

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Before it is put up to auction?

Hon. J. M. DREW: Before anything is done. There is no direction to that effect. Of course, it could be done without a direction. I think such a direction should be included in the Bill. I do not wish to be captious, but I have thought a good deal over Clause 2, the interpretation clause, and cannot follow it. The clause states—

In this Act, subject to the context, "Chat-tel" means any piece of household furniture, sewing machine, or musical instrument . . .

Does the word "piece" govern what follows? Does it mean not only a piece of household furniture, but a piece of a musical instrument? The point should be made clear. The word could mean any piece of a sewing machine.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Strike out the words "piece of."

Hon. J. M. DREW: I support the second reading. I should like to see this Bill made a good measure, and any amendments submitted will have my serious consideration.

On motion by Hon. C. H. Wittenoom, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.42 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 16th June, 1931.

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

QUESTION—ABORIGINES.

Mr. DONEY (for Mr. J. I. Mann) asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many aborigines, including half-castes, are in the Katanning magisterial district? 2, How many are in the Kojonup police district?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Chief Secretary) replied: 1, Katanning magisterial district, approximately 365. 2, Kojonup police district, 15.

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

As to Recommittal.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clauses 4, 14 and 36.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There was one other item, in the Second Schedule. The point was raised by the member for Leederville in relation to the loss of a foot at the ankle. That meant less than the loss of the lower part of the leg, which left the stump to carry the artificial foot. It seemed that the longer the stump, the less the compensation allowed, and it was urged that the same reasoning should apply to the other end of the leg. The Minister promised to have that also looked into.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and then there was another item in the Second Schedule, dealing with the diminution of the sight of the other eye. I agreed to have both those items looked into, but I said that if the position were found to be as stated I would have the amendments made in another place.

Question put and passed.

Recommittal.

Mr. Richardson in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That after "(b)" in line 12 of the definition of "employer," "or (d)" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That after paragraph (c) in the definition of "Worker," the following paragraph be inserted:—"(d) Any contractor engaged in manual labour in the course of the performance of a contract which he (either alone or

in conjunction with any co-contractor) has entered into with another person, for the purpose of such person's trade or business, provided that the consideration for the performance of the contract exceeds five pounds, that no part of the contract has been sublet, and no worker employed by the contractor or any co-contractor in connection therewith, and that if the earnings or average weekly earnings of the contractor cannot be otherwise ascertained for the purposes of this Act, they shall be deemed to be equal to the ruling rate of wages prescribed for workers engaged in labour of the same description by the industrial agreement or award in force at the time of the accident in the locality in which such manual labour as aforesaid was then being performed."

In the existing Act there are many sections dealing with contractors and sub-contractors. They have been omitted from the Bill because it was thought they would not be required, inasmuch as we are to have a compulsory fund. After discussion the other evening I agreed that this amendment should be inserted. The member for South Fremantle has shown me an amendment on this amendment, which he proposes to move with the idea of rendering it clearer.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister by the amendment has gone a good way towards meeting the objections that were raised on this side. However, there are in his amendment two points which I should like to improve. The first is the limitation of the contract to £5. The circular letter I read here the other night showed that in factories in the city men may be engaged on piece work, or contract jobs as they may be termed, which may mean only a pound or two or a shilling or two for each job, and not one of the individual contracts may exceed £5. So that class of worker would not be covered by the amendment. Of course if we delete the £5 we involve a very wide extension which even the original Act did not cover; for instance, the man who comes occasionally to cut a hedge or mow a lawn, or to chop a little wood. Some provision should be made to cover them. However, I am not going to press that on the Minister, for he has gone a good way towards meeting our objections on general grounds. But when it comes to considering how we are to establish the average weekly earnings of those men, it is provided that we shall take the industrial award or agreement in force in the locality. No provision is made if there should be no industrial award or agreement in that locality, or if the accident should

occur in a class of work which is not covered by any award or agreement. And the further away from the centre, the more likely is this to occur. An accident may occur to a worker at Marble Bar, but I do not know of any award covering any worker at Marble Bar. That applies to other towns. There are different callings in the city which are not covered by awards or agreements and which would not come under this proposal. I move an amendment on the amendment—

That the amendment be amended by adding the following words:—"If no award or industrial agreement is applicable to the locality, then the rate of wages prescribed by an industrial award or agreement operating in the locality nearest to the place where the accident occurred, and if no industrial award or agreement applies to the work performed, then the average weekly earnings shall be deemed to be not less than the basic wage in the locality where the accident occurred."

All the State is covered by the basic wage. In this case it would be difficult to provide something that would entirely cover every class of worker, and so there may be hardship in certain cases. Another point is whether the agreement made between the Public Works Department and the A.W.U., which caters for nearly all the unskilled labour employed by that department, would be termed an industrial agreement, as it is not registered. I do not expect the Government to stand upon such a fine point, but the point could be taken.

The Minister for Works: I will accept the amendment, which makes my own amendment more clear.

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

Clause as amended put and passed.

Clause 14—Liability of employers:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the clause:—"But the liability of the employer shall be substituted for that of the Commission, and the provisions of this Act defining the liability of the Commission to workers shall have effect, as regards the workers covered by such insurance, as if the employer were therein referred to in lieu of the Commission. The employer shall, however, be liable, in any case in which the services of the Medical Board are availed of, to pay the prescribed fees therefor, together with any incidental expenses incurred by the Board."

This deals with the question of self-insurance. It was thought that the clause did not make it clear that the self-insurer took over all the liabilities of the commission. This amendment will, I think, overcome the difficulty.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The amendment meets the situation. Our desire is that employees who are covered by the self-insured shall stand in the same relationship to him as to other employers who are not carrying their own insurance. There was no desire on our part that the commission should bear the expense of any work that they or the medical board might be involved in, but that this should be carried by the self-insurer. We hold that because some firm or company adopt the self-insurance policy, the employees should not be deprived of the protection that either the commission or the medical board might give them if they were employed by some other firm or company.

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

Clause 36—Liability of employers to workers for injuries:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That the words "three days next following the day when the worker becomes disabled as aforesaid" be struck out, and "seventy-two hours next following the time when the accident happened" be inserted in lieu.

Objection was taken to the possibility of its being four days instead of three as the waiting period. These are calendar days and not working days. If a worker is injured at 12 o'clock on Saturday he has the difference in calendar hours between then and 8 o'clock on Monday morning as the waiting period. The amendment makes it clear that the waiting time shall be 72 calendar hours from the time of the accident.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: We do not want this at all, but as the Government have decided on three days, we must, I suppose, accept it. It is an improvement on the original draft. At the first opportunity we shall, of course, get rid of this pernicious and illogical principle. It is unfair to say that until a worker has waited a certain time he shall not be paid anything.

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

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of page 17 the word "seven" be struck out and "thirty" inserted in lieu.

We debated the point as to whether seven days was sufficient time in which to estimate the nature of a man's injury. Seven days may be a little too short, and I am now proposing to make the time 30 days. It is necessary to have finality one way or the other.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister has misunderstood the stand we took up. It was the condition of the worker about which we were mostly concerned, and whether there was time to enable a medical man to estimate the extent of his permanent injury. Our view was that he should not be called upon to decide until such time as he was in a position to negotiate for a lump-sum settlement. A man might be badly crushed, and might be hanging on week after week or month after month, and the commission might say, "We will settle this case," and thereupon give him seven days to decide under which schedule he would claim. But it might be over 12 months before the medical men are able to advise the worker what is the extent of the permanent injury he will suffer from his accident. In many cases repeated operations are necessary. The medical board should first of all certify that the injured worker is in such a condition that his permanent incapacity can be definitely ascertained; then the commission could give him the seven days' or 30 days' notice within which to make his claim. But it is not equitable to compel the worker to make that choice until the medical men can state the extent of his permanent injury, they having finished with him. The clause should begin, "If the medical men certify that the extent of the permanent incapacity of the worker arising out of an injury can be definitely ascertained, the commission may at any time by notice in writing" and so on. I agree that the matter cannot be allowed to drift on indefinitely. My previous proposal was to leave the question with the worker to decide, but now I suggest that it should be left with the medical board. If they declare, "We cannot say now what the extent of the permanent injury may be, and it will be some time before that ex-

tent can be ascertained," it would be utterly unreasonable to call upon the worker to make his choice. The words "fit condition," according to lawyers whom I have consulted, refer to the mental condition of the worker. However, the medical men may not be able to determine the extent of the injury though the mental condition of the worker may be such as to enable him to make a choice.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

That the following be inserted at the beginning of paragraph (c) of Subclause 3:—
"If the medical board certify that the extent of the permanent incapacity of the worker arising out of the injury can be definitely ascertained."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no objection to the amendment, but members opposite have taken a different view of the provision from that taken by me and the Parliamentary Draftsman. A new principle is introduced. The Bill allows any injured worker to elect whether he will proceed under the First Schedule or under the second. A worker taking action under the First Schedule might recover even less than he would under the second; he has to take that risk. I do not think one injured man in a hundred will ever exercise the right of electing. Apparently the trouble is that a case might hang on indefinitely, whereas some finality is desired. Certainly it is not intended to force any man who is unwell to make his choice. The commission would not take action under the provision without consulting the chairman of the medical board.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (c) of Subclause 3 the word "seven," line 4, be struck out, and "thirty" inserted in lieu.

It really does not matter whether the period is 30 days or 60.

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

Bill reported with further amendments.

BILL—FIREARMS AND GUNS.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [5.16] in moving the second reading said: I have been reminded that I previously introduced a Bill with a similar title. I am sure that when hon. members read the Bill that I am now placing before them, they will find that it meets with their approval. They will find that it is not only necessary, but desirable. The Bill seeks to restrict the possession and sale of firearms and such lethal weapons. The previous Bill gave the impression that it was a revenue measure, but I can assure the House that the present Bill cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be classified in that category. The fee that will have to be paid will be small, and one fee will cover all the weapons in the possession of the person taking out the license. It will be admitted that in recent years there has been a great demand for a Bill of this description. Recently I received a deputation from the executive of the Police Association asking for the introduction of this legislation, because they believed it would prevent much crime of the class that has been committed frequently in recent months. Hon. members must be aware that judges, magistrates and coroners have also referred to the necessity for legislation of this kind. In Great Britain there is an Act dealing with this subject, but its provisions go further than we propose in the Bill, although the measure has been framed along the lines of the Imperial Act. There is also legislation in New South Wales, but there again the Act goes further than we propose in the Bill. The object of the measure is simply to protect the public. While I admit that no legislation can give a guarantee that certain things will not happen, the least we can do is to make an attempt, by restrictive legislation, to provide for the safety of the public and thus decrease the opportunities for crimes such as I have indicated. We have Acts of Parliament dealing with all manner of crimes, making them illegal and providing severe punishment for those committing such crimes, even to the extent of capital punishment in certain instances. That fact does not actually prevent the perpetration of those crimes. I will be candid enough to admit that the Bill will not prevent the illegal and careless use of firearms, but it will certainly have a restrictive effect and

that is the object of the legislation. One objection raised against the earlier Bill I have already referred to, was that it imposed an undue restriction on the use of firearms in the country districts, seeing that those weapons were so necessary for the destruction of pests. The present Bill does not include any such restriction. It applies only to certain portions of the State, and even then, any portion of Western Australia can be exempted by the Government. It provides that certain classes of weapons shall be covered by the measure, irrespective of where they may be held. I refer to pistols or other similar types of weapons that can readily be concealed on the person, thus rendering it easy for them to be used for other than legitimate purposes. Such weapons must be registered, and it is certainly desirable that they should be. Shot guns and rifles possessed by residents of country districts are not required to be registered, and that should get over the main objection taken when similar legislation was dealt with before.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Where is that provided for in the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: The hon. member will see that the Bill applies only to municipalities and the area within a radius of five miles. That is the position apart, of course, from pistols. It will be realised that the Bill is aimed largely at the wrongful and careless use of firearms by criminals. That is regarded as essential. Hon. members would be astonished if they realised the number of people arrested from time to time for various offences, who, on being searched, are found to have concealed on their persons weapons of this description. I do not think it will be suggested that when a person proceeds to commit a crime and has firearms concealed on his person, he has not pursued a premeditated course of action. It will be admitted that in such circumstances, the pistol is there to enable the criminal to kill, or at least injure any person who may get in his way. We should not permit that sort of thing if we can prevent it. The only means of dealing with the position in the first instance is to call upon every person in possession of lethal weapons of this description to register them. If the Bill becomes law, then any person having unregistered firearms in his possession will be guilty of an offence. It is also provided that the carrying of particular types of firearms at night time con-

stitutes an offence. For that offence a severer penalty is set out than is provided where the person is found in possession of an unregistered pistol in day time. It has become the practice of criminals to carry out their nefarious transactions at night rather than by day, hence the necessity for the severer penalty.

Mr. Marshall: How about persons who may require to carry firearms while they are in charge of large sums of money?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: The Bill provides for that contingency. Any person can obtain permission to carry firearms when required for the purpose of protecting his goods while they are being transferred from place to place. Merchants, bankers and others are already provided for. I have never been able to understand why it has been regarded as necessary to pass restrictive legislation dealing with the manufacture and sale of poisons, and yet practically no legislation of that description has found a place on the statute-book with regard to the use of weapons, although the latter can be more dangerous than poison.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is difficult to obtain poison.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Records show that more persons have been killed or injured by the use of firearms than by poison.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: But you can get poison surreptitiously.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: During the past ten years, there have been no fewer than 94 lives lost in this State through the use of firearms, and 68 persons have been injured through the careless use of such weapons. Had legislation of this description been in operation, valuable lives might have been saved. Hon. members are no doubt aware of the instance in which a police sergeant lost his life. It will be remembered that a man had been drinking in a city hotel and became intoxicated. In the end he was definitely refused further drink because of his condition. The man went away and, despite his intoxicated condition, purchased a revolver from a second-hand dealer. That sort of thing will not be permitted under the Bill. That man, having obtained the revolver, returned to the hotel for the purpose of shooting the barman who had refused to supply him with further liquor and in the scramble that followed, the police sergeant was shot with fatal results. If the Bill now before hon.

members had been on the statute book then, the man could not have purchased the revolver from the second-hand dealer because it provides definitely against the sale of any lethal weapon to a person in an intoxicated condition. Another important phase to which judges, magistrates and coroners have drawn attention is that if legislation of this description had been in force, cases they had dealt with would never have occurred.

Mr. Marshall: You are pretty severe on the air guns.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: A number of serious accidents have occurred as the result of the careless use of air guns, but, of course, the Bill will not apply to the ordinary toy gun.

Mr. Marshall: The definition does not make that clear.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: There are many air guns that can be used for firing bullets, shot or darts that can not only injure, but kill persons.

Mr. Sampson: They can be very dangerous weapons.

Mr. Marshall: The point I made was that you do not define clearly what you mean by "air gun"

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: We can discuss that phase in Committee. It is claimed that air guns can be manufactured of a type that will kill or seriously injure individuals, and in those circumstances they should be made subject to the same restrictions as other lethal weapons.

Mr. Wansbrough: Will persons who desire to buy guns in future have to produce their licenses before they are able to make their purchases?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: A person will have to obtain his license before he can purchase a gun. Unless he does so, he will commit an offence. In order to restrict the use of firearms, it is provided that the Commissioner of Police must be satisfied that anyone applying for a license is a fit and proper person to have the use of firearms. Thus, the first restriction will be that the Commissioner will have control of the issue of licenses, and he will not agree to permitting an unfit person to secure the right to carry firearms. At the same time, should the Commissioner refuse a license, the person refused will have the right of appeal to a police or resident magistrate. Thus, the right to obtain licenses

will be restricted. Even so, the fact that a person has secured a license entitling him to carry firearms is no guarantee that the person does not require the weapon for an illegal purpose. That cannot be obviated. The whole object is to restrict the possession of lethal weapons to those authorised by law by virtue of the license granted to them.

Mr. Marshall: Do you intend to bring the stilettoes used by foreigners under the provisions of the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I am prepared to consider that suggestion. I will admit that the stiletto is a dangerous weapon. Perhaps the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) may ask for some such provision as he knows many of them are carried for certain legal purposes by foreigners at Fremantle.

Mr. Sleeman: On a point of order. I think the Minister should withdraw that remark.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I will withdraw the statement and say they are carried for illegal purposes. Joking apart, I meant that the knives were used for cleaning fish and so forth, and I thought the hon. member knew what I was driving at. In the second place the object of the Bill is to give the police power to carry out and administer the measure. The next object is to provide an adequate definition of offences in connection with the possession and use of firearms, in order to prevent unauthorised persons from having possession of firearms. In the fourth place, the object is to make provision for the necessary formal machinery in the shape of regulations for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the legislation. The Bill provides that no person shall possess or deal in firearms unless he has a license. Four kinds of licenses are provided for: (1), To possess a firearm; (2), to manufacture and repair firearms; (3), to deal in firearms and, (4), to conduct a shooting gallery.

Mr. Sleeman: Then one man might require four licenses.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: No, unless he intended to do all four things contemplated by the four different types of licenses. I do not believe there will be many in that category. I have already explained that one license only will have to be taken out by an individual and that will cover the weapons in his possession,

but they will have to be specified in the license itself. For instance, a parent may take out a license which may provide for his own weapons and for half a dozen others used by members of his family. I have already said that, with regard to pistols and such weapons, which are defined in the measure, it is desired that the provision should apply to the whole of the State without exception, because such weapons can be very easily concealed and in the main are not used for what might be termed the legitimate purpose of destroying pests. Very often they are used for what may be termed pests, but not the pests I have in mind.

Mr. Sleeman: You will want a definition of "pest."

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I did not think of the hon. member when the measure was being drafted, and I hope it will not be necessary to think of him when we reach Committee. Special exemptions are provided for members of the naval and military forces, the police force and rifle clubs, and for common carriers and warehousemen, and also for proprietors of shooting galleries.

Hon. A. McCallum: Are Communists exempt?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: No; the hon. member will find in the Bill a clause not found, so far as I know, in any other measure of the kind. I shall refer to it later.

Mr. Sleeman: You ought to include machine guns.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: No pistol license will be issued to any person under the age of 21 years, and no person under the age of 16 years will be entitled to hold a license for any class of firearm. This will not prevent the son of a farmer from using firearms, but some person must be responsible for him if he is under the age of 16, and that person must be licensed to hold firearms. The Commissioner of Police is made the licensing authority. At present we have a Gun Licensing Act. It bears the date of 1885 and is pretty obsolete. It was a revenue-producing measure and is still under the control of the Treasury. Whether any officer pays attention to it, I do not know. Under this measure the Commissioner of Police will be the licensing authority and may refuse to issue a license, subject to the right of appeal to a resident or police magistrate. The

only other point I desire to mention is the provision under Clause 14, which gives the right to the Governor, by proclamation, in case of an emergency, to call upon any dealer in firearms to make the weapons innocuous. In the event of an emergency which might easily arise, weapons displayed in shop windows, which could easily be broken, might be stolen. That might happen during a riot. By proclamation the Governor may require portions of the weapons to be removed so that, if they were stolen, they could not be effectively used. That provision is desirable, though it is not likely we shall have occasion to use it. Members know that for years we had power under the Police Act to prohibit drilling, and only the other day we had occasion to put the provision into operation. It was very effective. I hope it will never be necessary to issue a proclamation under this measure, but the need may arise. All that would happen would be that parts of the weapons would be removed, but those parts would be available to the person dealing in firearms to replace at the time of a sale. It would, however, render abortive any raid on premises where a large quantity of firearms was displayed and could otherwise be stolen and used to the detriment of the public. In that way, the objection of the member for South Fremantle will be met. Certain sections of the community have stated that the only way in which they can get what they term justice is by the use of force, and the kind of force they would use is easy to understand. I do not think any member or any person in his senses would suggest that, in a democracy such as we enjoy in Australia, anything in the nature of force is required to secure amendments to the Constitution or to our laws in order to give effect to the will of the people. I hope the House will agree to the measure. It is restrictive to an extent, but not to such an extent as is likely to cause hardship to anyone. Even if it were so, members will admit the necessity for imposing restrictions for the general protection of the community, and this measure, I think, will have that effect. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. C. Willcock, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE MANUFACTURES DESCRIPTION.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES
(Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [5.36] in moving the second reading said: This is a measure that I am satisfied will not be controversial. Everyone will admit it is of a type that can very well be introduced and put into operation without proving detrimental to the community. As a matter of fact, it will be of advantage to the community. At present, under Commonwealth law, provision is made for the stamping and marking of goods exported for sale in foreign markets. For such action by the Commonwealth there are two main reasons, firstly, that a purchaser in the markets of the world will know it is an Australian product and, secondly, that the purchaser will also know that the product has been examined and passed and is up to standard. In Australia at the moment there is no such provision applicable to internal trade, and while it may be considered undesirable to have anything in the nature of the marking of products produced or manufactured and distributed in any part of Australia, I hold the view that we shall not be doing anything harmful to the producer, manufacturer, or consumer by providing that goods produced or manufactured in the State may voluntarily be marked, and thus give the consumer definite evidence that they were produced or manufactured in the State. Later we may be able to give him a guarantee that the commodity is of the standard claimed for it. In Great Britain a national mark is adopted, which is a guarantee to the consumer that the commodity was produced in the British Isles. It also carries a guarantee that the commodity is of a certain defined standard. There is a different mark for different grades of quality. The present Agent General (Hon. W. C. Angwin) forwarded me some particulars regarding the national mark that I had not been able to obtain in Australia, and I was surprised to find the different commodities to which it was applied. Eventually I turned up an Imperial Act dealing with the matter and found it was known as the Agricultural Produce Grading and Marketing Act. It dealt largely with agricultural and horticultural products, but I was surprised to find that

it also included the grading and marking of beef, which is about the last thing one would imagine could be marked and guaranteed as being of a definite standard. Apples, cherries and various other commodities are included in the Act. Eggs in particular are provided for, there being about half-a-dozen different grades. In fact, all sorts of commodities are mentioned, and the sole purpose is to give the consumer the opportunity to know that it is a local product and that it is of a definite standard. It is made an offence for any person to apply the national mark to any commodity not produced in the British Isles, or to mark it as being of a standard different from what it really is. While it is of advantage to the producer to be able to mark his goods for the information of the consumer, there is also protection for the consumer in that he knows the grade or quality of the commodity he is buying. In Western Australia we are endeavouring to convince the people that, where they can obtain local products, preference should be given to them. All parties are agreed upon the desirability of that action. As I move about, however, I hear quite a number of complaints that people have patronised a local commodity, only to find that the quality is not equal to that of the imported article, or equal to the quality claimed for it. A member of this House had an experience. In reply to an advertisement he purchased a special grade of commodity—apples, I think—and when they arrived they were like bantam eggs or even smaller, and were not fit for pig feed. Yet they were supposed to be of standard size and quality. The Bill does not propose that any person selling local products or manufactures shall mark his goods as of local production, but it is provided that the manufacturer may, upon application, and under regulations to be framed, place a mark on local commodities.

Mr. Sampson: It would not apply to primary products?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: It would apply to any product. The mark will be a guarantee, not only of local production, but also that it is of a grade set out in the regulations.

Hon. A. McCallum: How would you brand a chicken?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: It is done in the Old Country; the fact of

their branding beef shows what can be done. I have with me a leaflet, which the hon. member may see, issued by the British committee, giving full particulars as to how the brand is applied and how it indicates the different grades of beef. It also contains instructions how to cook it. All the information necessary is provided by the committee. While it is an offence to use a mark on a commodity other than that which the commodity purports to be, it is also an offence to use it on a commodity not produced or manufactured in the State. In each instance such action would amount to fraud and a penalty is provided. The manufacturers of Western Australia, largely those in Perth, have by arrangement decided upon a little brand which is placed upon locally manufactured goods. For that the Chamber of Manufactures is responsible. That is an entirely voluntary act, but it is no offence for any person wrongly to use the brand. He could use it on an imported article, and thus lead consumers to believe that they were purchasing a locally manufactured article. Commodities have been sent here in bulk from other parts of Australia, and even from other parts of the world, and put into cartons or bottles bearing the label of a local wholesale distributor without any indication that they were not manufactured or produced in Western Australia. When the people we are appealing to every day to purchase Western Australian goods see such commodities bearing the name of a well-known local merchant, they conclude that they are local commodities and purchase them, only to find in very small print on the label, "Packed expressly for so-and-so." Such goods are only packed for that distributor; they are actually produced outside the State. We are hopeful of being able to induce people who want their products put on the market to keep faith with consumers by maintaining a grade that will gain the confidence of purchasers and thus extend the demand for commodities that are produced locally. No one will suggest that a person should not be protected against even a retailer selling a commodity which is claimed to be of a certain type and which is found to be of an entirely different type. No manufacturer who is anxious to sell his commodity locally can object to a mark being placed on it to enable it to be identified as a local product.

Mr. Sampson: Is there no fear of Western Australian products suffering because of this?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: I have already said that this is a voluntary matter. Take the production of eggs. We have a certain amount of competition from imported eggs, but if the local egg producers got together and decided that they would apply this particular mark on local eggs, they would guarantee to the community that those eggs were locally produced and were of a certain grade. In the Old Country there are six different brands for eggs and they vary according to the grade and the size of the eggs. If the egg producers here adopted that plan a person would know that he was purchasing Western Australian eggs, and that they were of a definite standard, and not find, as he sometimes does, that on the top there are the eggs that he requires, that underneath there may be some duck eggs and perhaps at the bottom bantam eggs. Once the producers saw the wisdom of applying such marks to the eggs they could confer and arrange where the mark should be affixed. This would get over the objection so often raised by the housewife that she has not the time to see for herself whether the article she is purchasing is a local product; she can demand to be supplied with an article with the brand.

Mr. Sampson: Will this conflict with the Federal Constitution?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: Not in the slightest degree. We are not applying anything at all in the way of restriction on imported commodities. The only restriction is in respect of fraud, and that does not conflict in any way with the Federal Constitution. I believe that we suffer more from prejudice in respect to local commodities. We have the evidence of a small goods produce merchant who said to my wife, "It is 20 years since I started serving you," and then he talked frankly on the subject of the sale of butter. He declared that since the Bunbury Butter Factory had been opened he had not sold a single half pound of butter except that which had been produce by the Bunbury factory, and he added, "I can assure you that if I had not put some of that butter in wrappers to show that it was imported, 50 per cent. of my customers would not have taken it. They believe it is imported butter and they

consider it to be excellent." There we have evidence of prejudice, and as it applies to butter, so it applies to other commodities. Some manufacturers put up their commodities in an attractive form claiming for those commodities that they are of a certain grade. Afterwards it is found that they are not so. That is detrimental not only to that manufacturer's trade but to the trade generally of the State. We hope that the producers will see the wisdom of following the course proposed, and that they will combine to secure a mark of a distinct type together with a picture of the commodity that is offered for sale. Any person who applies the mark to a commodity not of the description set out will be guilty of fraud and will be liable to the penalty prescribed by the measure. I hope the House will see the wisdom of putting the Bill on the statute-book since it will be a guarantee to the consumer that what he is purchasing is actually what it is set out to be. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. M. F. Troy, debate adjourned.

PRIVILEGE—"DAILY NEWS."

Land and Homes Ltd. Advertisement.

Debate resumed from the 2nd June on motion by Mr. North—

That in view of the complaint made to the House that an article, published in the "Daily News" newspaper on the 28th May, 1931, under the heading "Land and Homes, The Other Side of the Question," contains statements which are a breach of privilege, a committee of the House be appointed to inquire into—(a) Whether the company, Land & Homes (W.A.), Ltd., by its officer or officers caused the article in question to be published, and (b) Whether the said article insults a member on account of his behaviour in Parliament; such a committee to have power to call for persons, papers, and records, take evidence on oath, and to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned and to report this day week.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [5.53]: Perhaps it would be as well if this motion were discharged from the Notice Paper. At the same time, I consider that members were perfectly within their rights in calling attention to the fact that an attempt was made to belittle them. A challenge was

thrown out to the House through an advertisement in the paper, but I contend that we have now done all that is necessary to uphold the dignity of the House. It is the duty of members to guard the privileges of the House and it would be wrong if we did not take steps to maintain the dignity of Parliament, when an attempt was made to disparage it. The traditions of Parliament were handed down to us when we were granted self-government, and it would be wrong if those who follow us were able to look back and see that those who were temporarily occupying positions as members of the Chamber had allowed to pass unchallenged a comment that was objectionable to members. It is the duty of members to bring before Parliament anything they think affects their rights and privileges, and particularly when those rights and privileges are challenged. In view of the fact, however, that a good deal of publicity has already been given to this matter, we might now allow it to be dropped. The discussion that has already taken place has served a useful purpose in that it has shown the writers of the advertisement, and indeed all who write in the newspapers in a slighting way about Parliament, that Parliament stands on a different plane from even the courts of justice, that it has the right to determine what is a breach of privilege and has the power to inflict punishment. I move—

That the motion be discharged from the Notice Paper.

HON. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [5.56]: I am glad the Minister has moved that the motion be discharged from the Notice Paper because I think the House has, up to date, cut a pretty sorry figure over it. Certainly it has not added to the dignity of the Chamber by the manner in which the subject was dealt with. First of all, the adjournment of the House was moved because it was claimed this was a matter of urgency; nothing else had to be done; all business had to be suspended until we had dealt with the advertisement in the newspaper. When the matter came up we learnt that the Acting Premier had not even read the offensive advertisement, and yet the business of the country was suspended to deal with the subject. Neither had the Leader of the Opposition read what was contained in the advertisement. The Leader of the House should have acquainted himself

with the contents of the advertisement and then the Leader of the Opposition should have been informed of his views. The Leader of the Opposition was not even advised of the nature of the urgency business; he was just told that the business was urgent and that it was necessary to move the adjournment of the House so as to deal with it immediately. Now the hon. member thinks that the House has gone far enough. The only resolution that has been carried affects the newspaper; the real culprits have not been mentioned and there has been no decision in respect of those responsible for the advertisement.

The Minister for Lands: The newspaper was responsible for the publication.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I venture to say that there was nothing in that advertisement nearly so severe against hon. members as some of the remarks we frequently use to one another.

The Minister for Railways: We are privileged to do that.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: If we are, then we should be careful that the privilege given to members in this House is not abused. The privilege is given on the understanding that members protect it and do not abuse it.

The Minister for Railways: If you call me a liar, though I might be one, you would have to withdraw the expression.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: We say the harshest things to each other across the floor of the House, harsher than were said in the advertisement. What was said there was that a certain statement made in this House was a lie.

The Minister for Railways: That it was false.

The Minister for Lands: We are not permitted to say that here.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: An accusation was made against the firm that at the end of five years certain things had happened. This firm has not been in existence for five years and so actually that statement was not correct. If they did refer to that incorrect statement by a harsh term it is the duty of members to see that their privileges here are preserved. The motion itself appears to me to be highly amusing. First it says that we are to take heed of what appeared in the newspaper and next we are asked to appoint a committee to find out whether the company, Land and Homes Ltd., by its officer or officers caused the article in question to be published. I venture to say you could

find that out by sending an office boy to the "Daily News" office where he could get the information in ten minutes.

The Minister for Railways: It was their statement that what a member said that the State had lost revenue was false.

The Minister for Lands: That was a challenge to the hon. member who was mentioned.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I was referring to the other statement, that after the expiration of five years certain things happened. I will support the motion to inquire into the operations of this firm, for I think we should do that, but I do think the House would cut a sorry figure in this business of privilege if we were to carry the motion before us. We are seriously asked to appoint a committee to inquire whether this company did insert that advertisement. A committee of Parliament, when an office boy could find it out! Then there is the second point for the proposed committee to consider, the question whether the said article insults a member on account of his behaviour in Parliament. This House has already decided that, and we have carried a resolution. Now we are asked to appoint a committee to find out whether the resolution already carried is correct. It appears to me altogether a ridiculous proposition, and certainly it does not add to the prestige or dignity of Parliament to have such a motion brought here, and particularly in the manner in which it was rushed in, all business hung up, notwithstanding which it has been on the Notice Paper ever since—about three weeks.

The Minister for Lands: The motion which was dealt with in a hurry was that adjudging the newspaper guilty of contempt.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Even in that regard there has been nothing done; not even a vote of censure has been passed. I hope that if anything of the sort occurs in the future it will be better considered, and action taken only after a definite line has been arranged and agreed upon, so that Parliament will not be held up to ridicule, as it may easily be under this motion.

HON. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [6.2]: I support the attitude taken up by the member who has just resumed his seat. I cannot conceive of anything more absurd than is the motion. How lacking in dignity this Parliament would have to be to agree

to it! A select committee is asked for. I cannot conceive of any member with any sense sitting on such a committee. That committee is to inquire whether Land and Homes Ltd., by its officer or officers, caused the article in question to be published. Well, they did. They signed it.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Who else caused it to be published? What other person went to the expense of publishing that article? Notwithstanding that, we are to have a select committee spending time discovering what has been discovered by almost all. Again, the committee are to inquire whether the said article insults a member on account of his behaviour in Parliament. Of course not! It makes no reference to any member's behaviour.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, it does, for it states that the member for Yilgarn's statement was false.

Hon. M. F. TROY: That is not his behaviour; that is his statement.

The Minister for Lands: The one includes the other, surely.

Hon. M. F. TROY: No, what the article refers to is his statement, his charge.

The Minister for Railways: Your behaviour could only be held to be objectionable because of what you said.

Hon. M. F. TROY: No, it is not a question of what one said, but of one's attitude. What the hon. member said was not his behaviour. I can see a vast distinction between behaviour and a statement. I can see a distinction between a man arrested by the police because of certain statements made, and a man arrested for assaulting the police.

The Minister for Lands: And I can see a man making a statement which would constitute a breach of the peace.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The article did not complain of the hon. member's behaviour, but declared that his statement was false. Now we are to have a select committee to inquire into the hon. member's behaviour. Could anything be more absurd? Suppose that Land and Homes Ltd. are the biggest rascals in the country, and all that has been said about them in this House is true, are we to waste the time of the House inquiring whether or not they have caused a certain article to be published in a newspaper? Is it considered that it will add to the dignity of the House to carry this motion? This august

Assembly is to be gravely concerned because a body of men whom some members have declared dishonest have replied to the charge. It is only natural they should reply. And members under the cloak of privilege to make statements about people outside, and when those people reply to the statements are we then to appoint a select committee to look into it all? Members having taken advantage of their privileges here to make a statement reflecting on the honesty of certain people outside, how can those members object to those people going to the Press and making a statement in reply? Those people are much more courageous than are the members attacking them, because they take a risk in replying, whereas the members making a charge against them took no risk at all. Yet this august Assembly, with all its privileges and protection against legal action, are asked to appoint a select committee because the dignity of members is assailed. As a matter of fact we shall have no dignity if we do these silly things. And, in these degenerate days who is at all concerned about our dignity? Does the outside man look upon us with veneration? Our dignity depends upon our actions here, upon the way we serve the country. Our dignity! It is with wonderful courage that we here, under the privilege of our position, attack anybody outside. We run no risk, but when those outside courageously accept the risk of replying, we say, "Let us appoint a select committee to look after our dignity." Could anything be more ridiculous? Could we be more undignified than we are to-day in even discussing a question of this character? I am sorry that you, Mr. Speaker, did not suggest to the hon. member who moved the motion, "Do you think it is worth while? You are only making us more ridiculous." I am glad the Acting Premier has seen fit to withdraw the motion.

The Minister for Lands: No. It is not mine.

Mr. NORTH: I will withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MOTION—SUGAR AGREEMENT.

Debate resumed from the 20th May, on the following motion by Mr. H. W. Mann:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should enter an emphatic protest against the re-enactment of the legislation

conferring a bonus on the sugar industry, and point out to the Federal Government the gross injustice of it to Western Australia.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [6.7] I wish to move an amendment to this motion as it stands upon the Notice Paper. I move an amendment—

That the words "re-enactment of the legislation conferring a bonus on" be struck out, and "renewal of the agreement relating to" be inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: I was pointing out to the House before tea that the Government had not been unmindful of their responsibilities to the people in respect of the sugar agreement. In August last a Commission was appointed by the Federal Government, and we detailed the Assistant Registrar General (Mr. Reid) to prepare a case for submission to that Commission. A very good case was made out. The Commission visited the State in December last, and the case was presented by Mr. Reid on that occasion. The Government also took other steps to place our position, not only before the Senate, but the House of Representatives. Members from, I believe, both sides of the House presented a case to the Federal Parliament, pointing out the disability that Western Australia was suffering under the agreement, which gave so unfair an advantage to Queensland over this State. No good purpose would be served by continuing the debate on the motion, because the agreement has now been signed by the Prime Minister. Whatever protest we might have put forward can have no effect upon the agreement. The member for Perth (Mr. H. W. Mann) has, I think, served his purpose by bringing the matter before the House. There is no doubt he has made out a good case. The people in this State do suffer extremely as a result of the agreement, but I am afraid until such time as the agreement is amended or again comes before the Federal authorities no good purpose can be served by continuing the discussion. In the circumstances I feel sure the hon. member will withdraw his motion.

HON. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [7.33]: If the member for Perth (Mr. H. W. Mann) is sincere, he will not withdraw his motion. Of what use is it to take up the time of members, to move motions of this character, to make speeches attacking interests, and then withdraw the motions? If the hon. member really means what he says, and is not like some other politicians in Australia, he will go on with the motion.

The Minister for Lands: The agreement was not signed when the hon. member first moved the motion.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It is signed now. I support the motion. The industry is the one industry in Australia that under this agreement enjoys prosperity, and has given to the producers a wonderful price during the last decade. It is still giving them a high price for their commodity at a time when other producers and the people of Australia generally are in serious difficulties, and are compelled to make big sacrifices. Many other industries just as important as the sugar industry are being carried on at a loss, but those connected with sugar are the only ones not being called upon to bear a sacrifice. The industry is being carried on the backs of the rest of the people of the Commonwealth. I grew up in the industry, and am therefore able to speak of its importance with knowledge. At the time I speak of sugar growing was the chief industry of the district in which I lived. To-day, however, the dairying, maize and banana growing industries are also in evidence in the locality. Notwithstanding that, a considerable portion of the area I refer to is still under sugar. I remember when the producers were glad to get a duty of £3 per ton on imported sugar. In those days the conditions were hard. The agriculturists were not very prosperous, but they had a living and reared large families and paid their way. Since then prosperous times have happened along and a great change has occurred. There is now an absolute embargo against the importation of any sugar. Sugar from outside has not the advantage of a tariff, but it is prohibited from entrance into Australia. The industry, therefore, is in a privileged position. It is not fair that those engaged in it should take undue advantage of the privilege, and in these bad times exploit the whole of the people of Australia.

The Premier: They are exporting a lot of sugar at a low price.

Hon. M. F. TROY: They have to do so. The industry produces a surplus and is compelled to export to the value of two million pounds. That export is useful to Australia because it provides a few millions of much needed credit in London. To that extent, therefore, the export is of value.

The Premier: The price of the exported sugar is very low.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Commonwealth Government appointed a Royal Commission to go into the question of the continuance of the embargo and the price those in the industry should receive. A majority, as well as a minority report, was put in. The majority report put down the case of production at £18 7s. per ton for sugar, and the minority report put down the cost at £22 7s. There was not much difference between the facts arrived at, but the Federal Government determined to accept the majority report, and as a result of this the Prime Minister signed the agreement. There is a disposition in Australia, which has been in evidence for a long time, to attach the blame for the price of sugar and the exploitation of the people by the sugar interests, to the Labour Party. Nothing could be more unfair and incorrect. I can only think that motions such as these are brought forward largely for propaganda purposes. To controvert the statement that the Labour Party are responsible for this, I would draw the attention of members to the fact that many leaders of the Nationalist Party and the Country Party are strong supporters of the agreement. All the Queensland members and the New South Wales members of the Country Party and Nationalist Party are strong supporters of it.

Mr. Angelo: Mr. Scullin had a chance to end it.

Hon. M. F. TROY: He does not deny signing the agreement, but there are other interests which are wholly in favour of it. Dr. Earle Page, Leader of the Country Party in Australia, is not only a strong supporter of the agreement, but he was the voice of the sugar interests in New South Wales at the conventions held at Canberra. Both Dr. Earle Page and Mr. Roland Green wrote to the sugar producers on the Richmond and Clarence, and said they were merely the producers' humble servants in

the matter. These alleged freetraders are just as favourable to the signing of the agreement as Mr. Scullin showed himself to be.

The Minister for Lands: But they were not as responsible as the Prime Minister.

Hon. M. F. TROY: This is no new agreement.

Mr. Corboy: They condoned it.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It was merely the continuation of an agreement entered into by successive Nationalists and Country Party Governments, which have ruled Australia since 1916.

The Minister for Lands: And endorsed by the Labour Government.

Hon. M. F. TROY: These Governments were also responsible for the high rate provided in the agreement. In the beginning the rate was reasonable, but Mr. Hughes, Mr. Bruce and Dr. Earle Page were instrumental in a high rate being imposed, similar to that now being charged to the people of Australia.

Mr. H. W. Mann: If ever there was a time when the rate should be reduced, it is now.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Mr. Scullin merely followed the bad example of his predecessors.

Mr. H. W. Mann: We will leave it at that.

Hon. M. F. TROY: No party in Australia is entitled to say that any other party is responsible, and that it has not played some part in it.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Quite right. I said that.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Country Party are forever attacking the sugar agreement, but Dr. Earle Page, their leader, was the strongest factor in it.

The Attorney General: He took his share.

Hon. M. F. TROY: He was the spokesman for the sugar producers.

Mr. H. W. Mann: So was Mr. Ford.

Hon. M. F. TROY: This question was tested in the Federal Parliament. It was brought forward by Senator Sir Hal Colebatch, representing Western Australia, and he put it to the vote. A number of freetraders who denounced the agreement, voted for it. Whereas the Senate has dominated the Federal Parliament, is all-powerful when it comes to disallowing waterside regulations and rejecting the Wheatgrowers' Assistance Bill, it passed the motion dealing with the new agreement.

The Minister for Lands: The Western Australian senators did not vote for it.

Hon. M. F. TROY: That is arrant hypocrisy. Take the case of the Honourable Senator Bertie Johnston, whom we ought to call the "most honourable." Would he not be most plausible over this, emphasising the effect the industry was having upon thousands of families, the money it was costing them and the advantage to the producers in Queensland.

The Minister for Lands: He got his training with a good party.

Mr. Corboy: He was with it for only five days.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Western Australian representatives voted against the agreement because the people here are unanimously opposed to it. Theirs was a very gallant, heroic and courageous action, seeing that all their constituents were looking to them to give their vote in the negative. The Country Party and Nationalist senators from the other States, however, made up the majority in the Senate and Senator Sir Hal Colebatch's motion was defeated. The Tasmanian senators, whose State is most concerned, where were they? Even Senator Colebatch, in his statements in the "West Australian," pointed the accusing finger at them. They were not even present. Let this eternal propaganda against a certain party end. The alleged freetraders are only freetraders where they run no risk through being freetraders.

The Attorney General: Do you disagree with the motion?

Hon. M. F. TROY: I agree with it, but I utterly denounce the hypocrites who are posing as freetraders, who blame the Labour Party, but never had the courage to maintain the stand they take in the country. We know that bounties and bonuses are a great infliction upon the mass of the Australian people. They are a great handicap to our development and efficiency in industry. But what do these people say about the Paterson butter scheme? Will the member for Perth move a motion against the Paterson butter scheme? That scheme is an iniquity. There is no more to be said for it than for the sugar agreement; in fact, less. The Australian sugar industry is, anyhow, carried on by white labour, employs about 30,000 men, and comes into competition with black-labour produced sugar except the unimportant quantities of beet sugar produced by a

few European countries. Why does the butter industry require the Paterson scheme? Why does it require a bonus taken out of the pockets of Australian consumers? Because it cannot compete with the butter industry of New Zealand, where the cost of land and the cost of labour are just as high. The Australian butter producer is so incompetent and so inefficient that he must have the Paterson scheme, by which he takes over £2,000,000 out of the pockets of Australian consumers every year, and must also have the further protection of a duty of 6d. per lb. on butter coming from New Zealand. What have Mr. Prowse and Senator Johnston and Senator Colebatch to say regarding the Paterson butter scheme? To them the sugar bonus is a tremendous iniquity, but I say the Paterson butter scheme, of which one of the strongest supporters is Mr. Macfarlane, the chairman of the Nationalist Party in Western Australia, is an equal iniquity. We have lost as much in group settlement as would provide butter free to the people of Western Australia for six years. The Paterson butter scheme is a further impost on every consumer. For what reason? Just the same as in the sugar industry, to maintain the price of land at much above what is a fair thing.

The Attorney General: The dried fruit business is just the same.

Hon. M. F. TROY: But to a less extent.

The Attorney General: It is the same principle.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It is not so important, because we need sugar and butter in large quantities, but can do without dried fruits.

The Attorney General: What about eggs?

Hon. M. F. TROY: What is the attitude of Mr. Prowse? To give Dr. Earle Page his due, he is consistent on both matters. He stands by the sugar bonus, and he stands by the Paterson butter scheme, which is the scheme of the Country Party. Mr. Paterson, the Deputy Leader of the Country Party, claims it as his scheme. By this means there is taken out of the pockets of the Australian people between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000 annually, merely to maintain land values in the Eastern States at far above their proper level. If the Australian butter producer with all the advantages of climate and soil and rainfall cannot compete against butter producers in other parts of the world, he is not worth bothering about. I know that dairying land in the Eastern

States has been sold at over £100 per acre. It is not worth that. It is not worth £50 per acre. The talk is all for stabilisation of the industry, and the more it is stabilised with bonuses the more inefficient and lazier the producers become, and the more their land values go up. I am able to draw comparisons between the conditions of to-day and the conditions of years ago. In those years they produced butter at 9d. per lb.

The Minister for Lands: What about high tariffs and bonuses?

Hon. M. F. TROY: The butter producers had their land cleared and their improvements made years ago. They and their forefathers have been on that land for 70 years. Many of these young dairy farmers have had their farms handed over to them clear of debt by their frugal and careful parents. What plant does a dairy farmer require? A separator and a small engine. Some have milking machines, but very few. In New Zealand nearly every farmer has a milking machine. There the condition is one of efficiency and up-to-dateness. But in the Eastern States one sees the same old conditions which obtained 30 and 40 years ago. We are told that because of bonuses to other industries dairy farmers must get a higher price for their butter. But how do the bonuses affect their cost of living? I notice that one of the committee appointed by the Federal Government to inquire into the sugar agreement was Mrs. Morgan, who was appointed in the State of Western Australia. This lady stated that the committee provided £240 a year as income of the farmer. The committee, she said, worked out the figures on the basis that the farmer ought to have £240 a year income, and that then he should get a price to cover all the other costs. The farmer who has an income of £240 cash has, with the other things he produces, an income of from £500 to £700. The farmer's income is not counted in pounds, shillings and pence, but includes commodities he grows on his farm. In the case of the butter industry 80 or 90 per cent. of the farmer's requirements are produced on the farm. Yet we are told that bonuses hit him hard. His land is cleared, he requires very little plant and equipment, and these things may last him for years. He ought to produce a great deal of his own requirements. The farmer is the one man in Australia who can escape many tariff

exactions, because of the fact that he is able to provide so many of his own requirements from his own property. If he does not do so, he is deserving of no sympathy whatever. And that is what really happens in the case of these farmers. They buy everything. They are too indifferent to grow commodities. All the Western Australian Federal members support the Paterson butter scheme; and Mr. Prowse, who is an out-and-out freetrader, the other day modestly pointed out what he had achieved regarding the tobacco industry. He said he was practically responsible for the prohibition on the importation of leaf. "Now," he said, "in view of this prohibition let Western Australia get on with the growing of tobacco. You have a payable price." He says that tariff is worth £100 per acre to us. Where the sugar industry is concerned he is utterly outraged by a similar arrangement; but where the Paterson scheme and the prohibition of the importation of tobacco leaf are concerned, he agrees that they are wise enactments. My objection to motions of this kind is that they get nowhere and are mere propaganda. I support the motion because, as I said in my opening remarks, there is not the shadow of a reason why to-day, in our depressed condition, in our increasingly impoverished condition, we in Australia should maintain one industry at a height of great prosperity when we all ought to be bearing sacrifices. I have felt for years that the sugar industry has had a good and prosperous time. Some little time ago there was a controversy in Perth between Mr. Murray, who I think is a member of the Nationalist Party, and a gentleman who came over from Queensland to speak in support of the continuance of the sugar agreement. They had an interesting discussion in the Perth Town Hall. Having some knowledge of the industry, I felt that the course which should be adopted by the Federal Parliament was a course midway between the one advocated by Mr. Murray and that of the gentleman from Queensland. Mr. Murray made an interesting speech, but was sadly handicapped by the fact that all his arguments were taken from data supplied, and that he had no knowledge whatever of the industry, with which he had never come in contact. The other man was standing out for the very best conditions he could get. I feel that the Federal Government would be very unwise indeed not to prolong the

life of the industry. The sugar industry is an advantage to Australia, and ought to be maintained. It provides settlement and population in one of the most remote portions of Australia, but it ought not to be maintained at such a cost to the consumer and other interests, as to be a burden.

The Attorney General: Are we sure that the industry cannot maintain itself?

Hon. M. F. TROY: I am sure it cannot maintain itself against the black-grown sugar of Java and Fiji.

The Attorney General: Why not?

Hon. M. F. TROY: Because labour is dirt cheap in both those countries. Imagine the Queensland growers competing with the conditions that operate in Java and Fiji.

The Attorney General: I am not sure that they cannot compete.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I am sure they cannot.

Mr. H. W. Mann: They should, with a £10 bonus.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Colonial Sugar Refining Company operate mills in Fiji, Queensland and New South Wales, and they can produce more cheaply in Fiji than in the Eastern States. Before federation there was a small duty on sugar but much of the labour employed in the industry in Queensland was brought from the South Sea Islands. In New South Wales, most of the labour came from India. I am compelled to admit that cane sugar in Australia cannot compete with sugar production elsewhere without protection, but that protection should be the mean between freetrade and the exorbitant imposts now levied, which amount almost to prohibition. In my opinion too generous treatment is not good for any industry. It builds up vested interests beyond what is a fair value, and creates inefficiency. Any highly protected industry becomes inefficient, and in the Queensland sugar industry, it means that the country occupied is not put to its full use. Those engaged in that industry can grow not only sugar but maize, bananas, pineapples, peanuts, cotton and other tropical commodities, and can secure annual crops. They can produce every tropical commodity required in Australia. I support the motion, and I hope it will be agreed to. At the same time I trust that the time is not far distant when conditions in Australia will compel a review of the

agreement, and that our sadly harassed and heavily burdened people will not be called upon to maintain the sugar industry without some sacrifice on the industry's part.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [8.3]: With the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy), I regret that the carrying of the motion will not be of immense benefit to us, but it should show our masters in the Federal Parliament that we have reached the stage when we no longer support the prevalent system of embargoes, bonuses and bounties. I noted that hon. members' remarks regarding the attitude adopted by Mr. Prowse, M.H.R., concerning tobacco production.

Mr. Corboy: Do you disagree with Mr. Prowse?

MR. SAMPSON: The hon. member knows that Mr. Prowse, when in Rome, must do as Rome does. It would be hopeless for him to stand definitely for free trade and oppose everything that depends upon the imposition of duties, particularly in view of the fact that our Federal Houses are so obsessed with the bounty system. The member for Mt. Magnet has furnished us with some splendid arguments in favour of secession, and I am sorry his speech was not made on the motion that will be discussed later on.

Mr. Panton: Do you not think some members of Parliament in Western Australia have been inoculated?

MR. SAMPSON: I hope the wisdom of the words of the member for Mt. Magnet will not be lost upon members generally. Unfortunately the sugar agreement has been renewed for five years, although the price of sugar may be reviewed after three years. I have visited Queensland and when at Bundaberg, the impression I gathered was that the sugar growers were comparatively well-to-do.

Hon. M. F. Troy: They are well-to-do.

MR. SAMPSON: Their standard of living is superior to that of the wheatgrowers. While it may appear that some support is necessary for the sugar industry, it is a commentary on the existing state of affairs that the Australian wheatgrowers are called upon to compete with the rest of the world and to transport their produce to far-distant parts. Much could be said regarding the cost of producing the soya bean in Manchuria, which is now being used in place

of wheat. Much could be said also on the motion now under consideration regarding the incidence of the high protective policy adopted in Australia, were it not for the fact that the discussion could not have any great effect. It is monstrous to think that those who produce wheat and other primary products in Western Australia and other States, including Queensland, must carry the burden not only of the sugar embargo but of the high protection policy. If there is one thing that makes for inefficiency in industry, it is the imposition of a high protection policy, to which the member for Mt. Magnet has already referred.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This is not a discussion on freetrade versus protection.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am replying to the member for Mt. Magnet.

Mr. Corbory: You are not; you are addressing the Speaker!

Mr. SAMPSON: Arguments have been advanced regarding the benefits accruing to the community through the granting of bonuses, bounties and embargoes. I have already pointed out that high protection makes for inefficiency, and I agree with the member for Mt. Magnet on that point. In fact, within certain limitations, I agree with much that hon. member said. Particulars regarding the export of sugar from Australia show that last year 215,000 tons were sent away, for which we received £2,000,000. I contend that the production of that quantity of sugar for such a return does not represent any advantage to Australia at all. On the other hand, it is economically unsound. The argument often advanced in support of the sugar embargo is that during the war period the people of Australia were able to buy sugar for 6d. per lb. It may readily be admitted that we did benefit to that extent because of the fact that the sugar was produced in Australia. That was a long time ago, and surely we are not to be asked to endorse the sugar embargo permanently merely because of that fact! The cost of production may be of interest to members. I have the figures given by the Sugar Inquiry Committee for raw sugar per ton as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Hawaii	13	10	10
South Africa ..	15	13	10
Germany	15	19	2
Formosa (high grade) ..	17	11	8
United States (beet) ..	18	13	4
Australia	23	0	0
Argentina	24	5	0

Hon. M. F. Troy: Some of those quotations are in respect of raw sugar, and some fine sugar.

Mr. SAMPSON: No, those prices are all in respect of raw sugar, according to a speech delivered by Mr. Martens in the House of Representatives on the 21st May last, in the course of which he quoted from the minority report of the Sugar Inquiry Committee.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The cost of raw sugar in Queensland is £18 7s. per ton.

Mr. SAMPSON: According to the figures I have quoted, the cost in Australia is £23.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Well, that is not so.

Mr. Corboy: The member for Swan is £5 out in his reckoning.

Mr. SAMPSON: I will not accept the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy) as an authority on sugar or anything else, unless you, Mr. Speaker, force me to do so. It is interesting to note the fluctuation of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's shares in view of the recent inquiry. In February of last year the shares were quoted at £46. In October last when it was expected that the embargo would be varied, the shares declined to £29 2s. 6d. In March of this year they rose to £35, and to-day the shares are quoted at £42. It is quite evident that, no matter how other industries may suffer, sugar is not to be allowed to do so. With other speakers, I regret that it is impossible for us to do more than pass what amounts to a mere pious resolution, but a unanimous vote on the motion may have some little effect in showing the Federal Parliament that the time has arrived when they must review a policy that has injured Australia so much. The motion has not been brought forward for party purposes, and I think every hon. member will support it. I regret that this policy has been re-affirmed, and that the embargo has been continued. In the circumstances, we can do no more than carry the motion.

Question put and passed.

	£	s.	d.
Cuba	8	8	4
Java (white) ..	9	5	0
Fiji	11	8	0
British West Indies ..	12	8	4

MOTION—SECESSION, REFERENDUM.

Debate resumed from the 20th May, on the following motion by Mr. H. W. Mann (Perth), as amended:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should introduce a Bill to enable a referendum of the electors of Western Australia to be taken on this question:—"Are you in favour of Western Australia withdrawing from the Federation?"

MR. CORBOY (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [S.15]: I do not intend to support the motion, despite the look of astonishment on the face of the Minister for Lands.

Mr. Panton: He is only trying to look astonished.

Mr. CORBOY: It may be only his child-like innocence, but he seems to be astonished at almost anything.

Mr. Sampson: The people of Yilgarn will be astonished at your attitude.

Mr. CORBOY: Not at all; I give them credit for larger minds. They are not so parochial as to wish me to support anything of this kind. The speech of the member for Perth impressed me as being a very able one in favour of secession, but it was extremely difficult to find anything in it to convince one that we should take a referendum of the people of Western Australia. He put up a most able case in favour of breaking up Australia into its component States, but not a solitary argument in favour of taking a referendum of the people in this State alone.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Leave it to the people.

Mr. CORBOY: To the people of the Commonwealth, yes. I might possibly agree with the hon. member in seeking a referendum of the people of the Commonwealth as to whether the present Federal Constitution should continue in force. To put up a motion that this State alone should take a referendum, however, is an entirely different matter. The hon. member has not offered a single argument to justify the taking of a referendum in this State alone.

Mr. Panton: He did not attempt to do so.

Mr. CORBOY: No. In his child-like innocence, to repeat a term already used, he gave away some of his very good friends in Perth, friends engaged in commercial activities. Apparently the hon. member set out to show the disabilities that Western Australian purchasers of galvanised iron suffered as a result of the Federal tariff, prohibition, bounties, and so on.

Mr. H. W. Mann: To the disadvantage of this State.

Mr. Sampson: That would justify the taking of a vote.

Mr. CORBOY: The hon. member has delivered himself into my hands. All he succeeded in showing was that there existed a combination of three or four firms in Western Australia who had put their heads together, to the exclusion of other firms, and had set out—to use his own words—deliberately to rob the people of this community. He said there was an organisation known as the Galvanised Iron Dealers' Association, and added—

I shall not go into details, but will show what opportunities monopoly gives to traders—I will use the term—to rob the general public of large sums of money.

Because three or four firms have put their heads together to rob the people of this State, the hon. member argued that we ought to pull out of the Federation.

Mr. Griffiths: Was that his only argument?

Mr. CORBOY: No, but the whole case he submitted was based on similar arguments. There is a whole column of "Hansard" covering his statements about galvanised iron to show what happened when Lysaght's representative was here. He pointed out to the three or four firms that it was of no use making the game too hot, that certain people would squeal, and that they had better be let in. They let in the State Sawmills, but did not let others in. Subsequently three or four firms crept in, but the three or four who crept in are not on the same terms as the original members of the Galvanised Iron Dealers' Association.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Do you agree with that?

Mr. CORBOY: I do not, but it is not an argument in favour of a referendum on secession. It is an argument in favour of a Bill to control the monopoly and the rottenness exposed by the hon. member. It has nothing to do with Federation.

Mr. H. W. Mann: We cannot control a prohibition imposed by the Federal Government.

Mr. CORBOY: But we can control the operations of local firms who put their heads together as the hon. member described. That is our business, and it does not affect the question whether this State should or should not continue in the Federation. The

whole of the hon. member's case rested upon such stupid arguments. The firms who, according to the hon. member, set out to rob the people of this State are not traders of Sydney or Melbourne; they are Perth firms. Because Perth traders are robbing us, he argues that we should get out of Federation. I do not know where his logic comes in. I cannot conceive of anybody attempting to substantiate a withdrawal from Federation on such grounds. That, however, is quite a side issue. As regards Western Australia, it is not a question of whether we are getting a fair deal from the Commonwealth or not. In my opinion Federation has operated detrimentally to this State. What the remedy for that might be is another matter. The Commonwealth Government recognise that we have suffered very grave disabilities under Federation, and in a small measure have compensated us for those disabilities.

Mr. Griffiths: Given us back some of that which they took from us.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes. We have suffered disabilities, and the Commonwealth Government have recognised the fact.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Do you know that the term of the disabilities grant expires at the end of this month?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes. Whether we have suffered disabilities under Federation is not the point involved in this motion. There is hardly a line in the "Hansard" report of the hon. member's speech that has any bearing on the motion. He put up a splendid case for secession, but he put up no case in favour of a referendum of the people of Western Australia alone. What does the hon. member hope to accomplish by a referendum of the people of Western Australia? The motion asks "Are you in favour of Western Australia withdrawing from the Federation?" Suppose 90 per cent. of the people voted "Yes," would it get us anywhere? Would it accomplish anything? All it would accomplish would be the expenditure of some £5,000 to take the referendum; nothing else. As I said in conversation with some of the people who are engineering this move, this is nothing more or less than a confidence trick; it is one more little method of bolstering up those people who support the Dominion League, the secession league or the "Sunday Times." We are considering a 20 per cent. cut in wages, pensions and other expenditure, and should

we spend £5,000 on a valueless referendum just to bolster up those people who wish to force secession on us? If they would work for a Commonwealth-wide referendum on the Federal Constitution, one might consider giving them some support, as there might then be some chance of remedying the disabilities under which this State labours.

The Minister for Lands: Would not that cost as much as a State referendum?

Mr. CORBOY: Maybe it would, but were it carried, it might influence the Imperial authorities to give their consent to the abolition of the present Commonwealth Constitution. One State alone carrying a referendum to pull out of Federation would not accomplish anything. That is perfectly obvious.

Mr. Sampson: It is not obvious at all.

Mr. CORBOY: It is. Does the member for Perth believe that the Imperial authorities would take the slightest notice of one State of the Commonwealth wishing to withdraw from the Federation?

Mr. H. W. Mann: It would depend upon the majority.

Mr. CORBOY: It would not. The hon. member does not believe that the Imperial authorities would take the slightest notice of one disgruntled partner to a contract wishing to pull out.

Mr. Griffiths: The Imperial authorities made an exception in the case of Burma.

Mr. CORBOY: I am more interested in our own difficulties. There is sufficient to do in trying to rectify them without going to Burma. This motion aims at the absolute waste of £5,000 of State funds, because the referendum could not be other than useless.

Mr. Panton: We are told we have not got £5,000.

Mr. CORBOY: I do not know that the position is so serious as that, but it is pretty bad.

Mr. Panton: Try to get £5,000 for prospectors and you will find out.

Mr. CORBOY: It is impossible to get five "bob" for them, let alone £5,000. The member for Perth, if he sincerely believes this State should withdraw from the Federation, would do better to endeavour to secure Australian-wide action. He should strive to obtain an expression of opinion from the whole of the people and then the Imperial authorities might listen to it. I

do not know that they would listen to it, but they might. They probably would not invite another Boston tea party if the whole of the people said they wanted a certain thing, but they would not pay much attention to one State and particularly what is, from their point of view, a minor State of the Commonwealth. There are six partners to the Federation, and when things grow bad we wish to get out of our liabilities and troubles, just as individuals do. Is it fair or right that one partner should endeavour to pull out? Even if this State were the only financially sound partner, would any court allow the one financially sound partner to pull out, leaving the creditors to come on the other five partners?

Mr. Sampson interjected.

Mr. CORBOY: The hon. member need not mention unemployment. His electorate is chock full of the sins of the present Government as manifested in unemployment.

Mr. Sampson: They are in my electorate.

Mr. CORBOY: If they are there in two years' time, the hon. member may regret it.

Hon. A. McCallum: The hon. member is repeating it like a parrot.

Mr. SPEAKER: I can hear only one member and that is the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie.

Mr. CORBOY: Evidently I misunderstood the interjection of the member for Swan. I thought it was to the effect that his electorate had the biggest percentage of unemployed, instead of which I now understand that he said some other part of the Commonwealth had a bigger percentage of unemployed than we had. If that is true, they have our sympathy, but it is not true and the hon. member knows it. It is right to say that the credit of Western Australia is higher than that of any other part of the Commonwealth. We have only to look at the market reports to realise that that is so.

Mr. Sampson: It is not the highest.

Mr. CORBOY: If it is not the highest of all, it is not the lowest.

Mr. Sampson: You are talking without knowing anything.

Mr. H. W. Mann: You are generally right, but you are wrong this time.

Mr. CORBOY: I am glad to know that the member for Perth admits I am generally

right. What does the hon. member hope to accomplish by this motion? He did not tell us in the course of his speech. Does he hope to bolster up the few who are running the Dominion League?

Mr. H. W. Mann: My hope is the same as yours, and that is to secure relief for the State.

Mr. CORBOY: The hon. member knows as well as I do that he cannot get relief for the State merely by getting the opinion of the people of the State.

Mr. H. W. Mann: It is the first necessary step.

Mr. CORBOY: What for? Where will you go from that?

Mr. H. W. Mann: The voice of the people is what you stand for.

Mr. CORBOY: Let the hon. member try to secure a referendum of the people of the Commonwealth. That would amount to something. While I admit there is no provision in the Commonwealth constitution for breaking up the Commonwealth, let the referendum be carried by the people of Australia on the lines laid down for the taking of referenda—a majority of the people and a majority of the States—and I have no doubt whatever that the Imperial authorities would then have to give it consideration. I am equally convinced they would give no consideration whatever to this little child crying in the wilderness as though someone had taken its dummy from it.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Anyway, we can start in Western Australia.

MR. PIESSE (Katanning) [8.35]: It is not my intention to speak at any length, but I feel it is my duty to place before the House some information that has been sent on to me by one road board in the electorate I represent. I wish briefly to support what has been done by that road board in their endeavour to meet the situation that has arisen regarding the question of secession. The Katanning District Road Board's desire was to place before the Government a scheme for taking a referendum without incurring very much expense. It seems to me that the greatest objection that can be raised at the present time, indeed the only objection by those opposed to the motion, is the cost that it will entail at this unfortunate period of financial stress. I might be excused for

saying that for the unfortunate position in which we find ourselves in regard to Federation, no one can be blamed more than ourselves. Unfortunately one has to form the opinion that our sovereign rights have almost been forgotten when perhaps a united effort on the part of all parties in Parliament might have saved them. Since the introduction of Federation, those rights have been gradually whittled away until to-day nearly every avenue for the raising of revenue has been taken from us by the Commonwealth Parliament. I have no desire to raise any party issue, but we know that not only the present Federal Government, but previous Governments, Nationalists as well, were largely to blame for the unfortunate position in which we now find ourselves. When we come to think of some of the serious disabilities under which we labour, and particularly the difficulties for which we have been getting relief from the Federal Government, I think a very good case can be put up, that at least for a time, as suggested by the Royal Commission which inquired into our disabilities, we should be given the right to manage our own affairs for the next 20 years. If it is at all possible we should secede from the Federation. The issue of secession, as hon. members must admit, has been one of the burning questions in this State for the past 12 months, and therefore it is the duty of this Parliament to give the electors the opportunity to voice their opinions on this subject. I know it is impossible for members on both sides of the House to agree, and it is impossible also to get an exact expression of opinion during a general election from one side or the other because of other issues that are involved. An important question of this kind should not be obscured by party issues. By permission of the House I would like to read the circular letter written by the Katanning Road Board on the 27th January on this subject. It was addressed to the chairman of the various road boards in the State:—

At the last meeting of my Board held on the 17th January, the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

Believing that the electors of Western Australia should be given an early opportunity of expressing a definite opinion on the question as to whether Western Australia should seek relief from Federation and to become a self-governing dominion

within the British Empire, this Board requests the Premier to arrange for a referendum on the question at an early date, on the lines proposed by a recent deputation, and recommends that voting be made compulsory, and in order, if possible, to minimise the expense thereof offers—(1) To use its best efforts to have polling places within its district made available, including its own hall, and (2) the honorary services of the staff and members of the Board.

This Board further suggests to the Premier that presiding officers and others should be approached to assist at the poll without fee, feeling that there would be no difficulty in making such arrangements. That a copy of this resolution be sent (1) to the Road Board Association executive, asking for its support; (2) to the Premier of Western Australia; (3) to the Dominion League of Western Australia; (4) to all other road boards in the State, asking them to adopt the same or a similar resolution, and send same to the Premier's Department, and the Road Board Association.

My board hopes that you will fall in with the suggestion made, and adopt this, or a similar resolution and forward it to the Premier's Department and the Road Board Association as mentioned therein.

Whether the personal opinion of individuals is in favour of Western Australia breaking away from the Federation or not, it seems to my board that the question having been so much discussed should be put before the electors for a definite answer, and at an early date.

In the report of the recent deputation to the Premier by the Dominion League, asking for a referendum, you will have noticed that the anticipated expense was commented on and my board believes if the suggestions made in the resolution were followed out that both staffs and members of road boards and civil servants generally would be prepared to show to a great extent that public spirit for which Western Australians are well known.

My board feels that the importance of this matter to Western Australians merits urgent consideration and trusts that your Board will consider this matter at its next meeting.

Replies to that letter came from 41 road boards acquiescing in the suggestion that a referendum be taken. The total number of road boards in the State I understand is 126. The number that decided to take no action was 12 and only four replied that they were against the proposal or against any referendum being taken. The figures I have given, I think, are a remarkable response in favour of the motion before the House. I can only hope that there is a possibility of the suggestion being carried out. The only objection seems to me to be the question of expense. I have submitted this information to hon. members in the

hope that it may be of some assistance in the direction of deciding upon the motion.

On motion by Mr. Griffiths, debate adjourned.

MOTION—MIGRANTS' REPATRIATION.

Debate resumed from the 20th May, on the following motion by Mr. Sleeman:—

That the Government be requested to make arrangements immediately to repatriate all migrants who are unable to obtain work here, hundreds of whom are going hungry and practically naked, and that they use all the influence in their power to get the Federal Parliament to issue the necessary passports, and the Imperial Government to agree to these people being returned home.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [8.45]: I cannot support the motion, which I regard as utterly useless and unlikely to serve the slightest good purpose. The Financial Agreement would preclude action along the lines indicated by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman). Even if the suggested action were possible and desirable, I question the wisdom of doing anything of the sort. The member for Fremantle would be better advised to consider the matter more deeply and submit cogent reasons why the action he suggests should be taken. The effect of the motion would be further to injure Australia in the eyes of the world. If we were able to deal with our basic difficulty—high protection—and were able to effect an alteration of the policy involved, we might get somewhere.

Mr. Panton: I suppose that explains the position in free-trade England.

Mr. SAMPSON: No, that is quite another story. When for a brief period I was Colonial Secretary, I received frequent requests from migrants for their return to the Old Country at the cost of the State Government. Except in very special instances, it could not be done. Unfortunately it was found that some of those who had been sent out with a clean bill of health were suffering from tuberculosis or from the effect of early accidents, and, in some instances, were more or less mental. In one instance the migrant and his wife had been parties to a swindle in that they had both signed the declaration that the husband was in good health, whereas he had a steel-leather truss on one leg

and one arm was much shorter than the other, the result of some early tubercular trouble. The member for Fremantle referred to the difficulties experienced in Canada. I agree that unemployment and economic stress are apparent throughout the world, but I do not believe that the position here is as bad as in other countries, and certainly not as bad as it is in the Eastern States. From a humanitarian standpoint, I question whether the motion has much to recommend it. I doubt whether the migrants would be in a better position if they were to return to the Old Country. In fact I believe they would be well advised to remain here. Present-day conditions will not continue indefinitely, and when prosperity returns again the position of those who are already in the State will be much improved. There are a small number of migrants who, because they are physically or mentally unfit, should never have been permitted to land in Western Australia, and to that extent I agree with the member for Fremantle. While the times are abnormal, there are indications of an improvement. The price of wheat has improved a little; the position regarding wool has been bettered; the price of fruit has been comparatively good; and when wiser counsels prevail, a better market will be obtained for our timber. There are great opportunities in the South-West, for we have not yet reached the stage of being able to supply the requirements of our own market. In the North-West, the vast stretches of undeveloped country must receive the attention of the Government in the near future.

Mr. Wansbrough: That has been said for a long time.

Mr. SAMPSON: And it is a pity that something definite has not been done towards the development of that part of the State. There is room for an improvement in our herds throughout the North-West, and if that were done, opportunities would be found for the employment of many men who are debarred from securing work at present. I sympathise with those who are denied the opportunity to secure honest employment, and I appreciate the fact that their morale is being undermined. They have the misfortune to live at a time when work is not available, and they have had to become the victims of the dole system. This will not continue, and reproductive work will be found, with the result that we will once

more reach normal times. There is a note of despair in the words of the member for Fremantle. That is entirely wrong. There are signs of better times and when once more we are able to provide our people with work, those now unemployed will become producing units in the community. I was interested in the remarks of the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) regarding the early-day settlers in the Eastern States. The days that he pictured may return to us. I do not refer to the day of low wages, because payment for work may never be on the low basis that obtained in those days. It is not so much a question of wages as of the cost of living. With the reduction of living costs, the wages paid will command the purchasing power that they once did. When that time arrives, the people of Australia will prove to be just as efficient and as hard-working as those who established themselves in the early pioneering days.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [9.55]: Although I shall support the motion, I do not wish to be a croaker. I recognise the terrible times through which so many of our people are passing. Since the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) moved his motion, I have received letters from many migrants, including group settlers and others, imploring me to do my utmost to secure the passage of the motion, with a view to inducing the Federal Government to assist in returning them to the Old Country. They claim that once they are amongst their own folk again they will be in a better position than they are to-day in Australia. They claim that the dole in the Old Country is much better than it is out here.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Of course, you know that is untrue.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not.

Mr. H. W. Mann: It is untrue.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The conditions in Western Australia to-day for these struggling people are absolutely damnable. They are getting 7s. per week per unit, and they cannot keep life in their bodies. They have no clothes, and hardly anywhere to rest their heads. It is the function of Government to find work for the people. If they cannot do so, then it is the duty of Government to feed them properly and give them a chance to return to their own homes.

It is not the fault of the present Government, or any particular Government—State, Federal or Imperial—that the migrants are here. We encouraged them to come to Western Australia in all good faith, believing that the conditions we offered were sound. We believed, as the migrants themselves believed, that they would be able to make a living here and have some assurance regarding their future prospects. Unfortunately we have found that the picture we painted was too glowing. Many thousands in Western Australia are out of work. Instead of creating work for them, we are handing out the dole, and apparently it has to continue. The Government should have awakened to the position 12 months ago, and levied an unemployment tax, as many people begged them to do. With such a tax, the Government would have been able to create work and provide employment. Instead of doing that, this State, in common with the rest of Australia, and for that matter, the world, has adopted the dole system. Although perhaps the casual observer may think things are not as bad as they were 12 months ago, actually they are just as bad, although the unemployed are not walking the streets. Through the Child Welfare Department they are working out their sustenance and receiving the dole—two sixpenny meals per day and a bed ticket for the night. What encouragement is there for unemployed men to remain in the country districts when they can get this in town? None whatever. In the timber industry we have men anxious to work for their sustenance, but the Government are not able to find money to keep them in employment. A few days ago the member for Collie and I interviewed the Minister controlling unemployment relief and asked him was it not possible to continue to give sustenance to single sleeper cutters. However it was not possible, the Minister assured us, for the vote had been expended. The only alternative is for those men to come to Perth and get their meal tickets and bed tickets. What we should do is what the motion proposes, namely, allow all those migrants to go back Home. It would be cheaper for the Government to pay their fares and let them go. The Premier in a few days will be telling us something in consequence of which perhaps there will be no need for this motion: he is going to enlighten us as to the putting back of people into employment.

From letters I have received I am satisfied a great number of people who left the Old Country to come here are only too anxious to get back. If we carry the motion it will be a blow to our prestige, but what is prestige when people are starving? Many of the settlers that were in my district a few months ago are to-day in Perth receiving sustenance; and that applies to every district in the South-West. Committees in my district met the migrants on their arrival and told them that all they had to do was to throw the seed on the ground, that they were now in a land of milk and honey. Many of the able-bodied men only too willing to work left good positions in England and could secure employment again if only they could get back there.

On motion by Mr. H. W. Mann, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.5 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 17th June, 1931.

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

QUESTION—CATTLE, PLEURO-PNEUMONIA.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, How many cattle were condemned by officers of the Health Department on account of pleuro-pneumonia at (a) Robb's Jetty, Fremantle, during the year 1930, and (b) at Wyndham during the 1930 killing season? 2, What percentages of cattle were condemned of the numbers killed at each place?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, (a) Carcases condemned, 13; organs, 55; (b) carcases condemned, 25. 2, Robb's Jetty, .011 per cent.; Wyndham, .085 per cent.

QUESTION—FARMERS' DISABILITIES ROYAL COMMISSION.

Position of Mr. W. R. Murray.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, Has the attention of the Premier been drawn to the statement appearing in yesterday's issue of the "West Australian," under the heading "Farmers' Problems," that Mr. W. R. Murray, the president of the Perth Branch of the Nationalist Party, on Saturday submitted in the name of the Nationalist Party a plan for assisting farmers? 2, Is the statement correct? 3, If the statement is correct, when, and by whom, was Mr. Murray authorised to promulgate this scheme as a proposal of the National Party?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, It is a plan devised by the Perth Branch of the National Party to help the farmers.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

As to Report.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.35]: I move—

That the report of Committee be adopted.

I would like hon. members to understand that, if at all possible, this Bill should be passed through all remaining stages to-day. The Standing Orders are suspended, but I have not the slightest intention of taking advantage of that fact unless it becomes imperative as in connection with this measure. Only a small amount of time remains to have the necessary regulations framed and gazetted, and the Administrator's assent obtained. The traffic authorities have the new licenses prepared for the first of next month, and all the local governing bodies are in readiness to act. I shall be glad if hon. members will assist me to have the Bill returned with amendments to another place to-day.