

and he is so much attached to them that it would be difficult to make him part with them.

Hon. P. Collier: He will never sell them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The works are quite in his line, and I do not think that the Minister desired to make a statement that was misleading. Unfortunately the public gained a wrong impression. These works are beneficial to the State, for without them the price of machinery would not be kept down.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

#### PAPERS—WOODLINE DISPUTE.

On motion by Mr. Lambert (Coolgardie), ordered: That all papers in connection with the settlement of the woodline dispute on the goldfields in 1919 be laid on the Table of the House.

*House adjourned at 10.16 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 22nd September, 1921.*

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

#### BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

1, Supply (No. 2), £542,000.

Passed.

2, Fremantle Lands.

3, Coroners Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Assembly.

#### BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

#### BILL—ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day; Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair, the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister has moved a new clause, to stand as Clause 3, as follows:—

The record of any proceedings in the Supreme Court under the principal Act shall not be open to public inspection without the sanction of a judge,

to which Mr. Duffell has moved an amendment to strike out "of a judge" and insert in lieu "in writing of the Master of the Supreme Court without the necessity of a formal order."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Since the adjournment I have further consulted the Solicitor General with a view to getting a clause which would meet the desires of hon. members. Before I can move it, it will be necessary for the amendment now before the Committee to be withdrawn.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I will withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That the words "without the sanction of a judge" be struck out, and "except for some reasonable and proper purpose and with the sanction in writing of the Master" be inserted in lieu.

The Solicitor General points out that this is in no way a new departure, that in many matters, particularly in lunacy, a similar restriction is imposed. He has furnished me with a copy of a report of an English case in which the judge said that nobody was allowed to see the records without an order by one of the masters, or by a judge in lunacy, but that, on the other hand, anyone who could satisfy the master or the judge that he desired to see the records for a reasonable and proper purpose would be allowed to see them.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is done under the rules, not under a special enactment.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know, but without some special enactment it could not be done here.

Amendment put and passed; the new clause, as amended, agreed to.

New clause:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move—

That the following new clause be added, to stand as Clause 4: "Sub-paragraph (3) of Section 5 of the Adoption of Children Act is amended by inserting the following after 'years' in line 2: 'or if over that age has been under the care and custody of some person for a period of three years,

during which time such person has acted as an adopting parent.' "

There are some cases in which children have been actually adopted but no application has been made for an adopting order and, the age limit having expired, it is now impossible to get an adopting order, although the children have been with the adopting parents for many years. In two cases at least it has not been the fault of the adopting parents, for they applied to the department and were advised by the then secretary of the department that they were not able to get a legal adoption; and, in consequence, they left the matter in abeyance. When the facts were gone into it was found that one child was nearly three years over the age of 15, and the other child was two days over it, and the order could not be granted. The adopting parents consider it a great hardship and want to have the children legally adopted. I want it to be possible for them to go to a judge and get an adopting order notwithstanding that the children are over the age of 15.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I can verify the statements made by Mr. Lovekin, especially in regard to two of the cases referred to. Three years ago I had a Bill drafted to bring about exactly what is aimed at by this provision. I have pleasure in supporting this new clause.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: In reference to the words "during which time such person has acted as an adopting parent," some question may be raised as to their application to the cases referred to, and as to whether these parties have acted as adopting parents or as in loco parentis.

Hon. J. Duffell: What difference does it make?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: A judge may say he must be satisfied as to whether parents are acting as adopting parents or in loco parentis. A person may act in loco parentis without being an adopting parent under the Act. I move an amendment—

That the words "or otherwise acting in loco parentis" be added to the new clause.

Amendment put and passed; the new clause, as amended, agreed to.

New clause:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move—

That a new clause be inserted, to stand as Clause 5, as follows:—"It shall be the duty of the Registrar of the Supreme Court to furnish to the Registrar General under the Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages Act, 1894, at intervals of not exceeding six months, a return in writing in the prescribed form of the orders of adoption made under this Act and the Registrar General shall cause an entry of every such order to be made in the entry of the birth of the adopted child in the register of births.

I desire to add this clause in order to meet the cases referred to during the discussion on the main clause of the Bill. It was suggested that this might prejudice the chances of a child receiving some benefits which may be conferred upon it at some future time. Whilst it was obvious that the parents of the adopted child may be able from the records of the court to trace back the history of the child, it might be difficult for anyone to trace forward the child's history when it had assumed a totally different name. All that it is necessary to do is to make sure that the Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages receives notification from the Clerk of the Court in which the adopting order was issued, and for him then to be compelled to note the fact in his own registers. In the opinion of the Solicitor General this new clause will enable anyone to trace a child forward as well as to trace its history backwards.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move—

That a new clause be inserted to stand as Clause 6 as follows:—"All copies of the principal Act hereafter printed by the Government Printer shall be printed as amended by this Act under the supervision of the Clerk of Parliaments and in any such reprint the short title shall be altered to 'The Adoption of Children Act Amendment Act, 1896-1921.' "

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

## BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

### Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: Although this is a very short Bill I regard it, for two reasons, as being of the first importance. In the first place it is a matter of practical importance, and secondly it is an assertion of a State right which the Commonwealth have so far successfully evaded. So far as the first point is concerned, that it is a matter of practical necessity, I think there can be no question that Western Australia, now more than ever before, requires as its representatives in the Parliament of the Commonwealth the best men that can possibly be induced to offer their services for that office. I do not suggest for a moment that members of the State Parliament are necessarily, or that they are in fact, better qualified for these offices than the people who are not members of the State Parliament. I do say, however, that it is not giving Western Australia a fair chance of securing in the Federal Parliament the services of the best men she

has got if we exclude from candidature all members of the State Parliament. It seems to my mind obvious that if the electors in their wisdom do not choose the best men in Western Australia to enter the State Parliament, they surely do not choose the worst. At present, when we want the best men we can have to uphold the rights and privileges of Western Australia in the Federal Parliament, it is wrong that all members of both Houses of the State Parliament should be precluded from offering their services as members of the Federal Parliament. Without making any invidious comparison between the services offered in the interests of Western Australia by members of the Federal Parliament, I do say that those members who have had legislative and administrative experience in the State Parliament have been amongst the best men for Western Australia in the Federal Parliament. That is as much as I intend to say on the first point. The second point is in my opinion the more important one. The Bill I think asserts a right that our Commonwealth Parliament has so far debarred us from. The Federal Constitution sets out the qualification of members of the Senate and of members of the House of Representatives. The qualification is the same in both instances. The section of the Constitution covering this matter is Section 34 which reads:—"Until the Parliament otherwise provides." I shall point out that these words are of the first importance. The Constitution Act also says, "The qualifications of a member of the House of Representatives shall be as follows:—He must be of the full age of 21 years," and so on. I would draw attention to the words, "Until the Parliament otherwise provides the qualifications of a member of the House of Representatives shall be as follows." This clearly contemplates that Parliament at its discretion from time to time may alter that qualification. Section 44 of the Constitution Act sets out the disqualifications, those things which prevent a man from offering himself as a member of the Federal Parliament. It says—

Any person who—(i) Is under any acknowledgment of allegiance, obedience, or adherence to a foreign power, or is a subject or a citizen or entitled to the rights or privileges of a subject or a citizen of a foreign power; or (ii) Is attainted of treason, or has been convicted and is under sentence or subject to be sentenced, for any offence punishable under the law of the Commonwealth or of a State by imprisonment for one year or longer; or (iii) Is an undischarged bankrupt or insolvent; or (iv) Holds any office of profit under the Crown or any pension payable during the pleasure of the Crown out of any of the revenues of the Commonwealth—shall be incapable of being chosen or of sitting as a senator or a member of the House of Representatives.

In that instance the words, "Until Parliament otherwise provides" are not included, I think for obvious reasons. It was never contemplated that the Federal Parliament should have the right to set up barriers against the State sending to the Federal Parliament any person it desired to send. There are two or three methods by which we can test this. Sub-section 4 of Section 44 reads:

Holds any office of profit under the Crown or any pension payable during the pleasure of the Crown.

There is a proviso which sets out that sub-section iv. shall not apply "to the office of any of the Queen's Ministers of State for the Commonwealth, or of any of the Queen's Ministers for a State, or to the receipt of pay, half-pay, or a pension by any person as an officer or member of the Queen's Navy or army, or to the receipt of pay as an officer or member of the naval or military forces of the Commonwealth by any person whose services are not wholly employed by the Commonwealth." Would it be contended for one moment that the Commonwealth Parliament—of course, by any amendment of the Constitution in the proper way, the Commonwealth Parliament can do practically anything—by a mere amendment to the Commonwealth Electoral Act, should say that this shall apply to people in receipt of pay or half pay and to the Ministers of State in the State? It would not hold water for one moment. It would be said that the Federal Parliament could not set up such another disqualification in addition to those which the Constitution specially set out should apply. If the Federal Parliament can not make an alteration in the disqualifications in that way, they cannot create any new disqualifications which were never contemplated by the Constitution. In the first instance, it specifically sets out that "until Parliament otherwise provides," certain disqualifications are set out. It provides among the disqualifications that certain people shall not be allowed to nominate or be elected to the House of Representatives or to the Senate. It is a fixed measure in the Constitution. Would it be suggested that the Commonwealth Parliament could say, "We will exclude women from the right of nominating?" I do not think it would hold water for one moment that any such amendment could be made, except by way of an amendment to the Constitution. Can it be said that the Commonwealth Parliament can say under the Electoral Act that no person under 40 years of age is qualified to nominate for a seat in the House of Representatives or the Senate? Surely not. It would be taking away from the citizens of Australia their Constitutional privileges. What more right than to do these things, has the Commonwealth Parliament under the Electoral Act to disqualify all members of Parliament from a seat in the Federal House?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Have they done that?

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** Yes. Under the Federal Electoral Act, provision is made in Section 70 that no person who at the date of nomination or at any time within 14 days of the date of nomination is a member of Parliament of a State shall be entitled to be elected as a senator or a member of the House of Representatives. I will not enter into the motives of the Federal Parliament in enacting such legislation and agreeing to a provision which is contrary to the spirit and wording of the Constitution. They have taken away from the States the right to send to the Federal Parliament those persons best qualified to represent us in the Federal House of Parliament. Can we in a State Parliament alter the qualification of members of either House of Parliament under an Electoral Act? We know that we cannot do it. Under the Electoral Act, for instance, we might desire to raise the age of persons desiring to be candidates for the Upper House. It is now 30 years of age, but we might consider that these young bloods of 30 years of age are too reckless and we might decide that no person who is under the age of 40 should be eligible to be elected to this Chamber. We know we could not make any such provision under the Electoral Act. We should have to go through the ordinary procedure provided for amending the Constitution. It is purely a matter for an amendment of the Constitution. Some time ago we decided that women should be qualified to nominate and sit as members of Parliament. We did not legislate for that under the Electoral Act but we did it by way of an amendment to the Constitution. In the present instance, the Commonwealth legislation provides under the Constitution for certain action "when Parliament otherwise decides." I do not think there is any question but that this matter cannot be dealt with under the Electoral Act, but in the case dealing with the disqualifications placed upon members of Parliament in this State—I am not alone in my opinion, for I have secured the advice of two professional men who have looked into the matter and who take the same view—new disqualifications cannot be legally set up under the Commonwealth Electoral Act. The only way the Federal Parliament can do that is by way of an amendment to the Constitution. If the Federal Parliament desired to exclude anyone from nominating, they could only proceed by way of an amendment to the Constitution, and if they did that they would have to adopt the procedure which is laid down, which includes a reference to the people. Let us consider what that means. Is it to be thought for one moment that if the people of Australia were asked to decide on this question, they would tolerate it for one moment? The people would say that it was absurd and nonsense to declare that those who they say are the most fit to represent them in the State Parliament should be debarred from sitting in the Federal Parliament. The point is that I do not know who is going to contest

the section under the Federal Act. The experience of the States in contesting the validity of Federal Acts has not been a happy one. We won one such case under the Navigation Act, but it was very costly. This is a matter which the individual would have to take up. The only way to get over the difficulty is that suggested in the Bill. This Bill, I admit, is somewhat in the nature of a subterfuge, and I would hesitate to put it forward for that reason if I thought there was some other way, or if I thought that the decision of the Federal Parliament was a just one. The same type of legislation has been passed in Tasmania and Victoria. We cannot get over the provisions of the Federal Electoral Act and the only way of evading it is for a Bill, such as the one before hon. members at the present time, to be passed by the State Parliament so that a member of the State Parliament may be allowed to nominate under the provisions of the Federal Act. Under the Bill, the State member's resignation will be accepted and the matter will stand until after the Federal election is held. Then nominations will be called for his seat. His resignation in the first instance must set forth that his reason for resigning is to enable him to contest a seat in the Federal House and he must go on with his candidature. If a subsequent nomination shows that he has nominated for that seat but has not been elected, he shall be declared re-elected to his old seat without further reference to the electors. I know of no other way of getting over this difficulty. The brightest minds in the other States have given consideration to this matter and this is the means that they advise. It will restore something that the Federal Parliament should never have taken away from the States, and that is, that we should have the right to be represented in the Federal House by our own State members if the electors so desire, unless they are disqualified under the Federal Constitution. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. Sanderson, debate adjourned.

## BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION** (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.9] in moving the second reading said: This Bill provides for two amendments to the Administration Act of 1903. The first relates to the remuneration of executors. It may come as a matter for astonishment to some members—I confess it rather astonished me—that there are still people who work for nothing. That is a very reprehensible practice and, in this particular instance, the Bill sets out to put an end to it. Section 103 of the Act provides that the court may allow remuneration to an administrator of an estate to an extent not

exceeding five per cent. of the assets collected, but it does not make any reference to the executors. I take it that the difference between the two is that the administrator is appointed by the court and the executor is nominated by a testator. They have to do much the same work, and in one case the administrator is paid and in the other case the executor is not paid. I understand the assumption is that this difficulty could be met if the testator, should he desire the executor to receive payment, said so in his will. That has not always been the case, and I understand instances have arisen in which the executor finds it impossible to carry out the duties in a voluntary manner and he has been compelled to renounce his office, much to his own disinclination, feeling that he is not doing justice to the friend who placed him in that position. The object of the Bill is to place the executor, from this point of view, in the same position as the administrator, so that the court may have power to allow him remuneration in the same way as with the administrator, and the court is limited to the same percentage. This is already law in New Zealand and in every other State of the Commonwealth. I am not quite clear on the latter point, but I am given to understand that that is the case.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I believe it is the law in some of the States but I do not know whether it is the law in every State.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I was told that that was the position but, of course, I am not quite sure. There is one other amendment in the Bill to meet the requirements of the people outback. In filing papers for probate, it is necessary to swear an oath, and in order to do that, the person must appear before a Commissioner of Oaths in order to have the necessary affidavit completed. The Bill provides that where there is no such Commissioner within 10 miles, the necessary procedure may take place before a justice of the peace.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is a very fair and proper provision.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I think so. Wherever there is a proper Commissioner of Oaths they must go to him, but where there is no such commissioner within 10 miles they can go before a justice of the peace. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. Duffell, debate adjourned.

## MOTION—STATE FINANCES, ECONOMY.

To reduce Parliamentary Allowances.

Debate resumed from the 7th September on the motion of Hon. H. Stewart—"That the finances of the State demand the exercise of the most rigid economy in expenditure as well as efficient and enterprising administration, and in the opinion of this

Council the Government should legislate for some reduction in the Parliamentary allowance to impress upon the citizens of the State the seriousness of the position and the necessity for their support and co-operation."

Hon. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.15]: Owing to the consensus of opinion that there is nothing definite about the motion before the House, I move an amendment—

That all the words after "Government" in line 4 be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"In order to impress upon the citizens of the State the necessity for the strictest economy, should forthwith bring in legislation to provide for a decrease of at least 50 per cent. in the allowance to members of Parliament."

Members may laugh, but I propose to show the House that this is no laughing matter. On the other hand it is a very serious matter. Let me take members back to pre-federation days before we handed over our three biggest departments, Customs, defence and post and telegraph to the Commonwealth. Before federation we had these three big departments to handle as well as other departments, and members were satisfied with an allowance of £200 a year. Prior to that again many of us served for years without any payment at all, and the records of Parliament show that the attendance of members and the results of legislation compared very favourably with those of today. We handed over these three big departments to the control of the Federal Government and immediately afterwards the allowance of members of Parliament was raised from £200 to £300. Prior to that alteration being made Ministers received £1,000 a year and the Premier £1,200 a year, minus the Parliamentary allowance, but by some mysterious means when the allowance of members was raised to £300, members of the Ministry drew the allowance of members as well as of Ministers, with the result that each of the Ministers received £1,300 and the Premier £1,500. I am not going to say anything about the amounts paid to Ministers. I think that Ministers who discharge the functions of office in a proper manner earn their money.

Hon. J. Duffell: Quite right.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not suppose I shall ever have an opportunity of occupying a Ministerial chair because, in democratic Australia, one has to pander to the man in the street or the man on the street corner in order to get office. This I am not prepared to do; consequently I do not suppose I shall ever have the honour or pleasure again of occupying a Ministerial chair. Quite recently when the State was right up against financial difficulties and we were in the position of not being able to pay the civil servants the money they claimed they were entitled to—and I do not think their claims were disputed—this

House and another place increased the allowance to members by 33½ per cent. Let us now analyse what has happened since that time. That was the beginning of the real trouble in Western Australia. It brought about the Public Service strike; it brought about the subsequent railway strike, and that led to the position which we find existing in the State to-day, namely the loss of control over Government departments. It was argued at the time that members of Parliament, while voting themselves an increase of 33½ per cent., refused the just demands of the public service, and civil servants asked "Why should we be loyal and honest in our service to the State when the highest tribunal in the land adopts methods of that kind?" Parliament did wrong on that occasion and did so with its eyes open, because certain members in this House pointed out what was likely to happen. Here, however, is an opportunity for Parliament to rectify the wrong it then did. Parliament led in the wrong direction on that occasion; let Parliament now lead in the right direction and set up a standard of economy in this State, and every other man will have to do the same. We can talk as we like; we may postpone the evil day; the Treasurer may tell the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth as he did to-day that the Commonwealth must see us through; but the fact remains that we have to face the position as we find it. As I remarked yesterday no individual, no company, no State, and no combination of individuals can borrow money advantageously to-day nor can we continue to borrow money to pay expenses. The most important point I made yesterday I repeat now, because it was not published, namely, that this community has borrowed £5,000,000 of money to pay expenses, and the interest so far as we can judge for six days a week is £1,000 a day. Can we afford to pay 80 members of Parliament an increase of 33½ per cent. in their allowances for bringing about a condition of affairs such as this? The point I wished to make yesterday—unfortunately I was out of order, though I hope it is in order now—was that we know and Ministers know and every schoolboy knows that the only way to get out of our difficulties is to do more work. That is what the Prime Minister told us to-day. Knowing this, however, we have set up arbitration courts paid by this country, special tribunals paid by this country, a special appeal board paid by this country to reduce hours and increase wages. Every schoolboy knows that it is a question of increasing both the hours and the output in order that we may make ends meet, though I do not advocate a reduction of wages. No country is worth living in that cannot pay good wages, but those wages must be earned. One can talk till further orders, but one cannot get away from that fact. Eighty members of Parliament in a time of difficulty and distress increased their allowances by 33½ per cent. and yet, when I

rose to point this out to-day, I was met with a sort of subdued jeer. A decrease such as I suggest is the only equitable way of getting out of the position created by Parliament itself. I do not care whether I am without a single supporter. To me right is right and wrong is wrong.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: You will get support.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not care if I stand alone. It was a wicked thing to do, as every member must realise, and the only way to rectify it is in the manner I suggest. I do not know that I need say much more on the subject for fear that I may say something I will be sorry for. The effect of that increase of 33½ per cent. has been demoralising on the community. Parliament led in the wrong direction then; it is up to Parliament to re-lead in the right direction now, and the only way is to make good the wrong of the past by adopting the motion in its amended form.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.25]: I support the amendment. I am fully in accord with the sentiments expressed by Mr. Holmes. I stated at the time the question of raising the allowance was before Parliament that it would be the forerunner of a great deal of evil. What I stated then has since eventuated. That action on the part of members of Parliament led to requests from the Civil Service and elsewhere, the result of which we are to-day only too painfully aware. A very large deputation waited outside the precincts of Parliament House to interview members and, not receiving sufficient satisfaction, they eventually took the case in their own hands and went on strike, with all the attendant serious consequences. This clearly proved that they had a case which demanded proper attention and the same attention as members of Parliament meted out to themselves by raising their own allowances. I have always contended that in a young country like this and with such a small population, the cost of administration in all its forms is considerably beyond what is reasonable to maintain law and order and the necessary machinery for the efficient control of the affairs of the State. We have 80 members of Parliament and a huge public service, costing no doubt as much as the civil service in the larger States of the Commonwealth, and we are faced with a serious problem which requires earnest and prompt consideration and action. It is for these reasons that I support the amendment moved by Mr. Holmes. I contend that it is our duty as representatives of the people to set an example in the direction indicated by the amendment. I agree with the remarks made by Mr. Holmes regarding the allowance to Ministers of the Crown. We know they have a tremendous task set them. They have problems which are causing the gravest anxiety and occupying the whole of their attention. No wonder that from time to time we hear of first one and then another Minister breaking down under the strain of office.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Not in this country.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: In this country and in this Parliament. Therefore I do not intend to say anything which might be regarded as advocating a reduction of the emoluments paid to Ministers, but as regards private members, the cost of law-making in this State is far too great. I would commence right here, only that the Constitution forbids it, by suggesting that members of the Legislative Council should receive less remuneration than members in another place.

The Minister for Education: There is nothing in the Constitution to prevent that.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I understood that the Constitution sets out that members of both Houses shall receive the same remuneration.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: No. That is in regard to certain officers of Parliament.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I would be prepared to move later in that direction.

The PRESIDENT: I must ask hon. members to confine themselves to the terms of the amendment. The hon. member is speaking to the motion as it would be, if amended.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I am candidly of the opinion that, taking into consideration the short period, not very many weeks, for which we members of Parliament are asked to devote ourselves to law making, and taking into consideration also the various advantages accruing to members of Parliament over and above the salary paid to them, it is our duty in the present state of affairs to do everything we possibly can towards the end indicated by the amendment. I am entirely in accord with the sentiments of the mover of the amendment. We are at present spending much money that we are not justified in spending. Again, money could be saved with regard to the Arbitration Court—just to give one instance. It is our duty to set an example of economy, and that example can best be given by applying economy to ourselves.

Hon. A. H. PANTON (West) [5.33]: I am rather sorry that Mr. Holmes has moved this particular amendment, because I proposed to afford hon. members an opportunity of doing something towards achieving economy, if they are honest in the desire they express for economy. However, I rise to oppose the amendment. I am obliged to confess that I agree with both Mr. Holmes and Mr. Duffell that the law-making not only of Western Australia, but of Australia as a whole, is costing too much. In this State we have 80 members of Parliament, and scattered over Australia there are seven Governors, 14 Houses of Parliament, and 676 members of Parliament. I think all members of this House will agree that a population of less than five millions is not sufficient to carry that number of legislators. In fact, the number would be too great for 10 millions to carry. However, a reduction in the salaries of the members of this State Parliament would not meet the difficulty in any way. Mr. Holmes talks about giving a lead. I think we got our lead from the Federal Parlia-

ment, the members of which raised their salaries by the full amount that we receive.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That came afterwards. That was the moral effect.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Mr. Holmes must have a very high opinion of the power of the Act which raised our salaries if he attributes to the passing of that measure all the troubles this State has experienced since. I contend that the Public Service strike and the railway strike had nothing whatever to do with the increase in the salaries of members of this Parliament. The public servants had been asking for their board for many months before we raised our salaries. The railway service struck over something altogether apart from salaries—on a question of principle connected with overtime. I give hon. members credit for honestly intending to bring about economy, and therefore I tell them that we should set about altering the system under which we are working. I contend that if the people of this State say it is necessary to have two Houses of Parliament comprising 80 members, then those 80 members are entitled to be paid. Whether Ministers are receiving too much or not, is not going to concern me. It is the system under which we are working that is altogether wrong. Apart from the six Ministers of this State, and from yourself, Mr. President, and from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, there are 72 members of Parliament in Western Australia; and I have no hesitation in declaring that those 72 members of Parliament have very little voice indeed in the government of this State.

Hon. G. W. MILES: That is our own fault, though.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: If it is our own fault, let us set about rectifying the matter. All the evils adduced by Mr. Holmes, extravagance, lack of proper administration by Ministers who are over-burdened, and so forth, are due simply to our adherence to a system which, though it may have descended to us from the greatest legislative body in the world, the British House of Commons, we need not necessarily borrow entirely or imitate absolutely.

The PRESIDENT: I would point out to the hon. member, and to hon. members generally, that the two cardinal points of the amendment are, first, the effect which reduction of the salaries of members of Parliament would have in impressing upon the citizens of this State the necessity for the strictest economy, and, secondly, the amount of the contemplated reduction. Any other remarks would more conveniently come when the main question, either amended or unamended, again becomes the question before the House. Hon. members will have an opportunity of speaking in a wider sense when the motion, either amended or in its original form, is put before them, with the exception of Mr. Holmes, who will have no further opportunity of speaking, and to whom therefore I allowed some little latitude.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I do not propose to deal with the question of the amount of the proposed reduction, because I am opposed to any reduction. As regards the effect on the public mind, if I thought for one moment that the effect would be to impress upon the people of Western Australia the necessity for abolishing this Chamber altogether, and for practically reducing the number of members of Parliament in this State by one half, or even more, I would gladly vote for reduction of salaries. In all seriousness, what we want to impress upon our people is the need for having fewer members of Parliament. Until that position has been reached, I shall remain true to my colours, at all events, by opposing any reduction in Parliamentary salaries. The electors of the West Province are entitled to some consistency from their members, and there is no elector of the West Province, or of Western Australia, who can say that he or she has ever heard me declare myself in favour of reducing either wages or salaries. However, as you, Mr. President, have intimated, there is not much scope on this amendment for saying what one really wishes to say on the main question. Therefore I shall have to await another opportunity. Let me repeat that I will gladly vote for reducing the number of members of Parliament, but that I will not be led into a trap by voting for a reduction of 50 per cent., or even of five per cent., in the salaries of members of Parliament.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [5.41]: I support Mr. Holmes's amendment. Although I supported likewise the motion of Mr. Stewart, I trust I shall not be accused of inconsistency. I recognise that Mr. Holmes's amendment makes the matter a little more specific than the form of Mr. Stewart's motion. The amendment proposes something definite by which economies can be accomplished, and states clearly the amount of the economies to be effected, thus emphasising to the public generally the desire of members to meet the present financial position. One has only to view the condition of our finances in order to recognise the need for some such step as a 50 per cent. reduction in the salaries of members of this State Parliament. The financial drift is such as one might dilate upon at great length, but I think hon. members are as fully aware of the position in that respect as one could possibly make them by dealing exhaustively with either the amendment or the motion. Just this may be said, that example is better than precept every time. If we in this House set an example of economy, we shall do something for the benefit of the community at large. Further, we shall be setting an example to members in another place, if such an example should be needed.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It will be needed all right.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Everyone must recognise that our community is faced with a most serious position. Quite apart from the

condition of the State finances, there is unemployment in Western Australia at the present time. Further, we are faced with the fact that in order to carry on our industries and export goods, we must place ourselves in a position to produce goods at prices which will enable us to export them to advantage.

Hon. A. H. Panton: But we cannot export our legislation.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I fully admit that. However, it is our duty as legislators, even as private members of Parliament, to do what we can to create employment in our community, and to establish prosperity in the State. If we can bring about prosperity by opening up additional industries, everyone of us will be anxious to do so. By that means we shall benefit the community generally and get rid of the distress now being occasioned by unemployment. We are also faced with the question of the cost of living. We are told—

The PRESIDENT: I must ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the amendment. It is very painful to me to have to remind the hon. member of this. In order to shorten the debate, perhaps I had better read the amendment.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Thank you.

The PRESIDENT: The amendment is to strike out certain words in the original motion and to insert other words as follows:—"In order to impress upon the citizens of the State the necessity for the strictest economy, should forthwith bring in legislation to provide for a decrease of at least 50 per cent. in the allowance to members of Parliament."

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Now stick to the moral aspect.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I appreciate what Mr. Panton said about being in favour of that part of the motion which impresses economy. I gather that Mr. Panton, whilst opposed to the latter part of the amendment, approves of so much of it as impresses the desirability for economy.

Hon. A. H. Panton: By the abolition of members.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not go to the length of saying that members should be abolished. Having regard to the position it is much better that members should be retained as at present, and that we should meet the position by a reduction in the remuneration which is paid to us. I am quite in accord with what has been said with reference to Ministers. I can certainly free myself from the charge of being anxious to occupy a Ministerial position. I am not seeking anything of that sort. I sometimes sympathise with those members who have the responsibility of discharging important Ministerial duties. They deserve all the remuneration they receive. An hon. member who holds a portfolio is responsible not only to the House, but he can do a great deal in the way of effecting economies. We had an instance a few weeks ago of what was done in the sister State of South Australia, where an effort was made on the part

of members to increase their salaries. It was just the converse of this case, and it is interesting to note what the Premier of South Australia said at the time the request was made. He said—

Although we recognise that payment is considerably less to Ministers and private members than it ought to be, we, the Government, feel that we cannot accept ourselves, or ask hon. members to accept, any increase in view of the retrenchment we are effecting, and in view of the big sacrifices the community is being called upon to make in time of financial stringency.

There is the position exactly as one would like to put it here.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Perhaps that is all they are worth there.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We should bring ourselves to a full realisation of the position as it has been recognised in the sister State. Sacrifices are necessary unfortunately on the part of the community, and we ought to set an example here by sacrificing something of the remuneration which we receive.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: You cannot sacrifice that which you have not got.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: A certain remuneration is paid to members of Parliament, and we can afford to relinquish a portion of it and thus set an example towards economy and towards helping the State out of its financial difficulties. At the same time we shall be setting a worthy example to the citizens as a whole in the direction of endeavouring to economise in their private affairs. Thus with combined economy on the part of the individual and on the part of those engaged in public works, we may accomplish something which may save the State from the destruction which apparently awaits it, unless something of the sort is done.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.52]: I have only a few remarks to make and I hope I may be successful in skating on that thin ice of relevancy which appears to have been too thin to bear the weight of some of the remarks of hon. members. I find some difficulty in arriving at a decision as to how to vote on this amendment. When last session a Bill was before us, I voted against the increase and I did so for two reasons, the main one being that we had no warrant from the electors to increase our salaries. At the same time I fully recognised that the remuneration which was proposed was not in excess of what in my opinion the duties pertaining to a member of Parliament demanded. The position now is rather different, and there is undoubtedly necessity to impress on the people of the State the requirements of strict economy in expenditure. I can conceive nothing which will give the community a greater shock and impress them more forcibly than the spectacle of 30 members of Parliament deliberately reducing their salaries by 50 per cent.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It would be worse than shell shock.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I can understand that not only would the community be seized with the necessity for economy, but they would also be stimulated to greater work and increased production, and it is only for those reasons that I intend to vote for the amendment.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (North-East) [5.55]: It seems to me that Mr. Holmes is of opinion that Parliament last session gave the workers in this State a lead in the direction of increasing wages, and now he is very anxious for the House to give the workers a lead in the direction of reducing wages. In his remarks when submitting the amendment, he pointed out that in his opinion the action of Parliament last session was responsible for the Civil Service strike and also for other industrial troubles. I am of opinion that the price of wheat together with the prices of meat, wool, clothing and boots have something to do with the industrial troubles we have had in this State for some years past. It is economic pressure on the worker—the increase in the cost of living as well as the increase in rents—that is responsible for the demands made by the workers for higher wages. In my opinion it is not a matter of Parliament increasing salaries by 33½ per cent. Boiled down, it is due to the high cost of living which has obtained in Western Australia and for that matter throughout the world for some years past. That is the factor which has been responsible for the demands of the workers for increased pay.

Hon. J. Duffell: Living is cheaper here to-day than it is in any other part of the world.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: It is possible that that is so, but the hon. member must take into consideration that there are countries in the world, and in the British Empire too, that are paying higher wages than the workers in Western Australia are receiving.

Hon. J. Duffell: Where?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I will refer the hon. member to Mr. Lovekin, who can put him on the right track. Only a few months ago when dealing with a measure brought before this House, the Leader of the House pointed out that there were some provisions in it so far as a restriction in the choice of the representatives of the people in the Federal Parliament was concerned. If the hon. member is successful in his amendment there is not the slightest doubt there is going to be a restriction placed upon the choice of the people so far as their representatives in the State Parliament are concerned. In the event of the amendment being carried and acted upon by the Government, I ask whether it will be possible for members of either House who are not in business or are not in possession of an income apart from their Parliamentary salaries, to represent the people on a salary of £200 per annum? I am inclined

to think that Mr. Holmes is not out to restrict the choice of the people in this direction. But how are we going to get over the difficulty? If we cut down the salary to £200, how are the representatives of the people going to attend to the wants of the electors in the same way as they have been doing for years past?

Hon. J. Duffell: The £200 would be supplemented from the funds of unions.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: That is all very well. I might say in reply to that interjection that some members might appeal to the Chamber of Commerce or some such institution operating in this State with which I am not connected. Such an institution no doubt would be in a better position than a union to subsidise members of this House. The unions are not sufficiently financial to do that. Mr. Duffell pointed out that for the short period in which members are occupied in law making, the amount of £200 would be adequate, especially taking into consideration other advantages possessed by members. What are those other advantages? They have not come my way. I have not seen anything of them and I do not know that the hon. member has seen anything of them. If he has, I think he might take us into his confidence.

Hon. J. Duffell: There is your railway pass.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: My experience is that it adds considerably to my personal expenditure. Mr. Holmes, I think, stated that the Prime Minister to-day said that work, more work was going to pull us out of our difficulties. Mr. Holmes thinks it is a matter of increasing the hours of labour. He wants the House to give the workers a lead in a reduction of wages and a lead also in the working of longer hours. That, I think, is what Mr. Holmes is out for. He wants us to follow his advice with a view to bringing the position of the State's finances directly under the notice of the people and so inducing them to adopt a more rigid economy. As I have already said, I intend to vote against the amendment and, later, to speak and vote against the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.2 p.m.*

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

### QUESTION—COBLININE SCHOOL.

Mr. STUBBS (for Mr. A. Thomson) asked the Premier: 1, On what date was Miss Ockerby transferred to the Coblinine School? 2, What date was she re-transferred? 3, What was the cost to the department? 4, Is it a fact that the Coblinine school has been closed?

The PREMIER replied: 1, September 6th. 2, September 15th. 3, £4 15s. 2d. 4, Yes.

### QUESTION—OIL PROSPECTING, BREMER BAY.

Mr. SIMONS asked the Minister for Mines: In view of the claim put forward by Messrs. Martin and Perkins, oil experts, that they have discovered free oil in the vicinity of Fitzgerald River, and in view of the uncertainty which negative reports from the experts of the State Departments have created, will he state: 1, What steps are being taken to decide finally which of the two sets of opinions is correct? 2, Is it proposed to accept the offer of Messrs. Martin and Perkins to demonstrate that oil can be produced from the samples now in the custody of the Mines Department declared to yield negative results by the State officials? 3, Is it the intention of the Minister to send a departmental official to test the accuracy of the report that free oil has been struck in the bore, and if so, when? 4, Is it a fact that Mr. Martin made known to Inspector Wilson his process for extracting the oil, and that Inspector Wilson, in the presence of the discoverers and other witnesses, produced benzene? 5, If the previous question is answered in the affirmative, why was this result not mentioned in the official report?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Answered by replies to questions 2 and 3. 2, Messrs. Martin and Perkins will be invited to demonstrate that petroleum can be produced from the samples of rock and alleged oil bearing material which have been reported by the Geological Survey Laboratory to give negative results, and chemical investigations will be made to ascertain the validity of their claims. 3, When the company have replaced the drill on the bore and are prepared to