freer from that influence than is Western Australia. Our Public Service Act is directly opposed to it.

Mr. BROWN: Despite all the safeguards there is a constant agitation amongst the electors to get members of their family into good positions in the public service. In proportion to population we have too large a public service, and if we had fewer members of Parliament I am convinced that we should have a smaller public service. Even if the motion is not carried it will do good, for it will serve to draw public attention to the question.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [9.18]: I do not know why the mover

of the motion should have made use of the word "expedient," which means that it is proper under the circumstances. It seems the hon. member declared to his electors that he was in favour of reducing the number of members of Parliament, and therefore he finds it is expedient to do so. He did not advance any good argument in favour of the motion, but simply told the House that he and certain other members had informed their constituents on the hustings that they were in favour of reducing the number of members.

Mr. Lambert: That is not an argument for it.

The PREMIER: No, it is not. This is a question which hon. members would do well to seriously consider, for hon. members are better able to deal with it than are people outside of Parliament. When Responsible Government was granted to Western Australia and the first Constitution Act was passed in 1899, the Home Government permitted this State to have 30 members in the Assembly and 15 in the Council. At that time the population was fewer than 40,000.

Hon. P. Collier: Where was the population basis then?

The PREMIER: In 1899 an amendment of the Constitution Act was passed providing for 50 members of the Assembly and 30 members of the Council. The Bill received the Royal Assent in 1900, and the elections of 1901 were held under the amended Constitution, and for the first time 50 members were returned to this House. I am quite sure that when the amending Act was passed in 1899 there could not have been more than 200,000 people in Western Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: In 1899 the population of the State was 170,000.

The PREMIER: So, when we had 170,000 of a population, it was considered that the State was entitled to 50 members in the Assembly. Have circumstances so changed that now, when we have a population of 320,000, it is expedient to reduce the number of members? I am surprised that the motion should have come from a member representing a country district and that it should have met with so much approval from country members; because there is not the slightest doubt that if it were agreed to reduce the number of members, under a re-distribution of seats the country people would be the people to suffer most. When the population is centralising so much in our cities, there is not the slightest doubt that the country people would be absolutely swamped by the town representatives.

Mr. Thomson: Not if the House decided otherwise.

The PREMIER: I think it is not at all expedient that the number of members should be reduced. On the contrary, I think that under the circumstances I have mentioned it is most inexpedient that we should decrease the number of members of Parliament. I desire economy in every possible way, but I do not think it would be economy to reduce the members of Parliament, as some people outside the House seem to imagine. We have an enormous territory, representing one-third of Australia, and I am sure hon. members find

it difficult enough as it is to properly represent the electorates for which they have been returned. I know that for a man of my age it means a great physical effort to contest an Assembly electorate in the country. One has to travel night and day, and generally in most uncomfortable circumstances. I am sure the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) agrees with me there. He and I are much of an age, and I am sure that, like me, he finds it a physical effort to contest his electorate.

Hon. P. Collier: And such a member can only visit his electorate once a year, because of its size and its distance from the City.

The PREMIER: It is a mere bogey to say that the representation in this House is too great. It is necessary for the good government of the country that not only the people, but the different interests in the country, should be properly represented here. If we reduce the number of our members, we shall certainly reduce the benefits which are derived by those engaged in the different interests in the country, benefits derived from their representation in this House.

Hon. P. Collier: And they never needed full representation more than now.

The PREMIER: One of the greatest arguments against a reduction of members at the present time is to be found in the fact that, 20 years ago, on a population of 170,000 people, it was thought necessary to have 50 members in the Assembly and 30 in the Council. Now, when the population has been well nigh doubled, it is proposed that there should be a reduction in the number of members. The fact that we have federated is no logical reason for decreasing the number of members; in fact it is a very solid reason for retaining our present numbers, if only to protect the interests of the State. I have never from the hustings given it as my opinion that the number of members of Parliament should be reduced. Apart from the mere saving in salaries, the country would in no way gain by such reduction. It would be a retrograde movement of very great disadvantage to the people themselves and to the interests of the State. Opinions regarding such questions are to be heard from hypercritical people outside the House who, perhaps, have not thoroughly examined the question. I believe it will be very much better to leave the number of members as at present, if only in the interests of those whom I am so anxious to see protected, and whom I rely upon to act up to the motto I have given to the State, namely, "Produce, produce, produce."

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [9.29]: There can be no question that there are in evidence symptoms of—I was going to say the moribund. There are those who rise in their places here in the expectation of earning acclamation from the public, but who are really delivering their own funeral orations in the Assembly.

Mr. Thomson: You ought to be glad of that.

Hon. T. WALKER: Why should I be glad of it? I cannot understand the attitude of mind towards a great institution, one which has grown up in history to such

a great height, on the part of those members who now wish in every possible way to belittle it, to degrade it, to say that everything that is uttered at street corners of it is true, that the bulk of the legislators are loafers, that they are not wanted, can be done without, and are of no service to the country, that they are supernumeraries and that we can well spare all of them. That is the attitude assumed by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson), and those who have spoken with him. If that is their view I do not wonder that the spirit is abroad in the public mind that this institution, and the whole of Parliament in fact, is a fifth wheel to the coach of government and of no value whatsoever. I do not wonder that the cry in almost every electorate is so strong that few can resist it. It is echoed everywhere that State Parliaments should be abolished. There is a positive move in the mind of the public in that direction. The public are justified in forming the opinion that we are a useless body when we have to listen to speeches in this Chamber of the character and calibre of those we have heard to-night.

Mr. Harrison: Not all of them.

Hon. T. WALKER: True, not quite all.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Are you referring to the speech of the leader of the Opposition, which I thought was quite a good one?

Hon. T. WALKER: I am speaking of those who advocate this reduction. This is not a new thing? I have been in a good many Parliaments, as I think you, Sir, have. I guarantee that if you, Sir, could speak from the floor of the House in contribution to this debate, you would tell those who are here that there has not been a Parliament that you have been in—certainly there is not one that I have been in—in which you have not heard this resolution brought forward by some new fledgling legislator climbing up the ladder of fame, as he hoped, and preparing for his downfall to the pit of oblivion. We have all heard it. It is the stock way of attracting popular attention, and catering for the popular ignorance of the value and necessity of institutions of this kind. Always that thing is done.

Mr. Thomson: Are you speaking to the amendment?

Hon. T. WALKER: I am speaking to the subject generally. There is little difference between the amendment and the motion, except that the motion pretends to define precisely how many legislators can run this country. Why 35 should be specified I do not know. The hon. member presumes to tell us just how many members can run the affairs of this country. We know from experience that the smaller the body of those entrusted with power the more likelihood there is for selfishness, and selected interests, and clique power to assert themselves. There is safety in multitudes. With a large body one is likely to have correctives, balancings, criticisms, and adjustments, which preserve the general character of the insti-

tution. Let there be a few, and there is bound to be distinctive class interests asserting themselves and a powerful clique having absolute control. That is a danger in the government of any country. Besides this there is always a degeneration in the intellectual capacity, even in the favoured able few, when there are small numbers coming into conflict or contact or exchanging criticisms. The greatness of the statesmen in the British Empire is due to the fact that there is a consciousness that the greatest effort of mind must be made to reach, to lead and to surpass the critics who are everlastingly finding fault or suggesting rival methods of government. It would be impossible in a clique of five or six to create the statesmen who have built up the history of England. There must be the numbers, there must be the stimulus of rival intellects, and there must be the magnetism and the intellectual force, the psychological influence of present ability, in order to bring out true greatness of mind. Let us suppose we had a Parliament constituted by the little Country party that nestles so snugly on the cross benches. Where would the great national policy be found? Even in regard to the extirpation of rabbits, a little scheme like that is bungled up by them and its value is destroyed.

Mr. Harrison: I thought you were all interested in rabbits.

Hon. T. WALKER: Undoubtedly we are.

Mr. Pickering: That is not fair to the Country party.

Hon. P. Collier: It is only that section which is supporting this motion.

Hon. T. WALKER: I am giving that as an illustration. Where would be the wealth, the future greatness, the grandeur, and the building up of this country if they were left to the little nest of members I see before me? Where would be the stimulus of mind, the promptings of genius, and the alertness that come from the everlasting probing of keen and concentrative minds? They could not furnish the stimulus themselves, for they would die of inertia. It is only by the stimulus that is received from opposites and contrasts, that one gets the quickening that illumines and leads.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): A sedative comes in sometimes, but one does not want to be stimulated all the time.

Hon. T. WALKER: I admit that with numbers we find those who pull us back and those who push us on.

Mr. Thomson: To carry out your argument you should have more representation in order to get effective legislation.

Hon. T. WALKER: That would give us a better choice and an improved chance of getting effective legislation. We want numbers to pick from. It is purely an accident, of course, that we occasionally get men here such as we find in the mover of this motion. Give us a choice, a wider range, and the greater chance will this country have of being well served.

Mr. Thomson: That is why you people started the selection ballot.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not long since your party did so.

Mr. Thomson: I never did so.

Hon. P. Collier: What about your selection of Mr. Hedges?

Hon. T. WALKER: There may be evils as well as benefits in that, but we still want the choice and to be able to make the best possible selection.

Mr. Thomson: I hope you will always carry that into effect.

Hon. T. WALKER: I desire it.

Mr. Thomson: You do not always do it.

Hon. T. WALKER: We have to be limited by the imperfections of our individual selves and our surroundings. That is the grave danger. A limitation in numbers must lead to—I am using an Americanism—a getatable clique. By having larger numbers, however, we preserve ourselves from the influences of wire pullers, and controlling influences from outside.

Mr. Harrison: The larger numbers are on this side.

Hon. T. WALKER: I know. In the minds of the public there is growing a spirit of utter disgust in parliamentary institutions. That spirit is exhibited almost perpetually in the Press and on every platform. In every public gathering we hear Parliament sneered at.

Mr. Harrison: Has there been any reason for it?

Hon. T. WALKER: Undoubtedly. The reason is found in speeches such as we have heard to-night. It is also found in the admission that these institutions are of no value, that the services rendered are an unnecessary cost to the community, and that members cannot contribute the value of their allowances in their services to the State. Admissions of that kind are quite sufficient to degrade us. If we have a small opinion of ourselves and belittle ourselves in our own institutions what can we expect of the public? They must adjudge us by our estimate of ourselves, and they say we are of no value. A spirit is growing up in the community that would sweep us away to-morrow if the power existed to do so.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the institution.

Hon. T. WALKER: I mean the institution. This institution is doomed, if we are to take the popular opinion regarding us at the present juncture.

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

Hon. T. WALKER: I am not wrong.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): A man can always respect Parliament and win his seat as well.

Hon. T. WALKER: I know, and it is what we ought to do and what I desire to have done. I want to see hon. members respect this institution.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): So do I.

Hon. T. WALKER: Not only on account of its historical associations but because of the genuine good it can do if it be a Parliament. If it be an institution where the popular will be represented, properly filtering through the representatives of the House and becoming matured alone by the process of responsible Government, where the sensitive Government refuses for a moment to be driven or to bargain for their policy, but have the ability to lay down a policy and stand or fall by it, when the people can respect the sensitive honour of its statesmen and swear by their honesty of purpose, then the people can

honour the institution; then we shall find the galleries crowded by those who come to hear their spokesmen. Now no one cares what transpires here; no one takes an interest in what we are doing. It is because we are departing from the old traditions. We have not responsible Government but government by bargaining, government by selling our policy for the purpose of support, swapping and bargaining for tenure of office.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You say if we have the numbers there is no bargaining.

Hon. T. WALKER: With numbers there is less. There cannot be bargaining with all. The bargaining increases as the number lessens. There becomes less safety. The difficulty is now through the amalgamation owing to the abnormality of the times, the amalgamation of alleged different parties. They are able to come to terms and do come to terms, and we have not Government as a Parliament, but a Government of cliques in this very Assembly itself, an evil that would enormously increase if we were to diminish the number of representatives of the people. But there is more than that. We are under a shadow at this very moment. Time was when we thought we were a sovereign State, when His Excellency was the representative of His Majesty, and spoke, as it were, in his name; when we had the full consciousness of our own destiny, when we had in view the building up of a great country without interference from without. At the present day the hands, I was going to say the tentacles, of the octopus are over us; we are no longer capable of governing as a sovereign State; the sovereign hand is over us. The Commonwealth is taking all our vital resources in its grasp and leaving us to struggle in its coils. We are not self-governing as we were, for at every step we are governing for another, an outside power, and we are restrained and limited in those spheres of action which once were peculiarly our own, and which we held to have a sovereignty over.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Almost helpless.

Hon. T. WALKER: We are indeed almost helpless. Let me tell members a great struggle is coming.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You are spoiling it.

Hon. T. WALKER: I cannot help it. I am saying what is absolutely true. We are facing a grave issue at no distant date, the issue whether we are to be a sovereign State or whether we are to be a subject of a governing body in another portion of the Commonwealth; whether we are to maintain our rights as citizens of Western Australia, free and unfettered, or whether we are to be the subjects of the Commonwealth Government subservient merely to the whim of centralised power, incapable of exercising the discretion that is necessary for the development of our resources. This is the question. As the leader of the Opposition has said, that fight needs every bright mind of the community. That struggle that is coming on us, the struggle which we shall have to engage in if we are to develop this part of Australia, if every industry, every avenue of wealth is not to sweep to the eastward; if we are to build up a great people here in the territory that is covered by the boundaries of Western Australia; if we are to do that, then there is a great struggle not far distant ahead of us. And

every mind and power and intellect is required in that struggle, and if we are going, metaphorically speaking, to emasculate ourselves, to belittle and weaken and despoil ourselves to take away every nerve, every fibre that we have within us, if in the face of the danger we are to paralyse ourselves, then we know what the issue will be. There will be no Parliament a few years hence. We shall not need resolutions of this kind because we shall be governed by deputies nominated from the far east. We shall have a simple repetition of shire councils and municipal councils dotted throughout the country. We shall be without that local zeal that takes an interest in the development of every spot we love in Western Australia—without that zeal for the development of that portion which we labour for. In other words we shall have a distant Government carrying out details through official acts. We shall be governed by officialism instead of patriotism; government by those directed from abroad instead of by patriots actuated by a honest desire to make this part of Western Australia the brightest ornament and in every way the most desirable of all the sovereign states of this great compact we call the Commonwealth. If we want to make homes for our children, to win the thanks of posterity and emblazon forever on our escutcheon an honourable and dignified name, then increase rather than decrease our local power; do not belittle the institution that has built us up to our present standard nor lessen that power which was entrusted to us by the people for the control of the destinies of our future.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [9-55]: I have listened with a great deal of attention to the speeches which have been delivered and I cannot support in toto the amendment, and I certainly cannot support the motion. I cannot support the amendment for the reason that this is no time for a redistribution of seats, not during the time of war. It would be a disadvantage to certain portions of the State that have decreased in population that a redistribution of seats should take place during the time of war. The more experience we have of our electorates, the more personal knowledge we have of our electors, the more a member knows of his locality, the better for this Assembly. One reason why we do not get the sympathetic treatment we ought to get from the Federal Government is because Federal members know so little of Western Australia and what it contains. They do not know our mineral wealth, our timber wealth, our agricultural wealth, or anything at all about us. Many visitors from the Eastern States are entirely surprised when they travel through our State and through particular centres. We are to-day almost in a pioneering condition and if we lose members shall we get the results we aim for, shall we get that concentrated energy to stimulate our industries? Shall we attain the end in a quicker way in reducing the number of members, and thereby reducing the cost by perhaps £7,000 per annum? I think that is no economy. I guarantee to say that there is not a member representing country districts or mining districts who could not put more than double his time in the particular electorate he represents for the good of the House and the State, by getting more in touch with the particular developments of the electorate which he represents. I for my part cannot give a vote for a reduction of the number of members that we have at present in the House. The leader of the Opposition has given us particulars, and I agree with him in what

he said as to country districts and the primary industries of the State. If we have a reduction of members we will get it in those centres if we go on the actual basis of population. We have to consider the North-West, and what it brings to the State, what the vast resources of that territory are. It is not only the population but the resources of the State that have to be considered. If we do deprive the North-West of representation we shall not know the condition of the various centres and if we have not that intimate knowledge from the various members representing those electorates, we cannot get a clear focus of what should be done for any particular electorate, and I say again the more knowledge we have of the various electorates the better it will be for the Government of the State and also the electors who are represented in this Chamber.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [10-0]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Mr. SPEAKER: There being no seconder, the motion lapses.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [10-1]: If the member for Greenough does not wish to continue the debate, I have a few words to say, and I desire now to give notice of a further amendment which I intend to move. I understand the amendment already proposed by the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) is to strike out certain words for the purpose of inserting, "It is expedient that the number of members be reduced." If that amendment applied to Parliament as a whole, I would have no objection, although in my own amendment I shall state very definitely where I require the number to be reduced. My wish is that the House should give a clear expression of opinion on a matter which deeply concerns the people of this country. My amendment will be that all the words after "arrived," in line 2, be struck out, with a view to the insertion of the following words, "in order to secure true democratic representation, the Constitution Act be amended to provide for the election of one House of Parliament, elected on an adult franchise." If one reform is more essential to-day than any other in this State, it is the reduction of members of Parliament with a view to giving the people of this country the right to govern themselves on a true basis of representation. The question has been before the people time after time; it has been a subject of discussion both on the platform and in the Press; and in my opinion, at a time when so much is spoken regarding democracy, and the rights of democracy, and the ideals of democracy, it is essential that we should give proper expression to it in the formation of our Government and in our Constitution Act. It is the most arrant hypocrisy for members in this or in any other British Parliament to speak about a true democracy, and the ideals of democracy, and about making the world safe for democracy, when by the very means by which they are elected to Parliament they shut out two-thirds of the people and hand over the government to the minority. I consider our present representation a fraud and a humbug. It gives the people power with one hand, and takes it away with the other. The people elect this House, on an adult franchise, to carry out certain principles and enact certain legislation. This House has certain powers, but another House has the right to take those powers away from us. This House has certain opportunities; another House has the right to embarrass this Chamber, and to

negative what is accomplished here on behalf of the people of this country. It is not desired that there shall be one Chamber to destroy the work of the other. If there is a desire for reform—and I appeal to hon. members who put forward this motion with the desire to secure reform—now is the opportunity to bring about that real, democratic government which I believe the majority of our people aspire to and desire. It may be urged that there is no precedent for this sort of thing. But I say there is. There is a precedent which we might well copy. That precedent has been established for a considerable time in other countries, and it has worked out to distinct advantage. Let me say than when responsible government was granted to Western Australia, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Knutsford, urged the then Legislative Council of Western Australia to provide a Parliament of one House only. He urged the Western Australian Legislative Council to follow the lead of Ontario, Manitoba, and other large States of Canada, which were then and are now governed by one House of Parliament. The Western Australian Legislative Council, in reply, urged that the cases were not parallel, because Ontario, for instance, had behind it the Dominion Parliament of Canada. If that was an excuse then, that excuse is now gone, because we have behind us the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia; and thus our case is entirely parallel with the cases of Ontario, Manitoba, and other large Canadian States, which are satisfied to be governed by one House. The State of Ontario has a population larger than that of any Australian State; Manitoba's population is equal to that of any Australian State. All except two of the Canadian States are legislated for by only one House of Parliament. Surely we here—and I appeal to those hon. members who say they desire reform and economy—are able to govern this State with one House of Parliament, and can dispense with the expense of two Houses of Parliament, with the needless expense of opposition and contradiction between two Houses. If we do not economise in this House, the people will make us economise. No matter what the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) may say regarding the dignity of this Parliament, Parliament has no dignity whatever unless it has the respect of the people. We pretend to a certain dignity, but this is apt to bring upon ourselves the ridicule and contempt of the people who send us here. I am not concerned for that dignity; I am concerned about giving the people the fullest power of expression, and the fullest right to secure their reforms and their legislation in the sanest manner possible, and in the manner which they desire should be adopted. If we here say that we are going to maintain ourselves under present conditions, if we are going to insist upon a form of government which has proved both expensive and unsatisfactory, the people will take a hand themselves. The time is coming when we shall have to economise. The time is coming when the whole State will have to economise. The time may be coming when we shall be unable to carry on in this State, and will have to hand it over to the Commonwealth Government. That is a possibility.

Mr. Smith: Then the sooner we start to economise, the better.

Mr. TROY: I do not care where we start; but we must start. I do not care whether a start is made with the Upper House or with this House

so long as the one House remaining is elected on an adult franchise and is representative of the whole of the people of Western Australia. I would be satisfied with such a House, but with no other. That would give a lead to the people of this country, and would be a proof to the people that Parliament is earnest in regard to economy. And then the people would follow us. When the assistance we are now receiving from the Commonwealth Government ceases, as it will do in a year or two, when we have the burden of war taxation pressing upon every individual in the community, we shall find it extremely difficult to pay our way. We find that difficult enough even now. If the Treasurer thought it wise to tell us his real feelings, he would say that financial matters are in a most unsatisfactory condition. If the Federal Treasurer told the Australian people his real feelings, he would say that the financial future is by no means bright. This country has heavy burdens, and the time is coming when we can no longer evade them. That being so, let us not worry about the dignity of Parliament. If hon. members are honest in putting forward this motion—and I have no reason to doubt it—I ask them, are they prepared to do that here which Lord Knutsford advised in the first instance, and which, according to the experience of Canada—an experience which ought to be good enough for us—supports? I have no fear whatever that a party will ever get into power in Western Australia or remain in power in Western Australia, that will do untold harm; because the people always have the opportunity to right matters, and always do right matters. They do that in this House. No Government in Western Australia exists for more than five or six years at the most, no matter how much they endeavour to continue to carry on. The present Government will most assuredly pass away, as the Government represented by members on this side of the House passed away. It is my opinion that the people follow neither extreme. They stand somewhere about the middle, and when one party goes too far in one direction, the people turn the other way. As a result, Western Australia has government by the more moderate sections of the community. Whilst that precedent obtains in British politics, and it has always obtained. I anticipate no great harm from democratic representation, or from Parliaments elected by adult franchise, which members here and in another place insist will result. If the people find that a Government legislate in a manner harmful to the country, they will take the first opportunity of righting the position, as they always have done. I do not wish to assume the role of prophet, but if hon. members think that the government of this country can continue under present conditions, I am sorry for the attitude they take up and for the opinion they hold. For I am convinced that just as the nations on the side of the Allies in this war insist upon the absolute democratisation of Germany, so our people will insist upon the democratisation of our government here. Although the Pan Germans declare that the work of the great Prussians from Frederick II. downwards now lies in ruins, and that they will receive the sword stroke of the social democrats standing erect. Prussia has already democratised herself. We have insisted that we are fighting in this war for true democratic principles, and we cannot expect our soldiers, when they return, and our people here to continue to be governed by our present system when they know that democratic aspirations have no possible means of success under

it. There is no doubt about it. It has been the experience of every hon. member that the people may elect a majority of members here to carry out a certain policy, and the principle of the other place representing a minority is to so embarrass the Government, and to so delay legislation, in the hope that the Government will become unpopular. That sort of thing will not go on indefinitely because the people will be bound to get tired of it, and if we do not alter it, they will alter it for us in a way we will not like. The people will not be content with electing a Parliament and seeing that Parliament embarrassed and opposed by every means available to a certain party. The time will come when they will not brook opposition; they will sweep it away, and that time is coming soon. When the soldiers return from the Front, they will not allow the representation of this country to be in the hands of a minority. Here then is the opportunity of hon. members who desire this particular reform.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that the motion does not deal with the constitution of Parliament other than the number of members.

Mr. TROY: May I draw attention to the fact that the number of members cannot be altered except by an amendment of the Constitution. It is my intention to move an amendment. The number of members cannot be reduced unless we amend the Constitution, and I am in favour of that, providing members are elected on an adult franchise.

Mr. SPEAKER: The franchise is not under discussion.

Mr. TROY: I am prepared to support a reduction of members provided the members are elected on an adult franchise. Other hon. members are prepared to support a reduction because it means economy, but economy is not in the motion. Surely I can give my reasons for advocating a reduction.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has been discussing the franchise of another place for some time.

Mr. TROY: I am not prepared to argue in this connection but I feel that you, Mr. Speaker, are misinterpreting my intention. Some hon. members have moved for a reduction in the number of members on the score of economy. I want to move for a reduction of members on the score of representation. I am perfectly satisfied that the motion is wide enough to give me the opportunity I want. I intend to give notice of the amendment I propose to move, and I hope hon. members will support it because by doing so they will be giving a definite expression to those ideals which are so much spoken of to-day and which hon. members themselves have referred to as the ideals of democratic representation and aspirations. I want to see Parliament conducted economically, but I am satisfied that cannot be done by a reduction in the number. I am not prepared to say there should be a reduction of from 50 to 35 because, as the member for Kanowna has pointed out, Parliament should not become a clique, and the fewer numbers we have the greater the possibilities of corruption. The time has arrived when we can govern this country as the Dominion of Canada is governed and surely what other British communities can do, we can also do. I will give notice of my amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member need not refer to it until we have disposed of the other amendment.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning—on amendment) [10-20]: I merely wish to say that I intend to oppose the amendment moved by the member for Sussex. My object is that it is only a pious resolution and what we want is something definite.

Mr. DUFF (Claremont) [10-21]: I would like to say a few words in reply to the leader of the Opposition who condemned the new members of the Assembly for their indiscretion during the recent campaign. Throughout Western Australia there seems to be a wave of condemnation for the existing Parliament. On the public platform I was asked the question as to whether I would be in favour of a reduction of the number of members in both Houses and I replied in the affirmative. After listening to the debate to-night, however, and particularly to the speeches delivered by the leader of the Opposition and the member for Kanowna, I am convinced that the present is not the time to reduce the number of members of Parliament. The Federal questions which we shall have to face are serious, and there is no doubt that the State Parliament requires to preserve its full strength to be able to deal with them. Then there would be a difficulty in connection with a redistribution of seats, a difficulty which would be rather awkward to overcome in the present abnormal times. The country and the goldfields electorates would suffer considerably by reason of the absence of so many adult males from the State. My only object in saying a few words is to explain the position I took up on the public platform during my election campaign, when I said I was in favour of the reduction of the number of members in this House and in another place. Before I entered this House I was one of the public. Since I have been here I have had the advantage of listening to interesting debates and I have learnt something. To-night I have learnt a little more and my intention now is not to vote in the direction of bringing about a reduction in the number of members of Parliament. I may have the opportunity of letting my constituents know that I have been converted in my views.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [10-25]: 1 move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [10-26]: I am going to vote against both the motion and the amendment. Personally I do not believe that Western Australia is over represented as far as the Legislative Assembly is concerned. I have always been of the opinion that the system of Parliament in Western Australia is not democratic. A majority of the electors return to this House various parties from which is formed the Government of the country, and if that party from which the Government is formed is not of a certain brand of politics, there is no possible chance of the Government putting their ideals and aspirations into operation. I trust when the member for Mount Magnet moves his amendment, that those who profess democracy in this House will support the amendment, and let the people of the country see that we, at all events, believe that the electors of Western Australia, the adult men and women, should have a voice in the government of the country. As it is to-day we have just on 150,000 electors in the State who return 50 members to the Legislative Assembly. We have over 53,000 electors on the roll for another place and I am within my rights when I say that there will not be 40,000 of them eligible to return

a member to the Legislative Council, if each had only one vote. There are men who possess eight votes; there are others with four, and hundreds with two and three votes. What right has any man, irrespective of any property he may hold, or woman either, to have more than one vote or more power than the man who works with the pick and shovel? The position has become almost intolerable, and I am prepared to show that the taxpayers of Western Australia are paying too much for the legislation they are getting. Irrespective of what legislation is introduced and discussed and passed by this Chamber, unless it suits the other Chamber it has no possible chance of going through. If we want good legislation, if we want members returned by the democratic vote and if we expect them to take a keen interest in the legislation that is brought before this House we should wipe out the other place. We should then have a keener interest taken in the legislation introduced here. I will support any motion for the reduction of members of Parliament by 30—that is to say, for the total abolition of the place which is elected on a minority vote.

Mr. SPEAKER: To the motion an amendment has been moved to strike out all words after "House" in line 2. The question is that the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the motion. All in favour of the amendment say "aye," on the contrary "no." The "Noes" have it.

Amendment thus passed; the words struck out.

Mr. TROY: Am I now free to move my amendment?

Mr. SPEAKER: No, because the words have not been struck out.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning—in reply) [10-32]: I must confess I have been surprised at the attack which has been made on myself. The member for Kanowna gave us one of his usual orations.

#### Point of Order.

Hon. P. Collier: On a point of order. I think a mistake occurred in regard to the amendment. You, Sir, put the amendment, that the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the motion, and you declared that the "Noes" had it.

Mr. Speaker: The question was that the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the motion. The "Noes" said that those words should not stand part of the motion.

Hon. P. Collier: Therefore, they were struck out. You gave the verdict to the "Noes."

Mr. Speaker: Wrongly?

Hon. P. Collier: No, rightly, for the words were struck out.

Mr. Troy: Therefore I can move my amendment.

Mr. Thomson: Would I not be entitled to call for a division? I was under the impression that the amendment had been negatived.

Mr. Speaker: The point is that I gave the decision that the "Noes" had it.

Mr. Thomson: I was under the impression that my motion remained intact. It now seems that the words proposed to be struck out were struck out. Had I known it at the time, I would have called for a division, and I think I am entitled to do so now. I understood that your decision was that my motion stood, that the amendment moved by the member for Sussex had been defeated. It was your mistake, Mr. Speaker, and I claim the right to call for a division.

Mr. Speaker: When I put the question that the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the motion, there were only two or three voices for the "Ayes" while there was a number for the "Noes." I then proceeded to put the motion, thinking that the words stood part of the motion, and I prevented the member for Mt. Magnet from moving his amendment. I do not desire to rob the member for Katanning of his right to call for a division. If he desires to question my decision on the point, I will put the amendment again. It is only fair to the hon. member, because the mistake was mine.

Hon. P. Collier: No, there was no mistake.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member thought that the words proposed to be struck out stood part of the motion.

Hon. P. Collier: It seems to me the position is perfectly clear. There was no mistake at all on your part, Sir. The amendment was put, and the decision was given in favour of the "Noes." No division was called for. The member for Mt. Magnet endeavoured to move his amendment and, under a misapprehension, you ruled that he could not do so. The member for Katanning is now claiming the right to call for a division because he failed to recognise the fact that the verdict had been given against him. I contend that he is not entitled to the division.

Mr. Thomson: With all due respect, the leader of the Opposition has stated clearly and distinctly that you, Sir, were under a misapprehension.

Hon. P. Collier: Not in regard to the question of "Ayes" and "Noes."

Mr. Thomson: I appeal to you Mr. Speaker, that if you, with your complete knowledge of the forms, were under a misapprehension, what could be expected of a private member? You permitted me to rise and proceed to address the House in reply before the motion was definitely put, and now you are going to deprive me from my privilege of calling for a division.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is right. I allowed him to begin his reply. I think he should be allowed an opportunity for dividing the House.

Hon. T. Walker: It is regrettable, of course, that either the member for Katanning, or you, Sir, should have been under a misapprehension. But it was a misapprehension which does not in the slightest affect the position. This is what happened: you called for the "Ayes," and you called for the "Noes," and you said the "Noes" had it. Anyone at that stage could have called for a division, but nobody did so, and consequently that is fixed. That procedure cannot be retraced. We cannot go back. The misapprehension was subsequent to that. You having made the declaration that the "Noes" had it and there being no call for a division, the opportunity has passed, the amendment to strike out certain words is carried, and the member for Sussex has now an opportunity of completing the amendment by moving to insert further words. We cannot go back.

Mr. Speaker: The amendment of the member for Sussex comes first.

Hon. T. Walker: Yes, the record of the House is complete up to that declaration.

The Premier: I was watching carefully what took place. There is no doubt you put the question, Sir, in this way: The question was, "That the words proposed to be struck out remain part of the question." There were "ayes" and there were "noes." You said the "noes" had it.

and there was no call for a division. I think in justice to the House that cannot be recalled.

Mr. Thomson: It is most regrettable that a member should be debarred from his privileges through a misunderstanding.

Mr. Speaker: The misunderstanding does not affect the hon. member's position.

Mr. Thomson: I am debarred from replying.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member is not debarred from replying. He has lost his opportunity of calling for a division, and that is the only thing he has lost.

Debate resumed.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [10-41]: I was under no delusion. I will now move my amendment, that the words "it is expedient to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council" be inserted.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	...	11
Noes	...	...	...	...	28

Majority against	...	17
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#### AYES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Smith
Mr. Maley	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Money	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. O'Loughlin	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Pickering	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Pilkington	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Broun	Mr. Mullaay
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Duff	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Gardner	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Roche
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Troy
Mr. Holman	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Willcock
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [10-48]: I move a further amendment—

That after the word "House" the following be inserted:—"It is desirable that, in order to secure true democratic representation the the Constitution Act be amended to provide for the election of one House of Parliament on an adult franchise."

Mr. ROCKE (South Fremantle) [10-49]: I second the amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would draw the attention of the hon. member to the fact that this amendment is quite different from the motion. It is very wide from the intention of the motion, which was simply to reduce the number of members of both Houses, and only meant an alteration to the Electoral Act. This amendment means an alteration of the Constitution Act.

Mr. TROY: If you rule my amendment out of order, Sir, I am prepared to argue the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have no desire to rule the amendment out; it is pretty wide, though.

Mr. TROY: There may be doubts about it, but there is no doubt in my mind. I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity of expressing my opinions. I have already stated my reasons, and I shall not repeat them. Hon. members now have the opportunity—

Point of Order.

The Premier: On a point of order. It appears to me that the amendment of the member for Mt. Magnet is entirely irrelevant to the motion. Can an hon. member be allowed to tack on an irrelevant amendment to a motion in this fashion? The amendment would involve an alteration of our Constitution by the abolition of one House of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker: I drew the attention of the member for Mt. Magnet and of the House to the fact, on a first glance at the amendment, that it was totally different from the motion.

Hon. P. Collier: Of course it is. That is quite right.

Mr. Speaker: There is hardly any relevancy at all.

Hon. P. Collier: That is so. There is no need for any relevancy.

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. member would hardly be able to make it clear.

Hon. P. Collier: Where is the Standing Order which says that an amendment must be relevant to the subject-matter of the motion?

Mr. Speaker: The amendment, certainly, is absolutely wide of the motion. I rule it out of order, and the member for Mt. Magnet can then move that my ruling be disagreed to.

Hon. P. Collier: I think we ought to have the Standing Order.

Dissent from the Speaker's Ruling.

Mr. Troy: I move—

That the Speaker's ruling be disagreed with. I do not think, Sir, that you ought to give the Standing Order. From my experience in your present position I know that that is something which the Speaker keeps up his sleeve. I would not give it myself, Mr. Speaker, in your position. But you have already expressed the opinion that the amendment of the member for Sussex, which you admitted, provided for a reduction of members of both Houses of Parliament. Is that so, Sir?

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Troy: Then, Sir, I understand from you that that involves amendment of the Electoral Act. The amendment of the member for Sussex, which you allowed to be moved, and which has been put to the House, involves amendment of the Constitution Act, not of the Electoral Act; because it is the Constitution Act that provides for the number of members which shall comprise the Parliament. Section 5 of the Constitution Act reads—

The Legislative Council shall consist of 30 elected members, who shall be returned and shall sit for the Electoral Provinces as hereinafter stated and defined.

The number cannot be reduced except by an amendment of the Constitution Act, nor can the Legislative Council be abolished except by an amendment of the Constitution Act. An amendment of that Act must be made to secure either object. If the amendment of the member for

Sussex is in order, then surely, on the same grounds, my amendment is in order.

The Attorney General: But your amendment refers to the qualification of electors.

Mr. Troy: That also is a matter of the Constitution Act.

The Attorney General: The amendment of the member for Sussex was relevant to the motion. Yours is not.

Mr. Troy: My amendment is absolutely relevant to the motion. The motion has been struck out by this House; only a word or two of the original motion remain. The position is similar to the moving of an amendment on a motion of want of confidence in the Government, or of an amendment on the Address-in-reply to the Governor's Speech. Any amendment whatsoever can be moved on the Address-in-reply. At present there is no motion, in fact, before the Chair; there are only a few words, which mean nothing. My amendment, I persist, is in order, if on no other ground, on the very ground on which you, Mr. Speaker, admitted the amendment of the member for Sussex and the motion itself. I have no desire to argue this matter further, unless, of course, I am compelled to do so. But I do insist that I am absolutely in order in taking the course which I have taken; and it is logical to expect that I shall secure, under the Standing Orders, the same ruling as has been admitted in the cases of the member for Sussex and of the mover of the original motion. The Constitution Act states that the Legislative Assembly shall consist of 50 members who shall be elected for the several electoral districts. Yet the motion provides for a reduction of that number. If a motion can be moved for the reduction by one, it is possible to move for a reduction of the lot.

Mr. Speaker: I ruled the hon. member out of order on the ground that the amendment was not relevant to the motion. The hon. member has quoted the Constitution Act, but he has not quoted anything in support of his argument from the Standing Orders. I find in the 12th edition of "May" page 261, the following:—

It is an imperative rule that every amendment must be relevant to the question on which the amendment is proposed. That is sufficient to support the ruling I have given.

Mr. Troy: You did not give that as the reason in the first instance.

Mr. Speaker: Irrelevancy was the reason. The motion had for its object the reduction of the number of members of this House and of that of the Legislative Council. Then the member for Mt. Magnet moved an amendment which I ruled was irrelevant. The effect of that amendment would be to abolish the Legislative Council, and because it is wide of the motion I have ruled it out of order.

Mr. Munis: I would draw attention to Standing Order 187, which reads—

Amendments may be proposed to a proposed amendment as if such proposed amendment were an original question.

I am of opinion therefore, that the member for Mt. Magnet is absolutely in order.

The Premier: It was not an amendment on the amendment.

Mr. Speaker: The Standing Order quoted by the hon. member does not affect the position.

Hon. T. Walker: The whole question resolves itself into one of relevancy. If the amendment is irrelevant it is out of order. The question is, to what does relevancy refer, not to the ques-

tion as it originally stood, but to the question now before the House. There is a motion which now only contains the words—"That in the opinion of this House." Any words that follow those must be relevant.

Mr. Speaker: The words must be relevant to the original motion.

Hon. T. Walker: No, the original motion has disappeared. "That in the opinion of this House," is the only question now. Those words stand and they are relevant as an introduction to anything that the House may choose to add. I submit we cannot compare the amendment with what the House has deleted. If you Mr. Speaker wanted to rule the amendment out of order, I should say it would be on the ground that it is not the procedure of this House to attempt to alter the constitution of another place. The original motion was to reduce the membership of Parliament. There still remains the principle of reduction. The reduction of the membership of the House may take place in any way; it may be done by the reduction of ten, twenty or thirty. The member for Mt. Magnet proposes to reduce another place by thirty members instead of by ten. Surely there is nothing irrelevant in that.

Mr. Pickering: Under Standing Order 187, which has just been read by the member for Hannans (Mr. Munis), I contend that my amendment was relevant to the question and the amendment moved by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) was on my amendment. The question therefore is, was the amendment moved by the member for Mt. Magnet relevant to mine?

Mr. Troy: You are ruling out the amendment on the ground that it is not relevant. In my opinion it is relevant. Its relevancy is on the same principle as that of other amendments we have had. Let me give an instance: on the 11th November, 1915, the member for Murray-Wellington, now Minister for Works, moved a motion in regard to the Wyndham Freezing Works contract, as follows:—

That this House views with grave concern the action of the Government in entering into a private arrangement with Messrs. Nevanas & Co. for the erection of freezing works at Wyndham and a private arrangement to hand over to Nevanas & Co. the management thereof for a term of years; and is of opinion that the evidence discloses through the negotiations contracts, and subsequent cancellation a state of affairs which is subversive of the principles of sound government.

To that an amendment was moved by the member for Menzies in these words—

That all the words after "that" in line one be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu, "This House on general principles disapproves of the letting of contracts without calling for public tenders."

There we had a definite motion on a definite subject, while the amendment was to strike out the whole of the motion, except the first word, in order to get an expression of general principles. Yet I, who have moved an amendment which is relevant, am told that it is irrelevant.

Mr. Speaker: Was any point raised on that ruling you have referred to?

Mr. Troy: No, no ruling was asked for, but the amendment was accepted and carried.

Mr. Speaker: No point of order was raised. The Minister for Works: It has been raised now.

Mr. Smith : If it had been raised I can imagine what the decision would have been.

Mr. Troy : Yes, for the amendment was in order. On the Address-in-reply debate in 1904-5 the then member for West Perth moved that all words after "we" be struck out in order to insert an amendment condemning the Government on the proposed purchase of the Midland Railway, a matter which was not referred to at all in the Address-in-reply. I could find other instances. My amendment provides for a reduction of members by 30 instead of by 10. That is all it means. It means merely an amendment of the Constitution Act, which the original motion also contemplated. Neither could be given effect to without an amendment of the Constitution Act. The same remark applies to the amendment by the member for Sussex. To that extent both amendments are relevant to the motion. We have had numerous instances of the whole of a motion, except the first word, being struck out by an amendment, as in the case referred to of the amendment moved by the member for Menzies on the motion by the member for Murray-Wellington. It has been said that in that instance the amendment was not questioned. No matter what question might have been raised, the Speaker would have given a decision which he regarded as correct; especially on a question of no confidence would the Speaker have gone very thoroughly into the question. If the amendment was relevant in that case, I am sure that my amendment is relevant also.

Mr. Speaker : The point to be considered is whether there is relevancy between the proposal for the reduction of the number of members in this House and the proposal for the abolition of the Legislative Council. I say there is no relevancy. The member for Mt. Magnet has disagreed with that, and has given the House reasons for his disagreement. The question is that the Speaker's ruling be disagreed with.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	10
Noes	...	...	...	22

Majority against 12

#### AYES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. Troy
Mr. Collier	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)
Mr. Munsie	

#### NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Broun	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. Duff	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Smith
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Money	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Mullany	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Nairn	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Pickering	(Teller.)
Mr. Plesse	

Motion thus negatived ; The Speaker's ruling not disagreed with.

Debate resumed.

Mr. MUNSIE : I take it we are now in order in

as it stands now is, "That in the opinion of this House."

Mr. SPEAKER : That is all.

Mr. MUNSIE : I move an amendment—

That the following words be added :—"The number of members of the Legislative Council be reduced by 30."

The member for Katanning moved that the number of members of the Legislative Council be reduced by ten. My proposal is to alter that "ten" to "thirty."

Mr. SPEAKER : The motion to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Council by ten was defeated. The amendment of the member for Sussex was that the number of members in both Houses should be reduced. Now the member for Hannans desires to move in other language that the other House be done away with, for the proposal to reduce the number by 30 means the abolition of another place. I cannot, therefore, accept the amendment.

Dissent from the Speaker's ruling.

Mr. Munsie : I move—

That the Speaker's ruling be disagreed with.

The member for Katanning and the member for Sussex moved to reduce the number of members of both Houses. I distinctly stated that I intended to vote against both the motion and the amendment. I do not believe that a reduction in the number of members in the Legislative Assembly is necessary or in the best interests of the country, but I do believe that a reduction in the number of members of another place is necessary. What position am I in ? Have I to vote for something I do not believe in, or can I vote for something in which I do believe ? I voted against the amendment of the member for Sussex because it suggested a reduction in the number of members of both Houses, and I did this for the purpose of moving an amendment for a reduction in the number of members of another place only.

Mr. Speaker : I gave the House two reasons before putting the amendment moved by the member for Mt. Magnet, the first being as to the abolition of the Upper House, and the second on the point of whether a reduction in the number of members constituted relevancy. The member for Hannans now moves an amendment to reduce the Upper House by 30 members. That Chamber only consists of 30 members and the amendment amounts to the abolition of the place. I cannot accept it.

Debate resumed.

Mr. LAMBERT : May I not move to reduce the number of members in the Legislative Council by 29 ?

Mr. SPEAKER : That is the same thing.

Mr. LAMBERT : Then I move—

That the following words be inserted "it is desirable that the members of the Legislative Council be reduced by 29."

Mr. SPEAKER : The House has already decided that it will not reduce the number by ten, I suppose because the reduction was too great.

Mr. LAMBERT : It does not mean that.

Mr. SPEAKER : Members cannot move to reduce the number by a greater number after a smaller number has been negatived.

Mr. LAMBERT : I do not think the defeat of that proposal implied any such construction.

Mr. SPEAKER : I rule that the hon. member cannot proceed, and rule the amendment out of order.

Mr. TROY : I understand you to rule, Sir, that the member for Coolgardie is not in order when he

that the number of members of the Upper House be reduced by 29.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is an impossible proposition; it means the abolition of another place.

Mr. TROY: With all due respect to you, Sir,—

Mr. SPEAKER: I have given my ruling; does the hon. member disagree with it?

Mr. TROY: I do.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then disagree with it.

Discent from the Speaker's Ruling.

Mr. Troy: I move—

That the Speaker's ruling be disagreed with. It is not within your province Sir, to say what is possible and what is impossible. It is within your province to say what is in order and what is out of order, but it is within the province of this House to say what is possible and what is impossible. With all due respect to you, Sir, I am not prepared to stand here and allow the Speaker to dictate to the House. Apart from any idea in your mind as to whether a thing is possible or impossible, right or wrong, high or low, wet or cold, I hold that the hon. member was right in moving his amendment. He is just as relevant in moving that the members of the Upper House be reduced by 29 as was the member for Katanning in moving that the number be reduced by 10.

Hon. P. Collier: In the attitude taken up by the House this evening we have entirely departed from the practice which has obtained in this Parliament ever since I have been a member of it.

Mr. Smith: You have not given one good reason for its abolition.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member may think so. There are many good reasons which might be obtained from day to day why some members might be abolished, if not the whole House. Our Standing Orders are silent on the question of relevancy so far as I can ascertain. They are entirely silent on the question of relevancy as to amendments that may be moved to a motion. Therefore, we have recourse to the practice of the House of Commons or to "May." I take it, in ruling, that is the course you have adopted. It may be correct, but I do not want to allow this occasion to pass without saying that whilst it may be in conformity with "May" it is entirely contrary to the practice that has been followed in this House. If time permitted I could provide scores of instances where motions have been amended from time to time by striking out the whole of the words after the first word "that" and inserting other words entirely foreign to the substance and intention of the original motion. I merely mention that to show it has been the practice. Whether it has been the correct practice according to the authorities, I am not going to dispute. But it has been the practice of the House all the years I have been here. I could provide instances where motions have been amended in the direction entirely irrelevant to the motion.

Mr. Nairn: Is it not time we corrected it?

Hon. P. Collier: I do not know whether we are correcting it. I do not say that the practice followed throughout is wrong, and that we have only found it out at eleven o'clock to-night.

Mr. Nairn: But you are admitting it now.

Hon. P. Collier: The House is governed by the Standing Orders, and where the Standing Orders are silent a certain procedure is laid down. But the ruling which has been given to-night as to the question of relevancy is entirely new, so far as the practice of the House is concerned. That does not seem to me the point on which the hon. member

has been ruled out. If it is competent for a member to move that the number of members of another place be reduced by a certain number, whatever that number may be, it would at least be relevant that it be reduced by a different number, although that might mean the whole of the members of that House. That may, and it would, achieve an entirely different result, to reduce the House by ten members and to reduce it by 30 members, which is the whole of the membership. It would arrive at a different end from that intended originally. I am not prepared to say whether it is relevant all the same.

Mr. Thomson: It is not what I set out for.

Mr. Speaker: We have disposed of that. The point now is 29 members. After the member for Hannans moved to reduce the number of members of another place by 30, which I ruled out, the member for Coolgardie moved to reduce the number by 29, and as the House only consists of 30, I cannot accept the amendment. I take it the House endeavours at least to deal with motions in a sensible manner and the motion as first moved did convey sense. It was sensible, because it desired to reduce the number of members of this House to 35 and the number of another place to 20. That is sense. Now it is proposed to reduce another place by 29 members, when it only consists of 30. That does not appear to be a sensible motion to place before the Chamber, although members may view it as they like. I have given my ruling that the amendment is out of order.

Hon. P. Collier: I only want to say with regard to the amendment of the member for Coolgardie, whether it is relevant or not, it might be ruled out on the ground that it is frivolous.

Mr. Speaker: It is not sense.

Hon. P. Collier: To move an amendment which will have the effect of making another place consist of only one member does not seem to have much justification about it, at any rate not as much as the amendment of the member for Hannans. I want to say, further, whether or not the ruling given is upheld by the House, and is in accordance with "May" and correct or not, it appears to me to be a new practice.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member cannot discuss a decision of the House.

Hon. P. Collier: I know, I want to point out that this is a variation of the practice followed in this House.

Mr. Lambert: It appears to me it would seem peculiar if this House had to accept a number which it does not require. It does not seem right that you should place an arbitrary ruling in regard to the number of members. No exception was taken on the motion or on the previous amendment.

Mr. Speaker: I pointed out that the first motion as moved by the member for Katanning was in accordance with sense. It was a sensible proposition. However, members disagreed with the policy of it, for it was possible for the House to carry on business with a reduced number of members, and it was also possible for another place to carry on business with the number reduced by 10. The hon. member desires to reduce another place by 29, when the number of members of that House only consists of 30. That motion does not convey sense, to me at least. I rule it absolutely out of order.

Mr. Lambert: That is not an interpretation of the Standing Orders; it is purely a matter of opinion. In my opinion I think another place would be better constituted with only one mem-

ber rather than 30 members. You, Mr. Speaker, are giving an opinion and not interpreting our Standing Orders. This is a matter irrespective of party. It is a dangerous thing to bring party into our Standing Orders. The amendment which has been moved in my opinion was relevant, but the matter of the number, as I said previously, is purely a matter of opinion. To my mind, and to the minds of every member on this side, we would prefer to see the Legislative Council constituted of one member only.

Mr. Angelo : That would be an autoeracy.

Mr. Lambert : To my mind the Legislative Council now is an autoeracy against the democracy of this country. I am concerned that this House should have a right to express an opinion as to whether Western Australia should have another branch of the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker : Order ! The House has the right to express such an opinion under a specific motion for that purpose.

Mr. Lambert : We desire to place before the House a specific motion ; but the discussion on it, and the right to move it, have been stifled by an interpretation of the Standing Orders.

Mr. Speaker : Order ! The hon. member brought forward not a specific motion but an amendment to another motion. If the hon. member desires to discuss the Legislative Council, its constitution, or its ramifications, he is at liberty to do so by bringing forward a substantive motion for that purpose. The hon. member is not in order in accusing me of preventing debate with regard to another place. The hon. member is not in order in doing that, and I will not permit it.

Mr. Lambert : I am sorry if I have been misunderstood, Sir. Owing to the interpretation of the Standing Orders we are prevented from obtaining the expression of opinion which we desire.

Mr. Speaker : This is not the proper way to obtain that expression of opinion. It should be done by substantive motion.

Mr. Lambert : I hope there will be that interpretation placed upon the Standing Orders which will allow of the obtaining of that expression of opinion which we desire.

Mr. Pickering : What was the result of my motion, Mr. Speaker ? My motion was to the effect that the numbers of members in the Assembly and the Council should be reduced. That was defeated. Therefore, it is the will of the House that no reduction shall take place. Is, then, the amendment of the member for Coolgardie in order ?

Mr. Speaker : I have answered that question in dealing with the amendment moved by the member for Mt. Magnet.

Mr. Troy : I am more concerned about the interpretation of the Standing Orders than I am for the convenience of members or even for the dignity of any man in this House. That is the reason, Sir, why I moved that your ruling be disagreed to. I have no personal feeling at all in the matter. I still think it possible, despite the ruling of the House, which may be made for reasons of expediency, to discuss the amendment. The reason you now give in ruling the amendment of the member for Coolgardie out of order is that the amendment is frivolous.

Mr. Speaker : That it does not convey sense.

Mr. Lambert : It conveys purpose.

Mr. Troy : If one hon. member's amendment asking for a reduction by 15 members conveyed sense, why should not another member's amendment, asking for a reduction by 29, convey sense ? Suppose it does mean, in effect, the abolition of another Chamber, what does that matter so long as the amendment contains sense and is in order ? Had he moved that the Legislative Council be moved to Rottneest Island, that would have been frivolous. Had he moved that the Legislative Council be sent to the Eastern States, that, too, would have been frivolous. But this amendment that the Legislative Council be reduced by 29 members is definite, logical, and drastic. And then we are told that it is frivolous. This, which is so drastic and so definite, and which conveys purpose, and which has a possibility of being carried into effect if the House would follow the hon. member's lead, is ruled to be frivolous, meaningless, and containing no sense. It contains too much sense. I moved that your ruling, Mr. Speaker, be disagreed with, because I do not wish to witness a return to the days of a former Speaker, under whom these questions were questions of convenience. I care not whether a ruling suits the Government or suits the Opposition ; but I say, let us be consistent. We cannot be consistent if an amendment is ruled out because it is inconvenient to somebody. I shall object most strongly to business being carried on in a manner contrary to the intentions and the spirit of the Standing Orders.

Mr. Speaker : I do not desire to make many remarks before putting the question, but I wish to draw the attention of the House to a ruling given by a former Speaker, the member for Mt. Magnet, on an amendment moved by the member for Pilbara on the Arbitration Bill of 1912. The ruling will be found on page 1,309 of "Hansard" for the 27th August, 1912. The amendment moved was in these words—

This clause is inserted with a view to its being acted upon, and not as a joke.

Then the Speaker ruled, in his own words, that—

An amendment cannot be accepted if it is not common sense.

Hon. members who have followed to-night's debate will recognise that the amendment moved by the member for Coolgardie is almost on all fours with that which I have just quoted from "Hansard."

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

Ayes	...	...	...	10
Noes	...	...	...	24

Majority against ... 14

#### AYES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Troy
Mr. Holman	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lutey	Mr. O'Loughlin

(Teller.)

## NOMES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Brown	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Duff	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. George	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. South
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Money	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Mullany	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Nairo	Mr. Hardwick

(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived; the Speaker's ruling not disagreed with.

Mr. Speaker: Notice of Motion No. 7.

Hon. P. Collier: But we have not yet disposed of No. 6, which we are still debating.

Mr. Speaker: There is nothing left of that motion to put to the House.

Hon. P. Collier: I take it that it cannot automatically drop out.

Mr. Speaker: I hope the leader of the Opposition will not adopt that attitude. Unless he desires to move a further amendment, it is finally disposed of. What is left of the motion now does not contain any sense and therefore it cannot be put.

House adjourned at 11.55 p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Thursday, 17th October, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Minutes of Proceedings."]

### MOTION—BUSINESS UNDERTAKINGS.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.32]: I move—

That the Under Treasurer be requested to state the total capital expenditure from loan funds on each of the business undertakings put down in Return No. 3, page 496, of "Hansard."

It is not necessary to detain the House long over this matter, but I think hon. members are entitled to a brief explanation of what I propose. We have been told by the Treasurer, and we know it ourselves, that a certain amount of time and money is sometimes wasted by members in calling for returns. The return that I call for will probably involve some slight trouble, but I think it is most important that

we should have it in order that we can understand the position of affairs with regard to our finances. If hon. members will turn to the papers which have been placed on the Table of this House, and to page 3 of the details of the Estimates, they will see the State Trading Concerns. I am not going to refer, even if permitted, to the Treasurer's statement; we have already seen it. What I want to point out is that where we see the net estimated surplus of £54,000, which is the official return from State enterprises, and when we think of the large amount of public interest there is in this question of State trading concerns, the public, to say nothing of members, should be in a position to fairly understand the financial figures. With this table, which I am calling for, I maintain we can understand the position of these State trading concerns. I am going to take one illustration only, that of the State quarries. We see there the estimated receipts set down at £5,500 and the estimated expenditure at £5,516, a deficiency of £16. I want to know what is the capital involved in these trading concerns. The same may be said of the State sawmills, and others of these trading concerns. What is the amount of capital involved? We want to know this in order that we may ascertain what the profit is. We know from the statements which have been made by the Treasurer, and other members of the Government, what is involved in regard to the sinking fund and interest bill. We have no right to put down the credit balance we have here at £54,000. At any rate, we have not the right to lead the public to believe that we have made £54,000, unless we debit up the interest charges. That is my view of the question. I hope that hon. members will support me in this motion in order that we, and the public, may fully understand the position. At present it is impossible to understand it. In Return No. 13 we have railways, tramways, and water supplies. Personally I should like to see these included. I hope the Under Treasurer will give us the figures. Having fought for 25 years against these State enterprises I seem to find myself in a hopeless minority.

Hon. J. Ewing: I do not think you are.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: As a Liberal I like to move with the times. This return will help us very much in determining that point. If we are to go in for the State enterprises we must do so on a business footing. It is going to involve a considerable amount of labour to Ministers and members, because we have our responsibilities as well as Ministers. I am going to examine each of these State trading concerns from a purely business point of view, and obtain an independent report from an independent accountant on the position of affairs. I cannot do that without the figures called for in this return, showing what the capital involved is and what has been set aside or granted, as the case may be.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Or invested.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The term invested is the last word I would use in this connection.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Sunk.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Sunk is better. What we want to know is what money has been sunk in these enterprises. We also want a balance