

New clause put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	14
Noes	8

Majority for .. 6

AVES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. A. H. Pantou
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. E. H. Harris
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	(Teller.)
Hon. A. Lovekin	

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller.)
Hon. C. McKenzie	

New clause thus passed.

Bill reported with amendments, and a Message accordingly forwarded to the Assembly requesting them to make the amendments, leave being given to sit again on receipt of a Message from the Assembly.

House adjourned at 12.20 a.m. (Friday).

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 15th December, 1921.

	Page
Questions: Arbitration Court, <i>Industrial Gazette</i> ...	2452
Prices Regulations Commission	2452
State Labour Bureau	2452
Joint Select Committee: Federation and the State,	
Interim report	2452
Loan Estimates, 1921-22	2452
Bills: Agricultural Bank Act Amendment, 3R.	2458
Traffic Act Amendment, 3R.	2458
Nurses' Registration, 3R.	2458
Closer Settlement, Com.	2458
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment, 2R.,	
Com. recom. report	2469
Industries Assistance Act Continuance, 2R.,	
Com. report 3R.	2472
Motion: Retirement of A. C. Kessell, to inquire by	
Select Committee	2456

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

QUESTION—ARBITRATION COURT, "INDUSTRIAL GAZETTE."

Mr. MUNSIE asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact that clerical assistance at the Arbitra-

tion Court was promised by him some time ago to enable the "*Industrial Gazette*" to be published? 2, Has such assistance been supplied? 3, If not, why not?

The PREMIER: 1 and 2, The Public Service Commissioner has arranged for providing assistance in carrying on the clerical work of the Court and overtaking arrears. 3, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—PRICES REGULATION COMMISSION.

Mr. McCALLUM asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to take the necessary action to continue the Prices Regulation Commission after the expiration of the current year?

The PREMIER replied: Yes. An amending Bill continuing the Act in a modified form will be introduced immediately.

QUESTION—STATE LABOUR BUREAU.

Col. DENTON asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is it the practice of the State Labour Bureau, when engaging men for employment in the Midlands district, not to frank the men so engaged over the Midland Company's railway? 2, If this is a fact, is it the intention of the Government to deny to settlers and prospective employees in the Midlands district the advantages of the State Labour Bureau? 3, If so, why?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Men are not franked over railways, but in certain cases advances are made for railway fares, and in doing this there is no discrimination against the Midland Company's line. 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE, FEDERATION AND THE STATE.

Interim Report presented.

Mr. Angelo brought up an interim report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to inquire into questions relating to the Federal Convention and the financial relations between the Commonwealth and the State.

Report received and read, and ordered to be printed.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1921-22. Message.

Message from the Governor received transmitting the Loan Estimates for the year 1921-22, and recommending appropriation.

In Committee of Supply.

The House resolved itself into Committee of Supply for the purpose of considering the Loan Estimates; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental, £66,124:

The PREMIER AND COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.41]: I know that hon. members will think, and rightly so, that this is a time to be very careful in the expenditure of Loan Funds. However, we have arrived at a stage when we must expend a considerable amount of money in the development of the country. In Western Australia there is no lack of opportunities for enterprise; but, having regard to the smallness of our population and the vastness of our territory, as well as the multiplicity of the industries in which our people are engaged, there is need now for development, even if the financial position is not what one would like it to be, and even if money is costly. It must always be remembered that in Western Australia the State owns the railways, harbours, and other public utilities, on which very large sums of public money have been spent. The revenue position to-day is due to the loss on those public utilities, as I have said here time and again. Further, I have stated repeatedly that the only way we can get over our difficulties is by further development. I think hon. members will agree with me as to that. Now, for the purpose of development money must be had. It could be said that this is no time to borrow money, because it is costing about £6 10s. per cent. Our last conversion loan of three millions cost £6 13s. 10d. per cent. Of course, instead of getting funds from the loan, we have had to pay the cost of raising it; though I may say that a million of that loan will come out to Australia for money borrowed here some years ago at short dates.

Mr. Willcock: What difference will that loan make in the expenditure for interest?

The PREMIER: I do not recall at the moment what rates of interest those locally raised loans carried. The loan redeemed in London was for two millions. When introducing last year's Loan Estimates, I said that I was asking for fairly large authorisations, because of the position the country was in. It seemed to me then that we might have to start public works and spend money in order that employment might be found. That was, in fact, done, with the result that there has been work for the people. In this very scattered State there must be money found for the purpose of keeping our industries going from one end of Western Australia to the other, from Wyndham to Esperance. As hon. members know, there is development proceeding in various north-western centres; expensive works are to be constructed in the North so that our people there may be able to carry on their callings and market their products. Similarly, money is being spent in the south-western and southern portions of the State. The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) knows that expenditure is being incurred for the construction of the Esperance-Northwards railway. Last year's Loan Estimates were for £3,641,932. The expenditure from Loan Funds was £2,586,404 and thus the unex-

pended balance is £1,055,528. This year's Loan Estimates total £3,548,504. During the last financial year there was an expenditure on agricultural development of £1,694,234 in all. On railways £189,124, on harbours and rivers, Bunbury and Fremantle harbour boards, £80,000, on water supply and sewerage £198,521, on business and trading concerns £146,377. Other amounts, including departmental expenditure spread over various works, total £140,613. It is proposed to spend this year on land settlement by soldiers £1,022,600, to increase the Agricultural Bank capital by £600,000, and to spend on land resumption £200,000, or a total of £1,822,600 on land development. On railways it is proposed to spend £715,000; on harbours and rivers £162,500; on water supply and sewerage £281,750; on mining development £57,000, on roads and bridges, public buildings, etc. £72,000, and on repairs to the "Kangaroo" £200,000, or a total of £3,310,850. Then there are sundries, including departmental salaries, etc., amounting to £237,454. Hon. members will realise that when a vote passes this House and the work is started, frequently it is not completed during the financial year. In this case the total unexpended balances amount to £1,055,528, and of that amount the re-votes, stated in round figures, will reach £742,000. As at the 30th June last the total loan indebtedness was £49,039,667. Against that is a sinking fund amounting to £7,641,564 and the value of the Commonwealth transfer properties, namely, £800,000, or a total of £8,441,564. We have spent on business utilities £27,780,130; on trading concerns £2,125,631. On other works earning interest and sinking fund such as the Agricultural Bank, soldier settlement scheme, the Industries Assistance Board, certain harbour works, and Workers' Homes Board, £10,425,698. This money consists almost altogether of loans to individuals who pay interest and sinking fund.

Mr. Willcock: Some of it is lost.

The PREMIER: Naturally a little is lost. We cannot advance all this money without losing a small percentage of it. However, but very little is lost. The wonder is that more has not been lost. When we remember that we advance the full cost of making a farm, and that there is no vital security, we cannot expect to get through without loss. But development has cost this country much less in that way than has similar development in any other State of Australia or even in any country in Europe.

Mr. Willcock: But we have a right to know what it has cost.

The PREMIER: Certainly. Every other agricultural country in the world has lost more in this way than has Western Australia. Other works, not earning interest and sinking fund, but which should recover later, works such as certain harbour concerns, batteries, etc., total £1,529,395, while the capital sunk in works not earning interest, including £2,807,653 of deficit funded, amounts to £7,128,813. In all these years of expenditure

on works of this nature that do not return interest, we have only spent £7,128,813, and it is all covered by sinking fund. I should like hon. members to remember those figures, because it is important that we should realise what the position really is. Capital invested in public utilities should pay £1,328,682 in interest and sinking fund, whereas the contributions last year were £613,515. It will be seen therefore that the shortage last year was £715,167. That is to say, those concerns earned £715,167 less than the cost of the interest and sinking fund which had to be paid out. There again, members should pause and consider. Then there was capital which did not fully earn interest and sinking fund, capital invested in harbours, batteries, estates, etc. on which we lost £38,200.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What harbours were they?

The PREMIER: Not Fremantle.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, you got £70,000 from there.

The PREMIER: Well, that is all right. On capital sunk in works not earning interest and sinking fund we lost £287,000 or a total of 1,040,367, representing a charge against Consolidated Revenue. The total expenditure on soldier settlement represented £4,108,084 covering 4,106 settlers at, say, an average of £1,000 per settler. I do not think hon. members will regard that as an extravagant figure, because the cost of machinery and implements has become so great that it now takes twice as much as it did six or seven years ago to equip a man to go on a wheat farm. The soldiers are to be found in practically every district of the State, for to meet the wishes of the House we have endeavoured to settle them in the districts from which they enlisted. The soldiers are working well. Of course they have been very fortunate and have enjoyed advantages. They came back from the war to find land here very cheap, getting it in most instances at much less than its actual value.

Hon. P. Collier: Have any of them failed to date?

The PREMIER: Strangely few of them. Some of them in consequence of their experiences abroad were too sick to carry on, and of course some have not worked, while some have given a little trouble. However, of those even, strangely few. It was not to be expected that so few would have given trouble. I doubt if we could pick any other 4,000 men who would give less trouble. Of course they have had special help and consideration, as indeed was only their due.

Hon. P. Collier: They have not yet reached the critical stage.

The PREMIER: Yes, many of them have, because they went on to improved or partially improved farms. There are cases in which they have been astonishingly successful. Some of them have made a big cheque in their first year.

Mr. Willcock: A few of them have repaid the loan right off.

The PREMIER: Yes, but naturally they are exceptions. I admit they have had special advantages and opportunities for doing well. It was only right that they should have them. But many went on to virgin land, and of course it will take some years before they establish themselves.

Mr. Teesdale: They have been settled better here than anywhere else in Australia.

The PREMIER: Yes, we had a good deal of Crown land available, and we were able to buy other land cheaply for them. To-day our land is cheaper than similar land anywhere else in the Commonwealth. It is not nearly half the price of similar land in, say, Victoria or South Australia. So the soldiers have been afforded a splendid opportunity, and our security must be the better because of the cheap purchases made. I should like to pay a tribute to the work of Mr. McLarty and his staff in regard to the soldier settlement. There is on the Estimates an item of £39,000 for the purchase of land in Marquis-street. This land was resumed from the Perth City Council in 1911 on the understanding that the Council retained possession until the change over to the Government electricity supply. Only recently it has come into the possession of the Government and has had to be paid for. Had we been able to sell it a year or two back it would have brought a considerable sum of money. Then we propose that certain railways shall be built—not many. There is a railway which will link up Busselton with the railway running from Augusta to Margaret River which was purchased from Millars' Company. The House authorised the linking up of that line some time ago. We have a large number of men along the line from Augusta to Margaret River, we are now surveying blocks down there, and 200 new settlers will be there in the course of the next few weeks. Then there is a very old friend which we have to give attention to. I scarcely like to mention it, because it has occasioned so much trouble for many years past. In consequence of a resolution which the member for Kanowna induced the House to carry, the Esperance railway must be the first line to be started.

Hon. T. Walker: That expresses a lot. The first to be started!

The PREMIER: It has provided the hon. member with a great deal of worry over a number of years, but probably he will be very sorry when the line is completed, as it will be before very long. The hon. member was told by way of answer to question the other day that 30,000 sleepers and 10 miles of rails are there now.

Hon. P. Collier: Those rails have been there a long time.

The PREMIER: The hon. member put them there.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, and they have been there ever since.

The PREMIER: I do not know why the hon. member did not build the line before leaving office.

Hon. P. Collier: We started it, but you stopped it.

Hon. T. Walker: You stopped it for salt.

The PREMIER: The work will be gone on with and will be completed. I hope the Minister for Works will get the 30,000 sleepers laid down before very long. That will suffice to carry the line across the sandplain. We have surveyed 400 farms down there and sunk dams. We will continue the construction of the line until it is completed. A good deal of harm has been done to that district because people have doubted the sincerity of this Parliament by saying that we had no intention of proceeding with the work of constructing the line.

Hon. P. Collier: I cannot understand that. They must see that you are pushing on with it.

The PREMIER: Just as rapidly as we are pushing on with any other works since the termination of the war.

Hon. T. Walker: But we put the 10 miles of rails down there many years ago.

The PREMIER: And they have been well cared for.

Hon. P. Collier: No doubt.

The PREMIER: I want hon. members to know that some 400 blocks have been surveyed, and dams have been put down, and water supply made available. Therefore people can take up land there in safety, and no doubt by the time there is land ready for cropping the railway will be running. I emphasise this because there are men who are endeavouring to persuade people not to take up land at Esperance on the score that there is no certainty as to when the line will go through. This Parliament is committed to the construction of the line. The House passed that resolution with but one dissentient voice, that of the then member for York. Therefore the work must be proceeded with without unnecessary delay. Of course there has been some delay due to the high price of rails and fastenings. Rails for which we used to pay £500 a mile were costing up to, a little while ago, as much as £1,500 per mile. Lately the cost has fallen, and before long we hope to get the rails at a moderate price, and then we shall complete the work. I do hope the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) will tell his friends that they need have no fear about taking up land at Esperance.

Hon. T. Walker: I will send the leading men there copies of your speech.

The PREMIER: And I hope the hon. member will tell them that the crops this year have been better than ever before. The land has improved since it has been cropped. Hon. members know that I did not at one time have a high opinion of the land there, but I know now that the longer it is used the better the crops will be. The

hon. member can tell his friends that too. If there is anything that hurts it is the charge of insincerity which is levelled against one. I cannot understand the newspaper in Kalgoorlie questioning the sincerity of the Government in this matter. Does it want to keep the men in Kalgoorlie? If so, what are they to be kept there to do? At any rate I want the House to realise that the line is going to be built. We have prepared land there for settlers and everything is in readiness for those settlers to take it up. I do not suppose more has been done anywhere than at Esperance in advance of settlement. With reference to the Wyalkatchem-Mt. Marshall line we provide a sum of £55,000 and we hope that about 25 miles will be laid by May. The Minister for Works is getting a few miles of rails which will be made available for this particular work.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What about the York-kaline railway?

Hon. P. Collier: The member for the district during the last election campaign told the settlers that the line would be built.

The PREMIER: He did not say that the line would be built in a fortnight.

Hon. P. Collier: He will be able to make the same statement at next election time.

The PREMIER: Then I shall put up to the electors the record of the Leader of the Opposition. Look at the record of the Opposition in connection with the Esperance railway. That will be hard to beat.

Hon. P. Collier: Look at the opposition we had to face. We were blocked on that for four years.

The PREMIER: We have also made provision to enable us to do some preliminary work in connection with the Nyabing extension. The Minister for Works is watching the market for rails very closely and we expect that the price will come down even further very soon. There is another item on the Estimates, and it is the provision of £70,000 to cover the amount the Lefroy Government agreed to pay for the purchase of a line from Waroona to Lake Clifton.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is the first we have heard of it.

The PREMIER: In the Act which was passed power was given the Government to acquire the line at any time, and an agreement was entered into between the Government and the Company.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We knew nothing of that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That agreement is not here.

The PREMIER: It should be here. The agreement sets out that the line is to be purchased when the company has been going for a certain time. The amount is not quite £70,000; I do not know exactly what it will be.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What is the object of it?

The PREMIER: The agreement sets out that the line is to be purchased.

Mr. O'Loughlen: To be purchased?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. T. Walker: Who drew up the agreement?

The PREMIER: It was prepared by the Lefroy Government. What that Government agreed to do was to purchase a line and pay for it in bonds carrying 5½ per cent. interest. The purchase was to be made when the company's works at Lake Clifton and at Burswood had been in operation for six months. The works at Burswood have been in operation for that time.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They got a concession to build the line under certain conditions. You must have money to throw away.

The PREMIER: I have told the hon. member that the agreement was made before my time.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It would have been a fair thing to refer the matter to Parliament.

The PREMIER: The company applied to the present Government to pay over, but the Government replied that Parliament must first be consulted.

Hon. P. Collier: And Parliament can repudiate it.

The PREMIER: I am consulting Parliament to-day. I think the House should have some record of the work performed by this company, and if hon. members will look carefully at the agreement they will see that the company have carried out their share of the contract. The company have expended a quarter of a million of money here. They are making first class cement which is a much needed article for so many things in this State. It is a great industry and it is doing well. The establishment of these works reduced the price of cement from 50s. to 20s. There can be nothing said about the works which the company have erected. Pipes made from this cement are being used in connection with the Geraldton water supply. The works should make it possible for the line to pay interest and sinking fund on the £25,000 which has been spent at Lake Clifton. Lime for agricultural purposes is also made available by the company and this can now be ground. Of course, in the depth of winter it was not possible to remove it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: No member of this House ever imagined that the Government had to purchase this railway in a few months' time.

Hon. P. Collier: The whole thing is shocking and scandalous. It is one of the worst scandals ever put up in this State.

The PREMIER: I am merely putting the position to the House.

Hon. P. Collier: And the man who was responsible for it should be impeached.

The PREMIER: I do not think we should pass judgment so readily.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no question about it, it is shocking.

The PREMIER: The agreement entered into has been substantially fulfilled. There is a large quantity of lime available now. Of course, the Government refused to pay over this money without Parliamentary authority. I could do no more than that.

Mr. Willcock: The agreement should never have been made.

The PREMIER: Before members pass judgment on the matter, they should look closely into it. But for the Minister for Works, many safeguards which are contained in the agreement would not be there now. They do not find a place there. The Minister made suggestions which ought to have been followed. It will be seen that it was expected that the agreement would be drafted subject to the will of Parliament.

The Minister for Works: If they had followed out these safeguards, there would not have been any trouble.

The PREMIER: The agreement is drafted and there is no clause in it which requires Parliamentary approval for it. When the men came to me they said, "We have the right to demand these bonds in exchange for the railway. We have carried out our part." My reply was, "Very well. I know that an agreement made by one Government must be passed by another Government. So far as I am concerned, I am going to consult Parliament before I issue these bonds." I hope hon. members will look at the file before they pass judgment on the matter.

Mr. Willcock: What are you going to recommend?

The PREMIER: I have put an amount on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. Willcock: You must recommend payment then.

The Minister for Mines: They can claim it under the agreement.

The PREMIER: There is an agreement made by the previous Government.

Mr. Willcock: Parliament has to ratify it.

The PREMIER: These people have an agreement, which is a legal document so far as I know, and under it they can claim payment for this work.

Mr. Willcock: Do you recommend that it should be paid?

The PREMIER: Of course I do.

Hon. P. Collier: You can recommend payment in compliance with the contract without approving it.

The PREMIER: I must recommend payment in compliance with the terms of the contract. I must bring down to Parliament this item on the Estimates in order to keep faith with that contract. That is what I have done.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is it possible to make the late Attorney General, Mr. Robinson, when he is acting for his own firm, responsible?

The PREMIER: The hon. member may try.

Hon. P. Collier: Parliament ought not to break contracts, but would be justified in breaking this one.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is a minute written that the request is made by the firm of Robinson & Cox.

Hon. P. Collier: And a member of that firm was Attorney General in the Government at the time.

The PREMIER: I must ask Parliament to vote the money to fulfil the terms of the agreement made between the Government and the company. So I have put this item on the Estimates in order that Parliament may have an opportunity of dealing with the matter.

Mr. Willecock: The Government should give the lead in these things.

The PREMIER: I have done so.

The Minister for Mines: It is an obligation under the agreement.

The PREMIER: The member for Kanoona (Hon. T. Walker) will tell members that it is a legal undertaking to pay. I suppose they could sue the Government for payment.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Let them sue.

Hon. P. Collier: Even if we have to pay damages we ought to teach a lesson to those who are responsible.

The PREMIER: The matter is now before members in this form.

Hon. P. Collier: We will break the contract if I have anything to do with it.

The PREMIER: I refused to do anything without consulting this Chamber. I wish to make it clear that the company is not in any way to blame. It has got this agreement and has carried out its promise and has established its works.

Mr. Pickering: Whom do you blame?

The PREMIER: The works are a valuable asset to this State. I do not think any company can be blamed for getting an agreement of this kind.

Hon. T. Walker: No, but what about a Minister of the Crown who has aided and abetted it?

The PREMIER: I think I can say that this railway is a valuable railway, seeing that there is an unlimited quantity of lime there which will be brought out. On the Estimates will be found provision for new rolling stock to the value of £104,000. That is to cover 170 stock wagons, 100 fruit wagons, and three petrol carriages. These carriages will hold up to 40 passengers and have provision for parcels. This is a fairly large sum, but these wagons are very necessary, particularly the fruit wagons, and they have been under construction for some time. There is also an increase in the tramway traffic, and 20 bogey cars are being constructed at the Midland Junction workshops for use in the tramway service. The sum of £149,000 is provided on the Estimates for a new generator set to cope with the increased business of the power station. Here we see what happens when we embark upon works of this nature. The Government set out, and very rightly too, to supply the metropolitan area with power from these works. Under the management of Mr. Taylor the demand has grown very rapidly. This is also due to the spread of population and to new industries which are making use of this power.

Mr. Willecock: And to the cheap current.

The PREMIER: Yes. After all, if these works are an incentive to the establishment of industries, they are doing something more than ordinary works can do. The power station is providing power for the Fremantle tramways and the system extends throughout the metropolitan area. One thing leads to another in an investment of this kind. Either it is bad or it is good. If it is good, there is an ever increasing demand for the supply. In this case the demand has made it imperative for a new generator set to be installed, and I ask the Committee to vote the necessary amount. Our harbours are a constant source of expenditure. There is silting up at Albany, which will mean the expenditure of some money on dredging in order to permit of large boats coming in. I believe there is some doubt about the depth of water that is available for the bigger ships. I do not know that the position is as serious as it is thought to be, because ships have been in quite lately. There is, however, silting up which will have to be removed. The Fremantle harbour is having a good deal of money spent upon it, but the harbour pays something towards the interest and sinking fund. The sum of £53,000 for further dredging of the harbour at Fremantle is being provided on these Estimates. Then there is the water supply upon which money has to be spent each year. At Geraldton it is anticipated that we shall have to spend this year about £50,000. The work is long overdue, and the people are entitled to their water supply, and in a very few months the taps should be turned on there. Narrogin has been without water all these years except for a scant supply, and it is estimated that £30,000 will be required there. At Carnarvon also the sum of £12,000 it is estimated will be spent on water supplies. The people of these towns have to provide the money. It is a charge against the local taxpayers, and will not be a charge against the taxpayers of the State as a whole. It is really money borrowed for the use of the towns concerned. The metropolitan water supply is a source of ever increasing expenditure within this area. The money is, of course, paid out of taxing the people. The sum of £33,000 is being provided for extensions and improvements of the metropolitan water supply and a sum of £32,000 for sewerage. For goldfields development a sum of £45,000 is provided to assist prospectors in opening up fresh country. I hope the result this year will be the discovery of some good and payable shows. There must still be a great deal of country which is worth prospecting. An amount has been provided on the Estimates of £3,415 for the completion of a five head battery at St. Ives. It is intended to make a start with the extensions of the jetty at Onslow. This will enable people to get their stock straight on board the vessels that call. It is an old and good centre, and sufficient jetty accommodation ought to be provided there. The people have been waiting for a long time. Jetties

cost more now than they did in the old days, but the depth of water required there is not very great. The "Kangaroo" can get alongside the jetty at Carnarvon quite comfortably.

Mr. Angelo: The depth is from 19 to 23 feet.

The PREMIER: We do not require to go out a great distance in order that vessels may come alongside at these North-West ports. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) will be pleased to know that the "Kangaroo" can get alongside the jetty there, and that she will be available to bring down fish and other things to put into cold stores here. Ministers controlling the various departments will explain the works that are proposed to be done. There are some works which are to be continued until they are completed. There are other works which are being renewed. In every case, particularly in connection with agricultural development, there is still money to be spent. We ask for power to increase the capital of the Agricultural Bank to the tune of £600,000. This will be spent on settling the land. It will not represent all the money available, for under the Act money is continually being repaid which is available for reinvestment. We shall I think have sufficient money to carry on for the rest of the year. Hon. members will agree that where we can spend money on agricultural development, particularly if it can be spent by way of advances to the selector, that ought to be our best means of investing borrowed money. The sinking fund of the Agricultural Bank is not a charge against the general taxpayer. I move the first item.

Progress reported.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Agricultural Bank Act Amendment.
2. Traffic Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—NURSES' REGISTRATION.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—(CLOSER SETTLEMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: When the Committee last considered the Bill, Clause 7 was postponed, the Premier having moved the following amendment:—Insert after "based" in line 1 of Subclause (3) down to "1893," in

line 3, the following:—“(a.) On the unimproved value of the land which shall be deemed to be the amount of which the unimproved value is assessed for time being under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907, with ten per centum added thereto; and (b.) On the fair value of the improvements assessed at the added value given to the land for the time being by reason of such improvements; to be agreed upon between the owner and any mortgagee or any other person having any interest in the land and the Board, or determined by arbitration under the Arbitration Act, 1905.” Upon that amendment the member for Katanning had moved a further amendment as follows:—“To insert after ‘thereto,’ at the end of paragraph (a), the following:—‘Provided that this section shall not apply until due date of 1922 Land Tax returns.’”

The PREMIER: When the clause was last under discussion I understood the member for Katanning intended to withdraw his amendment, on my undertaking that I would have a further amendment drafted to provide for the points raised. I have since had this matter dealt with and I propose at a later stage to move the following additional amendment:—

That after “thereto” in paragraph (a) the following proviso be added:—“Provided that any owner may within thirty days after the commencement of this Act, amend his return under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907, for the current year of assessment, by increasing the value placed by him upon his land, and thereupon a re-assessment shall be made by the Commissioner of Taxation, subject to an appeal by the owner to the Court of Review from any reduction by the Commissioner of the owner's valuation.”

Mr. Johnston: From what date does the 30 days' grace commence?

The PREMIER: From the passing of the Act. There will be a re-assessment of the land, whether it is required or not. Hon. members discussed this matter as though all land was concerned. The attitude they adopted was unwise. We do not want to frighten people into paying more than they should pay.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept the Premier's amendment until the amendment by the member for Katanning has been disposed of.

The PREMIER: I think the member for Katanning is satisfied with my proposed amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: It will be necessary to put the amendment moved by Mr. Thomson, as he is not present to withdraw it.

Amendment on amendment put and negatived.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That after “thereto” in paragraph (a) the following proviso be added:—“Provided that any owner may within thirty days after the commencement of this Act,

amend his return under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907, for the current year of assessment, by increasing the value placed by him upon his land, and thereupon a re-assessment shall be made by the Commissioner of Taxation, subject to an appeal by the owner to the Court of Review from any reduction by the Commissioner of the owner's valuation.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The period of 30 days is rather short. I do not see the necessity for such a limitation. The Premier might give the right to furnish new returns without making provision for 30 days. As an alternative, the Premier might agree to make the limitation 90 days instead of 30 days, which would give the land owners a reasonable chance to put in new returns.

Mr. McCallum: What about making it 365 days!

Hon. P. COLLIER: If it were parliamentary, I would say that the member for Williams-Narrogin is about the dead limit.

Mr. Johnston: Why confine it to 30 days?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member is mighty lucky if he succeeds in getting 30 days. If such a decision is arrived at, it will not be fair to the State. The object is to give consideration, to put it bluntly, to men who have been robbing the Treasury for years past.

The Premier: Oh no, not at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for Williams-Narrogin wants to give these men consideration.

The Premier: This is the New South Wales system.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The amendment is practically the same as that moved by the member for Katanning with the difference that it gives the Commissioner of Taxation an opportunity to re-assess for the current year. That is the only distinction. The amendment which has been defeated and the one moved by the Premier, amount, in my opinion, to nothing more or less than a recognition that owners of land have been undervaluing their properties for years past.

The Premier: I do not regard it as that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If that is so, there is no need for the amendment. I am pleased that such a suggestion came from the Country Party benches, for had such an accusation emanated from the Opposition side of the House, we would have had all the members on the cross-benches rising up in a flock, to repudiate the insinuation that holders of land had undervalued their properties and so robbed the State of taxation.

Mr. Johnston: But the land owner may not want to sell his land.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Let him pay the extra tax.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That does not affect the position at all. These land owners should have submitted fair valuations of their properties and it amounts to this, that because a man does not want to sell his property and knows he has no power to sell it, he is to be entitled to under-value his land

and rob the people. Immediately legislation is introduced to make it possible for the Government to take over land for closer settlement purposes, an owner sees the possibility of benefit to himself and he seeks an opportunity to put in amended returns in order to secure a greater price should his land be taken over, despite the fact that for years past he has been paying less by way of taxation, than he should have paid.

The Premier: I do not think that is so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Now we are asked to assist the land owner to secure the benefit of the higher prices made possible under the Act. If the land owner is to be permitted to review the valuation he has placed upon his land for the current year, why not go back for the past five or 10 years and permit the revaluation of that land for such a period, so that the Taxation Department may have the benefit of the extra money? The land owner may have valued his property at 10s. an acre but now he may see the possibility of getting more, and suddenly he realises that his property is worth 30s. an acre.

Mr. Willcock: As the result of this beneficial legislation?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is an extraordinary situation.

Mr. Johnston: The land might be worth £1 an acre, and the owner might not want to sell it for £1.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What a standard of honesty! It does not matter whether the owner wants to sell or not. In the opinion of the hon. member 60 days are not sufficient for the owner to admit that he has been dishonest in his returns.

Mr. Johnston: It is not a matter of dishonesty.

Mr. Willcock: The owner wants more time to make up his mind as to what extent he will rob the State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Quite so. If any land owner takes advantage of this provision and increases his valuation, can there be any other construction than that, in the original return, he attempted to rob the State?

Mr. Mann: Does not the fact that there are probable buyers about increase the value?

Mr. Munsie: The poor old State!

Hon. P. COLLIER: Were there not probable buyers before?

Mr. Sampson: The resumption clause is a new principle.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, a provision to permit a land owner to reap a higher reward by virtue of dishonest returns.

Mr. Latham: It has been permitted in the past.

Mr. Willcock: Of course; they have been robbing the country all through.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We have evidence that this poor bleeding country has been robbed year after year. It is about time it received a little protection. Is it any wonder that the State is on the verge of bankruptcy when the Government are asked to

yield up their rights in this way? The State has always been the milch cow for a class of people I do not like to describe. The man who has put in his return to the department for this year should abide by it. If he is honest he will not ask to withdraw.

The Premier: I think the position is misunderstood.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, it is not.

The Premier: Might I explain it?

Hon. P. COLLIER: How can it be misunderstood? The Premier wants to give taxpayers the right to reconsider their returns for the present year.

The Premier: No, the Taxation Department fixes the value.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the owner sends in his valuation, and now the Premier wants to give the owner power to withdraw his valuation and if necessary increase it, subject of course to the assessment of the Commissioner of Taxation.

Mr. Munsie: The Commissioner is there to put up the value. He will not reduce it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the Commissioner is offered £200 or £300 extra by way of taxation, he will not refuse it.

The Premier: The Commissioner is not there to act wrongly.

Mr. Money: I have seen returns in which the Commissioner has assessed land at a lower value than the owner returned it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is another question. Why should a person who has sent in his return be allowed to withdraw it and increase the value?

Mr. Money: But the department have been accepting the returns of three years ago.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That does not matter; it is the value that the owner put on his land.

Mr. Money: No, it is the value at which the Commissioner assessed it two or three years ago.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And which the owner accepted. We are asked now to permit the owner to increase the value of his land. Why should he?

Mr. Money: Does it not actually amount to a more recent valuation?

Hon. P. COLLIER: More recent than a return just sent in!

Mr. Money: If there has been no alteration in ownership, the valuation would be the same.

Hon. P. COLLIER: A more recent valuation desired by the owner because of the passage of this measure!

Mr. Pickering: It is a new policy.

Mr. Munsie: And a just one.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The new policy does not affect the value of the land. It is wonderful how amenable the Government are to the power of members on the cross benches.

Mr. Johnston: We are supporting the request from your side of the House.

Mr. Munsie: Nothing of the sort! What we suggested is on the Notice Paper.

Mr. Johnston: The Government suggested this in the original Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No such proposition would have been put up by the Premier but for the action of members on the cross benches.

Mr. Pickering: What do you mean by that?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member can place what construction he likes on it. To pass the amendment would be endorsing the actions of dishonest land owners as a result of which the Taxation Department has not received the money to which it was entitled. If land was worth 10s. an acre last year, it will be worth 10s. an acre after this measure is passed. The value of the land will not be affected by the Bill. Of course there will be attempts to reap the unearned increment, because there are land seekers in the community. I am amazed that such a reflection should be cast upon land owners by members who profess to be their direct representatives in this House.

Mr. Johnston: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is an admission by members on the cross benches who profess to represent the land owners that some at least have under-valued their land for taxation purposes, and now that there is a possibility of the land being purchased by the Government, they want these owners to be allowed to increase their own valuations in order to reap the reward of their perfidy in the past.

Mr. Pickering: That is your interpretation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course it is, and no other interpretation can be placed upon it.

Mr. Pickering: I can give a different interpretation and without casting any imputations, either.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No other inference can be drawn from it. Members who specially represent the farmers say that some of them have been dishonest in that they have under-valued their land.

Mr. Pickering: We do not say that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Now that there is a possibility of it being resumed for closer settlement, they want an opportunity to increase their own valuations and reap the benefit.

Mr. Johnston: That is not the point at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member says 60 days is not sufficient for him. He wants 90 days in which to look around and estimate what demand there will be for this land of his; 90 days to decide whether these prospective settlers will go to his district. Upon his conclusions he will decide to increase the value of his land by perhaps 10s. or £1 an acre.

Mr. Johnston: The hon. member knows that it might be three years or four years since the Taxation Department valued the land.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the Commissioner of Taxation is carrying on his work in that way, it is time we had a re-organisation. I take that interjection, if it means anything, to mean that the Commissioner of Taxation assesses the value of land, say, to-day, and then does not assess it again for about four years. But in the meantime the value of the land may have increased. The Commissioner, however, does not care. He has not been concerned to follow up possible increases in value. He is quite content to accept to-day the value of four years ago, although in the meantime the value may have increased considerably. Land values all over the State may be increasing; but that, says the member for Williams-Narrogin, does not matter to the Commissioner of Taxation. No wonder the Premier has a big deficit if that is the manner in which the Taxation Department is being administered! How many land owners in this State have benefited by this proposition of the hon. member? Is that the Commissioner's attitude towards all landowners? If so, they are on a pretty good wicket.

The Premier: It is not so at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not saying it is; I am merely taking up the argument of the member for Williams-Narrogin, who wants the 90 days. I am opposed to the amendment entirely. Landowners should stand by the assessment of the current year, whatever it might be. Not only in this State, but all over Australia, whenever there is a proposal for land to be resumed by the Crown, or for land to be purchased by the Crown, the tendency is to jump up prices. We should consider the individual only so far as is equitable and fair, and we should also protect the interests of the State.

The PREMIER: I do not think the Leader of the Opposition understands the position. The assessment is not necessarily the valuation of the owner.

Hon. P. Collier: I know it is not. I never said it was.

The PREMIER: Despite the member for Williams-Narrogin, the valuations are watched all the time.

Hon. P. Collier: But he said land was not valued more than once in three or four years.

Mr. Johnston: I said it might not be.

Hon. P. Collier: In view of the Premier's statement, the values are up to date; and therefore the amendment is not required.

The PREMIER: The valuations are often checked, and sometimes reduced. Under the amendment, if a valuation is reduced, the owner has the right to ask that it be increased. Eventually he can go to a court of review. Generally as regards taxation values, let me say that the farmer is not a rogue, but does what he honestly thinks is right.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not say that he does not.

The PREMIER: The amendment makes it possible for the owner to go to the court of review. Personally I do not want to

pay a penny more in taxation than I can help, and doubtless that is the attitude of people generally. I want hon. members to realise thoroughly that the amendment merely enables the owner to get to the court of review. The Taxation Department will not let him put up the value of his land just as he pleases; in many cases the department have reduced owners' values.

Hon. P. Collier: Then those are fair values to-day. Why should they be increased?

The PREMIER: I should say that during the past six years the Commissioner has got more in taxation of land than the land could be sold for. Do not let us assume that men are rogues.

Hon. P. Collier: The insinuation as to rogery comes from the other side, from the member for Williams-Narrogin.

The PREMIER: We are getting away from the point. The effect of the amendment is that the owner may increase the value of his land for taxation purposes, but that the Commissioner will not be obliged to accept that valuation; that, on the contrary, he may reduce it. Then, if he does reduce it, and the Crown thereupon takes the land, the owner will have the right to go to a court of review on the question of the value of the land. The amendment is a perfectly safe one, and would prevent an owner from getting more than a fair thing. The Taxation Commissioner has valuations for the whole State, and will see that the assessment value is not increased beyond what is fair, no matter what the owner may say. I do not think hon. members have read the amendment carefully enough. It represents the principle adopted in New Zealand, where there is a valuation roll, and the owner can apply to have the value increased, whereas an officer known as, I think, the Commissioner of Valuations can apply to have the value either increased or decreased. The amendment is safe for the owner and safe for the Government.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MUNSIE: The amendment is unnecessary. I do not believe the average owner of land has deliberately under-valued his land to the Taxation Department. Even if he has, the amendment is still unnecessary. The Bill itself is not dealing with the man who is genuinely using his land. The Bill is for the purpose of giving the Government some right to resume land being held idle. I was surprised to hear the suggestions from the cross benches. Why the agitation from those benches? The Premier led me to believe that the proposed amendment was for the purpose of giving the Commissioner of Taxation the right to reduce valuations. The Act provides that power now, and the Premier admits that the Commissioner has exercised that power, although not to the extent to which he has tried to get valuations

increased. The sole purpose of the amendment is to give the man who has already put in his valuation the right to withdraw that valuation and increase it. There is no other reason for the amendment. The man who has deliberately under-valued his land ought not to be afforded opportunity to increase the valuation. There is no fairer system than to take the land owner's own valuation of his property, and the only way of getting that is to take his valuation for taxation purposes. The principle in the amendment on the Notice Paper is practically new in this House, namely, that the Government shall have the right to take land at the owner's valuation plus 10 per cent. The only man who will increase his valuation under this amendment, is he who thinks he has a chance of having his land taken for closer settlement. We must consider the future owner of the land, and not have him charged too high a price. The man who gets his own valuation plus 10 per cent. is getting a fair deal. The amendment is neither necessary nor just to the future occupier of the land.

Mr. WILLOCK: I am against the proposed proviso. We are losing sight of the fact that it is not usual to take the valuation for taxation purposes as representing the real value of the land. Land is taxed on the relative value of land through the district. Whenever the valuation is withdrawn and increased, the board should have power to consider the earlier valuation made before the Bill came down. I move a further amendment on the amendment—

That the following be added:—"The board may, however, take into consideration the assessments of previous years for the purpose of determining the value for resumption purposes.

The amendment would place the valuation of these lands in the hands of the Commissioner of Taxation, instead of in the hands of a board who will be supposed to know something about the matter. The Commissioner, I suppose, has a fair ordinary idea of the value of land in the State, but as for giving him power to value land for resumption in the perfunctory manner that he usually adopts will not be right. Of course I would not have submitted my amendment if I thought the clause would be struck out.

The Premier: I regard the amendment as a safeguard otherwise I would not have submitted it. I hope the hon. member will withdraw his amendment.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I intend to support the amendment moved by the Premier. Many of the large estates were selected as far back as 50 years ago and our desire is to force those lands into use. The owners must put a fair market value upon the land and the Government will have the right to take it and add 10 per cent. to that value. If this be done the amendment of the Premier will be sound and legitimate.

Mr. Munsie: But you propose to prevent him doing that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The amendment provides that the owner's valuation shall be accepted.

Mr. Munsie: No, but the one on the Notice Paper does.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Then I misunderstood it.

Amendment (Mr. Willcock's) put and negatived.

Mr. Willcock: Does that mean that the Premier's proviso with my proviso added to it has been negatived.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the words the hon. member proposed to add to the amendment, and the Committee turned down those words. The business before the Committee now is that the proviso moved by the Premier be added.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the amendment:—"Provided also that if any increase in the assessment should result from such reconsideration, the same shall have retrospective effect as from the year 1917.

I am prompted to submit this amendment to some extent because of the remarks of the member for Williams-Narrogin. We are informed that it is possible that the value of the land as assessed by the Taxation Department to-day for taxation purposes, is the value that was fixed four or five years ago. If as a result of this reconsideration a landowner is able to withdraw his assessment for the current year and put in a new one, increasing the value of his land, and if the Commissioner of Taxation accepts that increase submitted by the owner, surely it is only a fair thing to say that that increased value did not accrue during the recent month or two. In other words if I take advantage of this position and re-value my land from £1 to £2 an acre, and the Commissioner of Taxation accepts my value, it is a fair assumption that that land was worth £2 an acre a year or two or three years before. Therefore the amendment should be made retrospective and the tax should be paid retrospectively. It cannot be argued that land has increased in value during this year only. If an owner is permitted to increase the value of his land, then the land was worth the increased value last year and he should pay tax on it accordingly.

Mr. Mann: Why stop at four years?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I must stop somewhere. I am assuming that land is worth to-day considerably more than it was four years ago, and that this value has been growing year by year during that period. If the Premier's amendment is to be accepted we should give it a retrospective effect. I am even prepared to reduce the period to three years, and with the permission of the Committee would amend my

amendment by striking out "1917" and inserting "1919."

Amendment (Hon. P. Collier's) by leave amended accordingly.

The PREMIER: The value of land to-day is not the value of land two years ago. Indeed, I know of land that has increased in value very greatly during the last 12 months.

Hon. P. Collier: Unimproved land?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: Then there is no need for your amendment.

The PREMIER: That does not give the taxpayer everything, but says he may increase the value of his land. I think we are making much ado about nothing. I doubt if the value of unimproved land is returned at anything less than a fair price to-day.

Mr. Pickering: You think that since the visit of the parliamentary party to the South-West the value of land there has gone up?

The PREMIER: There has been a great desire on the part of people to go upon the land now who would not do so before, and during the past 12 months we have settled hundreds of people in the South-West. The Leader of the Opposition should not seek to penalise the man who wants to increase his values owing to the fact that the Commissioner has put too little value on the land.

Mr. LAMBERT: If the member for Sussex is right in his interjection, we should not accept the Premier's amendment. We understand now that the speculative value of land in the South-West has increased. What we want to do is to arrive at the actual acquiring value of land to-day. Men have held land alongside our railways for a number of years for speculative purposes, and they now want to be allowed to revise their values because it suits them to do so. Even if land owners are prepared to pay a retrospective tax upon their land, that will not recompense us for the loss on our railways from the fact that this land has been non-productive for so long. What we want to do is to provide machinery by which land may be valued on a basis that will be equitable for our coming settlers.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I regret that the Premier has not seen fit to agree to the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. I am afraid, in speaking at an earlier stage, I made an error, for my remarks were so much waste energy. The Premier, I understood, desired to force the lands into productivity and the means to be adopted comprised the taxation foreshadowed in the Bill. I fail to see, however, how the Bill will have any effect.

Mr. Lambert: It will only mean an inflated value of the land.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I know of a considerable area of land rated at £1 an acre. It was selected 60 years ago and yet, though only slightly improved, apart from ringbarking, it has since been sold for as much as £25 an acre. When the local road board authority rated the land on an unimproved value of £20 per acre, the owners lodged appeals. I consider that the zone system should be adopted in connection with the valuation of land.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not desire to burke discussion, but the hon. member is outside the four corners of the amendment.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I admit that the Premier has a large vision, but I am sorry that he cannot see his way clear to accept the amendment by the Leader of the Opposition. I do not know whether the Bill is a bogus one or not, but I have rather a suspicion in that direction. Unless the amendment be agreed to, I do not see that the Bill will do much good. The object of the measure should be to force the land into use and provide freight for the railways which are now not paying, but I am afraid that result will not be achieved.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The interjection by the member for Sussex opened up a very important aspect and, indeed, it was supported by the statement of the Premier himself. If it be a fact, as asserted by the member for Sussex, that the value of the land has very considerably advanced throughout the South-West as the result of the Parliamentary party's visit, it means that, if there be any truth in such a statement, any resumption that may take place under the Bill will result in the owners securing a fictitious and speculative price. The increased value has been brought about by what I may describe as the optimistic and spread-eagle speeches made by responsible Ministers and members of Parliament as to the great development and advancement which was to take place in the South-West. The member for Coolgardie, too, opened up a very important point when he drew attention to the landholders who had held up the South-West for many years past, and who are now, because of the passage of this legislation, to get an increased and fictitious price for their properties, an enhanced value brought about within a week or two because of an announcement of Government policy. Individuals who have not spent a penny themselves or an ounce of effort in contributing to the increased value of their lands, are to reap the benefit of this legislation and of the expenditure of large sums of money by the State in the furtherance of a developmental policy. Those people will not be entitled to such enhanced prices for their land and that position should be safeguarded. I am convinced that the amendment I have moved does not go far enough. It merely touches the fringe of the problem, because it says that, despite the increased value their lands will have as a result of these developments, they shall be allowed to benefit from the provisions of the Bill by the payment of taxation for three years backwards. The expenditure of a few paltry pounds will enable these people who have held up the progress of that part of

the State to reap additional benefits under the Bill. Those people will be mighty lucky to get out of it with the payment of three years' extra taxation. In the interests of a successful closer settlement scheme, the capital cost should be kept down as much as possible. If we load up the settlers with a huge capital cost, they will not be able to succeed in their operations. Some members who participated in the Parliamentary visit to the South-West have expressed doubts as to the returned soldiers being able to operate successfully all their holdings in view of the large capital cost, plus the heavy cost of clearing. It should be the bounden duty of Parliament to see that the men who may be able to take unfair advantage of the Bill do not receive more than they are fairly and honestly entitled to. I have not the slightest faith in the measure assisting very much the promotion of land settlement. The Bill is not drastic enough.

The Premier: I hope I shall never have to put another one before you.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I appreciate the Premier's difficult task. He has to keep in view the success of his land settlement policy and to hold the balance even, while a very weighty section of his followers are hanging on to his coat and pulling him back.

The Premier: You are wrong there.

Mr. Troy: The Premier also has his constituents to consider.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am satisfied that he would not be influenced by considerations for his constituents in framing a policy for the good of the State. I am surprised to find opposition to the amendment. If the land has increased so greatly in value, anyone affected by the Act will be compensated ten times over for any small amount of retrospective tax. If, as a result of speeches made in this House, the land in the South-West has increased so greatly in value, surely it is a gratuitous gift to those fortunate enough to possess land, and fortunate enough to have it resumed. I am afraid that members, while trying to conserve the equitable rights of landowners, are losing sight of the interest and welfare of the State. I regret that there are no drastic provisions against the inflation of values in a night. Yet the whole of the unearned increment is to go to the landowners. Members should not oppose such a small consideration as that for which I am asking. The member for Sussex says that the value of land has increased greatly. Does he contend that the men who take up that land should be saddled with the increased price?

Mr. Pickering: No, but we should have an opportunity to amend our taxation returns.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then the Commissioner of Taxation should revise the valuations not only of land likely to be resumed, but of the whole of the land in the South-West. According to the hon. member's statement, owners of land in the South-West will this year be paying on about one half of the true value of that land. The Premier should introduce a Bill to empower the Commissioner of Taxation to review the whole assessment and secure for the Government the benefit of taxation on the real value, according to the hon. member, though I consider it a fictitious value. I would like to hear what members on the cross benches have to say against the equity of my amendment.

Mr. LATHAM: I object to the retrospective nature of the amendment. No legislature should make a law retrospective. If we have made such mistakes in the past, let them be buried. So long as I occupy a seat in this Chamber, I shall oppose every piece of legislation having retrospective effect. For this reason I oppose the amendment.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Before the hon. member has been here long, he will find himself voting for retrospective legislation. The hon. member should never commit himself to actions covering the whole of his Parliamentary career, or he will find himself travelling along a very thorny road.

Mr. Latham: I will accept your experience.

Hon. P. COLLIER: While I admit the unsoundness of legislating retrospectively, rarely a session passes without Parliament approving of measures having retrospective effect. It is necessary sometimes to do so, though as a general principle it is, of course, to be avoided. Last night the hon. member cast his vote for the second reading of the Licensing Bill, which contains provisions of a pronouncedly retrospective character. Parliament is never entitled to pass retrospective legislation of a taxation character, because the subject of the taxation, not being aware of the impost, has made no provision for it. The Licensing Bill provides taxation retrospectively for 12 months.

The Premier: No, it does not. However, we cannot discuss that now.

Mr. Latham: I was not in the Chamber when the division took place.

Mr. O Loughlen: If you had been here, you would have voted for the Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In this case we are only attempting to take a small portion of that which the State creates. If we add to the value of a man's land by £1 per acre in the night, then we are justified in taxing him as here proposed. That kind of retrospective legislation is justified. This particular piece of retrospective legislation does not go one-tenth of the distance I would like it to go.

Mr. LAMBERT: The attitude of the Opposition on this Bill, and in fact on all Bills throughout the session, has been one of constructive criticism. The matter of most outstanding importance to this State is closer settlement. I hope the appeal of the Leader of the Opposition will be heard by some of the members who desire to see a reasonable decent closer settlement measure enacted. The Premier has admitted, and every member of the Committee knows, that the only salvation for this State is additional population. In view of the backward condition of our finances we cannot extend our system of railways; and therefore we can find accommodation for overseas immigrants only in the unused lands adjacent to our existing very expensive railway system. The Opposition have no desire whatever to do any injustice to the land owners of to-day. But our object should be to increase the State's productiveness. The land here in view is the most desirable to acquire, and it should be acquired by the State at a reasonable and not a speculative price. I repeat, the State's financial position is desperate, and can be remedied only by increased population. The Committee will be justified in giving the Government every power necessary to acquire the land that is

needed in connection with their immigration policy. The Treasurer is positively handcuffed unless the unused, locked-up lands alongside existing railways are made available to settlement.

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

Ayes	17
Noes	25

Majority against ... 8

Amendment thus passed.

Mr. MUNSIE: I should like the Premier to explain what is meant by paragraph (b) of the amendment.

The PREMIER: The hon. member suggested this to us. There may be improvements on the land.

Mr. Munsie: The board attends to that. This is dealing with the land itself.

The PREMIER: No, this refers to improvements, and provides for the payment of the value of the improvements on the estate.

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

Title—agreed to.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Premier agreed to recommend Clause 6. Has he forgotten that?

The CHAIRMAN: It cannot be done at this stage.

Bill reported with amendments.

AYES.	
Mr. Angwin	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Simons
Mr. Collier	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Troy
Mr. Davies	Mr. Walker
Mr. Heron	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mann
Mr. Boyland	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Broun	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Carter	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Durack	Mr. Richardson
Mr. George	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Harrison	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Johnston	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. Underwood
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. Mullany
Mr. H. K. Maley	(Teller.)

Amendment on the amendment thus negatived.

Amendment (Premier's proviso) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	27
Noes	16

Majority for ... 11

AYES.	
Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mann
Mr. Boyland	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Broun	Mr. Money
Mr. Carter	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Davies	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Durack	Mr. Richardson
Mr. George	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Harrison	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Johnston	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. Underwood
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. Mullany
Mr. H. K. Maley	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Simons
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Collier	Mr. Troy
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Walker
Mr. Heron	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)
Mr. McCallum	

Recommittal.

The PREMIER: I move—

That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering Clause 6.

Mr. SPEAKER: The suspension of the Standing Orders does not affect this position. I know it has been allowed before, but I do not feel disposed to allow it, unless it is the desire of the House. It being apparently the wish of the House, I will allow it.

Question put and passed.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 6—Notice to owner:

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That the following be added at the end of Subclause (4): "but without abatement under Section 17."

Members were in some doubt as to whether the provisions of Section 17 would apply. The amendment clears up that doubt.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In the interests of closer settlement, it would have been better had the Premier consented to add two other clauses to the Bill. The amendment provides that Section 17 shall not apply. However, that deals with only one tax. A tax of 1½d. in the £ will not be sufficient to force people to either sell their lands or cultivate them. Many hon. members will agree, even though they will not vote, that it is not our desire to compel the Government to purchase the lands, so long as we can get them into cultivation. It will be far better for the State to have a clause to compel the Government to purchase. It will prevent the Government from making bad deals and will be the means of saving the State a large sum of money. I would have liked the Premier to provide that Sections 10 and 11 of the Act should not apply.

The Premier: I did what you asked and now you are not satisfied.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I said that in my opinion 1½d. would not compel people to sub-

divide or cultivate their land, and in all probability they would be relieved of one tax only, and they would have no land tax to pay. If the Premier exempted Sections 10 and 11, he would wipe out the £250 exemption and also wipe out the allowance for improvements. And, instead of the tax being 1½d., it should be 3d. Why should we not compel this land to be put under cultivation without casting greater responsibilities on the Government by way of raising loans. The Premier has not gone far enough to bring the land into productive use.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I regret that the Standing Orders will not permit me to make an attempt to amend the clause in the direction of striking out the word "three" with a view to inserting other words. The obsolete method of breaking up large estates for closer settlement by direct purchase should be abandoned. Under this Bill there will not be one holding which will be acquired for the purpose of closer settlement which will not be improved within the meaning of the Act. There are innumerable instances where the treble tax will have no influence in the way of compelling an owner to cut up his land and dispose of it. In many cases it will add merely £50 or £60 a year to his land tax and that will be cheerfully paid. The Premier has the option of cutting it up himself. The proposal in the Bill will have no effect whatever. I do not believe that any member can give a specific instance of a land holder who it is contended should be displaced. Instead of our having to go upon the money market and borrow at high rates of interest, let us impose such a tax as will have the effect of automatically forcing the whole of the land into use.

Mr. Mann: That might be unfair. You propose to compel the payment of a treble tax.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The treble tax sounds high, but it depends upon the amount he is paying. A treble tax might be high if the individual were paying 1d. or 2d., but where he is paying a mere ½d. it is practically nothing. In some States it is higher than it is here even for ordinary taxation purposes. Ours is the lowest land tax in Australia. For the past 10 years we have received on an average only £46,000 from this source and more than half of that has come from the metropolitan area—Fremantle to Midland Junction. From income tax alone last year we secured £290,000.

Mr. Mann: The farmer pays income tax when it is the greater of the two.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Let me point out how taxation has increased in recent years. Income tax has increased from about £80,000 five years ago to £290,000 last year. There have been increases also in dividend duties, stamp duties, and totalisator duties, and in every form of direct taxation. In 1916 direct taxation yielded £407,000, while last year the amount approached almost a million. This year the Premier hopes to get in more than that.

Mr. Mann: We have nearly reached the limit now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We have reached the limit already in many of these items. Every taxpayer, except the land tax payer has had his tax increased. The farmer who pays the land tax may have had his income tax increased so far as he has contributed his share to a larger income tax, whilst the total amount received

in land tax has remained practically stationary for the past ten years. I believe Western Australia is the only State which does not impose both a land tax and an income tax. If the amount of our land tax had been increased during the past five years in proportion to the increase that has occurred in other forms of direct taxation our land tax to-day would have been about 1½d. in the pound, and a treble tax on that would have amounted to 4½d. For the past 15 years there has been no readjustment of the amount of the land tax.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Why did not your party see to that?

Hon. P. COLLIER: We made the attempt several times, but another place saw to it that we did not succeed. In the archives there they must have at least 50 Bills that were passed on to them by the Labour Government and were cast aside there. The excuse was offered that we did not know how to handle finance, and that if we got further taxation we would only squander the money. Now that the country is in the hands of the Government who are holding fast upon the finances, members opposite should have no hesitation in allowing them to increase the land taxation. I want the Premier to increase that tax by five times.

Mr. Teesdale: The rents of our pastoral areas have been doubled and trebled.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The rent used to be 10s. per annum per 1,000 acres, and the Government have done an awful thing by increasing that rent to 30s. per 1,000 acres. I am glad we were not responsible for such a form of confiscation. If the treble tax goes through as at present proposed, it will not force into use one acre of land.

The Premier: I wish I had not seen the Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I should be neglecting my duties if I allowed this to go through without a protest.

Mr. Mann: It can be amended later if necessary.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Procrastination is the policy in matters of taxation. We on this side hold that if a thing is necessary it should be done at once. I want it to be known that as far as I am concerned I am utterly opposed to and have no faith in, the Bill, for I know it will have no effect. I do not believe any member on the Government side of the House thinks the Bill will force land into use. If we are going to do this sort of thing, let us do it properly. The Premier should agree to raise the tax from three to five times the amount. If it works an injury, we can pass amending legislation next session. If we err on the side of severity this session, we can remedy it when we meet again. The imposition of taxation on land is always mighty difficult to achieve. It is significant that the land tax was first imposed by the Moore Government, the members of which Administration, together with their supporters, were entirely opposed to the principle of land taxation.

The Premier: If you are agreeable, I will postpone the further consideration of the clause and we can get on with the Licensing Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That will simply mean going over the whole matter again.

The Premier: Not necessarily; I will bring the Bill forward much later next time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I prefer to go ahead now. "When I draw members' attention to the fact

that the present land taxation was imposed 16 years ago by a Government utterly opposed to the principle of land taxation, they will realise that the imposition was laid on with very gentle hands.

Mr. Johnston: Railway freights have gone up since then.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member cannot indicate anything that has not gone up except land taxation.

The PREMIER: I cannot understand this opposition. The member for North-East Fremantle asked that this should be done and asked that it should be made clear that the treble tax was imposed. I agreed to recommit the Clause to make it perfectly clear, and I have done so. I did what the Opposition suggested and now the Opposition complain.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I asked you to remove all exemptions and you have removed only one.

The PREMIER: The hon. member asked me to make it perfectly clear that it was the treble tax, and I have done so. If it is found unworkable, I promise that we will make it work. There is no humbug about this matter.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a mere nothing.

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

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

MOTION—RETIREMENT OF A. C. KESSELL.

To inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the 16th November on the following motion moved by Captain Carter—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the retirement from the Government services of A. C. Kessell.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [9-55]: I would like to congratulate the hon. member upon the case he made out for this select committee. Mr. Kessell is known to everyone and all in this Chamber are familiar with his case. I will not support the appointment of a select committee) although at the same time I am not going to offer any opposition to it. Mr. Kessell retired from the service and so far as that officer is concerned, I am anxious to see the matter settled but I cannot support the appointment of a select committee. The House may deal with the matter as it pleases. Everyone knows that Mr. Kessell was secretary to the Agent General in London. He retired and left the service. He is now drawing a pension. I repeat that I would like to see the matter cleared up, but I would not be doing my duty if I agreed to the appointment of a select committee.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [9-57]: With the Premier, I do not wish to take up any time discussing the motion for the appointment of this select committee. The Premier has some knowledge of the facts surrounding the matter it is proposed shall be inquired into. As one who for some years was associated with a Government, and has a pretty considerable knowledge of the alleged grievance of Kessell, I know some-

thing of the matter as well. The papers dealing with his case and his retirement were placed on the Table two years ago at the instance of one hon. member, but no action was taken. Without desiring to go into the merits of the case, I oppose the appointment of the select committee. I do not think that the time of the House should be taken up nor expense incurred by an inquiry into the grievances of every individual who happens to be retired from the Public Service and who imagines he has been unfairly retired from the public service. I do not think any injustice has been done to Kessell.

Capt. Carter: You have not read the file.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have read it very closely and know it from cover to cover. As a result of that knowledge the House would not be warranted in going to the trouble or expense of appointing a select committee.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10-0]: Apparently the motion has been prompted by the person who feels aggrieved. Though the Premier has adopted a non-committal attitude, it might be as well if we appointed a select committee and settled this case once for all. I do not know that the cost would be great. Select committees have been appointed in other cases such as the Mahle case and justice has been done. Kessell has desired and indirectly demanded an investigation.

Mr. Mullany: He has no right to demand anything here.

Mr. LAMBERT: Parliament is the supreme body and every citizen has a right to demand justice of Parliament. My knowledge of the case is not very great, but it would be well to settle it once for all and obviate it coming before us again.

Mrs. COWAN (West Perth) [10-4]: I support the motion. It would be a good thing if this case could be settled satisfactorily. I endorse the remarks of the member for Coolgardie. It is sometimes extremely hard for a civil servant to get justice done, and the public generally would be better satisfied if a select committee were appointed so that Kessell would get what he himself calls a fair deal. It is not satisfactory that a man's pension should be taken in payment of a charge for returning his furniture to the State.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [10-5]: I oppose the motion. It is not the province of Parliament to inquire into the grievance of every individual. There are Ministers to deal with these matters. Knowing something of the case, I say Kessell was very well treated indeed and, remembering that he is drawing a pension of about £225 a year, he has nothing to complain about. As a matter of fact he was not retired. He threatened that if his salary was not increased he would leave. He retired himself.

Capt. Carter: That is quite wrong.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is quite correct. His case has been dealt with by at least a dozen Ministers, and they have agreed that he was very well treated by the State. I trust a committee will not be appointed on the principle that Ministers should have the right to retire members of the Civil Service.

Capt. Carter: On good grounds, yes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If they think they should be retired. We will never have a satisfactory Civil Service unless Ministers have charge. If they can always come to Parliament because someone is retired from the service, the civil servants, and not Ministers or Parliament, will be running the country. If a select committee were appointed, I am certain the finding would be that Kessell has been well treated.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH (North Perth) [10-8]: I support the motion. It will not be an expensive inquiry and it should not take long. This case is somewhat out of the ordinary. Kessell, in the prime of life, was retired and paid a pension of £200 a year. I cannot understand why the State is put to the expense of paying a pension to an able-bodied civil servant who has been retired. If there was good reason for his retirement, I cannot see that he was entitled to a pension. Kessell has been very insistent regarding his case and it should be settled once for all.

Mr. SAMPSON (Swan) [10-10]: For many years Kessell occupied a very important position and, among the public, there is a good deal of misunderstanding and many questions have been asked regarding the treatment he has received. I support the motion. I offer no comment on the case; I have not read the file, but in view of the public interest in the case and the fact that he was retired from a very important position, an inquiry should be held.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I never heard any reason for his retirement. He was a surplus officer.

Mr. SAMPSON: I met Kessell on many occasions and he always appeared to be an efficient officer.

Hon. P. Collier: He has lobbied very effectively.

Mr. SAMPSON: It would be only an act of justice to grant an inquiry and finalise the matter.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [10-11]: I oppose the motion. If members desire to support a motion of this kind they should first acquaint themselves of the circumstances.

Hon. P. Collier: They have all said they know nothing about the case.

Mr. PICKERING: The circumstances are clearly stated in the file and no doubt Kessell received every consideration while in the service. He was well paid and exceptionally well treated on every occasion, and I see no reason for granting an inquiry. It is not the province of Parliament to inquire into such cases.

Mr. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [10-12]: I see no serious objection to granting an inquiry. If Kessell or anyone else has a grievance, he should be able to get it investigated. When I was employed by the Government, it was always thrown up at me that civil servants had the right to appeal to Parliament. Kessell feels that he has a serious grievance, and it is only a question of getting a few members to investigate the facts and settle the matter. A statement has been made that Kessell is drawing a pension of about £200 a year.

Mr. SPEAKER: The amount of his pension is £132 a year.

Mr. McCALLUM: I am told that this money has been garnisheed by the Government to pay the freight for bringing his furniture from England and that he has not drawn a penny of his pension.

Hon. P. Collier: Rightly so. I have seen the file and I know the facts.

Mr. McCALLUM: I understand that the Government started proceedings for the recovery of the amount and discontinued them. Thus Kessell was denied the right of stating his case or defending the action in the court. The Government instead garnisheed his pension and left Kessell with no redress. On these grounds, an investigation should be made. There is the further point mentioned by the member for North Perth (Mr. MacCallum Smith). What was the reason for retiring an able bodied man from the service and giving him a pension? Is not there work in the service where he could earn that amount of money? Is he incapable of earning it? What was he put out for? Why is the country paying him that pension if he can work, and thus earn that amount of money for the taxpayers? Moreover, it has been laid down over and over again that civil servants can come to Parliament if they have a grievance.

Capt. CARTER (Leederville—in reply) [10-16]: I have already dealt fairly fully with the subject of this motion, and I have heard nothing in rebuttal of the main arguments put up by me in introducing the motion. The question resolves itself into two parts. Firstly, there is the question of fair play, which stands out boldly above everything else. Kessell has been put in the position of a disgraced officer.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why?

Capt. CARTER: The officer who has been deliberately disgraced asks the very question which is now put to me by way of interjection.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is only in order in replying to arguments used. That question was not raised during the debate. I cannot allow the hon. member to make another speech. The hon. member is only in order in replying to speeches made to-night.

Capt. CARTER: I may reply to the remarks of the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum), who asked why Kessell was dismissed. It has been stated that Kessell was a surplus officer. Looking through the file, I do not see any other reason. On the other hand, the Public Service Commissioner has given Kessell the highest references. Kessell has been secretary to no fewer than six Premiers, and yet that man, in the hale heartiness of his middle age, and in possession of all his faculties, has been put out of the service. It is not a question of money with the man, but a question of fair play. He is not on the rocks financially, but he is out for justification; and for that reason I ask that the motion be carried. Secondly, there is the question of justification for the Government's action. The Government have not justified their action. They have taken the most

arbitrary course. There is the case brought by the Federal Government against the State Government, in connection with which Kessell's name—

Hon. P. Collier: You are not replying now; you are now stating a new case.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is now repeating his speech in moving the motion; he is not replying to the arguments advanced against his motion.

Capt. CARTER: Kessell was simply told, "We do not want you." I really have nothing to reply to, and therefore must recapitulate a little.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow the hon. member to recapitulate.

Capt. CARTER: The matter has been treated with levity, or without serious regard.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member is in order in attributing that to members.

Capt. CARTER: I am at a loss for a peg to hang an argument on. Nothing was put up against the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is only permitted to reply to arguments advanced, and if there have been no arguments advanced, there is nothing to reply to.

Capt. CARTER: I have nothing to reply to. I am in the position of making an appeal to the House.

Hon. P. Collier: You have already done that in moving the motion.

Capt. CARTER: I want to see the House act fairly and equitably towards every public servant. The select committee will decide on the merits of the case.

The Minister for Mines: The present Government have nothing to do with the matter.

Capt. CARTER: They have while they refuse the demand for inquiry. There are special circumstances appearing on the file. It is not my intention to weary the House or waste time. I do hope hon. members will vote seriously on the question, and accord this officer the privilege of an inquiry.

Question put, and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	20
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	4
				—

AYES.

Mr. Carter	Mr. Latham
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Davies	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Denton	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Heron	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. H. K. Maley
Mr. Angwin	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Collier	Mr. Piessse
Mr. Durack	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Walker
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. Corboy

(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order read for the resumption of the debate from the 16th November.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; Mr. McCallum in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 4:

Mr. McCALLUM: I fear that the Committee will not agree to paragraph (b), and therefore I move an amendment—

That the following be added to paragraph (a): "notwithstanding that such employees may be engaged in domestic service."

Capt. CARTER: It is my intention to move that paragraph (a) be struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is too late now to move that, unless the member for South Fremantle agrees to withdraw his amendment.

Capt. CARTER: I did not understand that paragraph (a) had been carried.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot alter my ruling.

The Minister for Works: It will be competent for the hon. member to vote out the clause when the clause is put.

Amendment put and negatived.

Capt. CARTER: The question of the inclusion of insurance agents in the interpretation of "worker" in Section 4 of the principal Act has been very fully discussed. The work done by the insurance agent, as outlined here, is peculiarly that of a commission agent. His work cannot be supervised or gauged by a time book, nor can he be brought under the term "worker" in the Act. Therefore I will oppose the clause.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I am disposed to assist the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) in his efforts to bring every worker under the Arbitration Court awards, but in this instance I think it is proposed to overload the court. The object of the clause

is to include all insurance agents. That, I think, is a mistake. There is only one class of insurance agents who can be termed "workers," in the view of the Arbitration Court, namely, those engaged as industrial agents; because in most instances they are exclusively employed in one class of work. If we pass paragraph (a) it will be an almost impossible proposition to place before any court of arbitrators, because commission work depends largely on the personality of the agent, and so it would be impossible for the Arbitration Court to lay down rates of pay or hours of work for insurance agents. I hope the hon. member will amend the clause in such a way as will bring that class of workers under the Act without making it impossible for the court to give effect to its award. General insurance agents are frequently employed in some other class of work as well, and so practically they could not be brought within the purview of the Arbitration Court. In the case of industrial insurance agents, however, there would be no overwhelming difficulty. The Act cannot be brought into operation except in respect of workers exclusively engaged on a specific class of work.

Mr. McALLUM: In reply to the member for Leederville, I say there is no suggestion that this class of employee should be put on wages. They went on strike for 10 weeks, and at no time during the negotiations did they ask for wages. The statement that they cannot be governed by an Arbitration Court award is refuted by the fact that I have here copies of the Queensland "Government Gazette" containing three separate court awards governing insurance agents. Therefore in Queensland the impossible has been accomplished.

Mr. Boyland: Is not that under the Government insurance scheme?

Mr. McALLUM: No; but it does not matter whether the employer be the Government or be a private company. The hon. member argues that there cannot be supervision over the insurance agents. There is no difference between canvassing on a commission fixed by the court and canvassing on a commission fixed by a private company. The agents ask the right to have their commission fixed by the Arbitration Court. There is no question of supervision. The only check on them to-day is whether they get the business.

Mr. Sampson: Would you be prepared to support payment on a commission basis?

Mr. McALLUM: Yes, of course, as it is to-day.

Mr. Sampson: And no minimum wage expressed.

Mr. McALLUM: No, except the rate of commission. In a letter which we received, the companies guaranteed to so arrange the business that the agents would be able to earn up to a certain amount.

Mr. Sampson: Is that unsatisfactory?

Mr. McALLUM: Yes, because the companies have since repudiated it.

Mr. Mann: Do you desire merely to include industrial insurance agents?

Mr. McALLUM: Yes.

Mr. Mann: Then the amendment has been made too wide.

Mr. McALLUM: Yes, and I will amend it.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot have any further amendment to the paragraph, because we have already rejected one amendment to add words after the word "clubs"; therefore the paragraph must stand, down to the word "clubs."

Mr. McALLUM: I have discussed this with the companies and with the Crown Solicitor, and this is the result.

Mr. Richardson: If you approach the Arbitration Court on this, you will not ask for a minimum wage, but only for a minimum commission?

Mr. McALLUM: That is so.

The Minister for Works: That binds only the hon. member.

Mr. McALLUM: No suggestion for wages has ever been put up. The awards given in Queensland are all based on commission.

Mr. Sampson: Who was responsible for the repudiation of that letter from the companies?

Mr. McALLUM: One company after another dropped it.

Capt. Carter: Name them.

Mr. McALLUM: That would not assist the Committee.

Capt. Carter: I do not think you can name them.

Mr. McALLUM: I do not know that any of them are still recognising it.

Mr. Mann: This should be definitely restricted to industrial agents.

Mr. McALLUM: I think it is. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) has in mind agents who do some insurance work and carry on a little business of their own as well. Of the 150 men who were on strike, not one was doing anything but industrial insurance work.

Mr. DAVIES: If the clause is passed as it is it will take in all.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What difference will that make?

Mr. Richardson: We might defeat the object we have in view.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes, and that is to bring every class under the word "industrial." It is unfortunate that the words "including industrial" are in the clause. The meaning is that there is someone else other than industrial employees. The court may rule it out on the ground that they have no power to deal with anything that comes under this particular section. We should possibly add a proviso setting out that the clause applies only to industrial insurance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the clause stops at the words "industrial insurance" in the fourth line, it will cover everything. The other words are redundant. No proviso is needed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The court has no right to put its views against the words contained in an Act of Parliament, though this is very often done. It is what is called judge-made law.

Mr. Davies: You cannot stop that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: And because we cannot stop it, it is our desire to make perfectly clear the intention of Parliament.

Mr. McCALLUM: If the words in line 4 of the clause "insurance business including" are struck out, the position will be met.

The MINISTER for WORKS: If that meets with the wishes of the House, I shall offer no objection.

The CHAIRMAN: I have said I cannot accept any amendment of paragraph (a).

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) be struck out.

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

Clause as amended put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	36
Noes	..	..	..	..	6

Majority for	..	30
--------------	----	----

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Boyland	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munle
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Collier	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Sampson
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Davies	Mr. Simons
Mr. Denton	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Durack	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Heron	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Troy
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Walker
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. Willcock
Mr. H. K. Maley	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Mann	Mr. Mullany

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Latham
Mr. Carter	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Plesse

(Teller.)

Clause, as amended, thus passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

New clause—Apprentices:

Mr. McCALLUM: I move—

That the following new clause be added:—“The provisions relating to apprentices contained in any award in force for the time being, whether made before or after the commencement of this Act, shall apply to agreements of apprentice-

ship (notwithstanding anything therein contained to the contrary) made before or after the date of such award.”

A deputation from the Trades Hall recently waited upon the Premier and asked that he should bring down an amendment to the principal Act. He promised to do this. I thought it, however, just as well to move this new clause and have it put into the Bill. This is rendered necessary owing to the decision of the court that the wages of apprentices could not be altered during apprenticeship. If this is passed it will enable the court to alter the rate of wages, rise or fall, in proportion to the wages existing in any particular industry. The late Mr. Dagglish, in the Arbitration Court, held that the court had power to vary the wages of apprentices during the term of an agreement, but the Full Court held that this could not be done.

Mr. CORBOY: The position created under the decision of the court is so ridiculous that some first year apprentices to-day are working under a higher scale of wages according to the new agreement than are third-year apprentices under an old agreement.

The PREMIER: I do not think that I promised the deputation from the Trades Hall to bring down an amendment, but I think I suggested that the Solicitor General should be consulted in the matter. There is very little doubt that when wages are increased the increase is passed on to the public. I do not know what happened when the Solicitor General was consulted, as I have not seen him since. It is rather a serious thing to set aside an agreement. I do not know why employers have not fixed this matter up before. I rather think most of them have made an adjustment.

Mr. McCallum: Yes.

The PREMIER: There are very few still adhering to the agreement rates. It is no good having apprentices working under the conditions that do obtain. Very few apprentices are now getting less than the award rates. I do not recollect any definite promise to make an adjustment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot conceive any reason why an employer should refuse to allow his apprentices to share in the general advancement of the rest of his men. So far as I am aware, all the apprentices employed under me from time to time have been accorded the same treatment as the adult employees. If the extra cost of living justified an extra wage for adult workers, the same position should affect the apprentices. For my part, I never asked for higher pay but always for higher duties. The question of wage did not worry me. The knowledge I gained in being given higher duties to carry out proved helpful to me later in life. I shall support the amendment because it is an act of justice.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister for Works has expressed the sentiments which I had intended to dwell upon and, in the circumstances, I support the amendment.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

Recommittal.

On motion by Mr. McCallum, Bill recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering Clause 2, paragraph (a).

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

That in lines 4 and 5 of paragraph (a) the words "insurance business, included" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: I would like the member for South Fremantle to tell the Committee what is really meant by the reference to employees of clubs. I understood that they were already provided for and that they were covered by an award.

Mr. McCALLUM: There is no award covering them and there is just a doubt as to whether they are included under the existing Act.

The Premier: But there is no doubt about that.

Mr. Corboy: The court will not admit that.

Mr. McCALLUM: The same position arose in Sydney recently and the Government had to pass an amending Bill to get over the difficulty. Here, a case is pending in the Arbitration Court and in the answer to the claim the employers raise the challenge that the court has no jurisdiction. Instead of making two bites at the cherry, I have included club employees in the Bill.

The PREMIER: I agree that club employees should be included but I am not willing to agree to the clause, because of the inclusion of insurance canvassers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Another man against arbitration!

The PREMIER: No, I am not against arbitration but I do not believe that canvassers should be included. There is no supervision over canvassers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What has that got to do with it? They are practically on piece work.

Mr. BOYLAND: I intend to vote against the clause. I have been an insurance agent and know the whole business. The clause will be bad for efficiency in that occupation. I have known men who, because they are not energetic, have made a small salary, but I have known others who have made up to £14 or £15. I have interviewed some men connected with the insurance business and they agree that the amendment will be harmful to them, if it is agreed to.

Member: That is the boss's tale.

Mr. BOYLAND: It is not a matter of the boss or his tale at all. I worked for five days a week and got a salary of over £300 a year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You were very foolish to give it up.

Mr. BOYLAND: Yes. I became a union secretary when I gave it up and worked seven days a week for all hours and then got kicked for it.

Mr. Lutey: Always hardly done by!

Mr. BOYLAND: The effect may be that the insurance companies will take away portion of the business from the canvassers. If they were wages men employed in an industry, they should be permitted to go to the court, but we shall be doing an injustice if we bring them under the Act.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Bill again reported with a further amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th December.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [11.33]: This is one of the annual Bills and I know that at present it is useless to oppose the second reading. During the year a fair number of additional settlers have been placed under the jurisdiction of the board, namely a number of returned soldiers, and they will want some assistance. If it were possible to amend the Act, I would limit its application to returned soldiers. Other settlers have had good seasons, good prices and sufficient time to enable them to get clear of the board. The Industries Assistance Act was originally brought forward to meet an emergency. It was purely and simply an emergency measure and it gave to Ministers certain powers which would never have been conferred under normal conditions. The sooner Parliament withdraws the powers which were entrusted the Executive, but which have now been handed over to one or two people who have control of State funds, Parliament thus being deprived of control, the better it will be for the State. I would not mind so much if the board were honest in the report which they recently submitted to the House. I would like members to read the report and to note particularly the paragraph under the heading of "Insurance." It states:—

The arrangements with the Fire and Accident Underwriters' Association were in the main features the same as the previous year.

This is the first intimation I have had that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. constitute the Fire and Accident Underwriters' Association.

Hon. P. Collier: The report smothers them up.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I was always under the impression that the Underwriters' Association consisted of representatives of most of the fire insurance companies carrying on business in Western Australia.

Mr. Teesdale: Doesn't it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The report of the Industries Assistance Board states that the arrangements with the Underwriters' Association were in the main features the same as the previous year. The report of the Westralian Farmers Ltd. published recently stated—

Last season the policy issued by us to the Industries Assistance Board for the insurance of those settlers who nominated the Westralian Farmers Ltd. to transact their business amounted to £694,982.

It appears to me that the Industries Assistance Board have endeavoured to cover up their transactions. I am not blaming the Westralian Farmers Ltd. for availing themselves of the opportunity of placing the whole of this insurance through their office. If the board hand all the insurance over to one firm, instead of to the secretary of the Fire Underwriters' Association through whom most of the Government business is done—by so doing the Government get the business done at low rates—they should be honest enough to tell us that they have placed it through the Westralian Farmers Ltd. The board have no right to endeavour to mislead us through their annual report presented to Parliament.

Mr. Piesse: The premium is the same.

Hon. P. Collier: But why the untruth?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When the Government have an office in the main thoroughfare of the city and nearer to the office of the Underwriters' Association than is the office of the Westralian Farmers Ltd., why the necessity to send down to Wellington-street for another firm to come to the Terrace to fix up this business?

The Premier: Where does that appear?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I was quoting the report of the Westralian Farmers Ltd. as published in the "West Australian."

Mr. SPEAKER: I thought the hon. member was discussing the board's report.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: So I am.

The Premier: The report is true.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But the report of the Westralian Farmers Ltd. says that they have transacted business to the value of £694,982 with the Industries Assistance Board.

Mr. Latham: Clients select them to do their business.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the hon. member reads the report, he will find that that amount is equal to the advances for the year.

The Premier: That is for the whole of the years they have been going.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, for last year.

Mr. Latham: Clients select the Westralian Farmers Ltd. and the insurance is transacted through them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not dealing with that. I object to the board reporting to Parliament that they have placed their insurances through the Fire Underwriters' Association when they have done it through the Westralian Farmers Ltd.

Mr. Teesdale: I, too, object. That is not clean.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have no objection to the Westralian Farmers Ltd. getting the business. If they can get it, good luck to them, but why do not the board say so in their report?

Mr. Latham: There are clients who do not select any insurance company.

Hon. P. Collier: The board did this business with the Westralian Farmers Ltd.

Mr. Piesse: What is the motive?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not in a position to say what the motive is, but the report of the Westralian Farmers Ltd. mentions the business they have transacted for the board, and the board tell Parliament an entirely different thing.

Mr. Pickering: What is the amount of the business transacted?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Last year it was £694,982. That is nearly as much as was advanced during the year for the purpose of assisting to put in crops.

Mr. Johnston: That is the total business done by the board.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Members do not seem to appreciate the statement in the report of the Westralian Farmers Ltd. that last season the policy issued by them to the board for insurance of settlers who nominated the Westralian Farmers Ltd. to transact their business amounted to £694,982, which exceeded the record policy of £565,291 issued by the department in the previous year.

Mr. Pickering: The settlers nominated the Westralian Farmers Ltd.

Hon. P. Collier: The Westralian Farmers Ltd. and not the Underwriters' Association must have done the business.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In face of that statement in the report of the Westralian Farmers Ltd., the Industries Assistance Board report that the arrangements with the Underwriters' Association were in the main features the same as the previous year. The total amount paid in premiums was £26,365.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is the association. The Westralian Farmers play only a very minor part in the association.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not such a dunderhead but that I know the Westralian Farmers could not carry the insurance of £694,000. I know very well that the Westralian Farmers split that insurance amongst the Underwriters' Association, in which they hold membership. But this was not done by the board; it was done by the Westralian Farmers. Why should the board say they were fixing up the business through another office, when they were not doing anything of the kind? It is utterly wrong of the board to report in such a misleading fashion. With regard to abandoned properties, the board report—

The number of properties on the hands of the board as on the 30th June, 1921, was 144, carrying an indebtedness of £96,721. During the year we were able to

dispose of 102 properties at an approximate loss of £47,483.

These figures show clearly that the time has arrived when we should endeavour to close up the operations of the board, outside the returned soldiers. A larger amount of money has been advanced during the year for the purchase of agricultural machinery.

The Minister for Agriculture: That was for the soldiers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There would have been no occasion for a loss in one of our State trading concerns if that machinery had been bought there. I am surprised at the Premier, who is the Ministerial head of this board, and who is so anxious to advance Western Australia, who strongly objects to sending money to the Eastern States for anything that can be obtained here. I am surprised that the hon. gentleman should permit thousands upon thousands of pounds to be sent away every year to purchase machinery in Victoria. Why do we send to the Eastern States for goods at all? Why should we not build up industries here in the same way as industries have been built up in the Eastern States? On returning from a Premiers' Conference the hon. gentleman said that he had been astonished to see the development of farming in Victoria, and to see the large industries being built up in that State. Those things should be an incentive to him to have industries started here. He is finding thousands of pounds to be sent to the Eastern States through the Industries Assistance Board, but the better course would be to use that money in encouraging industry and thus keeping population here. The only place in this State where drills are made is the State Implement Works. The total number sold by the State Implement Works during the year was 99, and there was only one concerning which complaint was made, some small complaint. Nevertheless, 50 drills must have been imported from the Eastern States, and the Government had to find the money to pay for them. The best drill in Western Australia to-day is the State Implement Works' drill.

Mr. Latham: You have never worked with one.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is about time the Premier took action to see that the State increases the number of its industries.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think I can allow the whole question of the Industries Assistance Board to be discussed on the second reading of this Bill.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But this is our only chance.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow that in connection with the Bill. The hon. member can discuss the Industries Assistance Board's report.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am dealing with the report. I do not intend to take up more time than I can help, as the hour is

very late. I trust the Government will realise that we have in this State a very large number of youths who want to learn trades as apprentices, and that it is our duty to provide employment for them as far as possible. I say honestly that it makes me feel almost bad when I see so many young lads without the possibility of getting employment in a trade. We have boys walking about day after day looking for work, being unable to go into the country. It is all very well to say that we should establish bacon and butter factories. They are useless unless we have other industries. The only money granted through the Industries Assistance Board should be money to be spent on goods made in Western Australia.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [11.56]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am very glad the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has drawn attention to the fact that so much money is being provided by the Government for expenditure outside our State. On this Bill it will be permissible for me, I think, to make reference to production.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is merely a continuation Bill. The hon. member can argue whether the system shall be continued or not, but he cannot discuss all the ramifications of the subject.

Mr. LAMBERT: I say the system should not be continued, because it is circumscribed in its operation, and does not fulfil that function which it was intended to fulfil. In Part III. of the principal Act will be found a heading "Assistance to mining and other industries."

Mr. SPEAKER: What is before the House is not the Act, but a Bill for the continuation of the Act. The hon. member cannot now discuss the Act.

Mr. LAMBERT: I will endeavour to show that the present Government have not carried out the intentions of the Legislature as expressed in the parent Act. They have confined the benefits of the Act to one industry. As rightly pointed out by the member for North-East Fremantle, the Act is not performing the functions it should perform. If the Government have to find money for machinery for the farmers, then, other things being equal, that machinery should be bought from the State Implement Works. I have not the slightest doubt that many of the implements which are manufactured by the State Implement Works are entirely satisfactory to the farmer. The fact that the State Implement Works last year sold £90,000 worth of their products is sufficient evidence that our State-manufactured machinery meets with the approval of the great bulk of the farming community of Western Australia.

12 o'clock midnight.

The Minister for Agriculture: Are you, as a consumer, patriotic enough to buy local butter and other commodities?

Mr. LAMBERT: I always give preference to local articles, clothes, boots, and everything else. If only somebody would tan the hon. member's hide and turn it into boots, I would wear that. The Act should not be continued, unless its proper functions are put into active operation. It should be made apply to all industries in all parts of the State. Last year we imported £1,648,000 worth of iron goods from the Eastern States. The Industries Assistance Board, when they spend money, give preference to imported goods every time.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must confine the hon. member to the Bill.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am speaking against the continuation of this Act.

Mr. SPEAKER: But what is your argument? Did the Industries Assistance Board purchase all that imported stuff?

Mr. LAMBERT: I say the Act should not be continued, because it has done nothing to stop the importation of Eastern goods. The Government have flouted the intention of Part III. of the principal Act. The Industries Assistance Board are opposed to the State Implement Works. Last year the Implement Works sold only one harvester to I.A.B. clients, while one private firm sold 50 harvesters to I.A.B. settlers.

Mr. Latham: The machines from the implement works were not big enough last year. They were only 6ft. machines.

Mr. LAMBERT: If the machine is not efficient the Government, through the I.A.B., ought to help make it efficient. We have advanced £1,300,000 to I.A.B. farmers.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss the parent Act in all its provisions.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am opposed to the continuation of the Act, because the Government, in applying monetary assistance to one industry alone, have flouted the expressed intention of the Legislature. I claim that I have a right to show—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can only claim it. I cannot allow him to categorically prescribe which industries should be fostered under this Act. He can only oppose the continuation of the Act and give reasons.

Mr. LAMBERT: Last year we imported from the Eastern States goods which could be manufactured here if only the industries had been fostered under Part III. of the parent Act.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Bill does not deal with that. Its sole purpose is the continuation of the Act. The hon. member wants to establish industries.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is the object of the Act.

Mr. SPEAKER: But not of the Bill.

Mr. LAMBERT: I desire to focus attention on the fact that the Government have not carried out the intentions of the Act.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has selected an indifferent opportunity to argue on those lines. The Bill will not permit of a wide discussion.

Mr. LAMBERT: I assume I have the right to discuss the question of assistance to agriculture.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, or anything in the report of the board.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am not concerned with the report of the board. I feel that we should not authorise the continuation of the Act, and I am going to show reasons why the Act should not be continued unless the Government realise their responsibilities under the Act. If the Government can see but one industry, they are shutting their eyes to the intention of Parliament when it passed the Act. There are other industries which should be assisted. Public attention should be focussed upon the way in which the Act has been administered. The Government should be prepared to assist other industries, as well as that of agriculture.

The Premier: I agree, so that is all right.

Mr. LAMBERT: I agree that the hon. member has done good work under the Act, but I should like to see its activities extended. There are other industries in the State. I should like the Premier to consider the advisability of appointing under the Act a separate body with special knowledge that would permit of their establishing other industries.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Council of Industrial Development is looking to that.

Mr. LAMBERT: Of what use is the overlapping by the Council of Industrial Development? We have the Federal Bureau of Science, which is capable of doing everything that is required. I believe that by a careful policy the Government can apply the intention of the Legislature in the direction of supporting other industries. We have hundreds of boys who are not being given the opportunity to learn useful trades. We are developing an army of unskilled labour, and with the competition which exists, small struggling industries have not a chance of establishing themselves in this State. I hope the Premier will apply this legislation in a practical way in other directions. We do not want a body like the Council of Industrial Development to have anything to do with it.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [12.20]: I am glad the Government have decided that the Industries Assistance Board shall continue its operations.

Hon. P. Collier: It will be a sad day for a lot of you chaps politically when it is gone.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It will be good for the Leader of the Opposition, if he should become Premier of the State, to remember the splendid work done by the settlers towards putting the finances of Western Australia on a sound basis.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the hon. member address himself to the Bill.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The board was established after the drought of 1914, and for some years the settlers leaned against the Government. In the wheat belt these people have been properly carried through to prosperity, and the report of the board shows the tremendous extent to which the settlers are to-day assisting the finances of the State. I would like to refer to the latest report of the Industries Assistance Board, that dealing with the operations for the year ended 30th June last and to quote these figures—

Return of Government Indebtedness paid by Industries Assistance Board on behalf of sundry Assisted Settlers to 30th June, 1921.

Head of Government Indebtedness.	1914-15.		1915-16.		1916-17.		1917-18.		1918-19.		1919-20.		1920-21.		Total.	
	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.
Land Rents	80,374	3	58,206	11	26,887	8	15,610	13	30,263	12	40,906	10	354,765	7
Agricultural Bank Interest—
(a.) Ordinary Accounts
(b.) Sundry Settlers Account	40,576	14	82,514	13	62,864	10	25,843	11	54,483	9	73,330	0	373,178	12
Water Rates	3,650	13	5,584	4	4,048	8	1,734	4	6,721	13	18,988	7	18,988	7
Land Tax (State)	1,207	10	1,092	4	...	...	1,538	15	...	...	7,741	4	37,427	1
Income Taxes (State)	7,741	4	37,427	1
Federal Income Taxes	7,741	4	37,427	1
Road Board Rates	7,741	4	37,427	1
Other Government Departments	7,741	4	37,427	1
(Pre-War Debt)—	7,741	4	37,427	1
(a.) Seed Wheat Board	7,741	4	37,427	1
(b.) Civil Service Settlers	7,741	4	37,427	1
(c.) Timmin Settlement	7,741	4	37,427	1
(d.) State Implement Works	7,741	4	37,427	1
Total	122,038	8	134,878	2	218,242	14	17,531	5	49,202	14	97,913	12	100,036	3	880,823	12

* Indebtedness under this heading from 1917-18 season to date has been paid by Settlers from their Spare Parts Allowance, but the Board has reverted to its previous policy from 1st July, 1920, by making advances for this purpose from Head Office.

If the board had not been established, and had not carried these settlers through to success, the Government of Western Australia could not have collected this large amount of revenue. Whilst, in the first place, the board assisted the settlers, to-day these same settlers are rallying up and paying back what they owe and thus assisting to build up the finances of the State.

Hon. P. Collier: In payment of their debts! Mr. McCallum: It is very seldom they do pay what they owe.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order in speaking out of his seat.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Had it not been for the operations of this board, that large amount of revenue, £880,000 odd, would not have been paid within seven years by those settlers, who had suffered so severely from the drought and whose finances were in such a bad condition. It is a very satisfactory achievement, and the Government should be pleased indeed that through the establishment of this board, the finances of the State have benefited by the collection of this huge amount, which was advanced to the settlers to enable them to carry on. Although the board in the first place helped the settlers, they in turn are now assisting the State in a manner which does them every credit.

Mr. Lambert: They cost the country half a million last year.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I trust the assistance that has already been given to the agricultural industry will be extended by the establishment of woollen mills in Western Australia during the next year or so.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not go too far on those lines.

Mr. JOHNSTON: We are considering a measure for the continuation of this Act. I have already suggested to the Government that they should invite Mr. Stirling Taylor to this State to lecture upon the establishment of co-operative woollen mills.

Mr. Lambert: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member's remarks are not relevant to the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am watching the hon. member.

Mr. Lambert: You may be watching him, but are you listening to him?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I could have concluded my remarks while the member for Coolgardie has been wasting the time of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in accusing another hon. member of wasting time.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I shall not continue to express my views upon that point. If the Industries Assistance Board is continued for another year I hope the trustees will be permitted to confer with Mr. Stirling Taylor, the director of science and industry for Australia, with regard to the establishment of woollen mills here, and to assisting them along the lines that the agricultural industry has been assisted. If we take up a Victorian newspaper we see that from one end of that

State to the other great assistance has been given towards the establishment of co-operative and other kinds of woollen mills.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is repeating himself.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Government should ask the trustees, who have held their positions for most of the year, to take up this matter with the gentleman I have mentioned, and arrange for these lectures in order that some satisfactory result in connection with the woollen industry may be achieved in the same way that is being achieved in Victoria.

Mr. SPEAKER: I shall have to stop the hon. member.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Very well, Sir. I feel that this action would help the agricultural industry and everyone of those settlers who have been placed upon their feet by the I.A.B. in that industry. It would be a good thing if the board could help with our secondary industries, especially as to woollen mills.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow the hon. member to proceed along those lines.

Hon. P. Collier: We shall have the woollen mills yet.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have allowed the hon. member a lot of latitude.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not wish to do anything against your wishes.

Hon. P. Collier: But we ought to have the woollen mills.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Certainly! There is a large sum of money outstanding at present, but against that we have the fact that the board has been instrumental in placing a large number of settlers on the path of prosperity.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [12.28]: I welcome this Bill. The State cannot afford to see this Act lapse. A great deal of money is invested in the agricultural areas, and this legislation provides the only means by which we can get it back. In 1920 the board collected over 1½ million of money from the farmers from the wheat supplied through the pool. Last year the amount collected was nearly a million. We would not have been able to hold that money but for the fact of being able to force payments through the board.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You have to thank the Labour Party for that.

Mr. LATHAM: I commend the Labour Party for their action. It is unfair to state that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. did the whole of the insurance work, or that there was any influence brought to bear to enable that to be done. Nothing of the sort occurred. I am one of the I.A.B. settlers, and appreciate the work of this board. Forms are sent out to the various farmers, who can nominate any insurance company they like, but most of them have nominated the Westralian Farmers Ltd. of their own volition. No doubt the Industries Assistance Board get 50 per cent. of the commission paid for the work. No influence whatever is brought

to bear. I myself know numbers of farmers who nominated the North Queensland and other companies. As for the State Implementation Works, they are the only firm who have an agent travelling around with the Industries Assistance Board inspector. That fact speaks for itself. The State tries to sell what it can to the farmers. I believe that another object of the arrangement is to save to the State Implementation Works the cost of sending round a traveller in a car of their own.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [12.32]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It was out of consideration for the Premier, who looks very sleepy, that I moved the adjournment of the debate. This very important subject should not be dealt with in the small hours of the morning. The existence of the Industries Assistance Board has had a powerful effect on the finances of the country, particularly in respect of businesses that have advanced money to the farmers and cannot get it back. The matter is one I have mentioned year after year; it is a hardy annual. I regret that in introducing the present Bill the Premier did not indicate how long the legislation is intended to last. The original Act was passed when the country was stricken with drought. It was introduced in those special circumstances, and it gave to Ministers extremely wide powers, such as should never be given in ordinary circumstances. The Act allowed monetary assistance to be given by Ministers even to electors in their own districts. The Premier has given no indication as to how much longer he expects the Act will continue. Year after year we have had the forecast that in two years at the outside the board will be wound up. A great deal has been heard in this Chamber about the duplication of offices. It seems to me that if the scope of the Agricultural Bank were widened a little, that institution could undertake all the functions of the Industries Assistance Board. At present there are two sets of offices, and different staffs of clerks, doing practically the same class of work, but doing it through two sets of books, one set belonging to the Agricultural Bank and the other to the Industries Assistance Board. Every member, when stuck for something to talk about, discourses on the duplication of departments. I guarantee that a man with financial experience could be found in the Government offices who would readily draft amendments of the constitution of the Agricultural Bank so that that institution could undertake all the operations of the Industries Assistance Board with the one set of officers, and do it in a more business-like manner than has obtained hitherto. The original Act having been introduced under the special circumstances of drought, it is a poor advertisement for this State that we have to

continue for such a long period the existence of such a measure. When shall we revert to normal circumstances? When will conditions permit of our doing away with this special assistance? Now, the provisions of the Act have been used for the purpose of extending preferential treatment to certain firms which had huge credits outstanding among the farmers of this State. The farmers' liabilities to those firms have been taken over by the State on the basis of 10s. in the pound. But other firms cannot get this consideration. What is good enough for the International Harvester Company and Geo. Wills & Co. should be extended to, for instance, the small storekeeper. I have said many times that the farming industry of this State has been brought to the point it has reached, not by Government assistance alone, but by the millions of money advanced by storekeepers to men pioneering on the land. The storekeepers are getting no interest on the money, and in fact are losing their asset. If the arrangement I have referred to could be made for the benefit of one or two firms, why cannot it be made for the farmers' creditors generally? It is only a matter of about £300,000 now.

Mr. Teesdale: Have not those creditors had part of their accounts?

Mr. WILLCOCK: They have had nothing; and what I object to strongly is that the farmers are increasing their assets during all this time that they are owing money to the storekeepers. A farmer may be increasing an original asset of £200 to somewhere in the neighbourhood of £2,000 or £3,000, while he is paying nothing to the storekeepers who have stuck to him, and but for whom he would not have been able to continue on the land. Would any other class of the community be allowed to build up an asset in the same way? If I had a house on the time-payment system, and were increasing my capital in that respect, by payments of £50 or £60 per annum over a period of six or seven years, making my original interest of £400 in the house up to about £700, then a creditor to whom I owed, say, £100 could levy on my asset in the shape of that house. But an entirely different procedure has been adopted in the case of the farmers, who have been allowed to build up assets of £3,000 or £4,000 while omitting to pay their creditors. It is a disgraceful thing, and the Government should remedy the position. If the Industries Assistance Act is to continue from year to year as a hardy annual, the storekeepers I refer to will never get their money. There seems to be no idea of the board ever being wound up. In the first place there was the drought, and in the second place there was rust, and then there were the abnormal conditions due to the war. But there is nothing abnormal at the present time, and so there is no reason why the Industries Assistance Board should be continued. It is up to the Government to give some indication of their policy in that regard. I know, of course, that the Indus-

tries Assistance Board represent a good thing for the Government from a financial aspect. Many of the farmers who are in credit with the board, who have been in credit for the past eight or nine months, are unable to get a settlement. I suppose their money is being used to finance the deficit. The Government are taking money belonging firstly to the farmers, and secondly, through the farmers, to the storekeepers and are using the money for the purpose of meeting the deficit. I can understand that in these circumstances the Government are not very anxious to get rid of the institution. But there is no reason why the directors of our own financial concerns should be cut out of this money year after year. The same position in regard to superphosphates again crops up.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Hear, hear! It is mentioned in the report.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I was charged with making an inaccurate statement last session, but it was perfectly correct. There should be no difficulty in letting the board secure the benefits regarding the superphosphate supplies and retaining the whole amount themselves. This pernicious system of giving the Westralian Farmers Ltd preferential treatment and allowing them to secure more money from the farmers out of superphosphate transactions should be discontinued. The farmers do not secure any benefit but the Westralian Farmers Ltd make an agreement with the other firms who get superphosphates that they will not give their clients supplies except at the list price. Yet at the same time under the lap they give a rebate of a shilling. I do not agree with that policy, and I think that if any benefit is to accrue, the benefit should be derived through the operations of the I.A.B. It is very difficult to get at the policy of the Government, who say they are out to assist co-operation. The co-operation practised by the Westralian Farmers Ltd is co-operation between two or three people who are making the money, and not the shareholders. The amount of money lost to the Industries Assistance Board, in accepting 7s. where they could have got 9s., means a loss of about £1,800 on the average output last year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That would make up some of their losses.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is so. It does not matter, however, so long as the Westralian Farmers Ltd get the benefit; that is all that concerns that organisation.

Mr. Troy: They are the bosses.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Government have not given the clients of the board any rebate. They go further than that, however, because of the sanction given to the composition of 10s. in the £1 to Wills & Co. The farmers have been debited with the whole amount owed by them to the Industries Assistance Board but they only paid to Wills & Co. 10s. in the £. If a client owes £200 to Wills & Co., the I.A.B. continue to debit the £200, but they discharge the whole liability—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They take over the bad debts as well.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is why I want them to do the same thing for the storekeepers. There is no reason why they could not do that in the circumstances. It is time that the Government woke up to the significance of the position. I think we should be given some indication of the Government's intention to wind up the I.A.B. and to operate through the Agricultural Bank in the future. It may be necessary to advance money to farmers, but there is no necessity to run an institution such as the Industries Assistance Board any longer. The board could be absorbed in the Agricultural Bank and the whole of Mr. McLarty's activities could be centred under the bank. I have sufficient confidence in Mr. McLarty to know that he is capable of carrying out the work under one department, rather than continue the present duplication of departments. I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill as a protest against the action of the Government in making the composition I have referred to, in using money which rightly belongs to the storekeepers to assist in funding the deficit, and as an indication to the Government that they should make an announcement of policy regarding the winding up of the Industries Assistance Board.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [12.46]: I regret having to record my protest, as I have done on previous occasions, against the advances under the Industries Assistance Act not being extended to the South-West. In view of the large settlement about to take place in that part of the State, this phase should be taken into consideration. If we are to continue operations under the Industries Assistance Act, we should see that they are extended to every part of Western Australia. In any case the operations should certainly be extended to the South-West. I am at a loss to understand why this consideration has been withheld in the past.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There are not enough members from the South-West sitting on the cross benches, that is why.

Mr. Troy: The member for Sussex does not count.

Mr. PICKERING: There are members representing the South-West and I look to them to support me in my protest.

Mr. Troy: But they do not carry any weight.

Mr. PICKERING: But they should assist me in my protest against the treatment of the South-West.

Mr. Troy: Where are they now? They are not here.

Mr. PICKERING: I notice that under the discharged soldiers' settlement scheme 783 have received assistance. I should like to know whether any of those discharged soldiers are located in the South-West. I have had applications from returned soldiers in my electorate asking for assistance under the Industries Assistance Act, and their requests have been refused. Why should not the returned soldiers in the South-West receive the

same privileges as those in other parts of the State? I notice that a certain percentage of settlers are leaving the Industries Assistance Board. I do not think it is the desire of the Government to prolong the operations of the I.A.B. in perpetuity, but I think certain phases of the board's work could be returned to the Agricultural Bank. If that were done, I think there would be some possibility of settlers in the South-West securing the assistance they require. I hope that in whatever the Premier does, he will see that the South-West will not be isolated. I regret having to make this protest against the non-recognition of my part of the State.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [12.50]: Although at this late hour it is of very little use prolonging the discussion, still the interests reflected in the Bill are so important that I venture to crave the indulgence of the House for a few minutes. I want to associate myself with the views expressed by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) in regard to those business people who have been standing out of their money for some years. I suppose it is because the Bill is an annual measure, and because most of the subjects that come up for discussion under it have been thrashed threadbare in previous years, that the Premier, in moving the second reading, gave us but very little information. The House ought to be told the number of business people who are still awaiting their money, and told also the amount that is owing to them.

The Premier: About £300,000.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I should like to know by how much the amount has been reduced during the year. It would be distinctly unfair to those who stood by the farmers in their bad days, those who played no insignificant part in the development of our agricultural areas by carrying the farmers, if members were to allow the occasion to pass without raising their voices in protest, and insisting that something should be done by way of giving relief to those people who have suffered for so long. I know of men who, after long and honourable careers in the commercial life of the country, have been ruined and forced into the bankruptcy court because of the immense outstandings which they have been unable to collect from the farmers. In nearly every instance in which a composition has been effected, it has been with firms who were, in a position to stand out of their money, who would not have to suffer to the same extent as would smaller men. Prior to the passing of the Act, the storekeepers who were carrying on operations in agricultural districts carried the farmers from year to year, gave them credit and stood by them, with the result that the farmers became heavily indebted to the storekeepers. Immediately the Industries Assistance Board was established, the storekeepers had no redress against the farmers.

That would not have been so bad had the farmers continued to deal with the storekeepers, because at least the storekeepers would have been assured of the payment of their current accounts. The Industries Assistance Board would have been responsible for them. But what happened? Straightway the co-operative companies, the pups of the Westralian Farmers Ltd., came into being, and the farmers under the Industries Assistance Board began to deal with those co-operative concerns, leaving the storekeeper to become bankrupt. It was a most scandalous thing. Yet, as the hon. member has said, it was under the "nine shillings per day" Government money that the co-operative companies got the business and the storekeeper had to get out. The member for Roebourne has seen a similar condition of affairs.

Mr. Teesdale: Yes, they came to me for years, but as soon as they got their money they cleared out.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The same thing happened under the Industries Assistance Board, and to-day there is still outstanding, owing to the storekeepers, a sum of £300,000. An effort should be made by the Government to afford relief to those people. In many instances the farmers, since becoming indebted to the storekeepers, have increased their assets by thousands of pounds; yet those to whom they are indebted cannot get their money. In no other trade or occupation would such a state of affairs be tolerated. There would be at least the right to recover. Those members who are particularly affected by the operation of the Act, members on the cross-benches, have recited for our information the wonderful figures involved, but I have not heard a word from them sympathetic with those men to whom the £300,000 is owing. The only point about which those members are concerned is as to whether the system cannot be further extended, what can be done to enlarge the scope of the Act in order to give a greater measure of assistance than is afforded under it to-day. They have not a word of consideration, of sympathy for the men to whom the £300,000 is owing.

Mr. Latham: A great deal of money has been repaid under the Act.

Hon. P. COLLIER: From the point of view of some members on the cross-benches, we have reached the stage when, if a farmer repays some of the money advanced to him by the State, he should be eulogised. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) read out a long list of figures, amounting to £880,823, which has actually been repaid by the farmer. No wonder the hon. member was amazed! He held it up for our admiration that those farmers who had had all this assistance had repaid £880,823. It astonished him.

Mr. Johnston: No fewer than 963 settlers have been cleared from the board.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that. The hon. member carried us right up to the repayment by the farmers of £880,823, but he did not make reference to the amount still owing. I will supply the omission, and if it be permissible, Mr. Speaker, I shall not mind if the figures are deleted from the "Hansard" report of my speech and incorporated in that of the hon. member's speech, in order that the figures he quoted might be completed. The hon. member is not in the habit of reading here a set of figures intended to hold up the farmers to the admiration of the House, and contenting himself with allowing them to be embalmed in the dead pages of "Hansard." The hon. member will see that they get the wider circulation. He will see that they are published in some of the journals which circulate in the Williams-Narrogin electorate. I do not blame him. My reason for desiring to have these figures reported in "Hansard," not in my speech, but in the hon. member's speech, is that they might get the circulation which the hon. member's remarks will get.

Mr. Johnston: I prefer to make my own speech.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know my remarks might appear rather lame and halting alongside the hon. member's. While the hon. member asked us to admire the farmers, he carefully refrained from giving the set of figures showing that the farmers still owe £698,566.

Mr. Johnston: On which they are paying interest.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but the hon. member should have suggested that they not only be relieved of interest, but that this amount be written off! Surely these farmers should be given a fresh start! I am surprised at the modesty of the hon. member. I listened with considerable satisfaction to the statements of members on the cross benches regarding the immense assistance this Act has been to the farming community. It was the much despised Labour Government, who allegedly had no time for the farmers at all who were responsible for the introduction and passing of this measure. I maintain that the Labour Government were responsible for all the good things enumerated by the hon. member which have followed the passing of the Act. The little infant sent forth in swaddling clothes in 1915 has apparently attained lusty manhood.

Mr. Johnston: I commend you for that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member is extremely modest about his commendation.

Mr. Johnston: There is no reservation about it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the hon. member does not give his commendation of us the same degree of publicity that he gives to other matters concerning the welfare of the farmers.

Mr. Johnston: That is not fair.

Mr. Mann: You will also take credit for agreeing to the arrangement whereby the storekeeper's money was withheld.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We made arrangements for them to be paid.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) should realise that the administration of this Act was not long in the hands of the Labour Government. The measure was introduced in 1915 and we left office in 1916. I am reminded by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) that we gave the orders to the storekeepers who would carry the farmers over.

Mr. Johnston: It was unreservedly a good Act all round.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I concur in all that has been said regarding the beneficial effect of the Act to the agriculturists of this State. I am not given to boasting, but I think I may state with some degree of modesty that it was an act of statesmanship.

Mr. Mann: It has saved hundreds of farmers.

Mr. Johnston: It saved Western Australia.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Undoubtedly it saved the State. Were I permitted to do so, I could indicate other directions in which the acts of the Government during those trying years supplementing this measure absolutely saved the farming community and, in doing so, saved the State.

Mr. Mann: For instance, putting the water into the dry areas.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. According to the report of the board, through the agency of this Act, 963 farmers have reached solvency. That is a fine record. There is another aspect which was mentioned by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) that the Act was passed as a temporary measure to meet an extraordinary set of conditions. Had it been intended as an ordinary measure to remain permanently on our statute-book, it would not have contained the provisions it did. It contained exceptional provisions to meet an emergency altogether extraordinary. It is time we reconsidered our attitude towards the Act. It is still necessary to continue a great deal of the support given by the board and will be necessary for many years, but I do not see why we cannot now incorporate in the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act the sections of this Act necessary to give the requisite assistance. Let us have one Act administered by one board. It is unnecessary to have two separate bodies, the Agricultural Bank to give assistance in one direction and the Industries Assistance Board to give assistance in another direction.

The Premier: They have been amalgamated.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, as regards management, control and administration, but the provisions of this Act should be overhauled. I hope this will be the last year of bringing down a continuance Bill.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [1.8]: I am not going to object to the continuance of the Act because the measure has been of material assistance to the agricultural industry, but I think the time has arrived when the Government will be compelled to operate more carefully under this Act than in

the past. It is a matter for congratulation that a great number of clients have gone off the board, but in view of the cost of commodities, great difficulty will be experienced in keeping them off the board. If the farmers now on the board have not been able to obtain a credit balance during the last few years of good seasons and high prices, I fear their position is pretty hopeless. The board, in their report, state that the position of a number of creditors is hopeless. If this is so, it is of no use the board hanging on to them any longer.

The Premier: Not a bit of it.

Mr. TROY: I know some instances of that character. The board is not acting in the best interests of the clients themselves in keeping them on its books. It would be better that the board should cut its loss and allow these people to follow other occupations in which they may have a better chance of success. I do not know if the measure is to be continued for ever and a day. If so, the time has come when the whole matter should be reorganised under the Agricultural Bank system. The bank might be made an institution of finance, credit and exchange, the same as any other bank, where the client would receive credit for the money he had in the bank from half-year to half-year. If a Bill to provide for this were brought forward it would receive the hearty approval of members. It would also be a big step in the direction of assisting the agricultural industry. The farmers have not much to complain of in their treatment at the hands of the board. Had it not been for that institution many farmers would be insolvent to-day. The Government, however, should not coddle men for too long a period. The Government stand for individualism and private enterprise. They may be out to cultivate individual energy, grit and determination, but they are not doing so under this measure. It is known to Ministers that many clients now on the board will remain there and will not make much effort to help themselves. They are not very energetic people.

Mr. Latham: There are not many of those people.

Mr. TROY: There are some. Of course there are others who are doing remarkably well. Many of them have big credit balances in the private banks, although they are still clients of the board. There must be something wrong with a system that permits that sort of thing to be done. They are drawing on the State when they already have a credit balance in other institutions, and when they are increasing their assets all the time. The agricultural industry can only be built up by grit, determination and individual effort. Although the board has assisted the industry in many directions, it has been detrimental to it in other cases. The board might well be abolished after it has served its purpose. The Government need not think there are going to be the same happy results in respect to repayments that there

have been in the last few years. The expense of carrying on the properties will be as great as it has been in former years, while the value of the production will be less. The board will not be able to congratulate themselves in the future concerning their operations as they have been able to do of late years. I hope the Premier will consult with his officers and see if the whole business cannot be amalgamated with the Agricultural Bank. The constitution of the bank should be amended to permit of its being turned into a bank of advance and exchange. By doing that we shall confer a great benefit upon the agricultural industry.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [1.15]: I have listened with considerable interest to the remarks of hon. members. Members of the board are greatly concerned because there are several outside creditors who have not yet been paid. It was not contemplated that they would have to wait so long. In many cases the debts were bad debts, or they would never have come within the scope of the board's operations. Some of the creditors have already received 10s. in the pound or more, others have had nothing, while some have been paid in full. A good deal of money has been laid out in the reduction of these outside debts, but I hope the whole thing will be cleared up very soon. The Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank are practically amalgamated already. Mr. McLarty and the members of the board have done the best they can to control the affairs of the institution. They have done well to have lost so little money. Prices have been fairly good, but the same cannot be said of the seasons. The men who come under the board were in a bad way at the time. Many of those who were on the books of the board in the first place now have substantial credit balances. I do not think it can be expected that we should pay every outside creditor, whether the account is a good or a bad one. Those clients who are regarded as unlikely to get on are gradually being weeded out, for there is no hope for success for them. In cases where there is hope, however, the client is given every opportunity of carrying on.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 1.22 a.m. (Friday).

Legislative Council,

Friday, 16th December, 1921.

	Page
Question: Education, Secondary, Goldfields and Country	2482
Bills: Health Act Amendment, 3A.	2482
Architects, Com., recom.	2482
Workers Homes Act Amendment, Com.	2487

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—EDUCATION, SECONDARY, GOLDFIELDS AND COUNTRY.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY asked the Minister for Education: Having regard to the answers given by the Minister to my question on the 30th November as to education facilities in the country, will he reply to the following: 1, If, as stated by the Minister, no regulation is in existence governing the number of students required before continuation classes are established in any centre, and if "experience makes it necessary for at least 60 students to be enrolled," does he realise the fact that in a small community like Cue it is impossible to comply with this condition? 2, Is it a fact that the four Cue boys referred to in my question (paragraph 4) of the 30th November were debarred from qualifying for a Narrogin school of agriculture scholarship because the grade was "too high" instead of "too low"? 3, Assuming that a scholar from any State school passes the qualifying examination for a Government scholarship for the Narrogin school of agriculture, or any other scholarship, why should he be debarred merely by reason of the grade of the school in which he has been educated being too high or too low?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes, but if a full range of subjects is not asked for it is possible to start with a lower enrolment. 2, Yes. 3, No scholar is debarred from competing for a scholarship because the grade of the school is too low. He is debarred from competing for the special scholarships at the Narrogin school of agriculture if the grade is too high, because it is not considered advisable to bring children from small rural schools into competition with children from large town schools.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—ARCHITECTS.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 14th December; Hon. J. Fwning in the Chair, the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.