

in-reply to His Excellency the Governor, and that I have received the following reply from His Excellency:—

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly: I thank you for your Address-in-reply to my Speech with which I opened Parliament, and for your expressions of loyalty to Our Most Gracious Sovereign. Signed, F. A. Newdegate, Governor.

House adjourned at 11.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 5th October, 1921.

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

PRIVILEGE—GRATUITY BONDS, DISPOSALS.

Special Report of Select Committee.

Mr. WILSON (Collie) [4.30]: On a matter of privilege, I wish to bring up a special report of the select committee appointed to inquire into transactions relating to war gratuity bonds.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. WILSON: The special report of the committee is as follows:—

We have the honour to report that, in obedience to a resolution of this House passed 21st September last, we commenced, as a select committee of the House, an investigation of the methods adopted by financial agents and others regarding profiteering in the buying of war gratuity bonds from returned soldiers of the A.I.F.,

and other matters contained in the said resolution. We summoned Mr. R. G. Friel, Commonwealth Sub-Treasurer, to give evidence at 11 o'clock this morning, and to produce certain papers and documents. Your committee had taken the precaution, as far back as Thursday last, 29th September, to wire the Prime Minister requesting him to give Mr. Friel the necessary permission to supply the committee with the required information, but regret to say no answer to that wire has been received. Mr. Friel attended this morning, and informed the committee that he had wired the Commonwealth Treasurer the day following the appointment of this committee, and inquired as to his position. He was instructed to take no action pending further advice. He had since sent further wires to which no replies had been received, and in view of his instructions he declined to give evidence, or produce any papers or documents. Your committee are of opinion that the evidence of Mr. Friel is essential to their work, and in accordance with Section 7 of the Parliamentary Privileges Act, 54 Victoria, No 4, report the matter to the House and recommend that action be taken in accordance with that section.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.32]: I move—

That Mr. R. G. Friel, Commonwealth Sub-Treasurer in Western Australia, be ordered to give the evidence and produce the documents required by the committee in the terms of the summons at such time and place as the committee may desire.

Question put and passed.

Mr. WILSON: I move—

That the Premier be requested to telegraph the foregoing resolution to the Prime Minister.

Question put and passed.

QUESTION—CATTLE IMPORTATIONS, EMBARGO.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is the embargo against the importation of cattle from South Australia still in force? 2, Is he aware that the cattle that are being imported come from a locality hundreds of miles from where pleuro was discovered? 3, Is it a fact that only eight train-loads of stock have come from South Australia, while eighteen train-loads went from Western Australia during the past twelve months? 4, Are the cattle now held at Kalgoorlie clean? 5, In the interests of consumers, does he intend to lift the embargo?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes, 2, No. 3, No. The correct figures are 20 inward and four outward. 4, All these cattle have now been slaughtered. 5, Yes, when it is considered safe to do so.

FEDERATION AND THE STATE.

Select Committee appointed.

On motion by Mr. Angelo resolved: That the Legislative Assembly be represented on the joint select committee by five members. Hon. W. C. Angwin, Hon. P. Collier, Mr. Money, Mr. Underwood, and the mover; with power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, to adjourn from place to place, and to report this day three weeks.

On further motion by Mr. Angelo, a message accordingly returned to the Legislative Council.

BILL—GOLD BUYERS.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [4.54]: May I make an explanation before the debate is continued, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Is it a personal explanation?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It is an explanation arising out of statements which I made last evening.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member may explain, but must not debate.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It will be remembered that last evening I made some reference to a doubt which might exist regarding the Royal Commission's recommendation. To-day I got in touch with the members of the Commission, and they have furnished me with a supplementary report, reading—

We have to advise you that the intention of the Commission when furnishing its report was that any action that might be necessary in the direction of amending either the Companies Act or the Mining Act should be taken with the object of removing the existing embargo on an applicant for forfeiture of any mining tenement held by a company in liquidation; in other words, that it should not be obligatory on such applicant for forfeiture to have to obtain the consent of a judge. (Signed), W. Lambden Owen, Chairman, Royal Commission on Tributing; S. W. Munsie, Edwd. J. Wellsted, Commissioners.

Another point in doubt was as to the period of tribute. On this I consulted the members of the Commission, and they have advised

me that their intention was that the period should be not less than 12 months. Upon consulting the Crown Solicitor I learned that there is a doubt as to whether proposed Section 26 in the Bill expresses that intention. The Crown Solicitor now advises that the proposed section should read as follows:—

26. No tribute agreement shall be made for a lesser period than six months, but by mutual consent such agreement may be entered into for a longer period; and every tribute agreement shall continue in force for the period stated therein, and thereafter until determined by six months' notice on either side, unless such agreement shall become liable to cancellation under Section 33.

MR. MUNSIE (Hannans) [4.56]: I support the second reading of the Bill, and am pleased that the Minister has made inquiries respecting the two points in dispute. As I said by way of interjection last night, there was no doubt in my mind, and I am satisfied there was no doubt in the mind of either of the other two Commissioners, as to the intentions of the Commission as a whole regarding either companies in liquidation or the proposed Section 26. Like the Minister, I am quite unable to understand the attitude of the lessees towards the amendment Act passed last session. Like him, too, I regret that the lessees should have refused point blank to give that measure a trial. I admit they contend that the Act has been on its trial inasmuch as they have refused to let tributes under it. To my mind, however, that is no argument, and such an attitude represents no trial of the Act. Let me emphasise that in this respect the mining companies, mine owners, leaseholders, are on the box seat, having regard to our existing law. Even if Parliament passes this present amending Bill, the lessees can, if they so desire—I do not say they will so desire—once more adopt exactly the same attitude, in which case this House would have been merely wasting its time in dealing with the Bill. From the evidence given before the Royal Commission, I realised more strongly than ever before the strength of the lessees' position. It was that realisation which actuated me in including in my addendum to the report a recommendation that our mining laws should be so amended as to give the Minister controlling those laws power to enforce the regulations made under them. The Bill now before the House represents an amendment of the Act passed last year. It does not propose many amendments, but deals almost entirely with Sections 26, 27, and 28 of that Act, those being the three sections to which objection was mainly taken. The Royal Commission's report recommends amendments in Sections 26 and 27, and the repeal of Section 28. With regard to Section 26, which deals with the term of tribute, I am pleased that the Minister proposes to make the position doubly sure as the result,

of his consultation with the Crown Solicitor. I trust that when the Bill goes into Committee the Minister will move an amendment which will place it absolutely beyond doubt that a lessee must let a tribute for a period of not less than six months, and that upon the expiry of that period of six months the lessee must give six months' notice of cancellation of the tribute, if he desires to cancel it. Thus a tribute once let would be for a period of not less than 12 months. With regard to proposed Section 26, I am bound to say that three words have crept in which, in my opinion, have no right to be there. I having signed the Royal Commission's report, this declaration on my part may seem self-contradictory. However, I was previously just as positive that those three words were not in the report, as now I am positive that they are in the proposed section. The words in question are "on either side." The proposed section, as just read by the Minister, makes the term of the tribute six months, with six months' notice of cancellation. The tributer will thus be compelled to give six months' notice if he desires to quit the tribute. That was never the intention of the Royal Commission.

Mr. Mullany: It would be absolutely impossible to enforce it.

Mr. MUNSIE: I admit that. I would draw the attention of hon. members, however, to Section 38 of the Act. Supposing the words I have referred to remain as they stand, and the measure is to be put in operation, Section 38 provides that any person contravening any provision of the Act for which no specific penalty is expressly provided, shall be guilty of an offence and, on conviction, shall be liable to a fine not exceeding £50. Section 28 in the Act as it stands now, was the principal provision to which the employers or leaseholders took exception. That gave them the right, a right which extended to either party to the tribute agreement, to apply to the warden for a variation of the agreement after it had been registered. The leaseholders pointed out that if the decision of the warden went against the company, and in favour of the tributer, the company would be compelled to carry on. If, however, the decision went against the tributer, the tributer could walk out and there was no power on earth to make him continue working the tribute. If the proposed new Section 26 remains as at present, a penalty ranging up to £50 can be inflicted.

Mr. Underwood: They probably would not pay it.

Mr. MUNSIE: I will move for the deletion of that provision when the Bill is in Committee. It was a mistake that such a provision should ever be inserted. The intention was that it should require a full six months notice to cancel a tribute agreement. Everyone realises that when a lease is let on tribute, there may be a dozen or fifty pairs of men who will go into the

mine to prospect in order to see if the ground is any good. It may take them two months to get a crushing out, and it very often happens that during that period the men do not earn more than £2 a week. Yet under the wording of the clause the tributers will be compelled to remain there for six months before they can get out of their tribute agreement. That is a ridiculous provision and I hope the Committee will agree to the deletion of the words concerned. Section 27 of the Act deals with the conditions under which a tribute can be let. The old Act provided for full wages for the tributer, no royalty to be charged until all the crushing charges, mining, hauling and realisation, had been deducted; the tributers then being charged up in accordance with the provisions of the tribute agreement. It enabled the tributer to get the full amount of the gold premium. During the discussions before the Royal Commission and during the evidence which was submitted, the testimony of the whole of the companies, lessees, and treatment plant owners went to show that, treating at the charges they were levying, if they had to forego the whole of the gold premium they would be working at a loss. I realised that if they had to forego the whole of the gold premium there was nothing in the Act to prevent them increasing their charges, and I realised further that they would probably have to increase them. Under the methods adopted, if they were treating ounce dirt, they charged 20 per cent. royalty under the tribute agreement, which meant that if one had a parcel of 100 tons, which would realise 100 ozs., £100 would be received on account of the gold premium. When that premium was due, and the company was about to pay it, the 20 per cent. royalty was deducted and the balance divided between the tributer and the treatment plant owner on the basis of fifty-fifty. Seeing that they were given a concession in the amending Act, I hope the House will include a clause giving the tributer at least 50 per cent. of the gold premium. Perhaps 50 per cent. is a little too much for the others to receive, but they should be satisfied with it, especially as they first deduct royalty on the grade of ore and then on the premium. As it stands at present, the proposed amended Section 27 only gives the tributer the right to a deduction of the crushing charges and realisation charges. The latter charges constitute a mere nothing. They will not amount to a penny per ounce on the Perseverance mine. In evidence it was admitted that the charges did not amount to a penny per ounce on that mine. There is another matter to which I referred in my addendum to the Commission's report, but which has not been included in the amending Bill, because it was only dealt with in my report. I refer to the extraction upon which payment is made. This is the crux of the tributing business in Western Aus-

tralia. During his second reading speech, the Minister said that the members of the Royal Commission had not realised sufficiently the interest of the third party to the tributing agreement, namely the State. Personally, I always kept that aspect in mind. The payment on extraction affects the State more than anything else in connection with the tributing business. For at least 15 years on the Golden Mile, when a tributer has taken his ore for treatment, the practice has been to pay on 90 per cent. extraction. It has only been during the last five months, and possibly less than that period, that there has been an alteration in that system. Within that period two companies took action which brought about an alteration in the system. One company decided that in treating dirt under 1 oz., they would pay on 85 per cent. extraction, and on all dirt over 1 oz., they would pay 90 per cent. extraction. A little while later the other company decided that they would only pay 85 per cent. extraction on 16 dwts. and under. That would not be so bad if the tributer had the right to take his ore where he liked, and where he could get more than the 85 per cent. extraction. I want to impress upon members the fact that one of the companies holds 600 acres under lease on the Golden Mile. Their holding is a sheep station, not a mining lease. I admit that they include tailings area as well. Some of the leases included in the company's block have not been worked by the company for over 11 years. On seven of the leases, no work has been done for over 15 years. On the majority of them no work has been done for at least 10 years. No work has been done on any of the leases during the last 2½ years. Not only has not a tap been done, but not a penny has been spent on them during that period, yet the company can still hold their 600 acres. Irrespective of where the tributer is working on any lease belonging to the company, they compel him to take his ore to their battery for treatment. I know of a glaring instance. A tributer was tributing on a lease adjoining the Oroya Links and using one of the abandoned shafts for the purpose of hauling his ore. The Oroya Links Company compelled him to bring his ore to their treatment plant or sink a shaft for himself. Although a tributer may be closer to the Kalgurli mill, or the Perseverance mill, the Oroya Links Company say that the tributer must bring the ore to their battery. At the same time, the company only pay 85 per cent. extraction on sulphide going under 16 dwts. The Minister has made a good deal out of the fact that he desires ore going from 12 to 14 dwts to be worked. It is not possible for a tributer to make a success with 14 dwts. dirt if he gets 85 per cent. extraction.

Mr. Mann: Has the Oroya Links Company paid any dividends?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes; within the last six months a dividend has been paid—the first for over 10 years. The company paid the dividend out of the efforts of the tributers who worked the mine. Seeing that they get all over 90 per cent. extraction, irrespective of the gold contents, there is no hardship so far as the companies or the treatment plants are concerned, inasmuch as they have the right—and I can assure the House that they exercise it—to sample the ore for themselves. If they are of opinion that it will not pay them to treat the ore, they will not accept the crushing. That has happened hundreds of times, because they say the treatment will not pay them. Hon. members will see that the company is safeguarded in that direction. Ore ranging from 10 to 11 and 12 dwts. will pay expenses. Ore going 10 dwts. will pay expenses, but will not leave the tributer very much. I know of a case on the Perseverance mine, where they pay on 90 per cent. extraction, in which they would not treat 10 dwts. ore although it came out of their own mine.

Mr. Mann: In such a case, will the company permit the ore to be taken elsewhere for treatment?

Mr. MUNSIE: No, the tributer must take the ore to the company's mill.

Mr. Mann: But if the company refuse to treat it, can the ore be taken elsewhere?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, it can be taken to an outside mill in those circumstances. Of course if it is oxidised ore, 5 dwts. dirt will pay. Some men have done very well on 7 dwts. ore. The principal hardship comes in where sulphide ore is being treated. I went to a considerable amount of trouble to get information regarding extractions, to find out what extractions the companies were getting: from sulphide ore. We tried to get it in evidence, but we failed. In consequence, I went to considerable trouble to get it elsewhere. I resorted to the returns supplied to the State by the mine owners themselves, and also referred to the "Mining Journal." I found that the latest returns of extractions I could get were those dealing with 1911. Any member who knows anything about mining, will admit that the methods of treatment have improved since 1911. At any rate, the methods have not gone back; they have certainly progressed. If a certain extraction was possible, and was obtained, in 1911, I am positive that under the present methods of treatment better extractions can be obtained. We find that in 1911, the Associated Gold Mines treated 105,238 tons of ore. I might mention that their treatment costs were 13s. 5d., and the total costs, mining and everything else, 23s. 7d. The actual value of the ore treated was 6.5 dwts. And on their own figures they got 92.57 per cent. extraction out of 6 dwts sulphide ore. Then we have the Oroya Links, which in the same year treated 100,016 tons of 5.6 dwts. ore and got 92.6 per cent. extraction. The Kalgurli Mine treated 127,010 tons of ore of an

average value of 10 dwts. and got 94.75 per cent. extraction. The Perseverance treated 243,109 tons of ore of a value of 6 dwts. and got 90.15 per cent. extraction. The average, therefore, of the four mines is slightly under 8 dwts. to the ton, while the average extraction is slightly over 92 per cent. In asking for a 90 per cent. extraction I realise that, probably, if they were treating a parcel of ore worth only 9 dwts. they might not get 90 per cent. extraction; but from a parcel of 10 oz. ore they will get considerably over a 90 per cent. extraction. They have been treating 4,000 tons per month in the Perseverance, and for 2½ years it has averaged better than an ounce per ton. Therefore it is ridiculous to say that they cannot get a 90 per cent. extraction. We asked that samples be put in as an exhibit of the assays of the residues from the Perseverance. They gave us the assays for seven months, from December, 1920, to the 30th June, 1921, and in no instance did the assays reach 2 dwts. It proves conclusively that they do get a 90 per cent. extraction on ounce ore. See what a difference it might mean if there be nothing in the Bill compelling the treatment plant owner, when he buys ore on the assay value, to pay on a 90 per cent. extraction! In my opinion this is what is going to happen: The Perseverance Company to-day is employing as many tributers as all the other mines in Western Australia put together. The company is paying on a 90 per cent. extraction, but the other company adjoining on the south is paying on an 85 per cent. extraction on one ounce, while the company adjoining on the north is paying on an 85 per cent. extraction on 16 dwts. What is the management going to do? It is going to knock off the crushing charges before taking the royalty, and drop the extraction on 16 dwts. ore to 85 per cent. I do not wish to see that happen. I have also figures as to the difference it makes on 85 per cent. and 95 per cent. extraction on their present treatment charges. Take one item, 15 dwts. sulphide ore: A man is treating say, 100 tons. Two of the mills pay on an 85 per cent. extraction, and the other on a 90 per cent. extraction. This is what the tributer would get, the 100 tons of ore being worth £412 10s., including the gold bonus. At the Lake View mine he would get £120 3s. 6d., the balance going to the company. If he took his ore to the Oroya Links he would get the same, namely £120 3s. 6d., whereas if he took it to the Perseverance he would get £152 12s. 2d.

Mr. Mann: Why the difference?

Mr. MUNSIE: The one is based on an 85 per cent. extraction, and the other on 90 per cent. extraction, and the difference in the crushing charges. It is only within the last four months that any company has dropped the percentage on which it pays. The Bill is principally a Committee one. I hope the Minister will seriously consider taking unto himself some power to enforce

the tributing conditions. If he does not do so I am afraid he will not get much good from the Bill, for the companies will let tributers only when it suits them. No tributer wishes any company genuinely working its property to let a tribute at all. All I am asking is that when a company has worked a lease to a standstill and is desirous of still holding the ground by means of tributing, it should be compelled to give the tributers a fair deal. The Bill does not even provide that. It is not fair to the tributer that the company should take royalty off the gold premium. I question very seriously the figures supplied by the different companies in regard to their actual cost of treatment. On their own evidence they convicted themselves of not telling the truth. We had before us the general manager of the smallest and least up to date of the plants on the goldfields. In answer to questions he said the full capacity of his mill was between 1,600 and 1,800 tons per month, that by forcing it he might get 1,800 tons through in a month. He told us that his total cost of treatment alone was 27s. 3d. per ton. He pleaded that we should not compel him to pay on a 90 per cent. extraction, declaring that he could not be expected to treat as cheaply as could the Perseverance, where there was a most up-to-date plant. Then the manager of the Perseverance submitted to the Commission a statement giving his actual cost of treatment of 4,000 tons per month at 29s. 2d. per ton. As I said before, I am not prepared to believe it. I asked what profit the Perseverance has made out of tribute. He submitted a statement, marked "Exhibit 14," showing that since the company went on tribute a clear profit of £132,544 10s. 2d. has been made. And this by a company which had £50,000 in a reserve fund and which worked the mine at a loss for a sufficient period to absorb most of that amount! Eventually the company went into liquidation and let the mine on tribute. The tributers have been successful in finding ore and producing it, and the company has made a profit of £132,544 since letting the mine on tribute. In the statement referred to, the management swore that they had been treating their own ore for six months of that time, that they had treated 16,000 tons per month of their own ore and 4,000 tons of tributers' ore per month for the first six months. They swore in evidence that the ore they were treating while running the stopes was of an average value of 5 dwts. Five fours are 20. At the outside the ore was worth only £1 3s. 7d. per ton, including the gold premium, and it cost 29s. 2d. to treat. And they swore they had made £10,000 profit out of it! As a matter of fact, they were treating ore which did not give them the value they say it cost them to treat the tributers' ore, and they swore that in doing that they had made a profit of £10,000. I hope the Minister will agree to include a provision prescribing that where the ore is sold on assay value to a treatment company the company shall be compelled to

pay on a 90 per cent. extraction, and refusing the right to increase the charges above what they are at present. Tributing is now more necessary than ever. It is unfortunate that it should be so, but as a matter of fact the mines on the Golden Mile are closing down one by one, ceasing operations as companies. I am convinced that if the Bill goes through, immediately the Kalgurli Company is prepared to let tributes there will be at least 200 men working in that mine, and I am positive they will all do pretty well. We had the sworn evidence of the manager that the mine was of no further use to any company. Not that the values have gone, but that he had worked out all the ore save little blocks. If they let tributes on that mine the result will be almost as good as it has been in the case of the Perseverance. The member for Claremont is shaking his head, but I know that since the Kalgurli Mine ceased operations there have been over 200 separate applications for tributes on that property.

Mr. J. Thomson interjected.

Mr. MUNSIE: That was said of the Perseverance mine; it was said that that mine had nothing more than 5 dwt. ore, and the tributers to-day are crushing 10 oz. ore. Seeing that tributing is greatly on the increase, we should take steps to ensure that, when a company is satisfied it can make no further use of its lease but desires to hold the ground by tributers, the tributers are given a fair deal. I support the second reading but I trust that in Committee I shall be able to get some amendments made.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 26:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The wording of the proposed new section is not sufficiently definite to provide that the tribute shall be for a period of six months, and shall continue thereafter until such time as six months' notice has been given by the lessee. I agree that the provision for notice "on either side" is a mistake. The Solicitor General has suggested an amendment to meet the case. I move an amendment—

That all the words after 'period' in line 3 of the proposed new section be struck out and the following inserted in lieu: "And every tribute agreement shall continue in force for the period stated therein and thereafter until determined by six months' notice by the lessee unless such agreement shall become liable to cancellation under Section 33."

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

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 27:

Mr. MUNSIE: I had no idea that the Minister intended to take the Bill through Committee to-day. It was my intention to consult the Crown Law authorities with a view to getting drafted amendments to fulfil the recommendation which I, as a member of the Royal Commission, made. I do not see why the Minister should wish to rush the Bill through.

The Minister for Mines: You know the difficulty that exists.

Mr. MUNSIE: Permission has been given for the tribute agreements to continue till the end of the year.

The Minister for Mines: Then postpone this clause. I have one or two new clauses which we can discuss.

Mr. MUNSIE: I move—

That further consideration of Clause 5 be postponed.

Motion passed; clause postponed.

Clauses 6 to 9—agreed to.

New clause—Application for forfeiture of mining tenement of company in process of winding up:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 10: "An application under Section 99 of the principal Act for the forfeiture for breach of labour conditions of a mining tenement held by a company in process of winding up, either voluntarily or by order of the Supreme Court, shall not be deemed an action or proceeding within the meaning of Section 114 of the Companies Act of 1893, and notwithstanding anything contained in that Act to the contrary, any such application may be made, heard, and disposed of without the leave of the Supreme Court, and the tenement shall be liable to forfeiture accordingly."

This will put a company in liquidation on all-fours with other companies. Under the existing law a liquidator might apply to the court for exemption, and the warden may recommend complete or partial exemption, but a difficulty arises if he does not comply with the decision of the warden by employing the necessary number of men. The amendment will put such liquidator in the same position as any other company holding a mining tenement—subject to the application by any person before the warden for forfeiture of the lease. At present the liquidator can ignore the proceedings to some extent by reason of the necessity for having first of all to get leave from a judge of the Supreme Court to apply to the warden for forfeiture, and while these steps are being taken the liquidator can comply with requirements, thus putting the applicant out of court. Under the amendment a liquidator could obtain exemption if it was justified, and if it was not justified the warden might recommend against exemption so that the company would have to stand to that decision just as other companies. This has been one of the bugbears

of the department for many years. I hope that the proposed new clause will overcome many of the difficulties, and that mining tenements will no longer be held up for years simply because the companies are in liquidation.

Mr. MULLANY: Seeing that the proposed new clause is of a highly technical nature, and in view of the necessity for consulting other Acts of Parliament, I suggest that further consideration of the proposed new clause be postponed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have no objection to reporting progress. I do not wish to insert anything in the measure which is not understood by members. Some members, however, the member for Murchison among them, are keenly anxious about this measure which is to some extent urgent as regards the Murchison district.

Mr. Marshall: There they have been hung up for 12 years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: To report progress now will mean delaying the measure until Tuesday next.

Mr. Pickering: It is only a fair request.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I thought that everyone was conversant with the difficulties against which we are contending. I might indicate another new clause which I propose to move. The intention is to add the words from the Coal Mining Act to Section 95 of the principal Act as follows: "Or for mining for such minerals other than gold, as may be prescribed." There are certain minerals, which might be termed industrial minerals, which it is not practicable to work continuously and I propose to give the mines, under the hand of the Minister, exemption from the full labour conditions, prescribing according to the market the number of men, if any, who shall be employed.

Mr. Pickering: That will apply to such minerals as lead?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The minerals will be prescribed, and will be subject to being worked at different periods according to the state of the market instead of being subject to forfeiture as at present, when any person jumping a lease would be unable to work it.

Mr. Underwood: It will be a dangerous provision.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think so. It has been operating as regards coal mining. However, I am merely outlining the proposed new clause so that members will be able to consider it.

Progress reported.

OBITUARY—MR. JOHN STOREY.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.45]: I desire to inform the House that a message has just been received announcing the death of Mr. John Storey, the Premier of New South Wales. We had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Storey in Perth only a few weeks ago when he was returning

from a trip to the Old Country. At that time we knew that Mr. Storey was in indifferent health, but it was not thought for a moment by those who had the privilege of meeting him that a serious turn would develop in so short a space of time. His death will prove a serious loss to Australian politics, and will be widely deplored. As a mark of respect I move—

That the sitting be suspended until 7.30 p.m.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.47]: I am sure we all deplore the great loss that Australia has sustained by the death of the Premier of New South Wales. It is rather a serious thing, from the point of view of those who are engaged in the public life of Australia, to find that so many who have taken a prominent part in the politics of the country in recent years have been taken away at an age which might be said to be comparatively premature. The late Mr. Storey was no more than 54 or 55 years of age, and when I met him last at the Governor General's recruiting conference in Melbourne, a gathering which lasted seven or eight days, he was then in the vigour of life. The strenuous work which is involved in the duty of attending to parliamentary matters has been such that many of our brightest and ablest men have suffered from the strain, and a number of them have been called away when it might have been considered that they had many years of useful service still before them. I agree with the Premier that the House might adjourn until after the dinner hour, and I also join with him in expressing our sincere regret at the loss which Australia has suffered by the death of Mr. Storey.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.50]: I desire to support the remarks which have been made by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. The death of Mr. Storey adds further proof to the call which public life makes upon the leading men of Australia. Our sympathy goes out to his widow in her bereavement and to the State of New South Wales in the loss it has sustained.

Question put and passed, members standing.

Sitting suspended from 5.51 to 7.30 p.m.

MOTION—WHEAT FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION.

Debate resumed from the 28th September on the following motion by Hon. P. Collier—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should immediately reduce the price of 9s. per bushel now being charged for wheat for local consumption.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.32]: Mr. Speaker, I beg to draw attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The probabilities are that members have had so much to do with wheat during the last night or two that they are tired of the subject. I do not propose to make a long speech on this occasion, or to go into the question why the price of wheat should remain as it is. I desire chiefly to draw the attention of members to the statement made in the House of Representatives by the Prime Minister on the 3rd November last, and to read to them some of the reasons why the price was fixed at 9s. per bushel. I shall then be content to leave the matter in the hands of the House. If I spoke for an hour I could not convey a greater justification for the price remaining as it is than that put forward by the Prime Minister, namely, that the honourable undertaking entered into on behalf of the Australian Wheat Board should be carried into effect until the end of the year.

Mr. Underwood: It was a mistaken judgment.

Mr. A. THOMSON: When the hon. member has heard the reasons which actuated the Commonwealth Government in agreeing to fix the price at 9s. per bushel for 1921, I believe he will oppose the motion to reduce the price. The motion, after all, merely amounts to a pious resolution. It will still remain with the Government as to whether they comply with it or not.

Mr. Willcock: They generally do.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the House did carry the motion and the Government put it into effect, it would, according to the Minister for Agriculture, mean the expenditure of a considerable sum of money, in that Western Australia would have to make up the dividends to the Australian Wheat Board.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am more inclined to believe the Minister for Agriculture on this matter than the member for North-East Fremantle. The hon. member is biassed in his opinion.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am not biassed.

Mr. A. THOMSON: He is not prepared to give this section of the community justice, or a fair deal.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I wish you were fair and equitable in other directions.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There has not been much fairness or equity meted out to the farmers' produce.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member is in order in accusing another hon. member of unfairness.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not suggest that any hon. member has been unfair. The statement of the Prime Minister, which appears in the Federal "Hansard" of the 3rd November, 1920, contains the following:—

The Commonwealth, therefore, being pledged to do nothing to prevent the grower getting the world's parity for wheat for local consumption, when a conference was called upon to consider the question

of fixing the price of wheat for local consumption, the Government decided to be represented thereat. The conference met on Friday last, and was attended by the Premier and the Ministers of Agriculture of all the States, including the non-wheat-export States—Queensland and Tasmania. It was a very representative conference, and the farmers' representatives were present from New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia. The matter was considered at considerable length and every aspect of the problem carefully reviewed The Commonwealth and the States—at any rate the wheat producing States—all agreed that the producer was entitled to the world's parity for local consumption. The Commonwealth had to consider the interests of the producers in the light of the pledge the Commonwealth had given them, and representatives of the States and the Commonwealth had to consider the interests of the consumer, for we were dealing with the staple commodity of the people and the conference was faced by this fact: It was essential to retain a sufficient quantity of wheat to supply the whole of Australia, not only for twelve months, but to meet a possible shortage or a failure in the next crop. The conference, in approaching the question, considered the position of the farmer, who, being denied the opportunity of selling at the present world's parity—

I want hon. members who are such keen supporters of world's parity to let that sentence of the Prime Minister's sink into their minds—

that wheat withdrawn from the exportable pool, was of opinion that he was entitled to some consideration on that account. The interests of Australia demand that we should retain a sufficient quantity of wheat to feed our own people; on the other hand, the farmers are entitled to the whole benefit of the world's price for their wheat. We were confronted by these two more or less conflicting interests, and we had to endeavour to harmonise them. We were dealing with a very large quantity of wheat compulsorily withdrawn from the pool. Much of this wheat would not be consumed for many months. What was a fair price for it? In endeavouring to decide this point we had to consider, first of all, what was the equivalent of the world's parity for the whole period of the year 1921? We know what it is to-day, but no man is able to say what it will be in a month, and certainly no man is able to say what it will be in twelve months. If we were going to fix the price of the farmer's wheat twelve months ahead, it might be argued that the price of wheat might fall, and, that being so, the farmer should be compelled to take that risk and bear the loss. No doubt that view is one which will appeal to many. On the other hand, the farmers' representatives put very

strongly the position from the standpoint of the farmer. It was urged that it was not fair to deny the farmers the opportunity to sell their wheat to-day when it could be sold at a high price, and then to tell them, "We will hold your wheat, prevent you getting it in the market of the world, and refrain from purchasing ourselves in the hope that the price will fall, and, when the market breaks, we will buy at the lower prices."

I hope hon. members will mark this statement of the Prime Minister, and the reasons which actuated the Commonwealth Government, after the conference had been held between the various wheat producing States, in agreeing to 9s. a bushel for 12 months.

In addition, a uniform price for the year, it was urged, would not only enable the farmer more easily to adjust his financial difficulties—and it is not to be forgotten that the farmers in some of the States have suffered from a very grievous drought—but would encourage him to go on growing wheat. This consideration very materially affected the Conference. It profoundly affected me. I believe there is no way by which the tendency of modern civilisation to flock to the towns can be so effectively checked as by making it profitable to go on the land. I have been listening for many years to appeals by honourable members, and have said a great deal myself about the great need for land settlement, but I certainly do not believe that mere words will do much good. We must make life on the land worth while. The farmer ought not to be expected to meet all the difficulties which country life involves without some corresponding advantages. He ought not to be expected to take the risk not merely of the vagaries of the market, because every manufacturer takes that risk, but of a total failure of output. The latter is a risk which the manufacturer does not take. A man may make, say, 10,000 pairs of boots, and the prices may fall.

The Prime Minister points out that if the market falls this man still has the commodity he has manufactured. He continues—

The boots, however, are in existence, and may be sold for something. But the farmer may work hard and have nothing at all to show for his labour. He may put in just as much work on land which, owing to drought or some other untoward circumstances, yields only three bushels to the acre, or nothing at all, as is involved in producing a crop of 30 bushels to the acre.

I do not propose to read the whole speech, for that would take too long. Mr. Hughes goes on to say—

The Wheat Board considered the question, and made a recommendation to the Conference, which the Conference, in its turn, unanimously adopted. The price the Wheat Board recommended was 9s. per bushel. It considered that 9s., although less than the

world's parity to-day, was a fair commutation of the expectancy of prices for the whole year. The Conference, in coming to the decision to accept the recommendation of the Wheat Board, had before it several facts. It knew what was the world's parity to-day, and, what was more, having sold forward, it was able to say what overseas buyers were paying for May, June, July, August, September, October, and December, 1921, delivery. It was unable, of course, to say what the then price would be.

Mr. Underwood: Events have proved that they did not know what the wheat would be sold for.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I think there is a misprint here, and that the year quoted should be 1920. I resume reading the Prime Minister's speech—

It was unable, of course, to say what the then price would be, but it was able to say that there were buyers who were prepared to purchase wheat to-day, to be delivered in December, 1921, and to pay substantially more than 9s. per bushel for it. In the circumstances, therefore, it felt that it was fully justified in agreeing to that price.

Mr. Gregory: Is the 9s. the net price?

Mr. Hughes: Nine shillings is the seaport basis. I am satisfied that the arrangement will be regarded as fair by all sections of the community.

I want hon. members to mark the following words, which fell from the lips of the Prime Minister of Australia—

We have to hold the scales fairly between the producer and the consumer, and must remember—here I admit I am speaking for myself—that even if we are giving to the farmer something which may be more than the world's parity in December, 1921, we have to consider what might be the effect of giving a price that would discourage the man on the land. That is a factor which influenced me very much. We cannot peer into the future and say what the price of wheat will be in August or October, 1921, but we can say that the figure agreed upon for local consumption is less than the price at which we are selling wheat for delivery abroad in December, 1921. Therefore, the world considers, as far as it is a buyer, that the price we have fixed is a fair one. It would be inadvisable to tell the House the price we are getting for wheat we are selling overseas—we are endeavouring to get the best we possibly can for it—but the position is that the consumers of Australia, who, during the war, got their bread cheaper than the people of any other country in the world, will still continue to do so.

I declare that to-day bread is cheaper in Western Australia than it is in any other part of the world, so far as my knowledge goes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The very highest price in England was 1s. 1d., or 1s. 2d. in some places.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But it cost Great Britain over 40 millions sterling to keep bread down to that price, while it has not cost the people of Australia one penny piece to keep the price of bread here down to the present figure. While the Australian Government have stood behind the wheat pool, have financed the pool, yet the Australian Government were basing the finances of Australia on the security of Australian wheat. I consider that the Australian farmer is entitled to a reasonable price, but not more.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Do you consider 9s. per bushel a reasonable price?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, under the conditions which have obtained. The Australian Wheat Board made a recommendation to the Commonwealth Government regarding the price to be fixed.

Hon. P. Collier: What has become of Mr. Hughes's speech? Is this now your speech, or Mr. Hughes's? It is somewhat difficult to distinguish what is yours from what is Mr. Hughes's.

Mr. A. THOMSON: A very good thing, showing that two men think alike.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member is quoting Mr. Hughes, and is interlarding his quotations with remarks of his own to such an extent that it is difficult to know which is the Prime Minister's speech and which the speech of the member for Katanning.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I return to the Prime Minister's speech—

... I maintain it is better to know where we are for 12 months, and readjust things on that basis, than to endeavour month after month to grope after a world's parity for wheat which might be subject to violent fluctuations, and over the whole year would certainly not put the consumer in a better position. On the other hand, it would disorganise our finances, and put the producer at a great disadvantage, at a time when he needs immediate financial help. The price of wheat to be retained for local consumption is fixed at 9s. on seaport basis, with fortnightly deliveries, and payment in advance by fortnightly settlements.

There is a great deal more of the Prime Minister's speech. Without casting any reflection whatever on members of this Chamber, I may say that the great majority of them do not realise the position. I believe that even the Leader of the Opposition, in proposing this motion, knows that if carried it can only be a pious resolution which will have no practical effect. Should an attempt be made to carry it into effect, the State will have to bear the loss. I ask the House to consider what would be the feelings of hon. members opposite if, a certain rate of wages having been made a common rule throughout Australia, this Parliament endeavoured to have that common rule of the Arbitration Court disallowed, and endeavoured to enact

that the workers of Western Australia must accept less pay than the workers in other parts of the Commonwealth. I could quite understand that the Leader of the Opposition would rise to oppose very heatedly the carrying of any such motion. I can imagine every member on the Opposition side rising to combat such an attempt to interfere with the Arbitration Court, which tribunal I adduce merely by way of illustration. If the motion is carried, and if the Government attempt to give effect to it, there will be the humiliating position of the farmers of Western Australia, who grow wheat which is admittedly superior to wheat grown in any other part of the Commonwealth or probably of the world, being asked to accept a lesser price than the Eastern States farmers. I trust the Leader of the Opposition will not press the motion, particularly in view of the Prime Minister's speech.

Mr. O'Loghlen: That will fetch him.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Probably Mr. Hughes's remarks will have more effect than mine.

Mr. O'Loghlen: No. I back your speech, anyhow.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I sincerely trust the House will not carry the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell Northam) [7.56]: I do not propose to say much on this motion. The question is, are we to reduce the price of wheat for local consumption from 9s.? It is unnecessary to discuss, in this connection, the quality of our wheat, or how much wheat we grow, or anything except whether the price of 9s. shall be continued. I must ask hon. members to realise and bear in mind that we have secured certain wheat for local consumption. Thirty million bushels of wheat were grown in Australia for export. We agreed to take a certain quantity, required by the people of this State, at 9s. per bushel. I want the House to realise that we secured certain wheat for local consumption. That wheat was secured at a time when the export value was a little over 10s. per bushel. Therefore, at the time, the deal was a good one. No one knew what would happen 12 months later with regard to the price of wheat.

Mr. Underwood: The deal was a good one for the grower.

The PREMIER: The deal was a good one for the consumer of this State. We considered that we were making a good purchase.

Mr. Underwood: A good purchase was made for the grower.

The PREMIER: It was done in all good faith. We believed we were doing what was best for the people of Australia.

Mr. Chesson: You bought that wheat when you saw the parity price falling.

The PREMIER: Of course, we were not honest; we gave more than we believed we ought to give.

Mr. Chesson: Of course you did.

The PREMIER: I believe the hon. member to be a perfectly honest man; I should

be very sorry indeed to suggest that the hon. member would be capable of doing the thing that he accuses me of having done. There is no need for that sort of thing. We behave quite honestly; we believed we were doing the right thing. We bought the wheat for the people of this State; secured it, kept it here; and it is here. Certainly, wheat has fallen in value since that purchase was made. However, I repeat, we bought at 9s. per bushel when wheat was selling for export at over 10s. per bushel. Our purchases for local consumption will average out at a price of about 8s. per bushel for the whole quantity acquired. In saying that I admit we made a shilling more than the average farmer will receive. It was necessary that we should secure the wheat and we did secure it. Let the member for Cue (Mr. Chesson) go back to 1919-20, and he will see that the consumer got his wheat at 7s. 8d. when it could be exported abroad at 10s. As the hon. member eats six bushels of wheat per year, someone gave him 14s. more than he should have received.

Member: He does not show it.

Mr. Chesson: We got our wheat at from 16s. to £1 per bushel in the Murchison.

The PREMIER: That is the fault of the man who lives in the Murchison, not of the farmer.

Mr. Lambert: Do you expect the man in the Murchison to come to Perth to eat it?

Mr. Chesson: It was the fault of the Government who increased the railway freights.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. O'Loughlen: They get you on the swing and on the merry-go-round.

Mr. Chesson: Yes, they get us both ways.

The PREMIER: When the people got the wheat for local consumption at 7s. 8d., we were selling wheat for export at 10s. per bushel, or 2s. 4d. less than it could have been put on board the steamers at Fremantle.

The Minister for Agriculture: And they got it throughout the whole year, too.

The PREMIER: I admit, however, that it might not be quite fair to quote those figures, but it is a fair thing to quote the average price for export abroad.

Mr. Marshall: What was the cost of production when wheat was retailed at 7s. 8d. per bushel?

The PREMIER: I do not know that the hon. member is entitled to regard everyone who produces wheat as a scro to provide him with cheap wheat when he wants it, and as a person upon whom he can draw whenever he elects to do so.

Mr. Marshall: I was only——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: I cannot say what it costs to produce wheat. I have heard speculative views expressed to the effect that it costs 5s. or 4s. 6d. Both figures are much above the average cost, but I cannot say what it actually does cost. I can say, however, that it is worth 10s. per bushel. If the House considers that it is entitled to take the pro-

ducts of the farmers or vegetable growers at less than can be got for those products elsewhere, of course it can do so. I think, however, such an action would be wrong in principle. For one long year the people got their wheat at 2s. 4d. per bushel less than the export price.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What would you get for Australian coal in Sweden?

The PREMIER: This year we are paying 1s. more than the export value.

Mr. Chesson: No, 2s. more, according to what the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) read to us last night.

The PREMIER: The member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) asks what we could get for our wheat in Sweden. We are not compelled to sell our wheat in any one market. What is the use of mentioning one market?

Mr. O'Loughlen: I said coal, not wheat.

The PREMIER: It may be that we could get a good deal more from Sweden. It is quite possible that we could get a good deal more than the average price by despatching wheat to various stray markets.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I was speaking of the world's parity for coal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! It is better to confine the debate to wheat.

The PREMIER: It will be quite clear that the consumer, having regard to London parity, has had the best of the deal by more than 1s. per bushel for the last two years.

Mr. Chesson: Not according to the Prime Minister's figures which were quoted last night.

The PREMIER: I am giving the House the actual figures for two years. I want the House to realise that this wheat has been secured, and if the motion is carried I do not know what will happen. I do know that we would have to pay the difference between the price now proposed and that which we agreed to pay to the Australian Wheat Board. All through Australia the same price is charged for wheat for local consumption. I do not propose to discuss the matter further. All I ask the House to do is to remember that in the Wheat Marketing Bill which we have passed we have stipulated the price for local consumption, which shall be on the basis of export parity. In one year we made a mistake which was in favour of the consumer to the extent of 2s. 4d. per bushel. In the other year I admit we made a mistake which was against the consumer to the extent of 1s. per bushel. It must be quite evident to any fair-minded man that the advantage has been all with the consumer. We have to safeguard the wheat for local consumption during the coming year. The price will be fixed from time to time, and at no time, if the Bill becomes law, can the charge to the local consumer be more than 7s. per bushel. Anything may happen during the coming year. The Russian crop is very poor and the Russian output will be very small. The whole of Central Europe is crying out for food. India has been importing wheat. Thus, any-

thing may happen. No matter what may happen, however, if the Bill we passed yesterday becomes law, the highest price for local consumption in Western Australia will be 7s. per bushel. My friend the Leader of the Opposition, having ventilated this question and tickled the ear of the member for Forrest, might see fit to withdraw his motion.

Mr. MANN (Perth) [8.8]: I will vote against the motion for the reason that it is not practicable and cannot be put into operation with any advantage. I was recently interested, with the member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson), in the settlement of the bakers' strike. We ascertained that the bakers had bought flour forward to the end of the year. Therefore there can be no advantage in reducing the price of wheat for local consumption now. The bakers cannot be asked to supply bread at $5\frac{1}{2}$ per loaf when the millers pay 9s. per bushel for wheat for gristing into flour. I am not in favour of breaking an agreement, but even if I were, it could not be done with any advantage to the consumer. I oppose the motion.

Mr. RICHARDSON (Subiaco) [8.9]: I am not quite clear as to the contract made between the wheat scheme of Western Australia and the Australian Wheat Board. Listening to the Premier's speech, I came to the conclusion that we were, if not legally, at least morally bound to take wheat at 9s. per bushel for local consumption.

The Premier: Yes, we must take it.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Seeing that that is the case, and that we have only about seven weeks to go before the new season's wheat comes forward, I hope the Leader of the Opposition will see fit to withdraw this motion. I desire to see the price of wheat much lower than it is at present, but I do not feel inclined to vote for any motion that will have the effect of breaking an honourable understanding we have reached with the Australian Wheat Board.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We did not make the agreement.

Mr. MANN: It is rather late in the day to repudiate it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We repudiated it before a month was out.

Mr. RICHARDSON: It does not matter who represented us, whether it was the Government or our representative on the wheat board. This honourable understanding was arrived at and, seeing that the time is so short, and that we shall soon be receiving the new season's wheat, I fail to see any usefulness in the motion. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) has drawn attention to the correct position regarding the bakers. While investigating the circumstances surrounding the attempted increase in the price of bread recently, we discovered that the bakers had bought forward supplies at a certain price, carrying them on to the end of next December. The position does not only

affect the bakers, but the bakers will be held up by the price, because having bought flour at a certain price, they cannot sell bread cheaper than at present. Most of them are losing money as it is.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You lose money in your own business by taking risks.

Mr. Mann: This is not a question of risk.

Mr. RICHARDSON: In this case the risk is forced upon them because of the honourable understanding I have spoken of. Many millers purchased wheat to carry on until the new season's wheat came to hand. We cannot ask those millers to grind the flour at lower rates because we pass a motion in this Chamber. If there were anything to be gained by the motion at the present juncture I would vote for it, because I have always advocated a reduction in the price of wheat for local consumption. We have passed a measure controlling the price of the new season's wheat, and I fail to see that we are justified in asking those who have entered into this honourable understanding to depart from their undertaking and act in accordance with the motion. That is the whole position as I view it. Notwithstanding the fact that only last night many of us voted for a reduction in the price of wheat, I intend to vote against the motion for the reasons I have given.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [8.12]: I intend to vote against the motion. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the consumers have been pretty badly treated, but notwithstanding that fact, we have entered into an agreement, rightly or wrongly, and we have to stand by it. After all, we have done the next best thing; we have provided against falling into another hole like this one. Everyone is liable to fall into a hole; we filled the hole we fell into.

Mr. Angelo: I thought it was a pool.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No, it was a bog. Now the maximum will not be above 7s. and we have also provided that there shall be one member of the board who will represent the consumers. That has been the trouble in the past. The board which fixed that price consisted practically of growers of wheat.

Mr. Lambert: The conference was loaded.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Nevertheless we went into that agreement fairly and squarely, and we have to stand to it; but in respect to the next pool we have already provided that we shall not get into another such bog. Again, I might vote with the Leader of the Opposition if I were convinced that the Government had power to reduce the price.

Mr. Munsie: How about the reduction in Tasmania?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am not convinced that the Government can get out of the contract in any way except by paying out

of Consolidated Revenue the difference to the wheat pool. That would be entirely ineffective, because we would then be paying in taxation the reduction in the price of bread. Therefore I intend to vote against the motion.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder—in reply) [8.16]: Having listened with interest to the debate, I am constrained to say that there has been a good deal of evasion and side-stepping. First of all let me take the objection raised by the members for Perth (Mr. Mann) and for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) that inasmuch as the bakers and others dealing in wheat or its products have purchased all their requirements to the end of the year, any reduction in the price of wheat during the remaining period could not affect them. Am I then to understand that the whole of the wheat requirements for local consumption in this State have been already purchased to the end of the year? Will the Minister in charge of the pool tell the House that he has no more wheat from last year's harvest to sell for local consumption? Has it all been disposed of? If not, the argument raised by the hon. members falls to the ground. Will the Minister assure the House that he has no wheat left on hand? Of course, he cannot. He is too honest to indulge in any such subterfuge. Further, I am not prepared to accept such a statement made at a conference of bakers in the presence of a couple of members of the House, when those bakers were striving to secure an increase in the price of bread. Did they produce all their documents before the hon. members?

Mr. Richardson: Yes, I saw several of them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Only several, not the whole of them.

Mr. Mann: They were not expecting this motion when they made that statement.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It does not matter; they were endeavouring to secure an increase in the price of bread, and in order to justify their action were claiming to have purchased in advance. If all the bakers, or even a considerable majority of them, have already secured their requirements to the end of the year, is there any more wheat for local consumption left in the pool? If so, what is the Minister going to do with the surplus he has on hand? He will have to pool it, or else to suspend supply of the coming season's wheat at a lower price until he shall have disposed of the surplus at present in hand. There may be a few bakers who have purchased their supplies ahead, but that is no justification for voting against a motion aimed at what is admittedly a robbery of the people. That is the point to be considered, the point which the people will ask themselves: not as to whether a baker here and there has made a contract to the end of the year, but as to whether the consumers are to be fleeced to the extent of 2s. or 3s. a bushel more than has been charged to the rest of the world during the past six months. We are told

there is a contract, and the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) says that if I could show him there was no contract he would be prepared to support me. But surely there is no onus on me to show that there is no contract! The onus is upon the Government to show that there is a contract. Where is that contract? Let the Premier produce the contract and lay it on the Table.

The Premier: It is not in writing.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Where is the contract? How can I prove that there is none, prove a negative? The member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) and the Premier and others have all said that there is a contract.

Mr. A. Thomson: An honourable understanding.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member in a very confused way read the speech made by the Prime Minister. So confused was he over it that we could not tell when he was quoting the Prime Minister and when he was offering opinions of his own. As a matter of fact, the speech of the Prime Minister proved nothing. It was merely an expression of opinion that the grower is entitled to the best available price for his wheat.

Mr. A. Thomson interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Katanning must keep order.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That was a sudden awakening on the part of the Prime Minister to the belief that the farmer is entitled to world's parity. It dawned upon him in November, 1920. Did the Prime Minister take up that attitude during all the years of the pool prior to 1920? Of course not. During all those years, and indeed right up to the present, the contention of those opposed to the motion has been that the farmer was not getting the world's parity. Now the hon. member endeavours to convince the House by quoting the Prime Minister to the effect that the farmer is entitled to world's parity.

The Premier: Our pools have always provided for world's parity.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Let us get back to the contract. It is not sufficient for any member to stand up and say there is a contract, and that we cannot get out of it. I ask, where is the contract?

The Premier: It is unwritten.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In a matter involving millions of pounds sterling and scores of millions of bushels of wheat, we are told that there is no contract! First there is a contract, but when we ask for its production, we are told that it is unwritten, that it is not a contract, that it is merely an honourable understanding.

The Premier: No, it is a contract.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If there was a contract, it was to the effect that all wheat gristed for consumption in Australia was to be paid for at 9s. a bushel. Now was it that, six months ago, the price was reduced from 9s. to 6s. 9d. for gristing for export to the islands? Where was the contract then? When they found that they could not retain the island trade with flour they said, "We

shall have to reconsider the contract"—that is all I am asking the House to do, to reconsider the contract—"and reduce the price to 6s. 9d. to enable our millers to retain the export trade to the Pacific Islands." Where was the contract there? The contract or honourable understanding was of such a nature that they could vary it when circumstances required.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There were 25,000 tons of flour in the State at that time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Now I come again to the contract. Has not the price in Tasmania been reduced to 7s. 1d.?

The Premier: Tasmania is not in the wheat pool.

The Minister for Agriculture: Tasmania was willing to pay 9s. for Australian wheat rather than use Imperial wheat at 7s. 2d.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Recently there appeared in the Press a paragraph to the effect that the Australian Wheat Board was going to supply wheat to Tasmania at 7s. 1d. for the remainder of the year.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, it is not so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: At all events, that statement appeared in the Press. On one night members say there must be no fixed price, that we must have open buying in the world's market. Members who to-night would vote for maintaining the fixed price of 9s., last night strenuously argued against any fixed price, saying, "Let us have world's parity, the open market."

Mr. A. Thomson: It was an honourable understanding.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Let us analyse this honourable understanding. How and by whom was that honourable understanding made?

Mr. A. Thomson: interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Katanning must keep order.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, I must ask for protection from the magpie from Katanning. He has had his say, and endeavoured to impress the House, not with his own speech, but with the speech of the Prime Minister. How was this honourable understanding arrived at? The Australian Wheat Board recommended to the Melbourne conference that the price of wheat should be 9s. And how was the Melbourne conference composed? It was composed of Ministers for Agriculture representing each of the States concerned in the wheat pool.

Mr. A. Thomson interjected.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Will the hon. member restrain himself? I do not want him to interrupt me by anticipating what I am about to say.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must keep order. I do not want to have to speak to the member for Katanning again during the course of this debate.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The conference was composed of Ministers from each of the wheat-producing States. In almost every instance those Ministers not only represented

wheat-growers in the Parliaments of their respective States, but were themselves wheat-growers with wheat in the pool, and so were directly interested both pecuniarily and politically in obtaining the highest possible price for wheat. That was one section of the conference. The other section of the conference consisted of direct representatives of the wheat growers from each State, the Minister who was interested, as I have indicated, and the direct representative of the wheat growers. This conference met and decided to fix the price of wheat for the whole year at 9s. a bushel.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Except Mr. Baxter.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. Could it be expected that they would do otherwise? They would have fixed it at 11s., 15s., or even £1 a bushel if they had thought there was any possibility of obtaining it. Naturally they would be restrained only by the endurance of the public in paying the amount they would extract from them.

Mr. A. Thomson: Were not the Premiers of the States there too?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No.

Mr. A. Thomson: The Prime Minister said so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the hon. member has not the intelligence to understand what I have said, I cannot assist him any further. I have already pointed out that the Minister at the conference may have been the Premier of the State.

Mr. A. Thomson: You said the Minister for Agriculture

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must keep order.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know what I said; I said Minister, probably the Minister for Agriculture. Cannot the hon. member understand?

Mr. A. Thomson: I know what you said.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will know what I say presently.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member is shuffling now, and trying to evade the point.

Mr. A. Thomson: No, I am not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am showing that the conference was composed of men directly interested either from a political or a pecuniary point of view in obtaining the highest possible price. Before they went to the conference, at least so far as this State was concerned, the growers as represented by their mouthpiece—the Primary Producers' Association—were insisting that there should be no fixed price for wheat consumed within Australia. They were demanding that the price should be based on London or world's parity, but as I have stated, just prior to the meeting of the conference the tendency in all the world's markets was for wheat to take a downward course. I am not merely stating what has happened after the event; these are views which I expressed at the time. The only motive which actuated the conference, comprised of men interested in fixing the

price covering a period of one year, was that they saw, as everyone who followed the subject with any degree of interest at all could see, that the price of wheat was falling and that long before the end of this year, it would be very considerably below 9s. a bushel.

The Premier: No one knew that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The same men, clamouring for world's parity, said that world's parity would be no good to them before the end of the year, and decided to abandon that tack and fix the price at 9s. a bushel which would be considerably above world's parity. As events turned out, they were pretty good prophets. While the people of this State for months past have been paying 9s a bushel for their wheat, we have been sending wheat to the markets of the world, to the Asiatic, the Japanese, the Chinese, the Pacific Islanders, the Germans, and in fact to people all over the world and letting them have it for 7s a bushel and less.

Mr. Latham: And more.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Not more.

Mr. A. Thomson: The Premier made a statement—

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member relies on the Prime Minister and the Premier for everything. He has not an idea of his own; that is why he is so frequently wrong. Let the hon. member try to rely on his own judgement now and again.

Mr. A. Thomson: I do rely on my own judgement.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What I have stated cannot be denied. It is of no use the hon. member shuffling. This is what the hon. member stands for and every member who votes against this motion to-night will proclaim to the people of the State that while he agrees that the wheat grown in Western Australia shall be supplied to the Germans and the Asiatics and all the other peoples of the world at 7s. a bushel, right up to the end of December the people of this country will have to pay 9s. a bushel for it. That is the attitude of every member who is opposing this motion.

Mr. A. Thomson: Not at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No amount of evasion or shuffling can get over that fact.

Mr. Johnston: In New South Wales the same thing applies.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We are not at present concerned about New South Wales. What I have stated is a fact. The conference fixed the price at 9s. a bushel.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: When the conference was held they had a conference of primary producers.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Prime Minister said he thought the farmers were entitled to world's parity and so the price would be fixed at 9s. The representative of the Western Australian Government, Mr. Baxter, declined to commit himself to the proposition. He had to wait until he returned and consulted his colleagues.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And yet they say the conference agreed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is what happened:—

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Baxter, returned to Perth by the Great Western express after three weeks absence in the Eastern States. Mr. Baxter represented the Western Australian Government at the recent Premier's conference in Melbourne which dealt with the price of wheat for the coming season and fixed it at 9s. Western Australia was not a consenting party to this price at the conference, and it remains for Cabinet to consider what action it will take after consultation with Mr. Baxter on the subject.

Capt. Carter: The Premier has admitted that Cabinet has bound this House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The question has never been discussed by this House. Here is the point: At this conference where this contract was made, where this solemn obligation was entered into—

Mr. A. Thomson: And ratified.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I must protest against the continual yapping of the irresponsible and inane member for Katanning. I do not mind a fair amount of interjection, but the hon. member, as Deputy Leader of the Country Party, ought to know better and ought to set a better example.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Boulder must not refer to another member in those terms.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I must ask you, Mr. Speaker, to protect me against the continual interruptions of the member for Katanning.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Boulder may proceed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope, Mr. Speaker, you will assure me a hearing. At this conference, where this solemn contract was made, where this solemn obligation was entered into.—

Mr. A. Thomson: And ratified.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not going to continue unless I get a hearing.

Mr. SPEAKER: I shall not speak again to the hon. member for Katanning.

Hon. P. COLLIER: You have told him that half a dozen times already.

Mr. SPEAKER: I shall put the Standing Orders into operation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have been interrupted so many times and you have warned the hon. member without effect, and I feel I require the protection of the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member interrupts again—

Mr. Johnston: He is the Deputy Leader of the party.

Mr. SPEAKER: And as Deputy Leader he should show a better example to the House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Mr. Baxter said the Government of Western Australia were not a party to the contract; therefore they did not agree at that conference to the price being fixed at 9s. a bushel.

The Minister for Agriculture: But the fact remains.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They reserved the right to agree or disagree. If it was optional for the Government to agree or disagree to the price of 9s., say three or four weeks subsequent to the meeting of the conference, it was optional for them to disagree at any time since that date.

The Premier: Oh no!

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Monger put the screw on.

Capt. Carter: The Premier stated that it is a contract.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is not a contract.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for Leederville feels uncomfortable, and I can quite understand it. Having decided to vote against the motion, he and a few other members who represent a section of what might be called the consuming public who are penalised by this price of 9s. a bushel for wheat will adopt, shall I say, any subterfuge to get out of a difficult position. The Premier says there is an obligation.

Capt. Carter: My feeling is not one of discomfort, but of justification.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Justification!

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is no justification for this.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The justification for which the member for Leederville stands is that he wears a returned soldier's badge—

Capt. Carter: Is there any disgrace in that?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Did anyone infer that there was?

Capt. Carter: Well, why are you talking about it? Why bring it in?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I shall bring it in in any way that suits my argument.

Capt. Carter: It has not much to do with the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. P. COLLIER: It has this much to do with the matter, that the hon. member who wears a returned soldier's badge—

Capt. Carter: And has every right to wear one.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, who wears a returned soldier's badge with honour and distinction—I do not dispute that—is standing for this: That in opposing the motion he is content to supply the country he was fighting against with wheat at 2s. a bushel less than he is prepared to supply our own people in Australia.

Mr. Clydesdale: That is an argument.

Capt. Carter: He is standing for what the badge stands for.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The people of this State will know all about that.

Capt. Carter: It is unworthy of you.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is a matter of opinion. The wheat growers' conference demanded a price of 9s. a bushel for the wheat. When Mr. Baxter declined to commit the Government of this State, a con-

ference of wheat growers was held in Perth and demanded that the Government should fall into line with the conference in Melbourne and accept the 9s. basis. If I mistake not, that conference was held in camera. The Press were not admitted, and I believe the representations made to the Premier from that conference were made in the privacy of the Premier's office. The representatives of the Press were not admitted; a statement was made later.

Capt. Carter: Tear it up! It is only a scrap of paper—repudiation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is no such thing as even a scrap of paper.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the hon. member can show us a scrap of paper, let us have it. Let us frame it and hang it on the wall where we can worship it and say prayers to the 9s. for the rest of the session. Let the hon. member produce the scrap of paper. Let anyone who is opposing the motion produce it. It is merely side stepping the question.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If the member for Leederville can produce it, I will undertake to vote against the motion.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I say there was no undertaking. The obligation rests upon those who are opposing the motion to show, not by a mere assertion, but in some concrete form, that there has been such a contract or honourable understanding as would bind this State till the end of the present year to the price of 9s. a bushel. It is a fact that it has been open to this State or any other State associated with the pool at any period during the 12 months to reduce the price of wheat within its own borders. A contract, they say! Just imagine, if the Government of this State decided to reduce the price of wheat in Western Australia, the people of New South Wales, South Australia, or any of the wheat growing States protesting against their action. Are they concerned as to what the Government of this State might do with regard to the supply of wheat to their own people?

Mr. Johnston interjected.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Members know perfectly well they are not, and the member for Williams-Narrogin knows it as well as anyone.

The Premier: May I remind you that you and your deputy leader made an almost similar contract in the early stages of the pool.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We did not make any contract.

The Premier: You fixed the price.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Never, at any time since the pool has been in existence. I challenge anyone to produce anything to the contrary, or evidence of any contract or obligation which would prevent the Government of the State from varying the price at any time they thought fit.

Capt. Carter: You were not tied down in black and white.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must keep order.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no question of black and white about it. With regard to the wheat grown in this State for the use and consumption of people in the State, throughout the whole period of the pool the Government of the State have been free to fix the price for local consumption as they thought fit. I challenge the present Government to produce any proof or any documentary evidence in controversion of the fact that throughout the whole period of the pool we have been free to fix the price.

The Minister for Agriculture: The preamble of the Bill which your Government brought down set out that the price must be fixed for local consumption on the world's parity.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The preamble of a Bill is not a clause in the Bill, and does not bind the Bill.

The Minister for Agriculture: It shows the intention.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We are now told that the Bill started off with a preamble saying that the wheat must be sold for local consumption at a price based on the world's parity. This conference which fixed the price for 12 months at 9s. is being defended by those who are opposing this motion and—

Mr. A. Thomson interjected.

An Incident.

Mr. SPEAKER: Under Standing Order No. 73, and in the interests of the decorum of the House, I shall have to order the member for Katanning to leave the Chamber.

Mr. Johnston: I move that your ruling be disagreed with.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no ruling about it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I order the member for Katanning to leave the Chamber.

Mr. Johnston: We will go with him. I will go with him at any rate.

[The member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) accordingly left the Chamber, followed by Mr. Johnston, Mr. Pickering, Mr. C. C. Maley, Mr. Latham, Mr. Angelo, Mr. Durack, Mr. Hickmott, and Col. Denton.]

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Boulder may now proceed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not wish to labour the question. I have endeavoured throughout the whole of the debate on this question to handle it fairly, not only from the point of view of the consumers who will be affected by the price of wheat, but also from the point of view of the growers.

Mr. Mann: This motion has come too late in the day.

Capt. Carter: Of course it has.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is too late to the extent that if effect be given to it it will

only confer a limited amount of relief. The robbery which has been going on for the past few months will cease, but the people will only get the benefit of the relief for the ensuing two or three months. In order to make my position clear on that point, and to show that I am not coming in at the death knock, as it were, with this motion, I wish to say it was not competent for me to bring the question before the House at an earlier date. The House did not meet until the end of July of this year, and was in recess from the beginning of the year until then. I was, therefore, helpless in regard to this matter. Immediately the House met I brought this question before it. It was before the House for decision at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. Munsie: On a division we voted against its further adjournment.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I wanted a decision on this matter three weeks ago, but a number of hon. members voted for its adjournment. I desired that the matter should be decided at the earliest possible moment. I knew that every week that passed would shorten the relief that would be given.

The Minister for Mines: There would have been a more effective decision from the House half an hour ago from our point of view.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why?

The Minister for Mines: We would have had more members here.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The matter has been brought before the House as soon as I could get it here, but its adjournment was supported by members opposite a few weeks ago. Although the relief which will be afforded if this motion is passed will be of a limited character it will still afford relief for the remaining months of the year.

Mr. Mann: Supplies for that period are in hand.

Hon. P. COLLIER: To some extent they are. I consider I effectively answered that point in the earlier remarks that I made upon this subject. I have done the best I could in the interests of fair play between the consumers and the producers of this State. I now leave the matter in the hands of the House.

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

Ayes	17
Noes	22
Majority against				5

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. Willcock
Mr. Heron	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Lambert	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Marshall	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Broun	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Carter	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Denton	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Durack	Mr. Richardson
Mr. George	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. H. K. Maley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Mann	Mr. Mullany

(Teller.)

Pair:

Ayes, Hon. T. Walker; Noes, Mr. Angelo.

Question thus negatived.

BILL—STAMP.

In Committee.

Resumed from 29th September; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Postponed Clause 28—Officer to whom instrument tendered for registration to be satisfied that proper stamp duty is paid:

The PREMIER: When we postponed this clause I told the Committee I would consult the Solicitor General, who agrees that Subclause 3 should be struck out. I move an amendment—

That Subclause 3 be struck out.

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

Postponed Clause 72—Certain contracts to be chargeable as conveyances on sale:

The PREMIER: There was a misunderstanding as to the effect of this clause. It now appears that a contract for sale of land bears only a 2s. 6d. stamp. That point clears up the objection raised.

Clause put and passed.

Postponed Clause 99—Receipt duty as between principal and agent:

The PREMIER: I propose to ask that a subclause be added to Clause 100, which will cover the objection raised when the clause was under discussion. The point was that a solicitor or agent should be permitted to pay money to the credit of his client at a bank without paying higher than one penny stamp duty. I agree it should be possible to use the bank, and I propose to make an addition to Clause 100 to bring this about.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th September.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [9.3]: This is the Bill annually introduced for the im-

posing of land tax and income tax. It does not afford much scope for debate, though at a time of financial difficulty it might well provide an opportunity for discussing the financial position of the State, and also the question whether additional taxation ought to be imposed under these headings. However, as I propose to reserve any remarks I have to make on taxation under any head for my speech on the Financial Statement, I shall not open up that aspect this evening. As the Premier mentioned in moving the second reading, the measure is exactly similar to last year's Act, imposing the same rates of taxation as have obtained during the past two years. There are, I think, some slight variations in the clauses dealing with the valuation of pastoral leaseholds; but I understand that the alterations involve no increase or diminution in the amounts to be paid by way of tax. I believe they merely represent alterations in the method of computing the unimproved value of pastoral leaseholds for land taxation purposes. I have no objection to the second reading of the Bill.

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.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT
AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th September.

Mr. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [9.8]: The Factories and Shops Act passed last session has hardly had time yet to prove itself. That measure represented an effort to bring the law of Western Australia in regard to control of factories and shops up to date, our law being considerably behind the corresponding measures of other States of the Commonwealth. Personally I prefer to see last year's Act given a more extensive trial before attempts are made to amend it seriously. The alterations proposed by this Bill may be described as mere machinery amendments. One of these, however, I cannot agree to as it stands. In the main the Bill as printed will have my support. I think the measure is needed, and will assist in the control of factories and shops. The provision to which I take exception is contained in Subclause 2 of Clause 5, reading—

The said forty-second section is further amended by the addition of a proviso, as follows:—"Provided that when a boy or woman employed in a factory has been allowed a holiday on full pay on or in respect of Foundation Day (that is, the first day of June) by or under any statute or

by virtue of any industrial award or agreement, he or she shall not in the same year be entitled to a holiday on full pay on or in respect of the birthday of His Majesty King George the Fifth."

The Minister has explained that this provision has been introduced because if boys and girls were allowed an extra day off on full pay, the men in certain factories, being unable to work without the assistance of the juniors, would have to lose a day's pay.

The Colonial Secretary: The men do not lose the day's pay. They lose the work, but get the pay all the same.

Mr. McCALLUM: Only where the award or agreement provides for that. Quite a number of awards and industrial agreements now in existence provide that all public holidays shall be paid for. In this connection the Public Service Act classifies as public holidays both Foundation Day and the birthday of the reigning Sovereign.

The Colonial Secretary: Those holidays are not provided for under the Factories and Shops Act.

Mr. McCALLUM: Where an award or an agreement says that public holidays shall be allowed and paid for, the employer has to pay his employees for those two days. The alteration proposed by the subclause will mean that the employer will be compelled to give the two days, but that the boys and girls will be denied pay for one of them. In trying to benefit one section of the employees the Minister will be penalising another section.

The Colonial Secretary: But the juniors will get Boxing Day now, which they have not been getting.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Minister is trying, by this subclause, to make the one holiday do for the two holidays. Consequently, boys and girls working under certain awards and agreements will be penalised.

The Colonial Secretary: Adult employees get only the one day.

Mr. McCALLUM: Numerous awards and agreements provide that all public holidays shall be given and paid for. I suggest that the Minister have this subclause re-drafted so as to provide for the giving of those two days to the staff. Then the juniors will be paid for the two days, and the subclause will be brought into line with awards and agreements which now provide for payment on both days. I do not think the Minister desires to penalise the juniors; I think the hon. gentleman's aim is to prevent a disability being imposed on the adults. However, in trying to prevent the loss of a day by the adults, he will in certain cases deprive the juniors of a day's pay.

Mr. Davies: Is not an industry governed by an award or an agreement exempt from the operation of the Factories and Shops Act?

Mr. McCALLUM: An award or an agreement overrides the provisions of the Act in

every instance. Clause 6 of the Bill provides—

Section 53 of the principal Act is hereby amended by the insertion therein of the words "shop or warehouse" after the word "factory."

The effect of this amendment will be to prevent girls under the age of 15 years from being employed in shops or warehouses.

The Colonial Secretary: Except with the consent of the Minister.

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes. While I support the amendment, I will ask the Minister to include a proviso that it shall not apply to girls now employed in shops and warehouses. Otherwise the bringing into operation of this measure will mean the dismissal of girls under the age of 15 years. I do not think the Minister desires that hardship shall be inflicted on anyone in employment. It is only reasonable to include the proviso which I have suggested, thus restricting the operation of the amendment to new engagements.

The Colonial Secretary: I do not know how that could be done.

Mr. McCALLUM: Provisions in awards referring to apprentices are frequently limited to new engagements, leaving unaffected those apprentices already in employment. It means that if a juvenile leaves one shop and goes to another position, the latter will be regarded as a new engagement. So long as the juvenile remains with the original employer, the provision should not apply. That is often done in Arbitration Court awards, and I hope the Minister will include some such provision in the Bill. A similar alteration will be required in regard to Section 62 of the principal Act, which provides for punishment respecting a breach of the preceding section, under which persons are prohibited from employing in a factory juveniles under the age of 15 years. The Minister will see that it will be necessary to provide a penalty, and the same words as those proposed in the new amendment should be inserted, otherwise there will be no provision made for enforcing the new clause.

The Colonial Secretary: I agree it will be necessary to insert the words "shops and warehouses."

Mr. McCALLUM: Clause 13 of the amending Bill is one which I will be compelled to resist. This provides for the opening of butchers' shops from 6 to 9 o'clock on Mondays which are public holidays. There is no such provision in the existing law and there has been no outcry on the part of the public for this alteration. Negotiations have been proceeding for some time between the employers and the union concerned, for a renewal of the existing agreement. There has been no suggestion at the various conferences that arrangements should be made for the opening of butchers' shops during the early hours of Mondays which happen to be public holidays. I am advised by those who should know that throughout the whole industry there are less than half a dozen owners of

shops who desire such an alteration. The great bulk of the employers do not want it. Rather do they desire the holiday when they can get it. They have agreed with the union to that extent, and only a very small section of the industry desire the alteration. It is significant that no mention of this proposal has been made at the conferences which have been proceeding between the employers and the employees. Whatever award or agreement is made, it overrides the Act altogether. According to the existing agreement, the clause I refer to cannot possibly operate. The employers have agreed with the union that their shops shall be closed on certain Mondays.

The Colonial Secretary: Is that an award or an agreement?

Mr. McCALLUM: An agreement.

The Colonial Secretary: Then the Act does apply.

Mr. McCALLUM: No, because the agreement has been made a common rule.

The Colonial Secretary: That is different.

Mr. McCALLUM: Under the agreement it provides that no work shall be done by the employees on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Good Friday, Eight Hours' Day, New Year's Day, Union Picnic Day, and Anzac Day. It also provides for two days in the year, Easter Monday and Foundation Day—it also refers to the Royal Show Day, but that is not a Monday—on which they can work up to 8.30 a.m. There is no employer in the industry taking advantage of the latter provision, although the agreement permits them to do so.

The Colonial Secretary: It does not mention any other Monday in the award.

Mr. McCALLUM: It mentions the different days during which no work shall be done and those are the holidays they have. The only argument that has been used that shops should open on Monday mornings is the same old argument which was raised in support of a contention that butchers' shops should remain open on Sundays. It was within my time that butchers used to call at the houses on Sunday mornings, for it was contended that people could not do without fresh meat on Sundays. That time has long passed by, and now people do without meat from Saturday to the following Monday or Tuesday. It is quite competent under the agreement for employers to serve customers from their cool chambers in the shops. No advantage is taken of that provision. Not one shop has found it necessary to open as is possible under the agreement. Monday is the lightest day in the week, for there is very little work done on that day.

The Colonial Secretary: The hospitals and the public houses will feel it.

Mr. McCALLUM: When the union asked the employers for a fortnight's holiday, the employers resisted the proposal and actually made an offer to close their shops all day on one Monday in each month. In the face of the employers making that offer—that offer is now before the union—why is it

necessary to legislate so as to enable butchers' shops to be open as suggested under the clause? If that course be followed, it will mean that the butchers will not have a single holiday in the year. There will not be one day they can call their own. At the present time they are singled out to work longer hours—and hours which are most awkward—than any other section of the community. If they have to start work at 6 a.m. as proposed under the Bill, it has to be remembered that there are no trams running so early in the day. It means that if they live in the suburbs, they will have to walk to work. In order to get to the shops before 6 a.m. the men would have to rise between 4.30 and 5 a.m., get breakfast, walk to work, finish their work by 9 a.m., and then go home again. What is left of the day they can call their own. Is that what is intended to be regarded as a holiday? Is that the sort of holiday these men should have? There should be some very substantial backing for any such proposal, which will so adversely affect one section of the community, before it is proposed in an amending Bill. As a matter of fact, there has been no such outcry. There was a time when slaughtering was deemed necessary on Sundays. At the present juncture there is no slaughtering done between 2 or 3 o'clock on Friday and the following Monday.

Mr. Angelo: That is only possible since the cool storage chamber system was introduced.

Mr. McCALLUM: That system has been in operation longer than two years.

Mr. Angelo: Not to the general extent it is now.

Mr. McCALLUM: Cool stores have been in operation as long as I can remember. Each shop now has its little cool store. I was dealing with the argument that slaughtering was necessary during the week end. A law passed in the time of Richard I. was used to prevent the slaughtering of beasts on Sundays. A lawyer who represented the union unearthed the Act, and it was only by applying that ancient measure that Sunday slaughtering was stopped. It will thus be seen that it cannot be argued that it was due to the advent of cool storage that an end was put to Sunday slaughtering. That alteration has inflicted a hardship upon no one. When the Minister talks about the position of hotels and hospitals, he should remember that such institutions have their cool chambers, and they can keep whatever meat they require. There is no argument to show that they cannot secure fresh supplies. They have been able to carry on without any complaints up to the present time. At the very worst, it means that for nine days in the year these people will be compelled—it does not mean it in actual fact, because they put their meat in cool chambers—to have cold meals. Is it a serious handicap to people to say that they should be satisfied with cold meals on nine days in the year? A good cold meal is better than a bad hot one.

The Colonial Secretary: It all depends on the digestion.

Mr. McCALLUM: In addition to that, there is the advantage to the housewife, who is entitled to some consideration and who, on those nine days in the year, is not confronted with necessity to cook hot meals. She is entitled to some consideration. There has been no outcry, no resolutions from women's organisations in favour of the amendment of this law of butchers' shops being opened on the Monday.

Mr. Angelo: But some husbands object to cold shoulder.

Mr. Simons: It is sometimes preferable to hot tongue.

Mr. McCALLUM: It is no argument to say that there should be another killing in order that the meat might be fresh, because all the establishments concerned have their own cool chambers, and so can keep the meat if they desire. I hope the Minister will not persist in that clause, because if there is to be any serious attempt to alter the hours of butchers' shops, I will have another claim to make. I prefer to see the Act given a longer trial on its merits before any serious amendments to its principles are proposed. If the Government agree to let the Bill go as it stands, with merely some improvements to the machinery of the Act, I will agree; but if they press for serious alterations in some respects, I must press for serious alterations in other respects. Our butchers' shops are open longer than are any other butchers' shops in the Commonwealth. I want the Minister to stick to the existing agreement. Employers and employees are even now in conference, but no suggestion has been made on the lines of the Bill. In Melbourne the law provides that butchers' shops shall be open from 7.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the first five days of the week, and from 6 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. on Saturdays. In Adelaide the shops are open from 7.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. In New South Wales the hours are from 6.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Mondays to Fridays inclusive, and from 6.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. In Queensland the hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, from 8 a.m. to 5.45 p.m. on Fridays, and from 6 a.m. to 12.45 p.m. on Saturdays. In New Zealand the hours are from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, from 7 a.m. to 12 noon on Wednesdays, and from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. In Kalgoorlie the hours are from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. on four days of the week, from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays, and from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. Our shops are open longer than are the shops in any of the other capitals. I am prepared to let the union and the employers go along as at present if the Minister will drop the provision to open the shops on holidays, but if important alterations are to be made in the existing law, there are other features of it which I will want tightened up, particularly that relating to the employment of Asiatics.

However, I do not want to press for a general review of the existing Act if the Government will be content to let the Bill go merely with machinery clauses calculated to improve the administration of the Act. I hope the Minister will agree not to press the amendment providing for the opening of butchers' shops on Mondays.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. T. Broun—Beverley—in reply) [9.35]: I am glad to know that the hon. member is not going to move for any drastic change in the existing Act. It is true, as he says, that it has not been in force very long, and so has not yet been given the trial which its importance deserves. Provision is made in the Act for holidays for women and boys, but no such provision is made in the existing agreement, and in consequence it has happened that owing to the absence of the women and boys on the King's birthday, the remaining employees could not continue their operations. In the Bill we provide Boxing Day as a holiday for women and boys, and make the King's birthday applicable to the award or agreement so far as it applies to adults.

Mr. McCallum: You do not say that in the Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is the intention of the amendment. It is proposed to give women and boys Boxing Day as a holiday.

Mr. McCallum: If the adult employees apply for both those days, what will be the position of the women and the boys?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In such a case a further amendment will be required. However, this amendment is to apply only during the reign of the present Sovereign, whose birthday comes so close to Foundation Day that the dual holiday is observed on the one day. We propose giving the women and boys Boxing Day as a holiday, and taking from them the King's birthday, for the reason that, with the women and boys away on the King's birthday, the adult employees are greatly inconvenienced.

Mr. Davies: How will it affect them if they are exempt under the Act?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Under the agreement or award certain holidays are set down, and if the award or agreement be made a common rule it over-rides the Act. The holidays provided for the adult employees are not the same as those for women and boys as prescribed in Section 42 of the Act.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is the same as the Public Service Act.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Public Service Act has nothing whatever to do with the Factories and Shops Act.

Mr. McCallum: If an award or agreement prescribes "all public holidays," that means the holidays under the Public Service Act.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That does not apply to all industries, but only to the Public Service.

Mr. McCallum: The court has ruled that where the provision is inserted "all public holidays," the meaning is "holidays provided under the Public Service Act."

Hon. P. Collier: "Public holiday" is defined in the Factories and Shops Act.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, but not the King's birthday. Under the award, the adult employees have not the King's birthday as holiday. That is the trouble.

Mr. Davies: If there is an award in the industry, how does the Act affect them?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It does not affect them. If the award is made a common rule, it over-rides the Act. Under that award the adult employees are not entitled to a holiday on the King's birthday. As for the opening of the butchers' shops on Mondays, the amendment has been inserted in response to representations made by the hospitals, hotels and restaurants, that the butchers' shops should be permitted to open on Mondays. Otherwise they would have to get a supply of meat to last from Saturday till Tuesday, and in the summer months it is not possible to keep it so long unless they have cool storage accommodation.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. Angelo: If they were up to date they would have cool storage.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, but they have not. In Committee we can go into that question at greater length. Efforts have been made to arrive at an amicable agreement between employers and employees, and it could well be set down in the agreement whether they should open on Monday. If it is necessary for hospitals to get a supply of fresh meat, some provision should be made to enable them to get it. Of course, if the slaughtering is done on Friday, the argument about getting fresh meat would not apply. This argument would apply only if the hospitals lacked facilities for keeping the meat fresh.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 42:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Subclause 2 contains a proviso that when a boy or woman employed in a factory has been allowed a holiday on full pay in respect of Foundation Day, the 1st June, under any statute, award or agreement, he or she shall not in the same year be entitled to a holiday on full pay in respect of the King's Birthday. This subclause will deprive a boy or woman of one of the holidays. It is true that Boxing Day is now provided for, but that has always been a holiday. Foundation Day is a public holi-

day, and the present King expressed a wish that his birthday should be observed on the actual date, the 3rd June.

The Colonial Secretary: He did not do so this year.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He did so when the Labour Party were in office; there is no need to do it every year. In 1912, Monday, 3rd June, was gazetted as a public service holiday, and in 1913, Tuesday, 4th June, was gazetted as a public service holiday. The King's Birthday is always recognised as a holiday under the Public Service Act, and the Public Service holidays are generally claimed as public holidays. Now it is proposed to provide that, though the King's Birthday be a public holiday, boys and women shall not have it if they have been paid for Foundation Day.

The Colonial Secretary: Because we are giving them another day.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, they have Boxing Day already. I do not know whether it is the intention to cut out the King's Birthday. Until we alter the Public Service Act, these measures dealing with boy and women labour should be drafted on similar lines. I move an amendment—

That Subclause 2 be struck out.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This measure will not deprive boys and women of a holiday. The holidays are set down in Section 42 and Foundation Day is not included for women and boys. Even Boxing Day was not included, but that has been inserted in another portion of the clause. If the proviso is struck out, we shall revert to the old position that boys and women will not be able to claim a holiday on Foundation Day if they have the King's Birthday. The clause will result in the holiday being observed on the one day, instead of by half the employees on one day and half on the other day.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The definition of public holiday specifies certain days and any other days which may be proclaimed. It is true that Foundation Day is not included in Section 42, but once it is proclaimed a public holiday, it has to be granted, and the same applies to the King's Birthday.

Mr. McCALLUM: If the hon. member's contentions were not correct, he could not ask for this amendment. The interpretation section mentioned by him must apply. I appeal to the Minister to re-draft the clause to meet the situation. There are factories governed by awards which merely set out all public holidays, which are interpreted to be those holidays provided under the Public Service Act.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I will report progress and amend the clause. It must be taken in conjunction with awards and agreements.

Progress reported.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment Bill.

ADJOURNMENT—ROYAL SHOW.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [10.2]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 11th October, at 4.30 p.m.
Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.3 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 11th October, 1921.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment.
- 2, Fisheries Act Amendment.

QUESTION—EDUCATION COMMISSION, COST.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM, without notice, asked the Minister for Education: Can the Minister state approximately what was the cost of the Royal Commission on Education?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: According to the Estimates, apparently £590.

MOTION—EDUCATION COMMISSION REPORT.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [4.36]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the report of the Royal Commission on Education laid on the Table of the House is unsatisfactory.

In moving this motion I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do so purely in the interests of the public, purely to bring the subject before the public so that the report can be really discussed. There will be nothing personal in my observations, and I particularly wish this remark to apply to my good friend Dr. Saw, who was on the Royal Commission. Although I intend to be quite frank, I shall not, I hope, be in any way personal. At the same time I do not disguise from myself that Dr. Saw will have the right of explanation and reply, of which right I have no doubt he will avail himself fully. When making a few remarks on the Address-in-reply I said that there were four points for hon. members specially to consider when the report of the Education Commission was laid on the Table of the House, and that those four points were as follows: first, the composition of the Royal Commission; secondly, the class of witnesses called; thirdly, whether the Commission's recommendations should be adopted; fourthly, whether, in the event of the recommendations being considered sufficiently good to be adopted, the State could afford to adopt them. I personally am one of those who had no confidence at all in the Commission as constituted. When I first saw Mr. Board's name as chairman of the Commission, knowing that he held a high office in New South Wales I felt that we gained an advantage in securing the services of a man of that description. But when I learnt, afterwards, that Mr. Board was intimately connected with the development of a similar system of education to that which we have in Western Australia, I felt that it was impossible for him to be otherwise than prejudiced. Some people said to me, "What is the good of Mr. Board? Western Australia has copied the New South Wales system for years."

The Minister for Education: That has been proved absolutely incorrect.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Very well. I was coming to that. However, in the first place I was told that Mr. Board had been connected with the New South Wales system for years, and that therefore he would naturally be prejudiced in favour of the system here, which New South Wales had copied. I mentioned this to a member of the staff of our Education Department, who replied, "No; New South Wales has copied our system for years." "Then," I said,