

matter requires consideration, for this measure is not quite as simple as we are led to believe by some who have spoken on it elsewhere. I ask hon. members to carefully consider the matter and consult any available authorities to see if the clause really has the effect which we all desire. I am merely uttering a note of warning and have no idea of delaying the passage of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. C. Sommers debate adjourned.

MOTION—STATE IMPLEMENT WORKS, TO INQUIRE.

Debate resumed from the 9th September, on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter:—"That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the conduct and management (past and present) of the State Implement Works."

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [G.12]: On the previous occasion I simply asked for the adjournment believing that another member who was at the time absent desired to speak. I have since learnt that the mover of the motion is not anxious to proceed with it. I expect he will return to the Chamber in a few minutes and withdraw the motion. I hope, and I believe, that the Royal Commission recently appointed will go fully into the question, which is all that is desired by Mr. Baxter.

On motion by Hon. J. F. Cullen debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 15th September, 1915.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Papers *re* purchase of Diesel ship for State Steamship Service, 2, Amendments to Public Service Regulations made between 1st July, 1914, and 30th June, 1915.

By the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Audit of accounts of the Government Abattoirs, Kalgoorlie. 2, Audit of accounts of Albany Cold Stores.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, Adoption of Children Amendment.
- 2, Land and Income Tax.
- 3, Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Amendment.

QUESTION—SLEEPER FREIGHT AGREEMENT, CANCELLATION.

Hon. J. MITCHELL asked the Minister for Works: What amount of compensation was paid by the Government for the cancellation of the freight agree-

ment with McArdle, Bell and Co. for the carriage of sleepers to Port Augusta?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Six thousand pounds.

QUESTION—GRISTING AGREEMENT.

Hon. J MITCHELL asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is it true that the Government have cancelled the gristing agreement with Ockerby & Co. and the Perth Flour Milling Company? 2, If so, upon what terms?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL REFORM.

Mr. ALLEN asked the Attorney General: Will he inform members if a report has been received, or if any information is available, of the electoral reforms to be effected with the consent of the Commonwealth and State authorities?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: Yes; a report of the proceedings of the recent conference of State Electoral Officers in Sydney has been received by the Minister, and will be duly considered by the Minister and the Government, and any proposed legislative amendment to existing electoral laws will be submitted to Parliament in due course.

QUESTION—FOOD COMMISSION.

Mr. THOMSON asked the Premier: 1, What has been the expenditure incurred by the State in connection with the Food Commission up to the 30th June, 1915, including salaries to members? 2, What are the articles of food upon which the Commission have regulated prices? 3, Is it the intention of the Government to continue the operations of the Commission?

The PREMIER replied: 1, £1,861. 2, Mainly by mutual agreement with traders and importers the Commission have regulated prices in practically all main articles used for food consumption, as well as many lines of ordinary merchandise.

Proclamations have been issued fixing maximum selling prices for wheat (since cancelled), flour, bran, pollard, chaff, sugar, and fresh milk. 3, Yes.

QUESTION—STATE FARM, BEVERLEY.

Mr. WANSBROUGH asked the Minister for Lands: 1, What quantity of hay and wheat was reaped off the State Farm at Beverley last season? 2, How much wheat was sold as seed for planting last seeding, and at what price per bushel? 3, To whom was the balance (if any) sold—(a) date of sale; (b) at what price per bushel?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, 1,300 bags of wheat, 150 tons of hay. 2, 124 bags = 375 bushels (graded) at 8s. per bushel; 150 bags = 450 bushels (ungraded), at 7s. 6d. per bushel. 3, 516 bags sold to the Grain and Foodstuff Board—(a) 6th August, 1915; (b) 6s. 9d. per bushel. The balance, viz., 510 bags, was used in planting the area now under crop.

QUESTION—GOLDFIELDS WATER SCHEME.

Mr. HARRISON asked the Minister for Water Supply: 1, What is the total amount of loan moneys expended on the Goldfields water scheme to the 30th June, 1915? 2, What is the total amount paid by the State from general revenue for interest and sinking fund since the inception of the scheme?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY replied: 1, £3,379,241. 2, £1,059,003.

QUESTIONS (2)—EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

Police Benefit Fund.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Premier: 1, Why are the members of the police force who resign in order to enlist informed that they will be debarred from again entering the service? 2, Is it true

that members of the force resigning to go to the front are denied all benefits from the Police Benefit Fund, into which some have paid for years?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No member of the police force has been so informed. 2, No; the cause of the resignation from the police force does not affect the benefits under the Police Benefit Fund, which are governed by regulations framed under the statute. To vary or amend these regulations in order to make special provision in favour of officers enlisting would be dangerous, as the condition of the fund from an actuarial standpoint must be considered equally with the fact that members of the Police Force are contributories. If an alteration were made in the regulations to meet special cases, it would probably necessitate an increased burden on the police in the shape of higher contributions, in order to maintain the fund in a solvent condition.

Teachers' Privileges.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Education: 1, Will he assure the teaching profession that no teacher on active service shall lose in any way through serving his country? 2, Is he aware that married teachers have gone to the war, and their wives and children have had to vacate the school quarters, and hence the dependents of these volunteers are losing through the bread winner serving his country? 3, As teachers going to the front lose their chances of passing examinations while others who stay at home pass and take precedence, will he see that this is altered.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, There has been assured to all the teachers whilst they are away at the front the rights and privileges they now enjoy; in other words, their rights and privileges will be conserved during their absence. 2, As to the allowance to married teachers' wives and families remaining here, two cases have been brought under the notice of the department where families have had to remove because there has been no other accommodation for the married teachers taking the

schools in the absence of those at the front. The question of making an equivalent rent allowance is under consideration.

Mr. Heitmann: If you make an allowance for the teachers, you must do so for all sections.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is so; that is why I said it is under consideration. I am making inquiries as to what is being done in other departments. 3, It is impossible to stop the examinations as they fall due, but no teacher's examinations will be held for the next 12 months, and we hope by that time the war will be over.

QUESTION—FIRE BREAKS, LEGISLATION.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Works: As there is no compulsory Act for the provision of fire breaks, the Engine Sparks Prevention Act applying to only private railways, will he bring forward some measure to remedy this?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The question will receive consideration.

SELECT COMMITTEE, PERTH- FREMANTLE ROAD.

Extension of time.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco) [444]: I move—

That the time for bringing up the report of the select committee be extended till Tuesday, 21st September.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [445]: I wish to ask the chairman of this select committee whether he will have the report here on Tuesday next. It is customary when the Estimates are introduced that particulars of municipal subsidies should be available; and, in accordance with the decision arrived at, the amount to be charged to each district is fixed, and is taken out of the subsidy granted by Parliament. There is a possibility that if this report is not available, the subsidies may be withheld. We ought

to be given some information now as to when the committee propose to submit their report.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco—in reply) [4.46]: I expect that the report will be available on Tuesday next. It would have been here to-day but for the fact that I have volunteered to assist in getting out the war census cards which are being furnished to the Commonwealth Government. As hon. members are aware, the Commonwealth Government have asked for the assistance of local bodies in this connection. The Subiaco council called a meeting for that purpose, and I am assisting them. Both yesterday and to-day I was fully engaged on that work, and in fact had to disappoint a meeting of the select committee called for 1.30 to-day. Had it not been for that fact, the report would now be available. I have no doubt that it will be presented on Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE, HORSE-RACING CONTROL.

Interim Report presented—Extension of Time.

Mr. Hudson brought up an interim report of the joint select committee appointed to inquire into the control of horse-racing.

Report read.

Mr. HUDSON (Yilgarn) [4.49]: I move—

That the interim report of the committee be received, and that 14 days' extension of time be granted for the presentation of the completed report.

Question passed.

The Premier: Should not the hon. member move that the interim report be adopted and taken into consideration at some future date, so that we can have the opinion of the House on it?

Mr. Hudson: I referred to the Clerk on that point, and was informed that, this not being a completed report, such a course would not be necessary. The report, after all, only makes recommendations.

BILL—SALE OF LIQUOR REGULATION.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—COTTESLOE BEACH RATES VALIDATION.

Introduced by the Minister for Works and read a first time.

RETURN—AGRICULTURAL BANK OPERATIONS.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [4.52]: I understand from the Government that there is no opposition to this motion, and I therefore formally move—

That there be laid upon the Table of the House a return showing,—1, The total capital of the Agricultural Bank authorised by Parliament since its inception to June 30th, 1915. 2, The total amount of loans authorised by the trustees to farmers up to June 30th, 1915. 3, The total amount actually advanced to farmers up to June 30th, 1915. 4, The total amount of gain or loss to the State in administration of the Bank—(a) up to June 30th, 1912; (b.) up to June 30th, 1915. 5, The total amount of loans advanced to farmers that has been unpaid by them. 6, Whether these repayments are credited to—(a.) Consolidated Revenue of the State, or (b.) the sinking fund of the loans authorised by Parliament, or are made available for fresh advances to the farmers. 7, The total amount of interest and sinking fund paid by the State from General Revenue for interest and sinking fund on the total amount of capital advanced to the farmers up to June 30th, 1915.

Question passed.

MOTION—DISTRICT SURVEY OFFICES, TO RE-OPEN.

Debate resumed from the 1st September on the motion by the Hon. J. Mitchell, "That in the opinion of this House it is advisable that the district survey offices be reopened" and on the amend-

ment moved by Mr. E. B. Johnston, "That the following words be added to the motion: 'on an economical basis during the present period of financial stress, in order to keep the existing district records up to date, for the convenience of the settlers concerned.'"

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford—on amendment) [4.55]: I suppose it will be obvious to hon. members that, in view of my remarks on the original motion, it is impossible for me to agree to the amendment. It is true that the amendment includes a proviso that district survey offices shall be reopened on an economical basis; but it proceeds to give as a reason for the re-opening of these offices on an economical basis that the records can be kept up to date. It can hardly be contended that the re-opening of the district survey offices for the mere purpose of keeping records has an economical basis, because there is not enough work to employ even one man fully in keeping the records. As I pointed out on the original motion, it has been recognised by the Government that as time goes on and conditions throughout the world improve, immigration will be again flowing to our shores, with the result that we shall have considerable numbers of new settlers. When that condition obtains, of course it may be necessary to re-open the district survey offices; and in order that difficulties may not arise under such circumstances, the records are being kept up to date and the books of all the district survey offices are being kept separately. Therefore, if it is proposed to re-open the office at Northam, the books will be transferred to that centre; or if it is decided to re-open at Narrogin, the books will be transferred thither. Apart from that, we are maintaining the district land offices, with the result that the connection is still maintained.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: What about keeping draftsmen at the offices?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would not be proper to keep draftsmen at the offices because they are not capable of doing the other work which would be needed in order that they might be fully

employed. A draftsman would not be qualified to carry out those duties of other Government departments, which are performed in connection with the land offices. For that reason we have selected competent all-round men who can attend to the clerical work attaching to lands offices, and also do work for the Treasury, the Savings Bank, and other departments. Thus the lands offices are being maintained in that way, and they are being maintained on an economical basis. We cannot, however, maintain the district survey offices, because the work is not there to be done. Where there is no work to do we cannot, in these times, keep offices open just for the purpose of being prepared for a resumption of work. What was necessary in the past is not necessary under existing conditions.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam—on amendment) [4.58]: I hope the amendment will be carried.

The Minister for Lands: You preach economy, but you do not like it in practice.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I always practise it, and have especially practised it in Government affairs, as the Minister himself proved conclusively the other night. He proved out of his own mouth that my administration was economical. The hon. gentleman now says that he cannot accept the amendment. I assure the House that the Minister is perfectly able to keep the records at the district survey offices without any considerable additional expense. He has all the officers required for this purpose in and about the departments in Perth. Quite apart from that aspect of the matter, this is not a question of keeping books up to date, but of keeping plans and records up to date. The Minister knows how much the preparation of those plans and records cost when the offices were opened.

The Minister for Lands: They will be kept up to date.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I am afraid they will not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: And I am afraid they will not. I fear that when

the books and plans are sent back to Northam they will not be found in a suitable condition. I do not believe in that kind of economy which whittles away the conveniences that the Government are bound to provide in order to get revenue. Only last night the Premier said he expected to get over £400,000 from lands.

The Premier: What has that to do with the district survey offices?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: A great deal. No surveys—no money. Under the arrangement proposed by the Minister, I understand, in some of these centres a Savings Bank clerk will be kept to do lands work. The Minister knows that a man inexperienced in land matters will not be satisfactory in a district survey office. I hope the House will agree to the proposed amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	22
Noes	..	..	..	16

Majority for 6

AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Male
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Connolly	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Gilchrist	Mr. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. George
Mr. Holman	(Teller).
Mr. Johnston	

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Foley	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Green	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Bolton
Mr. McDowall	(Teller).
Mr. Mullany	

Amendment thus passed.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [5.4]: I hope the House will seriously consider the motion before agreeing to it. After all, not very much exception could be taken to

the amendment, because if the motion is to be carried it is essential that it should be amended as it has been. In any case, I hope the House will consider the desirability of defeating the motion, even as amended. Surely under existing conditions the Government should be in the most satisfactory position to judge where economies can best be introduced without inflicting hardship on the general community. If we are to be called upon, merely for the sake of keeping one or two officers in a particular town in work and in pay in that town—

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It can be done better and more cheaply there.

The PREMIER: Experience shows that such is not the case. If we are to be compelled to do that, I want to know where it is going to land the country. After all, while in normal times it may be desirable, for the convenience of the public, to have these offices open in different parts of the State, yet under existing conditions it is not desirable that we should keep offices open merely for the purpose of maintaining local records, records which can be maintained at the central offices where men are available for the offices where men are available for the work. There is no reason why we should keep men idle in offices at local centres. We have a splendid opportunity of economising—and evidently it is desired in many quarters—by retrenchment in the public service; but the method we are now adopting does not inflict any hardship. Vacancies are occurring from time to time in different departments of the service, and by transferring officers who are not fully employed, we can fill the vacancies without actual retrenchment. If we are to be compelled to keep these survey offices open in districts where they are not needed, and keep officers there doing one or two hours' work a day—

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They will be kept very busy.

The PREMIER: Nothing of the sort. Why should we keep them in idleness when there are vacancies in busier branches of the public service? There is a general demand, and I think a justi-

fiable one, for economy. We are not practising this economy in agricultural districts alone. We are extending it wherever there can be found an office not essential to the carrying on of the affairs of the State. Wherever, without unduly inconveniencing the public, we can close these outlying offices, we are doing so. On the goldfields, we have had to abolish the mining registrars even in Ministers' electorates. If we are not to do this, what is the use of members crying out for the introduction of economy in the Government service? Wherever it can be done without inconvenience to the public it must be done. We are not creating the hardships inseparable from the retrenchment of men, but are merely readjusting the services. I want members to consider what attitude they are going to take up. It is of no use complaining about lack of economies if we are not to be allowed to economise. Members are ever ready to complain about what seems to them undue expenditure of public money when it is in somebody else's electorate, but when it touches their own electorates they demand an increased expenditure.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is not the point.

The PREMIER: Yes, it is. The present is a time when we should raise ourselves above the question of retaining public servants in our own respective electorates, and consider the matter from the broader point of view of economy for the whole of the State. The Minister for Lands has just pointed out that the Estimates show that we have already introduced these economies. We propose, wherever possible, to extend the system if it will show a saving. Surely we are not at the present juncture to give consideration merely to public convenience, if that means in the final analysis inconvenience to the public because of the lack of funds to pay for the upkeep of these offices, for which at present there is no need. The hon. member said something about losing money if we do not keep the surveys going. Has he forgotten that we have to pay for the surveys? At the present time there are tens of thousands of acres surveyed and not yet selected.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: One cannot get the plans in the district.

The PREMIER: Wherever there is a public office the plans will be made available. If that is all the hon. member is worrying about it can be arranged. But merely to keep an office open with a man sitting there doing nothing, or, at the most, a couple of hours' work a day, in order to allow a member to say, "We have a survey office in our district," is absurd. I hope the hon. member will be consistent and allow the Government to introduce economies wherever it can be done without undue inconvenience to the public.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [5.12]: I do not know whether the Premier is very much concerned about the fate of the motion. Personally I am going to vote against it, notwithstanding that I voted for the amendment on the score that I considered it would improve the motion. When we come to consider the Estimates we will find there are many items where we can apply the pruning knife, and I think this also is a question affording scope for economy. If the Government are not to be trusted to cope with any volume of business which may spring up in the Lands Department they are not too competent. I think we may well trust the Minister for Lands to deal with any contingency that may arise from time to time. In the South-West these offices have not been closed because the demand for them has been fairly keen, but if the demand arises in another district the department can cope with it. As I say I voted for the amendment, but realising that economy has to be practised, and that land settlement has fallen off for a variety of reasons; and realising, further, that if it should revive, the department is well able to cope with it, I propose to vote against the motion. We have to judge of the position from time to time, and I believe that if the Government, and the Minister for Lands in particular, are not sufficiently energetic or have not sufficient business acumen or enterprise to cope with the demand that may arise, we should not trust them with the larger questions in respect

to which we do trust them from day to day.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [5.15]: Although there may be a desire for economy at the same time I recognise with the member for Northam that serious inconvenience will be inflicted on the people unless some provision is provided as suggested.

The Minister for Lands: In what way?

Mr PIESSE: In the matter of the collection of rents.

The Minister for Lands: Eight-tenths of the money is paid by cheque.

Mr. PIESSE: That is not so. I have had the privilege of filling an office as land agent in a district for years and the great bulk of the money received in the Toodyay land office was cash. It is not every man who has a banking account. I can prove to the Minister by the old records in the court house at Toodyay that not five per cent. of the money was paid by cheque. The office was closed there but not by the present Government.

The Minister for Lands: If the hon. member had been here when the motion was being discussed he would have known that I said that settlers could continue to pay their rents at the office because the land agent would still be there.

Mr. PIESSE: I think that some convenience should be extended to Toodyay. During the last two or three years since the office at Toodyay has been closed, the people have been put to great inconvenience because of the absence of the officer there. Toodyay has been stripped of all its public offices except the registry office to record the deaths of people.

The Minister for Works: This motion deals with the district survey offices.

Mr. PIESSE: But the district survey officer receives rents as well as receiving survey applications. If I had my wish I would see the offices opened or I would empower the clerks of courts to receive moneys. It must be recognised that where officers are justified they should be retained. I hope the Minister will see fit to make provision in all centres. There should be provision at Goomalling and at Dowerin.

The Minister for Lands: And Kununoppin.

Mr. PIESSE: I hope the Minister will not reflect on Kununoppin which has suffered from the drought. The day will come when Kununoppin itself will be worthy of a lands office. I hope the Minister will make provision in all centres for the receipt of rents and moneys due to the Lands Department.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [5.18]: It has not been satisfactorily proved to me, although I am strongly in favour of decentralisation, that there is a necessity for officers to be kept in the country if there is not sufficient work to keep them fully occupied. If officers are kept fully employed no doubt the Minister will see that they remain in the country. If we are out for economy it must be to somebody's inconvenience. If we study everybody's inconvenience there will not be economy. If we are going to impress on the Premier the necessity for economy at the present time some small personal influences will have to be touched. If the Minister can see that the surveys can be carried out and the work of the department can be carried on from the head office without having a number of officers in the country partially employed, I am in favour of this economy.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [5.20]: The question that concerns me most in regard to this matter is, that whilst being of the opinion, which is generally expressed, that economy should be practised, I would like to know whether the removal of the country officers to Perth or centralisation in Perth would reduce the cost to any extent.

The Attorney General: Yes, it will.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Will the keeping of a lands office in Northam, for instance, require the augmentation of the staff there, or, will the alteration which has taken place make any appreciable economy?

Mr. HEITMANN (Geraldton) [5.22]: I am going to support the Government in their desire to bring about economy and I agree with the Premier that the House should consider very closely at any time before they endeavour to pre-

vent the Government carrying out that which the House is crying out for everlastingly and that is economy. At times doubt is caused in the minds of members as to the wisdom of recommendations put forth by officers of the department.

The Minister for Lands: This is not a recommendation by the officers of the department.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Whose recommendation is it?

The Minister for Lands: The officers recognise now that it is necessary, but it is hardly likely that officers will recommend that their positions be dispensed with.

Mr. HEITMANN: Most recommendations of this kind are made by officers of the department.

The Minister for Lands: I called for returns showing the work being accomplished compared with what it was a year or two ago and I found that practically nothing was doing, and I decided to close up these offices.

Mr. HEITMANN: The information given to the House by the Minister for Lands shows that the work at these offices has been reduced considerably. In some of the offices it has been reduced almost out of sight. I would like to point out the reason why sometimes members have doubts in following the Minister who acts on the suggestion of his officers. For some six months past the office at Geraldton has been in a most extraordinary condition. The officers there have been anticipating a change. Rumour first went forth that the survey office was to be closed up and an officer was transferred to another department. One day it was found that a permanent officer was acting as electoral officer and another day he was taking charge of the Treasury work, and month after month no one in the lands department in Perth or in Geraldton could get information as to what was to be done.

The Minister for Lands: The Geraldton survey office was closed before I took over the Lands Department.

Mr. HEITMANN: Step after step has been taken in this office but I do not think there has been a decrease demand-

ing such a change. It appears to me the suggestion of the member for Williams-Narrogin is a really good one. Instead of having the land agent as at present, the Minister could appoint an officer who was also a draughtsman. It was stated by the Minister that a draughtsman could not do the other work required. I know in more than one office of the State the work has been carried out by a draughtsman. He has done all the counter work and the information work for the public and what was required of him as a draughtsman. Speaking generally, one must deprecate the efforts in the direction of more centralisation. I am going to support the Government and give the proposition a trial. Up to the present although these survey offices have been closed some time, in Geraldton I have not heard complaints from those mostly interested, the farmers. I support the motion but I reserve to myself the right to ask that the office be re-opened in Geraldton if required.

The Minister for Lands: I hope it will be required.

Mr. E. B. Johnston rose to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot speak; he has already spoken.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I did not speak to the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member spoke to the motion and moved an amendment.

The Minister for Lands: I am in the same position as the hon. member; I cannot speak again.

Mr. SPEAKER: To satisfy the hon. member I would point out that he spoke to the motion and the amendment, because in moving the amendment he must speak to the motion.

Mr. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [5.26]: I cannot support the Government in the attitude they are adopting and I cannot be accused of parochialism because my district enjoys the privilege of having a land agent. But the whole of the Great Southern district from Perth to Albany will be without the services of a survey officer. From my past experience of local bodies such as roads boards it is a difficult matter to have surveys attended

to promptly. There is a number of new places in the Southern district and I am satisfied that by centralising the work in Perth it will be detrimental to the State. I do not say that the whole of the survey offices should be kept open, but I believe in the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin, for on an economical basis the offices should be retained.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.27]: I am a great believer in decentralisation.

The Minister for Lands: At any price.

Mr. THOMSON: Not necessarily at any price, but the Minister has stated that in closing these district survey offices he has effected an economy. I would like to know from the Minister if the services of any of the district surveyors or officers have been dispensed with.

The Minister for Lands: All the contract surveyors have been dispensed with.

Hon. J. Mitchell: They should not have been.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not dealing with the contract surveyors but the district surveyors and district officers.

The Minister for Lands: Will the hon. member admit that it is economy if we have twenty contract surveyors and we do without them. Is that economy?

Hon. J. Mitchell: No.

The Minister for Lands: Then I do not know what is.

Mr. THOMSON: That does not affect the question as far as the district survey offices are concerned. It is a distinct advantage to the settlers to have permanent officials in the district. As far as correspondence is concerned, I am prepared to admit that it is possible for settlers to do all they require by correspondence, but most of us know from experience the delay that takes place. Whereas, if they have an opportunity of meeting the district surveyor, the matter is very often fixed up, and this means an enormous saving of time to the settler, and of time and correspondence to the department. I support the amended motion because I am a believer in decentralisation. I know we are preaching economy to the Government and that this makes it somewhat difficult, perhaps, to vote against them

at this juncture, but in my opinion no economy has been effected, or at any rate the Minister has not shown it to me.

The Minister for Lands: Have a look at the Estimates and you will see.

Mr. THOMSON: So far as I am concerned I must support the amended motion.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker—Kanoona) [5.31]: I have been listening diligently to find a good plea for retaining what are apparently growing into obsolete offices at the present time. I can only hear two arguments in favour of the motion. One is that it is a convenience to have men on the spot in a township or village throughout the country where the farmers desire to pay their rents. The other reason is that it is a convenience to have men there to attend to roads boards business, and to have a surveyor on the spot waiting for emergencies.

Mr. Thomson: He only goes there once a month.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: People will have to come to Perth for every little thing.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not necessary to come to Perth. We are not living in the days of the bullock wagon; we are living in the days of the post office and the telegraph. It is not an ignorant country in which we dwell in this State. Most of our farmers are as educated as the general run of representatives of the people, and know how to transact their business and to do it in a businesslike fashion.

Mr. Thomson: Delays take place when dealing with the farmers.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I guarantee that in dealing with the Estimates the whole argument against them will be on the question of extravagance.

Hon. J. Mitchell: And we can prove that easily.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The present system is not decentralisation, because all the work that has to be done in the country in the district survey offices, under the existing system, has been re-done and re-recorded centrally. It is a duplication and all business men, whether they live in the country or in

the towns, must know that duplication increases expenditure. Is it not the time, then, when we should seek, even at some sacrifice and some public inconvenience, to reduce expenditure in every form?

Mr. Thomson: If we reduce expenditure!

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Undoubtedly.

Mr. Thomson: You will still have the same officers there employed by the department.

The Minister for Lands: You can see by the Estimates whether we have cut down the expenditure or not.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: As the Minister for Lands has just remarked, the hon. member will be able to see from the Estimates that the expenditure has been reduced.

Mr. Thomson: The Minister says we have done away with contract surveyors.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Contract surveyors are dissociated now from the district surveyors, and in that way there has been a saving. What has this Chamber been told by the Premier? He has told us that in closing down district offices it is sought to make an adjustment. The war has taken from us a number of men, capable officers, who are needed at the front. Their positions must be filled by somebody and consequently readjustments are being made throughout the whole of the service. We should have to employ outsiders if we did not take this course. The object is to absorb these district inspectors so that they lose nothing, and so that we can economise by preventing duplication, and in that way save the general cost to the whole people at a time when it is absolutely necessary that economy should be practised in the interests of the country. Admitted that there will be inconvenience on the part of the public, and some degree of suffering, some irritation, and some temporary annoyances, is it too much to ask the people to bear all these things in the trying times through which the country is passing and has yet to pass?

Mr. Thomson: I am with you if you effect economies.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Undoubtedly that is so. If we are effecting economies the hon. member is with us. Then he must be with us, for the sole purpose of this is economy. What pleasure can any Minister take, no matter what department he presides over, in merely closing offices? There is no more disagreeable task to a Minister than this. It makes him personally unpopular with the men representing the district concerned, and unpopular throughout the districts, and that unpopularity has a tendency to spread. The Minister does not do this with any relish; he does it reluctantly, and only yields to the necessity when he sees that it is obvious that the country must cut down expenses wherever that is possible.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Your only hope is to settle the land.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Do hon. members imagine that if this war was not raging, if our railways were earning up to their full capacity, if the revenue was flooding in, and if new resources of wealth were open to us, and the country was in a generally prosperous condition, we should seek to minimise the conveniences of the public? We should seek to extend rather than to curtail expenditure, and to provide more and more of these conveniences. This, however, is a necessity which has cast a stern duty upon us. Ministers themselves have had this necessity forced upon them. They are in the position where they must do their duty, and surely they can expect that hon. members will stand by them in such a case. There is no party question involved in a proposal of this kind; rather is it a question which affects us all. Wherever we can curtail expenditure we must do it, and wherever we can avoid duplication we must do so.

Hon. J. Mitchell interjected.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: With or without the amendment proposed, we can exercise economy. We are trying to do so now, but we could not do it on too great a scale. If we were not getting adequate service for the alteration which has been effected, we should be doing

wrong if we sought to limit these survey officers in any way. But we have not been getting an adequate return for the money which has been spent. The point is that we can do the work without them. All that we entail by doing the work without them is a little inconvenience in these hard times when people must suffer inconvenience. Surely there is enough patriotism, and enough interest in the service of the country, for people to be prepared to make some small sacrifice under the circumstances. Those who are going to the front to give their lives for the Empire are doing far more. Why cannot those who are in the farming districts suffer a little inconvenience themselves, and help us to save money to meet emergencies that arise, and will continue to arise until the war is over?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is costing more money.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not costing more money. That is merely an assertion. The Estimates themselves will show.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No, no.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I say yes, yes. I expect the hon. member to constantly interrupt me. Perhaps he would like to give my speech for me. No doubt he would. I am accustomed to all that. The point is that there can be no question that all the work in the survey offices has to be re-done and re-recorded in the central offices. There is not the requisite amount of work to keep the men constantly engaged. We are paying them for work they cannot do, and which is not there for them to do.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They cannot do it in Perth, but they can in the country.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is no work in the country for them to do. As a matter of fact, we are ahead in our services at the present time. If there was work for them to do it might be a different question.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is there.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not there.

Mr. Wansbrough: You are referring to contract work?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am referring to all work. I say there is no work to entitle us to keep men constantly in these districts. We only ask that the House will fall into line, to show that members are in earnest when they advocate economy and the cutting down of expenses, that they are willing to suffer something for it and to accept some degree of unpopularity in showing that they are not merely here to win public applause, but are here to do their duty to the State as well as to their constituencies. I say the Government have performed a very disagreeable duty, an absolutely annoying duty, in touching any of these offices.

Mr. George: We grant that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It grieves them to have the necessity forced upon them. But the necessity is there, and they have had the courage of their convictions, and now expect hon. members to stand by them in the performance of their duty.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [5.42]: There is no single member of this House who will disagree that there is a necessity for economy.

Member: In theory.

Mr. GEORGE: We must practice economy in our public lives, as we have to practice it in private life at the present time. If economy can be effected in the public service, and so directed as to cause a minimum of inconvenience to those who have to find the money, I think it is quite right for the Government to take that aspect into consideration. The view has been expressed by different hon. members, such as the hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) and the hon. member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston), who are both closely in touch with the country, that there is necessity for some provision to be made to minimise as much as possible the inconvenience to settlers. It occurred to me that it might be possible to have these offices not opened altogether, not on six days in every week, but opened in a district, as requirements occasioned, perhaps on two days, and that the officer should then go to another district for

one day, or two, and so forth. The question does not, of course, affect my district very much. There are people, even in these bad times, who have not lost hope and who have kept up heart, and are attempting to take up and are desirous of taking up, land. It must be admitted, if that is so, that a number of people will have to come to Perth to obtain information which it would certainly be better if they could obtain in their own particular district, better for them and better from an economical point of view. I, therefore, submit as a proposal to the Government that an officer should be detailed to attend at these places just in the same way as officers of banks are detailed to attend the branch banks; that, just as in the banks, an officer should attend either on one or two days in the week; and that if possible these should be expert officers. If this arrangement was adopted, an officer could go to Katanning say on Monday, to Wagin, if there is another office there, on the following day; and to Northam, if there is an office there, on the Wednesday. The proposal might be worth consideration in order that we might see if some economy could not still be effected, and to see if we cannot minimise the trouble which has been spoken of by the hon. members I have mentioned.

The Minister for Lands: The offices are open to-day; they have not been totally closed. Any one can get information on land matters because there is a land officer there, but no district surveyor is situated there.

Mr. GEORGE: I go this far and say, if there is not sufficient work to keep all these officers going, whether they are land officers or district surveyors, that the Government should see whether they could not reduce the number and endeavour to keep the offices open on one day, or perhaps two days in the week.

The Minister for Lands: They are open altogether; the office still remains.

Mr. GEORGE: The Minister tells us that the offices are open to-day, that is they are open for six days a week, and

that there is very little work to be done in them. This particular thing strikes at the question of district surveyors, but it may have to go further than that. If the officers are there and there is no work for them, we have no right to keep the offices open, but we might be justified in keeping them open for a part of the week; we might do as some of the banking institutions at Pinjarra and at Brunswick are doing; a banker goes there on one day a week from Harvey, where the central office for the district is situated. Would not a similar procedure be possible in connection with the land offices?

The Attorney General: The requirements of the public must be met.

Mr. GEORGE: My view is that the offices are not required to be open for the whole time, and it might be possible to make arrangements to close them on certain days of the week, and when an officer does attend, he can be an expert officer of the department. In that way we can probably effect an economy, but it is for the Minister to say whether he can or cannot do it.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco) [5.48]: The discussion once again demonstrates the impossible task the Government have to face in their endeavour to effect economy. We saw in this morning's newspaper a leading article which criticises the Government for not having done anything in the way of effecting economy. Whenever the Government have attempted to do anything at all we have found those whose electorates have been affected have come along and made a complaint. It seems to me that even some of the members now complaining do not thoroughly understand this question. The last member who spoke was under the impression that the offices had actually been closed. The land offices are there to-day, and what has been done is that the surveyors have been removed. The position to-day is that there are hundreds of thousands of acres in this State which are already surveyed and which have not been selected. I ask hon. members, whether they are just or fair in asking the Government to keep putting on

surveyors to survey land when we have already hundreds of thousands of acres of surveyed country not yet taken up. Let us take a glance at the Estimates and see what the Government have done in the way of effecting economies. If hon. members will look at pages 51, 52, and 53 they will see that a legitimate effort has been made by the Government to economise. Of course the hon. member for Northam might assume an idiotic grin, but that will not affect the question. If he looks at the Estimates of the Lands Department he will find there is to be a saving effected of £11,117. That is to say, that the expenditure will be less by that amount than that of last year. This shows conclusively that very substantial economies have been effected and not only that, but if hon. members will look at page 51 they will find there that an amount has been recouped to the Lands Department for officers loaned, and this amount is no less than £6,500. That recoup is for officers who were in the Lands Department and for whom there was no work, and they were loaned to other departments who required their services, principally the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank. All this shows that the Government have made an effort to economise, but hon. members to-day, purely for the sake of a little self-gratification, or for the purpose of harassing the Government come forward and ask that the district survey offices should be reopened. The Treasurer has pointed out to me that the Estimates on page 26 show that there are no fewer than eleven clerks in district offices in the country, who, although they come under the Treasury, are doing work for the benefit and for the convenience of the people in the country districts. The House will be very unwise to carry this motion, and as has been pointed out by various members, we shall be saddling the country with an expense which is not justified, because we shall accomplish nothing in the interests of the settlers. There is absolutely no justification for asking the Government to go on surveying land which is not required for settlement at the present time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam—in reply) [5.55]: The last hon. member who spoke knows nothing at all about the subject.

The Minister for Lands: You do not know much about it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Hon. members talk about the economy which is being exercised by the Government. Why, the Estimates which have just been submitted show an increase of £400,000! Is the Lands Department the only department that is to suffer? We are told that on the score of economy that department must suffer. Is the Premier serious in his contention that there is no money for the Lands Department? The Attorney General waxed eloquent and said that the work done at the district offices meant duplication. If that is the case it is due to faulty administration.

The Minister for Lands: We have been trying for three years to put your mistakes right.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Any mistake I made is capable of being rectified.

The Premier: By the settlers going through the bankruptcy court.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Is it not so with the mistakes of the present Minister for Lands?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the motion before the House.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The work has to be done and it is a question of centralisation or decentralisation. I say it can be done under decentralisation. When it comes to a question of costs, will those costs be decreased by centralising everything in Perth? Hon. members know full well that the costs will be increased. The work has to be done. At one time in Northam we had a staff of fourteen or sixteen men, but that was before the Government killed land settlement.

Mr. Munsie: That was when you were booming the land.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The whole State was booming and at that time the people had faith in it. We needed fourteen men to keep the work going at Northam, but owing to the administration of the present Minister and his predecessor, the

staff has been reduced to four. It is a great advantage to have a district surveyor who knows his district. Take the district surveyor at Northam. He knew the whole district, and when it came to dealing with the roads board he knew what to do with it; instead of having, as is the case to-day, to correspond with the Perth office. When it came to the selection and the survey of land, the district officers were told off by men who knew the district and the work was done more satisfactorily than it can be done now.

Mr. McDowall: What about the offices in our little mining towns?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier said that we must close those offices because economy must be the order of the day.

The Premier: I did not say that. I said they had already been closed in the mining districts.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier also said that he would endeavour to keep the district survey offices open, and he was supported in that by the Attorney General who knows nothing about the subject. The Attorney General says the officers were there for the purpose of receiving rent. That refers, of course, to amounts paid by cheque. No doubt, larger amounts are paid by cheque, but smaller sums are usually in cash. I wish to see district offices open with one chief officer controlling the whole of a district. A draftsman might be in charge of a district, controlling three or four centres, during times of depression. Such an arrangement would, I think, be satisfactory to everyone. I want to deal with the remarks of the Minister for Lands on the question of responsibility insofar as it concerns the policy of the Government. Everyone knows that the policy of the Government is shaped by Ministers. Everyone knows also that there are responsible officers, such as the under secretary and officers in charge of districts. In due course the recommendations come before the Minister for his consideration. The Minister tells us that he does not delegate his authority at all, that he takes the whole of the responsibility and work of administration himself. If he does, I

think he is wrong, I think he should consult with his under secretary and other officers. The Minister has been going round the country making statements, in reference to my administration of the department, that I placed people on the land too far east, that it has been responsible for making me unpopular and that this unpopularity was due to my lack of judgment.

The Minister for Lands: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister says "Hear, hear." I do not know whether I am unpopular as a result of my administration, but, if so, I do not think I deserve to be unpopular with the people on that account.

Mr. Munsie: Many of those whom you put on the land will never forget you.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It would be strange indeed if they did. A great many people in this State who are not on the land will never forget this time of labour rule. This statement of the Minister was unfair and made only with the object of damaging me with the people.

The Minister for Lands: I only stated that putting people on the land there was an absolute crime not only to the men but to their wives and families.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask hon. members to cease making interjections which have no relevancy to the question.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister further stated that, during my time, a large area of land beyond the safe limit was surveyed. I may say that since I left office more land has been surveyed further eastward.

Mr. Munsie: Further south.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Further eastward, not further south. When the Minister dealt with this question he told the people that this was not so. At any rate a district officer would be a safeguard. If the Minister wished to go further east, a district officer at, say, Northam could advise him that it would not be safe, that already he had gone to the extreme limit. During his term 204,000 acres of land were surveyed at a cost of £13,000. During my time that area would have been surveyed for £5,000. Yet the Minister

says that he practises economy and that he is determined to get economy. Dealing with the question of inspectors, the Minister said it was his intention to place all inspectors under one official in Perth—that is, Agricultural Bank inspectors and Land Office inspectors. I should like to point out to the Minister that the question of valuing improvements is not nearly so important as that of valuing securities. If he determines to have those dual duties performed by one inspector, I think he will be making a sad mistake. On the question of centralisation or decentralisation I think that had the farmers' assistance been worked on a decentralised system it would have meant a considerable saving to farmers. The House has now to decide whether it is in favour of centralisation or decentralisation. It has been said that we have now 100,000 acres of land already surveyed. To that I would reply that we want 100,000 acres more surveyed. Very soon, no doubt, there will be a revival in land settlement. I hope so in the interests of this country; and if we are to be ready for that revival we can be prepared only through the survey office, and the success of the survey office depends on the district survey offices. I hope, when that time arrives, we shall be ready to meet the demand. I ask hon. members who voted for the amendment moved by the member for Williams-Narrogin how they can consistently refrain from voting for the motion proposed by me.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	22
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	7
				—

AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Gilchrist	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. George
Mr. Male	(Teller)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Foley	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Green	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hellmann	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Johnson	(Teller)
Mr. McDowall	

Question, as amended, thus negatived.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £650,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

MOTION—IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT, TO CONTINUE.

Debate resumed from the 25th August on the following motion by the Hon. J. D. Connolly:—"That, in the opinion of this House, it is essential in the best interests of the State that the Government should continue the Immigration Department and all agencies and arrangements made in the past which were found essential for a vigorous immigration policy."

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [7.31]: Members are glad to have the assurance of the Honorary Minister that it is not the intention of the Government to abolish the Immigration Department and, therefore, I do not propose to occupy the time of the House at any length in speaking on this subject. I appreciate the Minister's assurance that the department will be kept in working order. I firmly believe that there is a good prospect, after the terrible war which is raging at present is over, of immigrants pouring into Australia. I believe that immigration will eventually solve the problem of the production locally of sufficient dairy produce to meet our own requirements and will save the importation of this commodity to the extent of about a million a year. It is a matter for wonder that greater effort has

not been exerted by the powers that be to obviate this great leakage. The production of those lines which are now imported will be best accomplished by encouraging people with practical knowledge to settle here and apply their methods to our land. In Denmark, the dairy industry has reached a high standard of efficiency, and its production is enormous. If only we encouraged people well acquainted with the pros and cons of the industry to settle in this State, we should soon be producing sufficient to at any rate meet our own requirements. I am gratified that the department is to be kept in readiness for the time when its services will be needed. *The member for Perth* was justified in bringing forward the motion because it was the general impression that the Government intended to abolish the department.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (*Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle*) [7.36]: The member for Perth has pointed out that it is the duty of the Government to continue the immigration policy with all the departmental agencies as in the past. Those who have given the matter consideration could come to only one conclusion that it would be a waste of money to keep the Immigration Department and its agencies going on lines similar to those of the last two or three years. The present Government have without doubt done more to encourage immigration—that is real immigration, the bringing out of the people required by the State—than was done by any previous Government. I am safe in saying that the immigration policy was really started and fixed on a proper basis when the Labour Government were in power in 1904-5. It is all very well for the hon. member to say that a vigorous policy of immigration was commenced in 1906. In 1905 there was a good deal of discussion on the question of immigration. It was felt that in the interests of Western Australia it was necessary to swell the population by bringing suitable immigrants to the State. Previous to this, practically nothing had been done, as immigrants numbered only 100 or 200 per annum. The then Pre-

mier thought it advisable to instruct the Agent General, Sir Walter James—who remained in that office for only a few weeks after the member for Perth became Colonial Secretary—

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Would you be surprised to know that he was in office for probably seven or eight months after?

[The Deputy Speaker (Mr. McDowall) took the Chair].

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: He was not because the hon. member did not take office until after Mr. Rason was appointed Agent General. Mr. Kingsmill was Colonial Secretary prior to that, and Sir Walter James returned to the State within a few months after the member for Perth took office. It was considered necessary to adopt active measures to bring about a vigorous immigration movement, and for the first time the Government voted a fair sum of money for the purpose. If members look up the Estimates they will find the amounts provided. In 1904-5 the Labour Government provided £12,500 for the institution of a vigorous immigration policy. Scarcely anything had been done prior to that. In 1905-6 there was little thought of immigration as the new Government provided only £6,927. From that time onward the amount increased. In 1906-7 it was £7,500; in 1907-8, £8,643—that was the year the hon. member was in office; in 1908-9, £13,348; in 1909-10, £12,800—

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Are you quoting from the Estimates?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: But there was a good deal also from loan money.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: These amounts include the loan money. In 1910-11 £71,000 was provided. Then the present Government took office, the Government whom the hon. member has said did not realise the necessity for encouraging immigration. It was said not only in Western Australia but out-

side that the Labour party were opposed entirely to immigration, and did not desire immigrants to come here to enter into competition with the workers already in the State. Yet in 1911-12, the amount provided for immigration was £100,000—a very large increase on the sum provided during the last year the hon. member was in office.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: You could not help that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, we could. It would have been possible for us to refrain from engaging special steamers to convey the immigrants here.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Could you have prevented the 3,500 who arrived in the first two months you were in office?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: They were all on board before you took office.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We found it necessary to charter special steamers to cope with the stream of immigrants. In 1912-13 the amount was £80,975, and in 1913-14 it was £10,000. The hon. member is fully aware that in 1912-13 a difficulty was experienced in obtaining immigrants. The New South Wales and Victorian Governments experienced such difficulty—

Hon. J. D. Connolly. It was not greater then than previously.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was much greater because an agitation had been put on foot in England to prevent people from leaving those shores for other parts. The difficulty was so great that the Victorian and New South Wales Governments amalgamated their immigration agencies in London. They had engaged steamers and were unable to fill them, and the Western Australian Government filled some of the steamers for them. They could not obtain sufficient immigrants to fill their steamers, and many of the vessels came out with only a few immigrants on board. The Federal Government, on being approached, considered it advisable to assist the States in their immigration efforts, and provided £250,000 on condition that the number of immigrants was increased. When

it was pointed out that it was difficult to get British people to emigrate to Australia, the Federal Government sent their agent to Europe to report as to the best country from which immigrants might be obtained. The Honorary Minister referred to that the other night and quoted some extracts, and I will not cover the ground again. I want to emphasise, however, that in 1912-13 immigration fell off, entirely owing to the difficulty in obtaining immigrants in England. The hon. member went on to say that full arrangements were made by him for immigrants. He said that they were readily absorbed and that the arrangements were so good that there was no difficulty at all in utilising them. The position was that the hon. member had established throughout Western Australia a large number of agencies. As a matter of fact, his agent could go along to a farmer and ask him if there was work for an immigrant to do. If the farmer would engage the immigrant, the agent was paid 5s., even if the immigrant did not stop more than one day. He would then go on to the next man and in all probability the man previously engaged would be engaged to the next farmer and another 5s. would be paid. This was the system carried on throughout Western Australia. In the Victoria district he engaged a man at a salary and provided him with a horse and trap to go through for the purpose of finding employment for these immigrants. It has been clearly demonstrated by the Labour Bureau that there was no difficulty so far as we were concerned in the way of placing immigrants without increased expenditure. This being so, it was thought advisable to again put into existence one Labour Bureau, instead of the two which were previously in existence. The hon. member said that there were not two Labour Bureaus in existence. There were, however, two in existence, one in connection with the Immigration Department, while the other was the general Labour Bureau. I find, in looking through some of the papers at the time, that what concerned the hon. member so keenly was that some of these

young fellows who were coming out from the old country were given work in the country instead of in the town. He thought it was necessary that, in bringing these people out, we should first fill our towns with them and that the Labour Bureau had no right whatever—

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Are you not contradicting yourself? You said I had agents throughout the country.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: And the hon. member did have agents throughout the country. I will give him some of his statements directly. He complained about young men being sent into the country. In his opinion it was more advisable, in the interests of the State, that the young men should first flood the towns and go to the country afterwards. I find that the hon. member said—

For instance, lads between 18 and 20 years of age were sent out into the country to do clearing work of which they had no previous experience. It must be apparent that lads like these, coming direct from the old country, should not be turned out in the bush. Employment should be found for them if possible in more settled parts.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: I remember that. I was speaking of a district some 20 miles outside Dowerin.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was under the impression that the immigration policy was brought about for the express purpose of filling up the spare parts of the country. The hon. member, however, thought differently. His immigration policy was to fill up the towns and not the country, and he desired in the first instance to bring these people into the towns with a view, after they had become acclimatised, of engaging others to fill their places and sending them out into the country.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: I said in the more settled parts of the State.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member said—

In such cases the men should be found employment in the towns until they become acclimatised.

This was a minute written by the hon. member on the 28th February, 1911, and

signed "J.D.C." It shows clearly that the hon. member was in the first instance only anxious to bring about immigration for the purpose of flooding the towns. I think hon. members are quite aware that, so far as the towns are concerned, there is sufficient population already, and that if immigration was necessary, it was necessary for the purpose of assisting those in the country. Steps have been taken to try and avoid this policy which was in force, and, as I said just now an alteration, has been effected in regard to the method of obtaining employment for these men. At this time also complaints were being made that West Australians never had an opportunity of obtaining employment, that is through the Labour Bureau, and it was said that the Government's policy was one in which preference had to be given in the first instance to the immigrant. If there were men who had been in town for a little while, and who had become acclimatised, and who then felt they would like to go out into the country, they would go to the Labour Bureau to look for a position only to find that all the best jobs had been picked out for the purpose of absorbing some of the other immigrants that were likely to arrive. I do not know what the hon. member's idea was, whether it was for the purpose of sending the married men out and keeping the single ones in. That might have been the idea he had in his mind, but at all events he issued those instructions. In any case he said—

I wish these instructions issued, that the officer entrusted by the Immigration Department with the duty of looking after these immigrants, is to go to the Labour Bureau some days before the boat arrives, go through the list of vacancies there, and any situation he thinks likely to suit some immigrant the officer in charge of the bureau is to reserve for the assisted immigrants of the Immigration Department.

It proves that the complaints made at the time were justified. Actions were being taken, so the public were saying, with the object of keeping all the best jobs in the

country for those assisted immigrants who were then arriving. This minute was written about two months after the previous one. It was dated the 1st April, 1911, and signed "J.D.C." So it was found necessary to merge the Immigration Labour Bureau and the general Labour Bureau again into one institution. Complaints were also made by the female immigrants. They pointed out that they had no opportunity of getting employment in the country, that the best positions were being reserved for those who were arriving every few weeks, and that consequently they did not get the same opportunity as the new arrivals. That was the hon. member's intention according to his minute. I wish to point out also that there was a good deal of dissatisfaction in regard to the class of immigrant which was arriving here. It was found that many men were coming here under false pretences. The vote was for agricultural immigration, but under the hon. member's administration it was determined that the bulk of immigration had to go through the towns and instructions were issued to the Agent General accordingly. These complaints which were made as to the nature of the immigrants who were arriving were entirely due to the hon. member's action in instructing the Immigration Office in London to scour manufacturing towns in Lancashire and other places, for the purpose of getting agricultural workers. One hon. member who was sitting on the front Opposition bench, said that some immigrants came here who were no good to the State and that he preferred not to have them. We found it necessary, therefore, to make it clear that any man filling in a form which did not comply with the regulations issued and did not state definitely the class of employment which he could follow, should be turned down after the necessary inquiries had been made, for the purpose of seeing that the agricultural immigration constituted agriculturists in reality and not in name only. The Government has a right to take some credit for the fact that the class of immigrant coming to Western Australia during the years

1912, 1913, and 1914, and the years 1913 and 1914 more particularly, was the best class of immigrant which had come to any part of Australia. This was brought about by the efforts of the office of the Agent General in seeing that the person who desired to come out here could follow, and did follow, that employment which he stated in his application he was qualified to fulfil.

Hon. J. Mitchell: There has been no difference at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There has been a difference. The hon. member himself said "What a fine lot of men we are getting here." There is no doubt that, so far as Australia is concerned, it is necessary to have population, and that this is so particularly in regard to Western Australia. I ask hon. members if we would be doing our duty at this juncture, however, if we sought to bring out from the old country men who were needed for other work. I maintain that no man who would leave England to-day to come to Western Australia is an immigrant worth having.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: No one has urged that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To ask the agents in England, or the Immigration Officers there, to visit the agricultural districts and the various agricultural shows in Great Britain, for the purpose of inducing men to come to Western Australia, would be not only unwise but a waste of money.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Surely you want to keep the department up to date.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We are fully aware that it is necessary to keep our eyes open so far as this department is concerned, but it is not always necessary to go to large expense in order that we may keep our eyes open. We have to-day, still holding the position of Secretary for Immigration, Mr. A. O. Neville, to whom I give every credit for the good work he has done in this direction. As soon as normal conditions arrive, and we can see that the time is right for again encouraging immigration to Western Australia, action will immedi-

ately be taken, as it has been taken in the past by this Government.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: That is all I am asking for.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member should study his motion. He says—

It is essential in the best interests of the State that the Government should continue the Immigration Department and all agencies and arrangements.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The agencies are only on a commission basis.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member knows as well as I do that 80 per cent. of the immigrants—I think I can safely say that—who came to Western Australia were induced to come here by our salaried officers. We did not stick to one like the hon. member did while he was in office. They were induced to come here by our salaried officers. Consequently the agencies of the shipping companies did very little, as far as Western Australia is concerned.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: They did a great deal.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The explanation of their inactivity with regard to Western Australia lies in the fact that other States paid larger commissions than we paid. Any person who went to the shipping agents was sent to the other States unless he specially stated his desire to go to Western Australia. That is one of the reasons why we here have had the best class of immigrant. I feel that hon. members will not agree to the motion at the present juncture. Certainly when the time is ripe, then, if the Government should fail to reintroduce a vigorous immigration policy on the lines of the past, such a motion as this might be necessary. At a time like the present, however, I consider it would be most unwise for any Government, and more especially the Government of a portion of the British Empire, to send agents throughout Great Britain for the purpose of encouraging young men to leave the old country and settle here. The salaried officers whom we employed in England on this business for years have

ceased to be in the service of the Government.

Mr. Green: What has become of Mr. Kessell?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He is not an immigration officer. Mr. Dolley was one—a very good officer, but his work was finished. Another officer was Mr. Gilbert, who joined the service of the Midland Railway Company. In my opinion, the Government acted wisely in ceasing expenditure and merely keeping an officer in charge who could at any time renew the policy. If, when the proper time arrives, I have the honour of being a member of this Assembly, I shall be one of the first to endeavour to re-introduce a vigorous immigration policy. I consider such a policy is necessary. We are never happier than when we see numbers of people coming into Western Australia. I used to meet almost every boat bringing immigrants, and I considered it a pleasure to see the landing of the newcomers, and to spend a few hours on the wharf amongst them. The children especially I regarded as a great gain to Western Australia, though of course they were a great loss to the country they left. The Government have no intention whatever of turning down the immigration policy except for such time as the British Empire is at war. As soon as present conditions pass away, immigration will be pushed as previously.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [8.5]: I am indeed pleased to have heard the remarks of the Minister for Works. I feel that the hon. member who moved this motion can have scarcely intended us to place upon it the interpretation which one naturally would from a perusal of it. If he would consent to modify it, probably it could be rendered acceptable to the whole House. No doubt his desire is that hon. members should emphasise the advisableness of immigration into Western Australia being continued when the proper time comes. If at the end of the motion there were inserted such words as "As soon as conditions are favourable for such," I am quite certain every member would be pleased to vote in its favour.

Indeed, I should think the motion in that form would be almost superfluous. It appears to me, however, that to continue the organisation which existed in England until recently, simply to encourage immigration from the Old Country, would be absurd at the present juncture. In fact, my own opinion is that the British Government would resent such a proceeding. The very men we want to get for Western Australia, the very men that we should be trying to encourage to come here, are the men whom Great Britain wants at the front. Therefore it would be unpatriotic, in my opinion, of us to endeavour to encourage them to leave the Old Country. Indeed, when they got here, we would feel bound to encourage them to go back again. I have always been an ardent advocate of immigration. I have fought for it during all the time I have been in Parliament, because I think the strength of a country can only be gauged by its people. It is no use boasting of our enormous territory and our enormous length of coastline. The strength of this country can be gauged only by the number of people in it. The strength of Australia can only be achieved by peopling Australia. Everyone who thinks the question over must thoroughly realise that. When I went Home as Agent General I found that all funds for encouragement of immigration were cut off from me. I had thought that one of the greatest pleasures I should have in the Old Country would be to carry out the object which I had so much at heart, namely, to encourage immigration into Western Australia. I found, however, that all funds for this purpose were cut off. I wrote volumes to the Western Australian Government of the day on the subject. I have now my letter book corroborating that statement.

The Minister for Works: I have seen some of your letters.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I told the Government here that it was impossible for me to make bricks if they did not provide me with straw. Eventually, however, a different spirit came over the country; and when Sir Walter James went Home as Agent General, he went

Home amply provided with funds for the encouragement of immigration. In fact, I believe I am not far wrong in saying Sir Walter James made that one of the conditions of his appointment. He would not take up the post of Agent General unless he was provided with sufficient funds to carry out a vigorous immigration policy. I know that up to the very last, until I got absolutely tired of it, I kept hammering into the Government here the need of furnishing the Agent General with every means of encouraging immigration. Repeatedly men called on me who were desirous of emigrating, and I always told them the truth about Western Australia. I told them that there were great opportunities here for steady and industrious men; but, at the same time, when they asked me whether it was any use for mechanics and other tradesmen to come here, I said no. My opinion is that the people we want to get here are people who will go on to the land, either to work on the land or to settle it for themselves. I am also of opinion that where one gets the primary industries properly started, everything else will follow after. The people whom the primary industries provide will follow the primary industries. That has been the experience all over the world. When gold mining starts in a country, one finds people flocking from all over the world to assist towards the advancement of that primary industry. In the same way, if farming is prosperous in a country, mechanics are wanted for all sorts of work, and mechanics will come to that country. They do not need encouragement to come. For these reasons I told many intending immigrants that Western Australia was a splendid field for the steady and industrious man who was prepared to go out into the country and work; but I never encouraged anyone to believe that there was work to be found in the towns. I am certainly in thorough sympathy with the views which the mover expressed, and I am quite sure he has brought forward this motion in all good faith. At the same time, I do not think he can have carefully studied the terms of his motion, because it seems to me that

he cannot really desire the Government should at the present moment—

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Were you in the House when I spoke?

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Yes, I was here.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Then you were not listening to what I said.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I was listening. I am only taking the motion which the hon. member asks us to vote on.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is all a matter of degree, and I explained the degree in which I was speaking.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: One can scarcely desire at the present juncture that the Government of the day should continue to carry on immigration work in the same way as in the past. In fact, they cannot possibly do it. We cannot ask the Government to continue the employment in the London agency of officers who have been engaged, at fairly good salaries, on this work for seven years past. In any case, those officers have already gone. If the motion were carried in its present form, those officers would have to be brought back and set to work encouraging, or attempting to encourage, immigration at the present time, which they could not possibly do. I consider that the Minister for Works struck the right note. I hope the hon. gentleman will always be of the same opinion. If so, I feel sure members on this side of the House will be only too glad to back him up in the policy which he appears to have at heart, and, further, which he seems prepared to support in every possible way. I trust the member for Perth will not ask the House to carry the motion in its present wording. If he would agree to add such words as "As soon as the conditions are favourable for such," it would emphasise the fact that the Parliament of this country is still favourable to immigration, and still desirous that a vigorous immigration policy should be carried out by the Government of the day as soon as the conditions allow of it. I should be glad if the hon. member would agree to some amendment such as that, because I think it a pity that we should be, so to speak, at loggerheads over a question like this. The whole country, in

my opinion, ought to be unanimous on the question of immigration. People in Australia have now awakened to the fact that it is necessary, if we are to be a great country and to have the strength to protect ourselves, that we must have population. I hope that all the Parliaments of Australia will be of the same opinion, and that they will all endeavour to carry out what we in Western Australia will always endeavour to carry out, a vigorous immigration policy to obtain the right class of people to populate our country, and especially to settle our lands, thereby encouraging all those primary industries which are so important for the future of Australia.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [8.14]: The motion in its present form does not ask that the Government should continue to employ all the officers they have had in the past for immigration work. When we find the Honorary Minister (Hon. R. H. Underwood) stating that he and the Public Service Commissioner are agreed that the Immigration Department should be abandoned, except for the retention of Mr. Neville, I think it is time that someone should take the matter up. The Minister for Works made an excellent speech. I would be perfectly willing to entrust the conduct of the immigration policy to that hon. gentleman. We have to keep an officer in London. This motion does not mean that we shall put on other men. It means, if it is carried, that the Government will keep the department there alive. It does not mean, either, that we must bring out able-bodied young men at the present time. I rose because I wished to point out that there are some people in England who have friends here, and they cannot get assisted passages. I think that the system of giving assisted passages should be continued and the department at Home might find useful work to do in the direction of sending out such people.

The Minister for Works: Men's wives and families are still assisted to come out.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think if a son wishes a widowed mother and her

family to come out we should assist them to do so. The Minister for Works knows that the young people who have come out have grown into good citizens. There is much to be done in London in that way. The Minister is quite wrong when he says that it is no use bringing men out from the towns of England. If we can get quick-witted town men they will develop into good agricultural workers, and in fact I would sooner have them than many who are in the agricultural districts at the present time. This State can readily and gladly welcome all the people it can get from England. I suggest that the motion be accepted as it stands. It will mean, of course, that the office in London must be kept going. It will not mean that the Minister will have to keep expensive officials running round the country.

The Premier: Carrying the motion will not do any harm, anyway.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I ask the Minister for Works to accept this motion because it is a reasonable and a proper one. It is a great pity to close down this and many other departments which we built up in the past, merely because we are having a temporary set back. I hope the motion will be carried.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [8.20]: I certainly cannot see my way to support the motion as it stands. It is absurd to think that we should now have to keep open those agencies which were essential at one time. The motion as it stands should not be carried. I agree with the deputy leader of the Opposition that when conditions are favourable we should pursue a vigorous immigration policy. When I was at Home some years ago I gave up a considerable amount of my time to lecturing, and I got no gold medals for it either. I was not a paid agent; I lectured because of the great interest I had in the State, and I was doing what I thought was right. I did not go to the towns from which the member for Northam says we should get men. I went into the country of Devonshire and Cornwall where the good men come from.

The Premier: Hear, hear.

Mr. WILLMOTT: They are the men we want to open up our agricultural lands, and not the gutter snipes who come out here and whom we have to put in gaol. I feel very warmly on this particular subject. I come from Devonshire and I consider that the member for Northam has cast a slur upon the men of Devonshire and Cornwall, a slur which they do not deserve, and which I will not allow to go unanswered. When the time is ripe, then we should strain every nerve to get every suitable person to come out here and we should then put them on our agricultural lands, but I will not allow any member to make the assertion that the men from the country districts of England are not fit and proper people to come out here as immigrants.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Who said so?

Mr. WILLMOTT: The member for Northam said so, and I repudiate it.

Hon. J. Mitchell: On a point of order, I deny that I said such a thing.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Northam denies having made use of the statement, and the member for Nelson must therefore withdraw.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I shall withdraw, but I was under the impression that that was what he said. I can only blame my hearing or, perhaps, I gathered it from the mumbling utterances of the hon. member.

The Premier: The member for Northam cannot deny that.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I hope the hon. member who moved the motion will agree to the addition of the words, "when the conditions are favourable." Every one then, I am sure, will be in accord with the motion.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth—in reply) [8.25]: I only desire to say a few words in reply. When I moved the motion I explained that I was led to do so because of the minute written by the Honorary Minister (Hon. R. H. Underwood), and which was endorsed by

Cabinet, to the effect that the Immigration Department should be disbanded, but that the services of Mr. Neville should only be retained as secretary.

The Minister for Works: There was no work for the other officers.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I quoted figures and explained to the House the difficulties which had to be encountered in building up a vigorous immigration policy. That has been confirmed by the Minister for Works to-night. That Minister has always been enthusiastic on the question of immigration. The hon. gentleman, however, stated that the immigration policy was started by the English Government in 1904, but I do not agree with him on that point. Granted, for the sake of argument, that that was so, it only proves my case, because it took several years longer than I stated to work up that immigration policy. The Minister also confirmed what I pointed out to the House about the great competition we had to encounter in obtaining immigrants. That condition of things will be more than ever felt in the future. I quoted figures and showed how immigration had increased from 1906 to 1911, and then it gradually fell off until immigration became exceedingly small. I pointed out that I did not want members to misunderstand me, and I added that no sane person would advocate the immigration of able-bodied young men at the present time, but I stated that the arrangements could not be dropped, that they should be kept alive so that when the time was ripe for the resumption of the policy we could derive the full benefit from them. Although the immigration policy was begun in 1906, it took several years before its value could be felt to any appreciable extent. If the policy is entirely dropped now it will take many years before we can pick it up again, and the flow of immigrants will be diverted to other countries. There are many people who, like the hon. members for Nelson and Moore who have spoken this evening, are fair-weather immigration advocates but who will not accept the responsibility when it has to be faced.

The Minister for Mines: What is the use of talking immigration just now?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am justified in bringing this motion forward when we have a Cabinet minute recommending that the department be disbanded.

The Minister for Mines: That is only during war time.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am satisfied with the assurance of Ministers that it is not their intention to drop it altogether. The motion merely affirms that arrangements and agencies essential to a vigorous immigration policy should be continued. It is not necessary to continue the actual department here, nor the various offices in the London agency. The greater number of our immigrants were obtained by the shipping agents.

The Minister for Works: A very small number.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: There was very keen competition amongst the shipping agents.

The Minister for Works: One man who after arrival here nominated his family, was referred to the agents, who got their commission.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: If they were paid commission on nominated immigrants it was absurd.

The Minister for Works: It was in your time.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No, certainly not. If it occurred at all those responsible ought to have been severely reprimanded. How could an agent obtain commissions on nominated immigrants, seeing that he never saw them until they went aboard the ship? If for nominated immigrants alone, we require to keep the department alive, for we are likely to receive a great many of this class of immigrants, even in these disturbed times. This work of putting into force a vigorous immigration policy cannot be carried out in a week or in a year if all the existing arrangements are cancelled. I merely desire that those arrangements shall be kept alive until the time comes for a vigorous policy to be again put into force. The Minister for Works declared that I

created two labour bureaus and wanted these immigrants to take work in the towns.

The Minister for Works: I was quoting your actual words.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Minister quoted the case of a young lad who, arriving from England in mid-summer, was sent by the Labour Bureau to a camp of single men 20 or 30 miles the other side of Dowerin. I pointed out that that was not the proper way to treat an immigrant, that the boy should have been put with a farmer in a settled district, in order to learn his work. In view of that and other instances I found it necessary to allow the Immigration Department to settle their own immigrants. The Labour Bureau did not give those immigrants proper consideration. There was any amount of work offering, and the Labour Bureau sent out immigrants to any job, irrespective of whether it was suitable for an immigrant. Because of this I desired that the department should be responsible for the placing of their own immigrants and should see that they were properly settled in the country. A great deal hinged on the contentment of an immigrant, for a discontented immigrant was the worst advertisement we could get.

The Minister for Works: Was that the reason why you advocated that the men should be kept in towns until acclimatized?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The hon. member would not have liked to be sent out into the unsettled bush when he first came here.

The Minister for Works: I was sent out very shortly after I arrived.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: In one breath the Minister for Works has complained that I gave too much attention to the question of finding work in the country for these immigrants, and in the next that I kept the immigrants in the town. I contend that it was a sound policy to appoint agents in the different towns for the purpose of finding suitable positions for the immigrant. I did not employ the Labour Bureau, for the reason that they treated the immigrants from the

standpoint of a labour bureau and not from that of an immigration policy. I do not for a moment advocate a vigorous immigration policy at the present moment, but I desire to point to the necessity of continuing all agencies and arrangements so that at the proper juncture the policy can be resumed in the shortest possible time.

Question put and negatived.

BILL—MARRIAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [8.42]: In moving the second reading said: The Bill is to rectify an anomaly in our marriage law. Some time ago a couple in my district were desirous of getting married, but on approaching the registrar they were astounded to learn that the marriage laws of Western Australia did not permit of a man marrying his deceased brother's widow. The couple had to incur the expense of a special trip to New Zealand in order to be legally married. If the Bill becomes law another such couple would not be put to that expense. The position is that, under the existing law a man cannot marry the widow of his deceased brother, but if he and his intended bride go to New Zealand they can there be married, and on their return to this State they are regarded by our law as having been legally married. Some objection may be raised to this proposed amendment of the marriage law. Many people contend that our marriage customs have been in existence for all time and that we should not interfere with them. The prohibition decrees of our marriage law were formulated with the object of preserving the purity of the human race. Now, the law permits first cousins to marry, and that in my opinion is certainly far more dangerous than the proposal I am now placing before the House. We have also the authority of Scripture, which is supposed to be the basis upon which all our laws are founded. If members will turn to Genesis, chapter 38, verse 8, they will find the

authority there, and also in Matthew, chapter 22, verse 24. I do not propose to read them, but members who are sufficiently interested will find the authority there.

The Minister for Mines: It would take a long time to look the authority up. You had better read it.

Mr. THOMSON: Possibly it might do hon. members good. They might learn a little from the Scriptures while they were searching for the authority. In introducing this measure, I am not introducing anything in the way of an innovation. We have the authority of the Bible to go upon. Some years ago there was a good deal of controversy in connection with what was known as The Deceased Wife's Sister Bill. That measure provoked a great deal of argument and a good deal of opposition was brought against it. One of the strongest arguments used in favour of that measure was the question, who was likely to treat a deceased woman's children better on assuming the position of a stepmother, a stranger or a sister of the mother. I think it will be generally agreed that the sister of a dead woman, on assuming the position of a stepmother, would look after those children better than a stranger. I maintain the same argument applies with greater force to the measure I am bringing forward; because, when a man marries his deceased brother's widow the woman has to care for her own children, and I am sure that a man who is desirous of accepting the responsibility of marrying the widow of his brother, and also of caring for his children—I know no one better fitted to look after them in this world. I do not propose to labour the question. It is a simple measure to rectify an anomaly. It certainly seems absurd that a man, desirous of marrying the widow of his brother, has to go to the expense of a trip to New Zealand in order to be legally married, and then, when he comes back, the laws of this State recognise the marriage as legal. I leave the measure to the consideration of the House. It does not appear to me

to be a very debatable one, and I hope it will be carried.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, debate adjourned.

MOTION — EXPEDITIONARY FORCES, DISABLED SOLDIERS.

Debate resumed from the 8th September on the following motion by Mr. Carpenter:—1, That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that immediate steps be taken to assist wounded soldiers whose injuries prevent them from following their usual occupations. 2, That in order to provide such men with suitable and profitable employment the co-operation of the Federal Government with that of the State should be invited. 3, That the passing of this resolution be an instruction to the Government to prepare and submit to the Federal authorities proposals under which joint action may be taken at the earliest possible date.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [8.49]: I was indeed pleased when the member for Fremantle brought forward this motion, and I am sure he is to be congratulated on the able advocacy in support of our returned cripples and wounded, which he made the other evening. There can be no question in the minds of hon. members as to the importance of the object. We as a people should not be in the slightest degree neglectful of every means by which our wounded are looked after bringing this war to an end. At the commencement of the war I happened to be in one of our largest departmental stores, and the person who was with me made a remark relating to the defence of the country. The man behind the counter held up a shattered hand and said, "If they want me to go to the war, they will have to take me." That man had been to the wars, had gone through war, and came out at the finish with his hand shattered; and thereafter had to make his living in the best way he could. As he said, while the war was on it was "Tommy here and Tommy there," when the country was in danger, but when he came back he was put in the background.

I entirely agree with the member for Fremantle that some scheme should be formulated, or some committee formed, to go into this matter immediately. I understand the Premier's dilemma when looking at this question from the Treasurer's standpoint; and I thought at first, when the Premier uttered his interjectory remarks the other evening that he was averse to the motion. But afterwards, when the Premier was speaking to the motion, I noticed that his heart got the better of his feelings as Treasurer, and he is, I am sure, entirely in sympathy with the motion, although, as he said, it is a matter for the Federal Government. I can understand the Premier's attitude, but the question of divided responsibility should not enter into consideration. The Federal Parliament, the State Parliament and the individual, each has a share of responsibility in this matter. I personally have my own. My own son is at the front, as also are the sons of other members of the House. It may be argued, perhaps, that I have a selfish motive in this matter, but I can assure members that, should anything happen to my son, I hope I shall be able to support him without outside aid. But there are thousands of others who are not so happily placed, who will be returning to this State totally unfitted for any of the ordinary avocations of life. We know that before us there is a time of trial, and we have to see to it that the returned troops, the widows and orphans, and every one connected with those who have given of their best for the Empire should not suffer in any undue degree. I should like, before sitting down, to say that if such a committee be formed we do not want anything in the nature of what I saw referred to in the pink sheet on Sunday as "mis-managed charity," and suchlike things. But already something practical in the direction of assisting the widows of those who are killed in the country's service in regard to their business affairs until such time as they are put in a sound position has been undertaken by the member for Irwin and Mr. Basil Murray. My great fear in this matter is that when this great Prussian scourge has been removed

the returned heroes will be relegated to the background, and I would urge that we should step in now, should, as the Yankees say, "Do it now." In conclusion I will quote a few words spoken by ex-President Roosevelt: "The man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal; more than that no man can be entitled to, less than that no man should have."

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [8.50]: I desire to offer congratulations to the member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) on bringing this motion forward. The Premier has said that this is a matter almost wholly for the Federal authorities. If that be so, I would suggest that the State might do something, more particularly in the matter of exemptions from probate duty. The Premier has stated that it has been decided to forego one half. I think that is not sufficient. I am given to understand on good authority that in the Old Country there is exemption on estates up to £6,000. I should like to mention a painful case which came under my notice of an elderly widow whose son has been killed at the Dardanelles. That lady is the sole heiress to her son's property, which consists of a farm at Totadjin valued at something like £1,000, and she has been called upon to pay probate duty. That, to my mind, is quite unjust. It is cruel to think that this elderly lady, having lost her son, is called upon to pay this extra tax. In the Eastern States, I believe, exemption is granted, and I beg of the Premier that he will introduce something more liberal in our State. The farm I have just mentioned is, as I have said, valued at £1,000. That is merely a valuation and I venture to say it is not a commercial valuation. It is not worth that money in the market to-day. All the same that valuation goes into the probate office and this elderly lady is called upon to pay tax on that amount. Furthermore, she loses the Commonwealth pension which she enjoyed prior to her son's death, because she has become heiress to this estate. I beg of the Premier to give further consideration to this matter and

to introduce exemptions in respect of estates up to £2,000 or £3,000 in the case of probate by men who have given their lives in the service of the country. I do not propose to stress the matter further because I have some feeling on the point. We have unfortunately a case in our own family in which the probate is somewhat high. I would only again urge the Premier to introduce exemption in respect of small estates of say £2,000 or £3,000 value.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [8.59]: If I may be allowed to make a brief statement it will perhaps tend somewhat to curtail the discussion on this motion. The Government have received a communication from the Commonwealth Government, with their request that we should adopt a similar procedure. The Commonwealth Parliament has appointed a central council comprised of members of both Houses, the Representatives and the Senate, to deal with this particular matter, the treatment to be accorded to returned soldiers. They have written to all the State Governments with a request that similar councils be appointed from members of Parliament to be called State councils. It is the intention of the Government to take steps next week to form such a council in this State, either by calling members of both Houses together to discuss it, or by formal consultation with the leaders of the other parties, and there is no doubt that will result in the appointment of a State council, who will work in co-operation with the Federal council, and will deal with all matters of the kind embraced in the motion. That being the case, I hope the hon. member will see his way to withdraw the motion, as his object will be attained in the way I have indicated.

Mr. Thomson: Does the State propose to subsidise the local council?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not known on what lines they will proceed, and that is why it would be undesirable to carry the motion because we would thereby be laying down the lines according to the opinion of this House,

which perhaps to some extent the council might think it ought to follow.

Mr. Carpenter: It might tie their hands.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. The council will be entirely free, and it will be their duty in consultation with the central council to formulate schemes for the consideration of the State Governments in co-operation with the Federal Government, but I do not know what is in the mind of the Government, or what particular form the assistance might take.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [9.2]: After the Minister's statement, I presume the member for Fremantle will withdraw the motion. It is just possible that a better result might be obtained if we left the motion on the Notice Paper, so that it might be further discussed if necessary, and then the Government would be given a lead as to their action through the State council. I am pleased to hear the announcement that a State council is to be appointed. I congratulate the member for Fremantle on having brought the motion forward. While I agree with the motion, I cannot see eye to eye with the Premier when he says it is not a matter for the State Government. I contend that it is essentially a matter for the State Government to guard the welfare of not only the soldiers, but of any of the people of this State.

The Minister for Mines: The Premier was speaking more particularly in regard to paragraph 3, that is, the obligation on the Government to formulate a scheme.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not say that the Premier was not as heartily in accord with the spirit of the motion as any member of the House. I think he was, but I did not agree with the principle he expressed not only on that occasion but also when the member for Kattanning asked if the Premier was aware that certain unclean blankets were being distributed to the men at the Blackboy Hill camp. The Premier's reply was that these are military matters, and the hon. member should make representations to the Federal Government through a Federal member.

Mr. Bolton: That has nothing to do with the motion.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The same sentiment as the Premier expressed towards this motion was involved. Undoubtedly it is the duty of the State Government to look after the soldiers, and to—

The Minister for Mines: To co-operate with the Federal Government.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Yes, and to go further and represent the matter to the Federal Government in the strongest possible light. The same argument applies to the other matter. If a communication is to be made to the Imperial Government, is not it made through the Federal or the State Government? Similarly any communication by a State member to the Federal Government should be made through the State Government. The Government ought to admit this, as it is an unwritten law, and the principle should certainly be maintained because, particularly in regard to military matters is it the duty of the Government to make any necessary representations to the Federal Government without the fear that it might cost the State something. It would come from the Government with very much more force than from a private member or individual. I congratulate the member for Fremantle on having tabled the motion. It would have received my whole-hearted support even to the third paragraph, if the circumstances had not altered in the way indicated by the Minister for Mines.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle—in reply) [9.6]: I would like briefly to thank hon. members who have spoken for the sympathetic way in which they have treated the motion. I think I can safely assume also, that their views represent the feelings of those who have not spoken. When tabling the motion I did not anticipate that there would be any opposition to the spirit of it. Of course there was room for some difference of opinion as to the methods to be adopted to give expression to it, and although I was not surprised that the Premier raised objection to the expending of money, still I was rather sorry that his endeavour

to make it appear a Federal matter and not a State matter crept into the debate.

Mr. Thomson: They are not treating them too well.

Mr. CARPENTER: I would repeat that the care of our disabled soldiers is a responsibility resting on the whole of the people of Australia. It does not matter whether the agency is a Federal or State, or even a private one for that matter. I want to see everything done that can be done in the quickest and best way possible. I am very glad to hear that the Federal authorities have communicated with the Government and that the Government are acting promptly in the suggested course of action of appointing a State council in common with the other States, so that the matter of making provision for returning soldiers may be undertaken on uniform lines throughout Australia. I hope and believe the Federal Parliamentary Committee will recognise that the chief responsibility for financing any scheme rests with the Federal Government, but that should not, and will not, preclude any State Government or Parliament from co-operating with the Committee and doing all they possibly can; in fact, it cannot be done without co-operation between the State and the Federal authorities. As the object I had in view in moving the motion has been accomplished by the announcement of the Government, I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [9.10] in moving the second reading said: I do not propose to occupy a great deal of time in moving the second reading of this measure, because it is essentially a Committee Bill. The introduction of a Bill of this description is absolutely necessary, because of the limitation which was placed in the Act. It will be remembered that in the original Bill the Government

did not propose to limit the operations of the measure to the extent they were limited by another place, but we agreed to the limitation, realising of course that we would have to introduce another Bill this session to extend the operations because it would be utterly impossible to wind up the business of the board by March of next year. The work of the board has been somewhat strenuous, and although I believe there is room for some criticism in regard to details, I think we ought to take a broad view of the work of the board, realise the difficulties they had to encounter, and bear in mind that they accomplished that which Parliament and the Government desired, namely, got the largest area possible under crop. When I tell hon. members that an area of approximately 550,000 acres has been seeded, owing to assistance rendered by the Industries Assistance Board, all will agree that they have accomplished very great good indeed. It is impossible to give definite figures, but it is calculated that to date something like £720,000 has been distributed by the board in seed wheat, super, or in other ways. To give a few details that go to make up the sum of £720,000, in the supply of fodder which, unfortunately, was so essential last year, £252,000 was spent. In the supply of stores to the settlers as guaranteed by the various storekeepers, it is calculated that £85,000 was expended. On machinery to put crops in, and on which the first instalments only were paid, £6,700 has been spent, on the payment of water rates due to the State £7,937, on the arrears of land rent £105,828, and on arrears of interest due to the Agricultural Bank £33,565 has been spent. Those figures do not make up the total of £720,000, because I have not included the payment for seed wheat and super and other incidental expenditures which had to be made, but I give these details to convey an idea of the magnitude of the work of the board. Members will recognise that the board have done much and will realise the responsibility we have to carry out as provided by the Act, namely, not only to get back the money advanced by the State, but also to take over the surplus

of the crop and distribute it as outlined in the schedule of the Act. This is left to the discretion of the Colonial Treasurer. I have consulted the Chamber of Commerce to a very great extent, and I wish to express my appreciation of the generous way in which they have met us on all occasions, and have endeavoured to assist the Government in the many trials confronting them in their endeavour to help the settlers over the difficulties caused by the recent drought. It has been generally expressed by the Chamber of Commerce that it is desirable that the State should take over the total proceeds of the crop, and that after recouping the Government as outlined in Clause 9 for advances made under (a) and (b) the proceeds should be distributed by the State as outlined in the third schedule as nearly as possible. Therefore, when they realise the magnitude of that work, I think hon. members will admit that it is utterly impossible to have it all accomplished by March of next year, and that an extension of time is absolutely essential. I am of opinion that we will find in quite a number of cases that the farmers, owing to the continuous bad seasons which we have had during the last few years, have got into arrears to the extent that it will be impossible for them, even with the bountiful harvest that we have every right to expect, to get out of their difficulties. In many cases, therefore, we will probably not get sufficient money to recoup the Government and pay up a lot of the old debts of the farmer. If we left him at that he would be stranded, consequently I think that we shall have to continue the operations of the measure to enable the Government to go to his help next year and assist him to get out of his difficulties. When we arrive at that portion of the Bill in Committee it will no doubt be discussed, and I hope hon. members will realise that it will be unwise to unduly limit the operations of the measure. Some of the amendments deal with the difficulties which presented themselves with regard to the administration of the Act last year. I found, as Minister in charge, that a number of settlers had made repre-

sentations for assistance that were totally outside the scope of the measure, and these representations appealed to me as being just and reasonable, and in many cases of extreme urgency. Consequently, I took the risk of instructing the board to advance for these things, feeling certain that I could confidently look to Parliament to endorse the action by amending the Bill to make the application of the Bill retrospective and cover these advances. The advances were made more particularly in regard to maternity cases, medical expenses, dental expenses, and in regard to life insurance premiums, which, if not paid, would have meant that the policies would have run out. In addition, we also paid veterinary fees in many cases and wages to men in order to assist the farmer in getting his crop in, when he was totally unable to do so by his own labour. These actions I will ask the Chamber to endorse by making the Bill retrospective in order to recoup these advances made. We have also arrived at an arrangement with the Chamber of Commerce that we will guarantee to the merchants payment for oil, twine, cornsacks, and the first instalment on the harvesting machinery out of the proceeds of this crop. Hon. members will agree with me when I say that the Government have a responsibility in this regard, because we have seeded some 550,000 acres and we have to see that the harvest is gathered from that enormous area. We have to admit that we want all those commodities I have outlined. Had we not made that arrangement with the merchants, it would have meant that the Industries Assistance Board would have had to go into business, and become machinery merchants and general suppliers of stores in regard to these harvesting necessities.

Mr. Bolton: The merchants are not satisfied with the arrangement.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They are quite satisfied.

Mr. Bolton: No, they are not.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is one merchant who is dissatisfied, and that is Mr. Bolton, of South Fremantle.

Mr. Bolton: There are many more than that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Chamber of Commerce expressed their satisfaction with the arrangement by which the assistance board guaranteed to them, on these commodities that they supplied, that payment was to be one of the first charges on the crop and that it would have to be made by the 1st February. I do not want to go into great length with the various clauses of the Bill because I will have to do that in Committee. Speaking generally, however, the House will be asked to endorse the advances which have been made in the directions already indicated. Members will be asked to continue the operations of the measure to, at least, December of next year. In regard to advances made for the payment on land rents, we found quite a number of settlers who were able to finance themselves in regard to putting in the crop, but were unable to furnish sufficient cash to pay their land rents when called upon. They could not get assistance through the bank, and on their making representations to the Lands Department I agreed that the Industries Assistance Board could advance money for the land rents, and guaranteed to ask Parliament to endorse the proposal—as I felt sure Parliament would—that we could not in cases where we did not advance money for the putting in of the crop take any mortgage over the crop to secure us for the amount of land rents advanced; in other words, that we should limit the security for the repayment of land rents to the land itself and not extend it to the crop. This has obviated the possibility of banks or other financial institutions which have advanced money from taking action, where the Government stepped in, and trying to take a first mortgage. The House will be asked to endorse that policy which has been put into operation of taking security over the land, and not over the crop as outlined in the Bill.

Mr. Hickmott: Did the Government take a bill of sale over the goods and chattels of the farmer?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Under the Act we were supposed to do that, but I want it amended in that regard. There

was an amendment inserted in the original Bill, as it was brought before this Chamber, by the late hon. Mr. Gawler, when it was in another place. I am inclined to think the amendment was badly drawn up, or, if it was not badly drawn up, it must have been amended in that Chamber with the result that it does not, in the opinion of the Crown Law Department, convey exactly what the late hon. gentleman intended, and was not in accordance with what Parliament considered was the case. For instance, the clause as adopted by Parliament called upon the Colonial Treasurer, before making advances on properties which were already mortgaged to an outside mortgagee, to ask the mortgagee to consent. If he did not consent then the Colonial Treasurer could advance the money, but instead of taking a lien over a man's land he would have a lien over the crop for two or three successive years until he was re-comped. It called upon us in each case to make application to the mortgagee, and we found that there was so much delay in getting these applications replied to that it was seriously hampering the settler in his cropping operations. There was grave danger that it would delay the operations too long and make the seeding too late. I instructed the board to go straight ahead and not to wait for replies, and felt that we could take the risk in that regard, because, if they agreed, we could put the crop in, and if they disagreed, we could still put the crop in, but, instead of having a mortgage over the crop, we would have only a mortgage over the land. I want the House to agree now to make an amendment in the original Act, stating that where the application was not sent to the mortgagee or was not replied to by the mortgagee we would still have a lien over the crop for two or three years. I hope hon. members will follow me. When the obligation was placed upon the board to make application to the mortgagee, if he replied agreeing to the advancement of the money, the advance was made. If he disagreed we had a mortgage over the crop only and not over the land for two or three years. But instead of waiting

for a reply we made advances. If he did not agree, we had a mortgage only over the crop. I ask Parliament to say whether he agrees or disagrees that we still have a mortgage over the crop, and that in cases where no application is made at all we still have it over the crop only and not over the land.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Surely that was what was intended.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is what I said at the outset. I am inclined to think that the late hon. Mr. Gawler had that in his mind when he drafted the amendment, but for some reason or other it does not apply, and we want to put the matter right. The next question is rather a peculiar one. Under the Act as it stands to-day, we, as a Government, undoubtedly have first claim on all crops for the repayment of advances under subsections (a) and (b) of Section 9. But we have not got full power of taking a surplus if the farmer elects to assign his estate to a trustee. If a farmer, from now onwards, likes to assign his estate to a trustee we can only claim under the Act for the payment of advances made by the State, but we cannot guarantee to distribute the surplus as outlined in the third schedule. The danger is this: A number of farmers may elect—I do not say they will—to assign their crops, and then allow the trustee to distribute the money as he thinks fit. There may even be preferential creditors. Therefore, it will preclude the board from doing what we undertook to do, namely, to agree to a distribution of the surplus as outlined in the schedule. I discussed the matter with the Chamber of Commerce quite recently, but they declined to take the responsibility of saying what should be done because they were of opinion that possibly an injustice might be effected to some of the trustees. If a trustee distributes an assigned estate he gets 5 per cent. on it, and they took up the attitude that it would be unfair, possibly, of the board to take that 5 per cent. commission away from the trustee. At the same time, they wanted me as Minister to guarantee the protection of their accounts, and to distribute the proceeds as outlined in the

third schedule. I could see, of course, that we could not do both those things. It was then agreed that we should have a conference between the various trustees who usually administer these estates, and the Chamber of Commerce and the Crown Law officers and myself. We then arrived at a unanimous understanding that in cases where the Industries Assistance Board advanced on estates which had been assigned previous to the advance, the distribution of the surplus over and above the Government's claim should be left to the trustees, but that after an advance was made no assignment of crops could be effected. Thus we obtained a guarantee that in the case of all assignments outside those made after advances had been granted, distribution would be as outlined in the Third Schedule. Accordingly Clause 4 asks the House to agree to the arrangement by which assignments will not be permitted on crops from now until the cessation of this measure. By the same clause we are asking Parliament to agree that where the Colonial Treasurer distributes a surplus as outlined in the Third Schedule he shall be allowed to charge a commission for doing the work. It has been generally recognised by the commercial community that when we do this work it is only fair we should receive some recomp for the administrative charges. Under the measure as it stands to-day we have not that power, and we are now seeking it. The next point relates to another case where we could not have got the area under crop if we had waited for the various settlers to sign the forms acknowledging their liability to the State as outlined in the principal Act. In those cases, seeing that otherwise a great deal of delay would be involved, it was arranged with the Crown Law Department that, instead of waiting for these acknowledgments to be signed before making advances, we would make the advance and then lodge a caveat against the debtor's title. That has been done in quite a number of cases. The farmer would make application by letter for an advance, and we would approve of those advances and send him a form making acknowledgment of his liability to the

State, or giving us, as outlined in the Third Schedule to the principal Act, a mortgage over his crop. Where he did not do that, we simply lodged a caveat. We now want Parliament to agree to those caveats being considered mortgages as outlined in the principal Act. If hon. members will look at the schedule to the Bill and compare it with the schedule dealing with mortgages in the principal Act, they will see that the two amount to practically the same thing. In order to avoid duplication and unnecessary expense, we have not thought it necessary to lift the caveat and lodge the mortgage. No harm to any individual whatever will result from this amendment. The next proposal is to correct an obvious error in the principal Act, where the season is given as 1913-14 instead of 1914-15. It is purely a printer's error. The only other matters are insurance of crops and insurance under the Workers' Compensation Act. We want the crops insured, of course. We are leaving it to the farmer to effect the insurance, but we want Parliament to give us the right to effect the insurance in the event of the settler's failing to insure. In an earlier clause we ask for power to allow the farmer to insure, and that will be a first charge against the crop exactly in the same way as advances under Subsections (a) and (b) of Section 9.

Mr. Harrison: Is the farmer to have liberty to insure his crop, or portion of it, for short periods in his own interest?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have heard some criticism on that point, and I have not yet had an opportunity of discussing it with the board. It has been stated to me that the underwriters' association are representing to the farmers that they must insure at a given date and for a given period. That has not been agreed to by me. I contend that the farmer should insure as late as he possibly can and get away from insurance as early as he possibly can, without, however, taking any undue risk. I am not prepared to agree to a proposal which will compel the farmer to insure his crop for a period longer than the average. I shall go into the matter, and in Commit-

tee I shall be able to give the Chamber definite information on the point, as to which some representations have been made to me. The next point is the payment of the premium on workers' compensation. The conditions as they stand to-day make the board to a great extent, if not wholly, responsible in respect of any accident to the labourers on the farms. We want to see that the risk is insured against, so that if there are any claims we shall be covered against them. The matter, of course, is one in which the farmer can exercise his own judgment. He can effect the insurance himself, but if he fails we want the right to do it and make it a charge against the crop. I have now dealt with all the provisions of the Bill. Hon. members understand that it will be necessary for the whole of the amendments to be made retrospective, dating from the commencement of the principal Act, in order to ratify the risk taken in going beyond the provisions of the Act so as to get areas under crop. I do not think members will take any exception to this, and I submit the second reading to the favourable consideration of the House. If any more information is required, I shall be happy to supply it when we get into Committee.

On motion by Hon. H. B. Lefroy debate adjourned.

BILL — PERMANENT RESERVE.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [9.38] in moving the second reading said: This is a very small matter indeed, affecting the constituency of the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison). The Bill deals with the Merredin township. On the western side of the surveyed township there is a reserve numbered 1483, which is a reserve for park lands and recreation, about 10 acres in extent. Immediately adjoining this reserve, on the south side, there is a railway reserve, which is numbered 10359. In connection with buildings erected by the Railway Department at Merredin it is proposed to introduce the

septic tank system for sanitation, and in making the drains it is found necessary to enter the railway reserve, 10359, and just to enter the other reserve, 1483. The drains pass through the latter only for a chain or so, but it is necessary to introduce a Bill to transfer the area affected from reserve 1483 to reserve 10359.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Have you a plan?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The plan is not here.

Mr. George: How much land do you propose to transfer?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It looks to me like a tenth of an acre. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [9.40]: It is usual for the House to be in possession of a plan even when an alteration of a minor character affecting a reserve is proposed. Does the Minister desire to go on with the Bill to-night?

The Minister for Lands: Yes. We are only transferring from one reserve to another.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: You are transferring from a class A reserve.

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The plan, of course, gives more information than the Bill itself. There seems to be no objection to the Bill which, as the Minister says, merely transfers an area from one reserve to another, and does not propose to take a reserve for the purpose of sale. Because a class A reserve is affected, the matter has to come before Parliament.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [9.41]: I have seen the Minister for Lands in regard to this matter. The portion to be transferred is very small, and the transfer is necessary for the drainage of Merredin. For the purpose of getting the drainage through to a septic tank on the other side of the railway, portion of reserve 1483 has to be taken. That being a class A reserve, application has to be made to Parliament for power to transfer. As member for the district I see no objection to the carrying of this Bill.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [9.42]: I do not rise with any desire to oppose the second reading, but merely to enter a protest. Permanent reserves are made for the special purpose of preserving certain pieces of ground for recreation purposes. The Permanent Reserves Act was passed in order to prevent any Minister from interfering with the King's Park or similar reserves. The Act in question is probably the best of its kind ever passed in Western Australia, and I do not think we can too jealously guard the provisions of that measure. I wish to protest against the failure to furnish a plan in connection with this Bill. In the past a large plan has always been supplied in these cases. It is all very well for the Minister to say that there is no interference with reserves, but a former Government made reserve 1483 for recreation purposes. The department have theories of their own, and they probably want a piece of this reserve as of a great many others. While it may be, and probably is, necessary that the transfer here proposed should be made, yet great care ought to be exercised. I am satisfied in this case, because the member for the district takes the responsibility of saying that the transfer is necessary and that no harm will arise. I am speaking not in opposition at all to this particular Bill, but for the principle of the thing, which is that these reserves should be carefully guarded and not lightly parted with. On future occasions of this nature I hope the Minister will give the House the fullest information, including a map.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

**BILL.—MINES REGULATION ACT
AMENDMENT.**

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [9.48]: There is not much left in the way of

breaking new ground so far as supporting this Bill is concerned, particularly after the splendid introductory speech of the Minister for Mines. I would not have risen to speak if it had not been for some of the remarks of the leader of the Opposition. That hon. gentleman congratulated the Minister on having dropped many of the contentious matters that were contained in the Bill introduced to the Chamber on a previous occasion, but I want also to emphasise, as well as the Minister, that although he was only introducing this, practically a one clause Bill, he did not mean by the introduction of such a Bill that he, as the Minister for Mines or the Government as a Government, and the supporters sitting behind them, realised that many of the principles suggested or contained in the previous measure were not just as necessary to-day as they were then. That being the case, I desire to emphasise the necessity for passing this one clause Bill. The leader of the Opposition said that the workmen to-day had the power to appoint their own inspectors. It has been pointed out to that hon. gentleman that times out of number that, while we admit that such a provision is contained in the Act, it is an absolute absurdity to have it there or in any other measure. The fact of the matter is that the Act which is at present in force has been in operation since 1906, and I venture to say that throughout the whole of that period there has been a continuous agitation on the part of men employed underground for the right to appoint workmen's inspectors. There are records of only two cases in which the men have ever attempted to avail themselves of the provisions of the Act. That in itself shows that the measure is unworkable. It is absurd to expect men working underground, and who are advocating the right to appoint workmen's inspectors, to be satisfied with the provisions contained in the present Act. Section 16 of the present Act reads—

The majority of persons employed in any mine, may, at their own cost, once in every month, or oftener if they think fit, appoint two of their number, or any two practical working miners, not being mining engineers, to inspect the mine and the persons so appointed shall be allowed once at least in every month, accompanied, if the owner, agent or manager of the mine thinks fit, by himself or one or more officers of the mine to go to every part of the mine and to inspect the shafts, levels, planes, working places, return air ways, ventilating apparatus, old workings, and machinery.

The point I want to lay stress on is that the men, first of all, must get two shifts together so as to obtain an absolute majority of the men working on that mine before they can appoint two of their number. Then they are compelled to go down the mine with the manager, or the underground foreman. Do hon. members think, under existing or any circumstances, that a man going round that mine would have the same freedom to make a report which he conscientiously believes should be made, that is, when he is in the presence of the manager himself? I venture to say that if two men, who were absolutely conscientious, found things were not as they should be, and submitted an adverse report, they would be looking for work in the next week. Hon. members may say that is not so, but I have had nine years' experience working underground in and around the Golden Mile, and that experience has led me to believe that what I have just stated is the case. I have never been able to discover that a manager or an underground manager would admit that a man had been dismissed for that or any other purpose similar to it. It is ridiculous to expect that men are going to take advantage of such a situation. On the other hand, the argument used by the leader of the Opposition is that if it is correct for the employees in a mine to want the right to appoint inspectors for their own protection, it is just as logical for the Chamber of Mines to ask that inspectors be

appointed on their behalf. That argument, too, in my opinion is ridiculous in the extreme. Let us analyse the position. The leader of the Opposition contends that the Chamber of Mines should have the same right as the workers in that respect, but what I would ask is, what risk does the Chamber of Mines incur so far as the conditions of employment underground are concerned? The Chamber of Mines have their chief inspector, who is the general manager, and who very rarely goes underground. The general manager appoints a manager who is practically responsible to him for the satisfactory working conditions from the company's standpoint. And if the underground manager, or his subordinate officers, do not carry out their duties satisfactorily, they will soon get their walking ticket. They have their inspectors going around and the actual duty of these men is to get the best returns they can, and they can only do that by obtaining the best results from the men employed. It is only reasonable, therefore, that the men employed in an industry such as mining, where the occupation has such known dangers, should have the right to appoint one of their own number to look after their interests. It is exceedingly strange to hear the argument continually advanced against this proposition that the men who are going to be appointed will harass the managers. The argument is absurd. It is to the interests of the men to see that the mining industry continues, just as much as it is to the interests of the mine-owners, and if the men harass anyone to any extent they will lose their employment. Personally, I do not believe they would attempt to do anything of the kind. The strongest argument in favour of the appointment of workmen's inspectors is that the men employed would have some control over these inspectors so far as the actual work they would do, or the method under which they would do the work was concerned. At the present time we have three permanent inspectors on the Golden Mile, and even with those three, in a mile length of country, a mine

is never inspected unless notice has been given to the mine manager on the night before. That is wrong, and I believe the Minister considers it to be wrong. I have argued the point with the late chief inspector in Kalgoorlie, and he told me that it would not be possible for the staff there to make any kind of efficient inspection of the mines, unless they notified the managers that they were going to do so. The chief inspector contended that it was impossible to go down a mine and find out all the working places without someone to act as a guide. I want to pay a tribute to the inspectors on the goldfields. I believe that we have as capable officers as it is possible to get, and the present chief inspector is one of the best mining inspectors we have ever had in Western Australia, but let those inspectors be ever so honest, they do not see the mine in its ordinary condition. This condition of things prevailed the whole time I was at work, and I protested against it, but what happened? This is what I believe has happened. Up there to-day they do not send word to a mine until the inspectors arrive back at the office in the afternoon, which means 4 or 4:30 o'clock. Then they notify the manager of the mine they are going to inspect next day. What happens? If they are working only two shifts on that mine the shift bosses are immediately notified, and as they go their rounds they tell every man to take special precautions to see that nothing is wrong, because the inspector is coming next day. If three shifts are being worked, they do not bother about it on the afternoon shift, but when the men on the night shift go to get their candles they are told to see that everything is right before they knock off next morning. That is not as it should be. The workmen should have their own inspectors, empowered at any time, day or night, to see the mine worked under its ordinary working conditions and, if it is not being worked as it should be, to lodge a complaint. It is only a fair proposition. Until the workmen themselves have some say in the appointment and control of inspectors they will never be satisfied. I do

not wish to be misunderstood in this. The Bill places the workmen's inspectors directly under the control of the district inspectors, but the mere fact of the workmen's inspector being appointed by the men will give the men a sufficient lever to see that he carries out his duties in a proper manner. He will inspect the mine without first notifying the management, and will not ask any representative of the management to go round with him. That is the insuperable bar to our present inspectors getting all the information they should get. Nine times out of ten they are accompanied by the underground manager and, when thus accompanied, they ask a man how things are. Is it reasonable to expect that he should declare the conditions to be unfit to work in?

Mr. Heitmann: He is a pretty poor man who works in unfit conditions.

Mr. MUNSIE: Probably so, but I have known cases in which honest and sincere men have had to consider their bread and butter before voicing a complaint. I have worked in a place which I did not regard as safe, and if an inspector had come along I would certainly have drawn his attention to the condition. But no inspector comes along to such a place. He is accompanied by the underground manager, who takes care that the inspector shall not see these doubtful places. I have worked in such a place and, on coming to the surface, have been surprised to learn that an inspector had been down that day. Scarce necessary to say, he had not been anywhere near where I was working. In many instances had he come some awkward questions would have been asked by him; but the management took care that he was never allowed to see such a place. We cannot hope to render the men satisfied until we give them some control over the inspectors. There is only one way of doing that, namely, by giving them the right to appoint their own inspectors under the control of the Government inspectors. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [10.5]: Members of the Country party are quite

willing to endorse anything which has for its object the safeguarding of human life. The first thing to appeal to any legislator is human life, and the second should be human well-being. If at the present time these men are running greater risks in the mines than they ought to accept, something should be done, and if it can only be done by appointing inspectors from among the men, I will endorse that principle. But while we appoint inspectors from the ranks of the workers, we should see that nothing is done to hamper or restrict the working of the mines. Several of the mines on the Golden Mile have been brought to decimal points of a pennyweight. When last I was in Kalgoorlie I inspected a considerable mine having large surface workings rendered necessary by a very complicated treatment, and I was told that the problem of making that mine pay had been reduced to a science. There were 300 miners working underground in that property, and if any mal-administration of the Bill should bring that mine below the profit-making margin, it will mean the throwing of those men out of employment. Great care should be taken to see that the inspectors appointed do their duty without putting any hampering restrictions on the mine. I wish to sound a note of warning in that direction, because it means that a number of mines profitable to-day may be rendered unprofitable in the future, in which case the effect will be severely felt by the miners. I hope that whoever are appointed will be true to the trust reposed in them. Statistics prove that there is only one comparison with a mine in point of the hazardous nature of the employment. That is a railway. There are some 6,000 miners working underground in this State, and in our railway service we have over 6,000 workers. In 1914 there were 26 men killed in our mines, while 831 were the victims of serious accidents. On the railways 7 men were killed, and 78 seriously injured. The total given in *Knibbs* is somewhat different, the numbers there being shown as 25 and 154, including not only the

workers on the railways but civilians and passengers suffering injury. Those figures clearly prove a very great difference. Statistics in relation to our friendly societies go to prove the existence of a much greater amount of sickness among miners than among any other class of workmen. If that can be thus remedied hon. members ought to favour a more rigid inspection.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [10-10]: Like most hon. members I am quite prepared to do anything that will ensure the safety of the men working in the mines. Undoubtedly mining is an exceedingly hazardous occupation. I know of none more so. Probably the men do not recognise it as being so hazardous, because of course one can become accustomed to almost any conditions. Although I have never worked in a mine, I have had considerable experience of spending money in mining, and therefore have gained a wide practical knowledge of the industry. I cheerfully admit that if I had to earn my living by manual labour I would not take up underground mining. The point is, will the Bill lessen the risk in mining?

Mr. Munsie: Certainly.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not agree that it will. We have to-day a very good system of inspection. The proposed system is entirely new. Can the Minister say that it is in force in any part of the world?

The Minister for Mines: The principle is recognised in practically every country in the world.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The principle is recognised in our existing Act, where full provision is made for putting it into operation.

Mr. Heitmann: Unworkable.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is not. Exactly the same provision obtains in the New South Wales Act. Repeated requests have been made to the Labour Ministry there to adopt the provision contained in the Bill, but he has refused point-blank to do so, and to-day the Broken Hill miners are working under the same Act as ours, namely, the Mines Regulation Act 1906. They appointed two

inspectors some three years ago under practically the same provision which exists in our Act. This emphasises the fact that if this Bill becomes law, it is no guarantee that the provision will lessen the number of accidents. We ought to be very careful not to do anything which will interfere with our gold mines, because the industry has reached a stage at present which will not permit of any liberty being taken with it. But if it is a matter of working under unsafe conditions or closing down the mines, then, I say, close them down.

Mr. Munsie : Has not the appointment of check inspectors in the coal mines of New South Wales had a beneficial effect so far as accidents are concerned ?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : There is no comparison between the two.

Mr. Munsie : Of course there is.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : The member for Nelson quoted reports regarding mines in Belgium and France. He made exactly the same mistake as the member for Hannans in comparing coal mines with gold mines. There are no mines in Belgium or France other than coal or iron mines. On one occasion a member of this House stated that he spoke with the greatest eloquence when he was entirely untrammelled by any real knowledge of the subject. I am inclined to think the member for Nelson was in that position, because, judging by his speech, he was certainly untrammelled by any real knowledge of the subject of gold mining.

Mr. Mullany : You yourself are going pretty well now.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : The coal mines are regulated under an entirely different Act, namely, the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1902. They have check inspectors, but for a different purpose.

Mr. Heitmann : What for ?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : To weigh the coal, and they are employed by the men in the mines.

Mr. Munsie : You are talking about the check weighmen. The check inspectors are not paid by the men.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : By whom are they paid ?

Mr. Munsie : They are mostly honorary positions.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : If they do the work, the men ought to pay for it. In any case, those inspectors have not the powers proposed to be conferred on workmen's inspectors under this Bill. The question is, will this system of inspection lessen the number of accidents ?

The Minister for Mines : We say yes.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : I regret that the Minister did not give some facts to prove his contention.

Mr. Munsie : How could he when you say there are none in existence ?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : He quoted reports applying only to coal and iron mines which had no real bearing on the question.

Mr. Heitmann : Of course they had.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : I would have liked to hear some real arguments as to how this Bill would assist to lessen the number of accidents. The Bill proposes to recognise three distinct kinds of inspectors. First we have the Government inspectors, who are now called district inspectors; they have to have five years' experience of general mining work, and, further, have to pass a stiff examination. Then we have special inspectors, appointed to make inspections requiring special technical or scientific training or knowledge as the Minister may direct. This is a very good provision at which no one can cavil. But when we come to workmen's inspectors it is provided that they shall be elected by the general union of mine workers and subject to the approval of the Minister, but no person shall be elected unless he has had five years' experience, which might have been gained at any period of his life. No examination whatever is provided for. Every member with a knowledge of mining will admit that a man might be five years underground and still not make a competent inspector.

Mr. Heitmann : He might be 25 years.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : Quite so.

Mr. Munsie: Do you think the union would be likely to appoint such a man?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: In a mine, just as in a factory, a man has particular work and generally sticks to it, because he becomes versed in that particular branch of the work. Even after 10 years underground, a man might not have acquired anything like a general knowledge of mining, and, therefore, would not be competent to say, as a district inspector could, whether a mine was safe.

Mr. Heitmann: In my opinion a majority of the district inspectors had to pick up their practical experience after they were appointed.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That should not be the case. If it is so, the examination must have been peculiar indeed.

Mr. Munsie: There are many men on the fields who could pass the practical examination.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Then, why not make provision for that, for then it would be more likely that the safety of the men would be assured? If we are to have these workmen's inspectors let them be competent men who will know what they are doing. One objection to the clause is that the miners are to appoint these inspectors for two years. Whether they are good or bad they will be there for all time. The Minister has no power of removal.

The Minister for Mines: Does not it say that their conditions of employment shall be made by regulation?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That is in regard to their pay and the conditions under which they shall inspect the mines.

The Minister for Mines: Not at all; the whole control of them.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It does not say that the Minister might remove them. When the executive appoint a district or special inspector, they can remove him.

The Minister for Mines: It stipulates all the terms and conditions of appointment.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That does not include removal.

The Minister for Mines: One of the conditions of appointment would be the power to remove them.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That is a detail, but a very important detail. No power of removal is expressed in the Bill.

Mr. Heitmann: The Minister will attend to that.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Minister has not shown that workmen's inspectors would have any effect in the direction of lessening the accidents in mines.

Mr. Munsie: They will insist on better conditions under which the men work, even if they do not lessen the number of accidents.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: According to the latest report, the number of fatal accidents for the year 1914, was less than in any year since 1897.

The Minister for Mines: No, the same as in the previous year.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It was slightly less last year.

The Minister for Mines: No, 226, the same number.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: According to the diagram, it was slightly less. Even allowing that it was the same, there were fewer accidents during last year and the year before, than for 18 years.

The Minister for Mines: The least in the history of the industry. That is my administration.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: If that proves anything it is that the present system of inspection is effective. The present Act was passed in 1906 in which year the number of accidents reached the highest point, and since then it has diminished until the lowest number was reached the year before last.

The Minister for Mines: If I can achieve such results under the Act, what would I do under such a measure as this?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Minister has achieved those results under an Act passed by a Liberal Government, and he would not achieve anything like the same results under a measure of this description framed by his Government. The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Under the present Mines Regulation Act there has been a gradual decline in the number of accidents until last year and the year before we reached a point as low as in 1897 when mining was merely in its infancy. This shows that the present system of inspection must be effective, so far as the number of accidents are concerned.

The Minister for Mines: No; it only shows that it is an improvement on past years, but does not show that it is not possible to improve on that.

The Premier: It also shows that, with an alteration in the Government, we might revert to the old condition of affairs.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: [Nothing of the kind. It is regrettable that these accidents have occurred, but I am afraid that, so long as mining is carried on, accidents will occur. The Minister will agree that many of them are caused by the over-confidence of the men. In mining, the same as in any other work, familiarity breeds contempt. This is borne out by the details of fatal and serious accidents set forth on page 56 of the Mines Report. The Minister laid great stress on the number of fatal accidents which have occurred in this State. I repeat it is regrettable that they have occurred, but I do not think he should make more out of them than is necessary or than is fair or just to the mining industry. It is not fair to compare the accidents in mines in this State with the accidents occurring in the Eastern States. The Minister knows that the conditions are not similar and that the statistics are not taken on the same basis.

The Minister for Mines: I only compared the fatal accidents, not the injuries. You can make a fair comparison with them.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: If the Minister took fatal accidents they would not constitute a fair comparison for the reason that most of the gold mining in this State is deep mining, whereas the contrary is the case in Victoria, for instance.

Mr. Heitmann: Rubbish.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: In the majority of cases that is so at any rate.

The exception does not prove the rule, and because there is a deep mine in Bendigo that is not to say that the majority of mines in the Eastern States are deep mines. Take, for instance, the dredging in Victoria where the workings are practically all on the surface. In the Eastern States—I am not certain of Victoria—they only take an accident underground as being a mining accident. Here we find that a great many of the fatal accidents occur on the surface, in many occasions in connection with the machinery which is controlled by a different Act altogether. To make a fair comparison we should eliminate from the fatal accidents of last year the great number that took place on the surface, including all those killed by machinery. The Minister is not justified in decrying in a loud voice the fatal accidents as compared with the Eastern States. If a fair comparison is made probably Western Australia would show up very fairly indeed with the Eastern States. If we take those accidents as set out in the State Mining Engineer's Report, which gives the details of all of them, we shall see that they could have been prevented by no amount of inspection. If I could see that any inspection would lessen one of these accidents then I would say, provide that inspection notwithstanding the inconvenience it may cause.

The Minister for Mines: One of the principal causes of accidents which could be avoided are the falls of earth.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: We find that the falls of earth have been lessening until they have of recent years come down to a minimum.

The Minister for Mines: And they are still lessening.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I admit that the falls of earth constitute one of the greatest dangers.

The Minister for Mines: The result of better inspection, you see. My good work again.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: By having better inspection the falls of ground could be minimised, it is true.

The Minister for Mines: There has been stricter inspection during the last few years than ever before, and as a

result we are reducing all these classes of accident.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: If the Government want more inspectors by all means let them have them, but let them be Government inspectors and qualified men over whom the Minister has control.

The Minister for Mines: I control them all right.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Minister will have no control over these proposed workmen's inspectors.

The Minister for Mines: I keep hold of them.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: They are appointed by the men and dismissed by the men only. This diagram shows that falls of earth are of less frequent occurrence now than formerly. It goes to show that the present system of inspection is good and that the falls have diminished considerably since 1906 and the passing of the present Act. If hon. members will turn to pages 56 and 57 of this year's Mines report they will see the different fatal accidents mentioned and the reason for them. They will see that in almost every instance they were not caused by any reason which could have been avoided by any amount of inspection. There is a case of a man who attempted to ride in a skid, but was unable to squeeze into it and so was caught. In another case a man happened to get on the door of the shaft though warned not to do so with the result that he fell down the shaft. All these cases are the same. The coroner's verdict is accidental death with no blame attachable to anybody. In some cases when the men were warned not to go under certain ground in a mine they judged that it was quite safe and went under it. The ground was examined and believed to be safe. That may happen with any amount of inspection. All these accidents occur in that way. Here is another instance, of a man who was precipitated down a shaft a distance of 140 feet. The winze was well protected and the requirements of the Mines Regulation Act were carried out. I want to remind the House again that the present system of workmen's

inspectors as provided under Section 16, as the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) pointed out, in the portion where it says that the majority of the persons employed can appoint two of their number to inspect, contains full provision for workmen's inspectors.

Mr. Munsie: They cannot employ any practical man who is not employed on the mine.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: If the wording of that section is not correct it is the fault of the Minister. The Minister had it altered before, and rejected a number of good amendments to the Mines Regulation Act two years ago. He objected to that very clause which was put in in exactly the form which the member for Hannans says it should be in now. Another good provision was for the appointment of a Mines Regulation Board to which all complaints could be made.

The Minister for Mines: And the Council threw it out.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No, they reduced the number of members forming the board from seven to three. If that provision was inserted in this Bill which the Minister rejected from the last Bill it would do a great deal more for the safety of the miners than these workmen's inspectors. It will be seen in Clause 10 that inspectors shall examine into and make inquiry respecting the state and condition of any mine, or any part thereof, and of all matters or things connected with or relating to the safety or well being of the persons employed, and for the purpose of such examination or inquiry the inspector may require the attendance of any mine official or employee and such official or employee shall attend accordingly. That is, a man working in a mine may order the manager to attend, and has exactly the same powers as a district inspector. The Minister said that they never initiated prosecution, without approval of the head office. Subsection d says they are to initiate and conduct prosecution against persons offending under the provisions of the Act. If inspectors do not initiate prosecutions they are not doing their duty

and the head office is preventing them from doing it.

The Minister for Mines: The hon. member is mistaken. The Act, of course, must give the inspectors power to initiate and conduct prosecutions, but by a circular issued from the head office they are forbidden to do so without authority. When head office authority has been given, the inspectors must of necessity have the power provided in the Act to enable them to proceed.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I understand the Minister to say that the inspectors had to submit each case.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, to the head office. No inspector launches a prosecution now without the previous approval of the State Mining Engineer.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That is not the point. I wish to show that the workmen's inspectors have exactly the same power as the district or Government inspectors. Under the Bill, the workmen's inspectors must submit cases to the Minister or the State Mining Engineer. The Minister has power to define the conditions under which they shall work, but I am not altogether satisfied it is a wise regulation to make the Government inspectors submit each case. If they are competent men, why not allow them to initiate prosecutions? There is one other provision to which I desire to refer. Clause 11 says—

No person shall be qualified to be a district inspector who at the same time actually practises, either alone or in partnership with any person, as a land agent, mining engineer, mining manager, viewer, agent, or valuer of mines, or acts as an arbitrator in any differences or disputes arising between owners, agents, or managers of mines, or is otherwise employed in or is the owner or part owner of, or interested as a shareholder, in any mine within the State.

That is a perfectly proper provision. It would not be right to allow a mining inspector to be interested in any of the various ways mentioned in the clause. But, let hon. members mark, no such restriction is placed on the workmen's

inspector. True, he is under a penalty, the same as a district inspector, if he discloses to any person information he acquires through inspecting a mine. But that does not prevent him from using the information to his own advantage or to the detriment of the mine owner or the shareholders. The workmen's inspector can examine a mine as he likes, get all the information he likes, at any time, and yet can be interested as a mining speculator, as a land agent, as a mining engineer, as a viewer, or as a valuer of mines.

Mr. Munsie: There are a lot of wealthy mining inspectors working underground to-day.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: They have their ups and downs. In certain days at Kalgoorlie many mining speculators would have been pleased to have the opportunity of visiting any mine whenever they pleased, and would readily have acted as workmen's inspectors. I will only repeat once more that if I were in any way satisfied that the system of workmen's inspectors would in the slightest degree lessen the risks of mining, I would support that system.

Mr. Munsie: Let us give it a trial just for once.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The argument against giving it a trial is that the principle is entirely new and has nothing to recommend it, that it is a principle which has never been adopted in any other gold mining country in the world. It has been turned down by older mining districts in the Eastern States. It was turned down by an ex-miner who became Minister for Mines in the New South Wales Government; because New South Wales has exactly the same provision as that in our Act of 1906. The miners may appoint their own inspectors. Although the Labour Government have been in power in New South Wales for over four years, they have refused in a very decided manner, and for a reason similar to that which I have given, to make the provision asked for by this Bill. Apparently the Broken Hill miners are satisfied that they have no case, because they have appointed workmen's inspectors

under the provisions of the existing law. Undoubtedly, a good many things might be amended in the 1906 Act, and some of these things were offered to the Minister two years ago. However, because he did not get the whole Bill, the hon. gentleman refused these beneficial amendments.

The Minister for Mines: That is absolutely a wild remark, to say the least.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: There were various provisions in that Mines Regulation Bill which would have been decided improvement.

The Minister for Mines: I accepted every amendment made by the Council except this one thing, and sent the Bill back to the Council, where it was lost.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The amendments which the Minister refused would have considerably helped the miners in regard to bad ventilation and other unhealthy conditions unfortunately prevailing in the mines. The principle of this Bill, however, represents merely an idea. It is a principle which does not obtain in any other part of the world. I say undoubtedly the measure will exercise an unfair influence on the mining industry of this country, without any adequate benefit so far as the miners are concerned. I do not believe the measure will contribute in any material degree to the safety of the miners, and therefore I am not prepared to support the second reading. I have spoken because formerly I represented a mining province. It is not my special duty just now to address myself to this measure, because I do not now represent a mining constituency. At the same time, I consider it is our duty to support or oppose a measure irrespective of whether our particular districts are directly interested. It was not because I represented a mining district before that I opposed previously a measure similar to the present. My opposition was formerly for the same reason as now, that I do not think the measure is to the interest of the men, or to the interest of the mining industry.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [10-48]: I congratulate the Minister for Mines on having again brought down this Bill. On the last occasion we had a Bill of something like 70 clauses. The present measure, I take it, is in keeping with the promise made in the Governor's Speech that no contentious legislation would be brought forward. Practically, this Bill consists of exactly one clause. That clause provides chiefly for inspection. It provides for inspection by district inspectors, special inspectors, and workmen's inspectors. The district inspectors, I presume, will be practically the same as the mining inspectors we have at present. The special inspectors will deal with cases where technical knowledge is required—cases of machinery accidents, or foul air, or fumes in mines, where a doctor or an analyst would be called in. I hope the Bill will receive from another place treatment different from what was accorded it in a previous session. At every mining conference which has been held in Western Australia all the clauses contained in the last measure were approved of, and I am satisfied that if we do not pass the present measure, there will be a great deal of dissatisfaction caused amongst the mining community. I fail to see why there should be so much opposition to the suggested better method of inspection. All that the miners are asking is that the regulations shall be properly carried out? There has been a good deal of criticism about the likelihood of miners harassing the managers, but I am quite satisfied that that will not take place. The men who will be appointed will be practical miners, and men of sound and practical knowledge. When a man goes underground he probably begins with trucking work, and after a while he gets on to a face. Then he may be working with hammer and drill and probably subsequently get on to the timber. If a man has any ambition he can always better himself, and in that way acquires practical knowledge. He is the kind of man who would be appointed to the position of workmen's inspector. All men in mines try to make themselves proficient and endeavour to give the best results they

can. I am satisfied that if workmen's inspectors are appointed by the unions, the men chosen for the positions will be men of years of practical experience in connection with mining. As the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) has pointed out, there have been only two instances in which the men have availed themselves of the opportunity of appointing inspectors. The reason for this is that if they reported adversely they would have no opportunity of getting further employment in the State. Even those members of unions who have given evidence in connection with arbitration cases have had to go on tramp.

Hon. J. D. Connolly : I do not think you ought to talk about victimisation after the Youanmi case.

Mr. CHESSON : The hon. member need not mention that case, because proceedings were taken against the men and big fines were inflicted.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs : For every one case on the part of the men there are hundreds on the part of the employers.

Mr. CHESSON : I have nothing to say against the present inspectors of mines. I am quite satisfied they do their duty. When we take into consideration a district of the size of the Murchison, which extends to the North as far as Mt. Egerton and to the South as far as Warriendar, we can readily understand the difficulties they experience in carrying out their work. Some of the mines in this district are visited only once in three, or once in every six months, but if workmen's inspectors were appointed the Government inspectors would get a great deal of assistance. At the present time, if an accident happens in a mine and the Government inspector is not in the district, the warden may appoint a deputy inspector to investigate the matter. In every instance the deputy who has been appointed has been a mine manager in the district, and we cannot expect a mine manager to report adversely when we take into consideration that a week later a brother manager may be called upon to report on his particular mine. It seems absurd, therefore, that a manager of an adjacent mine should at any time be appointed a deputy in-

spector. The Minister for Mines quoted the number of accidents which have happened in the mines of the State since 1910, but the figures are worth repeating. In 1910 there were 29 fatal accidents, and 589 other accidents were reported. In 1911, there were 37 fatal accidents, and 528 other accidents were reported. In 1912, there were 35 fatal accidents and 491 other accidents were reported. In 1913 there were 26 fatal accidents, and 741 other accidents were reported. In 1914 there were 26 fatal accidents, and 1,831 others were reported. For the seven months of the present year there have been 20 fatal accidents, and 1,487 others reported. I do not mean to say that these were all serious accidents, but at least it serves to show that during the last few years the inspection has improved under the present Government, and the inspectors are making an honest attempt to do their duty. Considering the large districts they have to attend to they are doing well. But I maintain that with inspectors appointed from the ranks of the miners we could expect a much better inspection, and could feel confident that the men would not be afraid to come forward and report to fellow workers in their capacity of inspectors. I have known instances of men reporting to inspectors of mines in respect to the working of a mine, and shortly afterwards those men have been told to go, notwithstanding that they were unquestionably good workers. In districts where union secretaries are to be found the reports are made to them, and there is no chance of their being victimised, because they are independent of the mine managers ; but if, under our existing law, men were appointed to inspect a mine and they reported in the complaint book provided, those men would probably have to leave the State. That has been proved beyond doubt. A point not previously touched upon in the debate is the large number of men stricken down by miner's phthisis. Dr. Cumpston's report shows conclusively that 33 per cent. of the underground miners are affected with fibrosis. That is a terrible state of affairs. It

would not obtain if we had better inspection of the mines. One half the fibrosis results from inadequate ventilation. Who is to say that there is an adequate supply of air in a mine? I do not think the district inspectors are provided with anemometers for testing the ventilation. At Day Dawn, for four years we paid £900 to assist the dependants of miners stricken down by this complaint. I fail to see how any member can object to a better inspection of our mines. No mining community is likely to unduly harass the mine management. The only object the Minister had in bringing down a one-clause Bill was to satisfy the demands made by the workers for the better carrying out of the Act. I hope the Bill will receive more sympathetic treatment in another place than it has had in the past. Although the leader of the Opposition spoke against it I am convinced that his heart was not in the opposition he offered. The miners have supported everything brought forward for the benefit of the farming community, and I feel sure that on this occasion we will have the support of the farmers' representatives in this House.

On motion by Mr. Gilchrist debate adjourned.

[] House adjourned at 11.7 p.m.

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Thursday, 16th September, 1915.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3.0 p.m., and read prayers.

BILL—GOVERNMENT ELECTRIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment to Section 5:

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I am utterly opposed to any extension of the industrial enterprises unwisely entered into by the Government. The extension of the electric works provided for in the clause will mean more work, more expenditure and more material, and will end in the engagement of an increased number of employees. It seems to me that the chief end and aim of a number of these industrial concerns is to provide employment. I will oppose the clause.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 the following words be struck out:—"otherwise than to a Government department or agency (State or Commonwealth)."

The clause will still give the Government power to enter into a district and supply electric current. By means of the amendment I hope to get an expression of opinion from hon. members on the question of the right of the Government to supply in districts already supplied—in some instances by arrangement with the Government of the day. Originally two schemes were submitted to the people of Fremantle. The minor scheme was rejected and the major scheme adopted, for the reason that the Government agreed that if the larger scheme were undertaken they would draw their supplies from that scheme. It was a distinct understanding given to the people of Fremantle that if they established the larger works the Government would take their supplies from them.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I believe the amendment has the sympathy of the leader of the House.

The Colonial Secretary: Certainly not.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: The chief arguments advanced in support of the Bill on the second reading were that the Government should be allowed to go to