

ernment of £9 10s. per ton mean? The price of £11 10s. 6d. means that the Government are making Monteath Bros. a present of £12,300. After establishing a plant which would cost £6,000, it leaves a balance of £6,300 to the good, and the implement works have benefited by having a new plant installed.

Hon. F. Connor: And have men working it as they like.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes. Is there any justification for an action of this sort? I do not know that I need go further into the case. I ask for a thorough investigation into the administration of these works. I want to see the works run on sound and good business lines. I feel that if the implement works are run on these lines they will be a success from every standpoint. I have every faith in them. Unless there is a thorough investigation, and they are established on good lines, they will never pay anything into the revenue. It may be found advisable to appoint a good commercial man to take charge of the concern and obtain engineers, one man to take charge of ordinary engineering, and another to take charge of the agricultural machinery portion. That will be the best way of running the works in my opinion, if we are to expect any success out of them at all. I have much pleasure in moving the motion standing in my name.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [8.8]: I second the motion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [8.9]: I do not propose to reply to the statements made by the hon. member. The matter is practically *sub judice*. The Government have approached the Chief Justice with a view to having a judge of the Supreme Court appointed to inquire fully into the whole matter.

Hon. F. Connor: A Royal Commission?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes. The Government court the fullest inquiry, but if the Legislative Council thinks that it can appoint a select committee which will obtain more information than a judge of the Supreme Court with all the powers of a Royal Commissioner, I do

not think the Government will offer the slightest objection. I do not envy Mr. Baxter his task as chairman of the committee, for the appointment of which he has asked. Surely he has already given proof of his patriotism in carrying out these duties by moving the motion, which presupposes that he will undertake the work of chairman. I certainly will offer no objection to the appointment of a select committee. I wish to remind the House, however, that a judge of the Supreme Court is to be appointed to thoroughly investigate the matter.

On motion by Hon. W. Kingsmill debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [8.10]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 24th August.

Question passed.

House adjourned at 8.11 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th August, 1915.

	PAGE
Question: Bags, supply of	320
Papers presented	321
Assent to Supply Bill	321
Address-in-reply, presentation	321
Chairmen of Committees, Temporary	321
Bills: Sale of Liquor Regulation, 1R.	321
Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Amendment, 3R.	321
Land and Income Tax, 2R., Com.	321
Enemy Contracts Amendment, 2R., Com.	321
Government Electric Works Act Amendment, 2R.	329
Bread Act Amendment, 2R., Com.	345
Adoption of Children Act Amendment, 1R.	346
Message: Horseracing control, to inquire by joint committee	346

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

QUESTION—BAGS, SUPPLY OF.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has any agreement or arrange-

ment been entered into with Patterson & Co., Ltd., for the supply of bags? 2, If so, what are the terms and conditions of the agreement or arrangement? 3, (a) What date were the negotiations started? (b) What date completed? 4, Were any other firms approached in connection with the supply of bags? 5, If so, what was the result?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Lands) replied: 1, Yes. 2, Supply 144 bales at 8s. 6d. per dozen, f.o.r., Fremantle, Yandanooka, and other State farms, in August and September. 3, (a) 16th July, 1915, (b) 22nd July, 1915. 4, Yes; 5, Answered by No. 2.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Works: Wyndham Freezing Works, Documents *re* settlement of claims by Nevanas & Co.

BILL—SALE OF LIQUOR REGULATION.

Introduced by the Attorney General and read a first time.

ASSENT TO SUPPLY BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to Supply Bill, £1,409,300.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY — PRESENTATION.

Mr. SPEAKER: Accompanied by the mover and seconder of the Address-in-reply, I presented the Address to His Excellency the Governor last Friday, and His Excellency has replied as follows:—

Mr. Speaker and hon. members of the Legislative Assembly, In the name and on behalf of His Most Gracious Majesty the King I thank you for your address. (Signed) Harry Barron.

BILL — FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: The Bill which is now before the House to impose a land tax and income tax provides for a tax similar to that which is now in operation. I have made no alteration, because I consider in the existing conditions it is not desirable that we should interfere with the ordinary forms of taxation. I submit the Bill merely as it was submitted and passed last session. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES, TEMPORARY.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to announce that I have appointed the hon. member for Coolgardie (Mr. McDowall), the hon. member for Kimberley (Mr. Male), and the hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) as temporary Chairmen of Committees.

BILL — ENEMY CONTRACTS ANNULMENT.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker—Kanoona) [4.42] in moving the second reading said: In bringing this Bill before the House I am carrying out a promise which was made by the Premier and myself when we attended a conference in the Eastern States with the Federal Attorney General. The measure is rendered necessary in war time because there is some difficulty in making quite sure as to the relationship of contractors with the enemy, and there are certain rights to annul, to declare void, which

must cease to act in connection with contracts made between enemy countries. There yet remains some dubious question as to the relationship of these firms which, though nominally British, are known to be indirectly connected with German transactions, and which, in fact, are carrying out contracts in the interests of the enemy. I do not suppose that any hon. member of this House or in any Parliament in Australia, except those directly concerned in the matter, is aware of the extent of the control that Germany has over our sources of production in Western Australia. More particularly is this so in the metal trade. I do not apologise to the House for quoting what the Federal Attorney General quoted when he was introducing a measure in connection with the annulment of these contracts. His statement of facts to the House on that occasion places the matter so concisely and clearly that I could not better his utterances even if I gave his original sources of information to the House. On the 6th May of this year he referred hon. members of the House of Representatives to a speech he delivered in December, 1914, in the course of which he said—

Shortly stated, the facts show beyond all question that German capital and German influence exercise a monopoly of the base metal industry of the civilised world; that this monopoly is for all practical purposes so complete as to exclude effective competition; that it covers the whole sphere of the industry, limiting output, controlling markets, determining the channels of distribution, and fixing prices; that the war, by closing most of the channels through which the metallic products were distributed, and the markets in which they were disposed of, has very seriously affected the industry, throwing large numbers of working men out of employment, causing great loss of wealth production, retarding the development of our great resources, and seriously menacing the welfare of the whole community; that peace holds out no prospects satisfactory, or even tolerable, to British and Australian inter-

ests, since it would but revive that complete domination of the industry by German influence, which insures the building up of German instead of British and Australian interests. No patriotic citizen can contemplate such a prospect without the most serious misgivings. This war will have been waged in vain; the blood of our best and bravest citizens shed without purpose; the Empire will have endured the dreadful horrors of modern warfare to no purpose, if, at its conclusion, when victory tardily, and at a dreadful cost, has been won, we are again compelled to pour into the lap of Germany the lion's share of the wealth created by Australian enterprise and Australian workmen. Before the war, German capital and influence had created a splendidly organised system by which it was enabled to levy toll upon the world. The cream of the profits arising out of the metal industry of the world—profits upon a turnover which, at a rough estimate, cannot fall short of £200,000,000—found its way through various channels to the pockets of the great German financiers, thus strengthening Germany's position commercially, industrially, and nationally, enlarging the scope of her operations in other directions, and maintaining and perfecting that terrific instrument of destruction by which she now seeks to batter all who dare withstand her, into submission. It is a humiliating but irrefutable fact that Australian capital, enterprise, and labour have materially aided the enemy in this dreadful conflict.

He goes on to say—

A few figures will clearly establish this position. The value of the metals, lead, zinc, copper, tin, produced annually in Australia, estimated upon an average price for the year 1912, amounts to nearly £13,000,000, or, including silver and gold recovered in the extraction of these commoner metals, £15,000,000. Even upon a fair average price for the past ten years, the gross value is not less than £13,000,000. All this wealth was produced in Australia,

but—with the exception of gold and silver—the industry was and is controlled by German influence, so that output, destination, and price were matters in which Australia had no say whatever.

Only one more quotation as clinching the point. He quotes from an international newspaper, the *Lloyd Zeitung*, which, in its issue of the 8th July, 1913, published an article by Professor Robert Liefmann under the heading of the "International Organisation of the Frankfort Metal Trade," of which the following translation of an extract may be quoted—

Lastly, there belong to the Merton concern two more companies which bear testimony to the international character of the concern by their very name, namely, the African Metal Company and the Australian Metal Company, of London and Melbourne. These two companies are sub-companies of the Metallgesellschaft and of Henry R. Merton & Co., and transact for the latter firms the purchase and sale of metals in Africa and Australia. They are, therefore, agencies which were given the titles of independent companies chiefly for legal reasons.

It is that point I wish specially to impress upon hon. members, that there are in the Commonwealth quite a number of firms which have a registration purely local and have apparently British managers and directors, yet when they are probed they are found to be neither more nor less than branches of great German firms, dealing with the specific objects of the trade of those companies. In other words, these registrations are purely blinds and under them we fancy we are doing an honest trade with our own people, when, in reality, we are trading simply and only with Germany, and this has been going on for many years past. At Broken Hill, for instance, they made contracts before the war which carried Broken Hill companies as far as 1921, with a special clause in the agreement that the contracts shall be suspended during the currency of any war between Germany and Britain and that then, at the end of 1921, the

period of interruption caused by the war shall be added to the term of the contract.

Mr. George: Was Britain specifically mentioned?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, it is during the war. The clause provides that there shall be a cessation of the portion of the contract during that period, but that the contract shall be resumed on the declaration of peace, and the interrupted period shall be added to the end of the contract, so that Broken Hill would be bound with Germany up to say 1925, or perhaps we cannot exactly state the period.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Legislation is being enacted to cancel those contracts.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The purpose of this Bill is to annul all these enemy contracts. Its object is to make such contracts as those to which I have referred absolutely void.

Mr. James Gardiner: Taking effect after the close of the war as well?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, and it enables those companies to seek other markets, to make arrangements with Britain and her Allies. But if these contracts hold good, and if there be legality in the revival of the contract at the close of the war we must immediately turn back to Germany and pour all our millions and wealth into that country, instead of building up the countries of Britain and our Allies.

Mr. Thomson: It is a good thing to stop that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Undoubtedly. The Bill proposes to do that and it will do more. It proposes that any party to a contract may, by giving notice to the Federal Attorney General, obtain his decision in regard to questions where there will be some doubt as to whether the matter is conclusively an enemy contract, or even if there may be some circumlocution about it, it involves German interests. There may be firms which may have Scotch shareholders and directors, and German directors as well, and there may be some question, therefore, as to whether such firms are actually Scotch, or British, or German.

Mr. Taylor: Like Nobel's.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I was going to mention Nobel's explosives. Nobel's is a firm at Glasgow. I have an extract here from a Melbourne newspaper which I would like to read to hon. members. Some coal miners, for the purpose of prosecuting their work, ordered from Nobel's Glasgow Company some gelignite and this is what was published by the newspaper—

An interesting event, which may have some bearing on the relations which exist between German and so-called British companies, took place a few days ago at the State coal mine. A contract exists between the railway commissioners for the management of the mine and the agent for Nobel's Glasgow Explosives Co. for the supply of certain kinds of explosives. Last week an order was given to the local supplier to deliver ten cases of Nobel's Glasgow gelignite. The quantity ordered was delivered, but on examination it was found to be branded "Nobel's Hamburg." The supplier was asked for an explanation, and, he, with the local representative for Nobel's Glasgow explosives, had an interview with the management. They produced a letter from Dalgety & Co., the Melbourne agents, stating that, owing to an explosion at the Glasgow factory, the Hamburg Co. had granted the Glasgow firm facilities to manufacture at their factory. It was also stated that the Glasgow chemists had gone to Hamburg, and that the gelignite was made there, and that as it was manufactured under the supervision of the Glasgow chemists, it was practically made by the British firm. The mine manager, Mr. M'Leish, refused to allow it to be used, and when Mr. Broome, the general manager, was acquainted with the facts, he was indignant, and gave orders that the gelignite should be taken away from the mine. The detonators, or dynamite caps, which have been supplied at times also claim attention. On the top of them is the brand "Nobel's Hamburg" with the ad-

dition of the words "Manufactured in Great Britain." Until the last day or two the miners had not taken the trouble to notice where the explosives were made, but they are now anxious to know what is the connection between "Nobel's Glasgow" and "Nobel's Hamburg." The sooner it is made known the better, for the miners are strongly opposed to supporting the enemy's goods when there is an ample supply of purely British explosives available.

Mr. George: What have Dalgety's to say about it?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have not inquired from Dalgety's. That article was published in the *Age* in October, shortly after the outbreak of war.

Mr. Foley: Their explosives were all branded Glasgow.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We did not take much notice of that before the war, when we were trading with Germany, but in the meantime we find that our metals and the wealth of Australia are being poured into Germany. Germany has obtained command, not only of the metals of Australia, but of South Africa and America, the full control of the metals of the world, and in that secret lies the extensive preparation she has made for the war in which she is now engaged. I do not think that I need labour the numerous cases that there are of firms registered in this State that are run from Germany or in which German interests are involved.

Mr. Taylor: German institutions really.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: And may be German institutions.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Why do you not give some of the names so that we may know?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In our own State? There is the Continental Rubber Co. for one.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: That has been suppressed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That was one of the firms, nominally a British company. We knew nothing to the contrary, we thought we were dealing with our own citizens but it is undoubtedly one of the companies to which I am now tak-

ing exception. There is the General Electric Co., the Photographic Supply Co., and one or two other firms.

Mr. George: Who owns those two companies?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have not a list of the shareholders, but they are alleged to be German firms run in the interests of German financiers and German speculators.

Mr. Smith: What about the company supplying wire to the Government, the Mannesmann Tube Co.?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the Government are unconsciously taking goods from a German firm, and I do not know of any, supposing that were so, this Bill will cancel any contract on the part of the Government or a private citizen.

The Minister for Mines: Any contract must have been made by the Tender Board, not the Government.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will read another article on this matter, it says—

Fault was found inferentially with the State Government by Mr. Blackburn in the Legislative Assembly yesterday concerning the acceptance of a tender from the Cape Explosives Co., of South Africa, for the supply of 5,000 cases of nitro-glycerine explosives for use in deepening operations at Port Phillip Heads.

This is again from the *Age* of the 26th May. It goes on to say—

He suggested that the Australian Explosives and Chemical Co. had tendered (in the case of 60 per cent. product) at 43s. 6d., as against 38s. 6d., and that inasmuch as not more than 42 per cent. of the South African Company's employees were Europeans, and the tariff protection was only 5 per cent., substantial and effective protection had in this instance been denied to Australian industry. On behalf of the Minister of Public Works, Mr. Membrey replied that in order to continue the deepening operations without interruption, and without curtailing the supply of explosives for the mining industry, the chief inspector of explosives had recommended that an additional source

of supply was necessary. Otherwise thousands of miners would have been thrown out of work. The mines required the whole output of the Australian industry. When the tenders were invited by the department four were received. Three were almost identical, but that of the Cape company offered prices averaging 34½ per cent. lower than the others. The Australian company's tender, Mr. Membrey went on to explain, was practically the same as that of two "importing" tenders. This strange coincidence suggested further inquiry, and it was found that the manager of the Australian company had admitted to the Inter-state Commission that he represented a combine known as the Nobel Dynamite Trust, and that the mine-owners of the State had protested against the excessive charges of this combine, which were not reduced until the Cape Explosives Company started business here. The balance sheet for 1913 showed that the Australian Company owed the Trust £18,000. From the latest available information it was ascertained that the directors of the Trust included the following:—A. G. Aufschlaegan, C. von Chauvin, Louis Hagan, E. Kraftsmeyr, F. F. Rieter, and Max Schinkel, and two were on the directorate of the Australian Company. Thus the Australian Company was connected with a large combine, with a strong German representation at its head. Further, the Australian company had never previously sought to supply even a share of the explosives the department had been purchasing openly for some years. The inference was that the company did not want to interfere while supplies were coming from other sections of the combine. The company came in now only when an independent company tried to secure the business. As far as the use of black labour was concerned, that applied only to £1,000 out of the £10,000 involved. But the £1,000 would be paid to coloured labour in a British dominion, who received higher rates of pay than did British and German workmen in the same occupation.

I think that must strike hon. members as a revelation. We are not only having companies registered here as British companies but registered as Australian companies, and yet the hand that moves them is in Germany, the whole combination—outside the signs they put out here—is that of Germany. We have no idea of the ramifications of the German enterprise in this Commonwealth to-day. We cannot trace the full extent of them.

Mr. George: It is a bit humiliating.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is undoubtedly humiliating. It arises out of that spirit which exists in the British Empire that had believed hitherto in fair play, and in giving the utmost rights to everyone, and which prior to the war were given to every person; we put restrictions on none. The British Empire has been the freest not only in history but in the whole world, and in these circumstances, Germany with the end in view of the very destruction she is now working got her tentacles on every source of wealth in the Commonwealth and every portion of the British Dominions, and in the whole world. She has placed nations under tribute and so worked her contracts that when this war is over she can step into her old place again and still demand tribute from the nations of the world. If we do not have a desire to preserve for our own race and our own people and our allies that inestimable source of wealth that Australia possesses in the shape of raw products and mineral and which other parts of the Empire possess in the same respect we need not be surprised if Germany gets the better of us. If this Bill is passed it will so far as this State and the Commonwealth are concerned make it possible for everyone dealing in metal, tin or lead, to obtain contracts and start industries in Britain or here and make use of these works among British people or her allies and so keep out from the enemy this source of material wealth which provide munitions of war. That is the object of the Bill. We cancel all existing contracts of the kind I have mentioned and if

there be any doubt as hon. members may see there may be some doubt as to whether a contract is German or British for it would be unfair to assume that because one naturalised German should have crept into a company that company was of necessity a German company. We must have some means of testing whether that contract is or is not in the interests of the enemy, not whether it is a direct German contract but assisting the enemy, if there be that doubt expressed, either party to the contract can refer a copy of the contract to the Federal Attorney General and he can give his certificate on it and if that certificate be given that this is a contract in the interests of the enemy then that contract becomes null and void. It will be only fair to the House to say that when the matter was discussed in the Federal Parliament very able constitutional lawyers who took part in the debate took the ground that it would be unwise perhaps to take such extensive powers, such drastic powers and give them to the Federal Attorney General, that it would be better to refer the matter to the courts. But it was made clear that the most satisfactory way was to place the responsibility on the Federal Attorney General. I was anxious to know exactly whether it would be wise for us to introduce any alterations to the measure as passed by the Federal Parliament and I wired to the Federal Attorney General to obtain his opinion on that point and he wired me back as follows:—

State legislation is necessary to supplement the Federal Act because of the limited powers of the Commonwealth in regard to trade and commerce, many of these contracts may be outside the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth, but within that of the State (stop) in any case necessary make assurances doubly sure (stop) essential that State Act should follow Federal Act literally (stop) function of the Attorney General under clause three will be exercised by the Federal Attorney General otherwise there would be no uniformity of treatment of contracts.

Mr. George: That means that this Bill is the same as the Federal Act.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is exactly the same, word for word as the Federal Act, and the other States are introducing similar legislation so that we shall have uniform legislation throughout the Commonwealth. The reason that we are passing it is this: there may be a question whether the Federal Attorney General has jurisdiction over some contracts made in this State.

Mr. Robinson: Has it been passed anywhere yet?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It has passed the Federal Parliament?

Mr. Robinson: But not any State House?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not sure. We are merely fulfilling our promise to introduce it and we have the assurance of the Federal Attorney General that all the States have promised to pass a similar measure.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: If each State has an Act of this description, what will the Federal Act cover?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It will extend in that respect the Federal jurisdiction throughout the States. We shall remove all doubts as to the power to annul the contracts in our State. If this measure be not passed, though there are arguments in favour of the Federal authority being supreme, and having these powers all through the Commonwealth, the question is arguable and there is doubt, and I am sure no hon. member considering how rich we are in metals and general wealth would desire that there should be any question as to the desirability of this measure to this State. To make assurance doubly sure, as the Federal Attorney General put it, we want to pass the Bill through our legislature. I take it that the measure itself, without further utterance from me, commends itself to the judgment of hon. members. Therefore, I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [5.17]: I have listened with keen interest to the utterances of the Attorney

General and I wish to say that the action taken by the Federal Attorney General, Mr. Hughes, has been watched very closely by myself. I have been connected with the metal trade pretty nearly all my life and it is only recently that I ceased to have anything to do with it. I think Mr. Hughes's attitude has been absolutely correct and that he has shown to Australia the way in which the tentacles of the German octopus have been stretched into every branch of the metal trade. The Attorney General has mentioned that there are firms in Australia bearing English names and apparently British firms which are in reality dominated by German money and control.

The Minister for Mines: Some of them are good Scotch names.

Mr. GEORGE: I do not care whether they are Scotch or English. There have been a number of firms in Australia connected with the metal trade apparently all British, but really controlled and governed by continental people.

Member: What are their names?

Mr. GEORGE: It is not necessary to give them. The Bill is necessary, as the Attorney General has told us, because there might be some slight loophole or difficulty in the way of the Commonwealth Government dealing with the matter. But, to my mind, the point is that we should centre this particular business if it is to be dealt with strongly and well in the hands of one Attorney General and not in the hands of half a dozen. The bulk of the information must necessarily be in the hands of the Commonwealth and this is one point which might very well be urged that there are some matters upon which the information might not be quite correct. When the Attorney General was speaking, I interjected that the position was rather humiliating to the British nation. I would like to point out that before the war we welcomed from all parts of the world any firms who were desirous of starting in business and the German chemists and metallurgists, by reason of the fact that they had within their borders large deposits of various metals have raised themselves to a very high position. If we take the

early days of Broken Hill, we find that the bulk of the authorities who came out either as engineers, metallurgists or chemists, were those who came from Freiberg and the other German centres. I have been here for 30 years and I have held the opinion all along that the English manufacturers for many years have not really valued to its fullest extent the market they had in Australia alone. They have been too conservative in their ideas. They would not bring forward fresh matters and they have gone on thinking they were cock-of-the-walk, but they have discovered that there are others who can tread the same dunghill and crow as loudly and put up as good a fight for the trade as they. One reason why German metal works have been able to successfully compete with the British, and in many instances to down them, has been that the rate of wages in Germany and Belgium has been far less than that paid in British countries, while the hours of work have been very much longer. At one time in Belgium and Silesia, I know from personal knowledge, the working hours were 12 a day and the men were being paid 1½ francs. The only zinc works at that time in Great Britain were those of Gilbey & Co., London, only a small concern it is true, but they were unable to compete with the Silesian Co. and the Vulle, Montague Co., Liege. Perhaps it was not altogether a matter of cheap wages. When the war is over, with all the safeguards we might provide, the lower wages and the longer hours will create competition which all the patriotism we may bring to bear will be required to exclude. There is no reason why the mechanical part of metal manufacture should not be carried out in Australia. The only question is, whether we can produce the stuff sufficiently cheaply to compete with continental nations. This is a question which will have to be considered later on. Although I think the British manufacturer has been conservative in the past, there have at the same time been factors which have successfully operated against him—the longer hours and the cheaper wages. All these are factors which must be taken into con-

sideration here in Australia. I am now advocating that wages should be lowered or hours increased.

Mr. Green: The Yankees have beaten the Germans and have paid better wages.

Mr. GEORGE: But I think they are working longer hours than are being worked here, and they are thus exhausting the strength of their people. Eight hours a day is long enough for me and should be for the hon. member. The Attorney General mentioned the names of two or three local firms. I have no desire that any firms in Western Australia, with whom many of us have been doing business, should be pilloried in any shape or form, and I would rather that the Attorney General had not mentioned any names.

The Attorney General: I was asked.

Mr. GEORGE: Then the Attorney General should have continued. It is well known that the Optical and Photo. Supplies Company and the General Electric Engineering Company are really Strelitz's. If one is suspected, why not Strelitz also? It is of no use mentioning one name and not others. The Continental Rubber Company's office was in Viking House, which is supposed to be the property of Strelitz Brothers.

The Attorney General: Now you are going further.

Mr. GEORGE: But when the Attorney General mentioned these two off-shoots, why did he not mention the firm who were really known to be the proprietors? I have no reason to suppose that Strelitz Brothers are not as loyal as the Attorney General or myself, but when the Minister named the off-shoots he should have given the proprietors. These names have been bandied about Perth pretty considerably during the last few months, and if the Government know that these people are loyal why not make it known?

The Premier: How do we know? I have been getting abused because I tried to protect him personally when an effort was made to raid his house.

Mr. Bolton: You cannot convince me by your opinion.

Mr. GEORGE: I particularly wanted to say in regard to Mr. Hughes's attitude that, although I am not of the same political party, I have followed the correspondence and subject from start to finish, and it is only just that I should pay him the tribute that, so far as I can judge, he is absolutely right and this House will be right in following the lead he has taken and passing this Bill.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER (Irwin) [5.26]: As I understand the Bill, it is not only to protect present contracts but the provision is such that after the war is over no German firm or enemy firm will be able to prosecute in our courts any action for any breach of contract or continuance of contract. If that is so, this is one of many Bills which the British Empire will have to add to her statute-books. It not only makes provision for to-day, but it makes provision for the day after to-morrow when the war will be over, and is an attempt to again prevent the ascendancy of Germany in her commercial enterprises over the whole of the world. The Bill has another objective; it is an attempt that calls forth our patriotism because it means that we are taking steps to try to protect the natural products of the British Empire for the use of the people of the British Empire first, and, I presume, for the use of our allies afterwards. This is what the Bill seeks to achieve and we will not only have to make such provision in this Bill but there will be lots of other measures in which we shall have to take, for our own interest and protection, exactly the same steps. I think all shades of opinion in this House will welcome this Bill because it is a direct attempt to achieve these things.

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 — GOVERNMENT ELECTRIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th August.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [5.32]: As the Premier has already informed the House, this measure represents a small amendment, but a very important one, of the Government Electric Works Act passed last session. In the first place, I wish to take the opportunity of protesting against the manner in which Bills are drafted for this House, though I do not say that the present Government are any worse in this respect than their predecessors. The first amendment proposed is purely the correction of a mistake in drafting. A wrong word having been inserted in the measure passed last session, an amending Bill is now necessary. I consider that not nearly enough consideration, in the interests of the people of this State, is given to the drafting of Bills. It is true that we have a Parliamentary draftsman, but that gentleman, who is an excellent officer, is overloaded with other work. Consequently, Bills are drafted too hurriedly, with the result we see here.

The Premier: Draftsmanship has nothing to do with that particular amendment. That amendment was made by your special House.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It illustrates my point, all the same. Even though a wrong word was inserted by another place, the mistake should have been detected by the Parliamentary draftsman. That officer is not allowed sufficient time to draft Bills as they ought to be drafted. He is a very capable man, and the fault is not his; he is simply overloaded with duties. I take this opportunity of making a protest on the subject. The Premier dealt with one amendment made by this Bill, and undoubtedly from his point of view he put forward a good case in regard to the difficulties placed in the way by the Fremantle and Cottesloe municipalities against the extension of electric light works. It goes without saying, of course, that every facility should be

granted for Government electric works; but, at the same time, there are other rights to be considered besides those of the Commissioner of Railways. As regards Fremantle, though that place does not concern me or the people I represent, it is passing strange that so much opposition should be raised to the proposals of a kindred department. If the municipalities of Fremantle had established electric works, they should, one would imagine, receive better consideration than a private concern. The Fremantle undertaking is really a State concern, run on exactly the same lines as the Government concern; and, therefore, I am surprised that more consideration has not been extended to it. However, I know the member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) is quite able to protect the interests of his own constituency. My trouble is in connection with the very extensive powers given to the Commissioner of Railways last session in regard to electric works. If hon. members will refer to the interpretation section of the principal Act, they will see that the powers under Section 5 are very far reaching and cover practically everything connected with the carrying out of electric works. While the Commissioner of Railways was authorised to exercise the whole of those powers over any municipality, yet there was a slight restriction imposed. For example, he could enter upon any land, street, or place, remove gravel, and so forth, but not until he had given notice. Again, before breaking up any street or opening up any sewer, he had to give notice. Under this measure, the necessity for giving notice is practically done away with. A municipality only desires to be given notice as regards the erection of poles, for instance, in order to have a say as to where the poles are to be erected. On the part of the Perth City Council there is not the least desire to obstruct.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: I should not think there was, considering the whole thing was because of the agreement the Perth City Council got.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That is not very flattering to the Government.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: I know it is not. The Government made a mistake.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I daresay the agreement is a perfectly good one. Under the principal Act, the Commissioner of Railways is given wide-reaching powers, but before he proceeds to exercise any of those powers he must give notice to the local authority or the owner or occupier of the land. Under this amending measure, however, any safeguard for the municipality is entirely done away with. I do not for a moment ask the Premier to give full powers to the municipalities, but the municipalities want a fair deal and ought to have a fair deal. I am not content to give every officer and every workman of the Railway Department power to enter upon any street or place in any municipality for the purpose of digging up that street or place or erecting poles, without even a notification to the municipality. That is what it comes to under this Bill. It is all very well to say that the Commissioner of Railways is not likely to exercise those powers as suggested, but it is not the Commissioner that we have to do with at all in this matter. The Commissioner has a foreman and three or four workmen who go about erecting poles. We have experience of that in connection with the Telephone Department.

The Premier: The workmen erect the poles under the supervision of the Commissioner.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: But that is not to say that the Commissioner is going to supervise the erection of every pole.

The Premier: He has officers for the purpose.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am speaking now of small matters; not of the erection of electric works in the true sense of the word, because that does not concern municipal authorities at all. Every day the Telephone Department, over whom we have absolutely no control, erect poles. They need not give any notification whatever.

The Premier: That is a Commonwealth matter.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Quite so; but I think it will be recognised that they have altogether too much power; and under this measure exactly the same power is to be given to the Commissioner of Railways. The works foreman, who erects poles, need not ask the municipality, or the town clerk, or the City engineer, one word about it. He can put up a pole anywhere he thinks fit. While there is no desire on the part of the municipality to prevent the erection of poles, there are always half-a-dozen wrong ways and only one right way of doing a thing. I would ask the Premier to consider that aspect of the question and to see whether he cannot allow some control in this connection or require the Commissioner of Railways to give some notice—

The Premier: He gives notice now.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The notice is scarcely enough. The municipal councils should have more than a notice. This amending Bill in one case even does away with the obligation to give notice.

The Premier: The Perth City Council are really asking that they shall have control of the running of trams and the erecting of poles and so forth.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Does not the Premier think that the Perth City Council who are elected to look after the interests of the City, and in whom the streets are vested, should have some control? This Bill takes away from the local authority all control of the streets so far as the actions of the Commissioner of Railways and his men are concerned.

The Premier: If the Bill proposed to confer that power upon some private company, it would be an entirely different proposition; but the Government can at any time take the powers away from the Commissioner if he uses them unwisely.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: This question was thoroughly thrashed out last session. The point I am now discussing was brought up, and the Premier was good enough to accept an amendment which met the whole position. But, by the present Bill, he proposes at one fell swoop to take away the whole of that protection.

The Premier: What amendment do you speak of?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The amendment of Section 5 of the principal Act. That section provides that the Commissioner may—

Establish electric works or acquire electric works by purchase or otherwise, and generate electricity, and sell or supply electricity and electric meters, fittings, or other apparatus for any lawful purpose to any person or local authority, or to any Government department or agency (State or Commonwealth).

"Electric works," let me repeat, covers everything. Now, under this Bill, the Commissioner of Railways would have power to erect poles which may be unsightly or inconveniently situated. Electric works in the sense in which the term is generally understood, the Perth City Council do not interfere with at all, because that matter is covered by the rights regarding electric light within a 5-mile radius. What I am asking on their behalf is the power that exists now under the Act to direct in what way the poles shall be erected and what their shape shall be. Later, I will suggest to the Premier an amendment, of which I hope he will see the fairness, covering that small point. Another very important amendment made by this Bill was not touched on by the Premier at all. That amendment is contained in Clause 4, which reads—

The following proviso is hereby added to Subsection 2 of Section 7 of the principal Act: Provided that when any owner of any land or premises is not within Western Australia, then any notice under this subsection shall be deemed to have been well and sufficiently given to him if it has been affixed or displayed on or over a conspicuous part of such land or premises and left so affixed or displayed for at least three days.

These are the powers which are contained in these subsections: For the purposes of the Act, the Commissioner may enter upon any land, street, or place, and sur-

vey and take levels thereon, and dig, fell, remove, and carry away from the land any earth, stone or gravel, or sand, or trees required to be used in constructing or maintaining any electric works. All he has to do under the Act is to give three days' notice to the owner, or if the owner should be out of the State, to his agent. That is a reasonable proposition. But this amendment seeks to do away with that, and if a man be out of the State the Commissioner may put a cable through his property, or even through his house, without giving any notice beyond a notice posted for three days on the land.

The Minister for Works: Is it likely that they would put a cable through his building?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: They have power to tack it on to his walls or on to his roof, and having this power they will not hesitate to use it. The Telephone Department do this with their wires, and from experience I should say the Railway Department will do the same. Clause 4 could be struck out altogether without imposing any hardship on the Commissioner. Under the proposed conditions it would be scarcely safe for one to go out of the State, because there is no obligation on the Commissioner to do more than affix a notice on the land and leave it there for three days. This covers not merely land, but property. The Commissioner can make his cables fast to any buildings in any position he likes. In the case of an owner being absent, a notice should be served on the agent instead of being posted on the land.

The Premier: That refers only to when the owner is not to be found in Western Australia.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: When an owner is out of the State his agent ought to get the notice.

The Premier: How are you going to find the agent?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Even the protection of the three days' notice is to be done away with, and there will be no protection whatever.

The Premier: How are we to find the agent in a case of urgency?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: If the agent cannot be found, the notice should be served at his last known place of residence. There is no necessity for Clause 4. It gives the Commissioner unnecessary power, and if it is struck out the Commissioner will not be hampered, while the necessary protection will be afforded to the owner. I trust the Premier will accept a small amendment to Clause 3, and will see the fairness of striking out Clause 4.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle) [5.50]: I am going to ask hon. members to scan the Bill very closely before voting for the second reading, particularly those interested in and sympathetic with the work of local government bodies. In my opinion the Bill, innocent though it looks, strikes a very dangerous blow at the rights and powers of local government bodies. When the Bill of 1914 was before Parliament, this danger was foreseen. It was recognised then that the Government were asking for powers that were altogether too great, and in another place an amendment was inserted modifying those powers by the protection of local government bodies.

The Premier: Nullifying, not modifying.

Mr. CARPENTER: I say modifying those powers, and the Premier and the Government, apparently convinced that some such protection was necessary, accepted the amendment and asked us to accept the amendment, which we did. Now the Premier comes down and tells the House that some local government bodies have made use of that amendment, or of the powers given by it, to practically hold up the Commissioner in the carrying out of work authorised by the Bill last year. I do not want to be unfair at all to the Premier. I want members to look at the matter from both sides. I am sympathetic with local government bodies; I also recognise that, for the carrying on of any public works, the Commissioner or Minister in charge of the department must have certain powers, and ought not

to be placed in the position of being blocked by a local government body in the carrying out of necessary work. I put the matter fairly, because I do not want it to be thought that I am making any special pleading on behalf of the Fremantle council, or any other body. Those who listened to the Premier's second reading speech will remember that he led off by instancing the action of the Claremont council in refusing to allow a cable to go over a roadway which crosses the Government railway. It was interjected by, I think, the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George), "Surely they have not such power." The Premier said he did not think they had. There were some doubts about it. The Government were not going to be put to the expense of a legal action, and therefore they had put this amendment, this Clause 5, into the Bill in order to make quite sure. I do not know what steps the Government have taken to ascertain whether the Claremont council have the power to prevent the Government carrying a cable over a railway crossing. I think the Government have the required power. If the Government have the power, why does the Premier point to that instance as one of the reasons for asking the House to pass this drastic amendment?

The Premier: I say the Government have not the power.

Mr. CARPENTER: I think the Government have.

The Premier: It cannot be done without the consent of the local authority.

Mr. CARPENTER: Let us see what the law is upon the subject. Section 17 of the Government Railway Act of 1904 reads—

The Commissioner, with the approval of the Minister, may make additions and improvements to any railway, and in the performance of such duty shall have all the powers and be subject to the liabilities of the Minister for Works under the Public Works Act of 1902.

In Section 2, Subsection 2 of the Public Works Act of 1902 we find these powers given to the Minister for Works—

To construct any railway authorised by special Act or any work whatsoever authorised by any Act.

And in Subsection 19—

Any building or structure of whatsoever kind which, in the opinion of the Government, is necessary for any public purpose.

And in Subsection 21—

Any work incidental to any authorised works.

And in the face of that the Premier says the Government have not the power.

The Premier: I say absolutely that the Government have not the power.

Mr. CARPENTER: I say they have.

The Premier: The Act of 1914 specifies that we can do the work only by the consent of the local authority.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am speaking now of the power the Premier said the Government did not possess. I say that under the Public Works Act they have that power.

The Premier: The Government Electric Works Act specially provides for the consent of the local authorities.

Mr. CARPENTER: This is the point: The present law gives the full power, and the Government are asking, in this amendment, for more power than they really require, and against the powers of the local authorities. There ought to be something not so drastic. I do not say that the local authority should have power to prevent the Commissioner from doing any public work, but I also ask that the Government or the Commissioner shall not have the power to dictate to any local authority what it may or may not do, or to in any way destroy the works which that local authority has set up at great expense. That is the point.

The Premier: All your argument is against having the Act at all. If we can do these things without the Act, we do not want it.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Premier is asking the House to believe that the local government bodies have power to prevent the Government from carrying out such works as are authorised by Parliament.

Mr. Bolton: It is provided in the Government Electric Works Act that they shall have that power.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) interjected while the Premier was speaking, "Do you propose to enter into a competition with Claremont?" The Premier rightly said, "No." When referring a little later on to the position in Fremantle the Premier—I will not say endeavoured to mislead in any way—did not put the whole case when he told the House that he had no intention of interfering or competing with the Fremantle Tramway Board in the supply of electric current.

The Minister for Works: And the Government have not.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am going to show that they have and are doing it, and are doing it very effectively.

The Premier: Interfering?

Mr. CARPENTER: They propose to interfere, and are actually interfering at the present time.

The Minister for Works: Perhaps I know something about this. You had better be careful.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Minister is in a somewhat invidious position. He is a member of the tramway board and a member of the Government. I daresay the membership of the Government is a bigger position to him than the membership of the tramway board, and if he has to let one slide it will certainly be the smaller position.

The Minister for Works: I take a strong stand on the board.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Premier told the House that the Government had offered to supply the Fremantle Tramway Board with current at the same rate as they were supplying the Perth City Council. That was of course quite correct.

The Minister for Works: It was not exactly correct.

Mr. CARPENTER: It is practically on the same terms. The Premier said that the reason given by the Fremantle council for not accepting the Government's offer was that it would mean the closing down of their power station and

the throwing out of work of a number of men in the municipality. If that was the only reason for refusing to accept the offer of the Government—

The Minister for Works: It is the only reason.

Mr. CARPENTER: There may be something in the Government's proposal in asking for the amendment. There is this important point about the matter, namely, that the Government are asking for power to come into competition, in establishing a new station, with the electric light station already established.

The Premier: That is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. CARPENTER: With a station working successfully and working profitably.

Mr. Robinson: Where is that in the Bill?

The Premier: It is incorrect.

Mr. Robinson: If that is in the Bill I agree with you.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am going to show that it is in the Bill.

The Premier: I am talking about the statement you said I made, that they had refused the offer made by the Government because it would put men out of work. You said there was another reason. What is it? We would not enter into competition with them at all.

Mr. CARPENTER: I have used the Premier's own words in regard to the reason for the refusal of the Fremantle council to accept the offer of the Government to supply current. He says, "For this reason the Fremantle council would not accept our offer." I am quoting the words of the Premier, not the words of anybody else. He goes on to say as quoting the words of the Fremantle council—

We have an electric power station in the municipality and we are not going to allow it to be abolished, whether it pays or not.

When the Premier makes use of these words concerning the Fremantle council he knows he is not putting the case correctly. They have got £150,000 of the ratepayers' money tied up in the present electric power station and plant.

The Minister for Works: That includes rams, etc.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am speaking of the tramways as a whole. They established these works and the ratepayers obtained a loan to establish them with the certain prospect, as it appeared to them, of being allowed to supply, without any interference, all the existing agencies and business places in and around Fremantle. No one ever contemplated that when they had got these works established at this heavy expenditure the Government would come along and say, "We now propose, unless you accept our terms, to take from you some of your best customers."

The Premier: Who are they?

Mr. CARPENTER: The Premier knows.

The Premier: Some of the customers are the Government; why should we not supply ourselves?

Mr. Bolton: What about the naval base?

The Minister for Works: They will put their own plant at the naval base.

Mr. CARPENTER: When the members for the suburbs of Fremantle have finished I will go on. The Premier has told the House—

I happen to know that Mr. Mitchell, the manager and engineer of the Fremantle tramways, recommended the acceptance of our offer on the grounds that it would show a saving.

[I do not know where the Premier got that information.

The Minister for Works: I told him that.

Mr. CARPENTER: I quite expected that.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: We all suspected it.

The Premier: Two very reliable sources of information.

Mr. CARPENTER: If the Minister for Works made that statement on the authority of Mr. Mitchell then I say that Mr. Mitchell's official report to the board entirely contradicts him.

The Minister for Works: Mr. Mitchell made that statement to a general conference of all the councillors concerned.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am quoting Mr. Mitchell's statement in his report made to

the board, which is quite contrary to the statement made by the Minister.

The Minister for Works: It is not.

Mr. CARPENTER: That he personally favoured the retention of the local power station.

The Minister for Works: "If it had been my own concern," he says, "I would take it from the Government."

Mr. CARPENTER: His statement, in his official report, does not say that. I ask hon. member which will they accept, the official report made by the manager of the board, or what the Minister for Works maintains that he said?

The Minister for Works: I was present at the board meeting.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am quoting from Mr. Mitchell's official statement. I repeat, that it was that he personally preferred to see the local works retained. He had very good reason for doing this. What would the acceptance of the Government's offer, which they are so anxious to put upon the Fremantle board and the Fremantle council, and which they are using as a lever in connection with the naval base, mean? The result to Fremantle of taking the current from the Government on the proposed terms would mean this: the original cost of their power plant was £37,255; since its construction it has depreciated to £31,997; they estimated that in scrapping the plant, which they will have to do if they take the current from the Government, they would be able to dispose of the machinery for an amount of £6,700 only; and this would mean a total loss to the Fremantle board and the Fremantle ratepayers of £25,297.

The Minister for Works: No loss at all.

Mr. CARPENTER: On which interest and sinking fund, etc., would have to be met. That is the official report of the manager to the Fremantle Tramways Board. It is quite useless for the Minister for Works to interject that there would be no loss at all. I am quoting word for word the official statement of the manager, which, I take it, represents the opinion of the board, no matter what the Minister may think as an individual.

I can understand that at the board meetings he "barracks" for the Government every time.

The Minister for Works: You understand wrongly.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am quoting the words of the working manager, which is the opinion of the board and not that of the Minister for Works.

The Premier: At the price we would offer it would show them a saving, even by scrapping their plant.

Mr. CARPENTER: They have gone fully into the matter.

The Minister for Works: No, they did not.

Mr. CARPENTER: And they cannot agree that it is a saving.

The Minister for Works: They did not give it half an hour's consideration.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the Minister for Works cease interjecting?

Mr. CARPENTER: Let me quote from a circular which came to hand to-day. It is evidence that the Fremantle council regard the matter as more important than the Minister for Works does. They know what it means to them. They would not be so eager unless they did. They only held a meeting last night to consider the matter and took these steps to inform the House of the position, and they would not have done this if, as the Minister stated, they were going to make money by it. Referring to the offer of the Government they say—

The matter was considered at a conference consisting of representatives of the Fremantle and East Fremantle municipal councils in conjunction with the Tramways Board, and after taking all things into consideration they came to the conclusion that it was not in the best interests of the municipalities to accept the Government's offer.

The Premier: They did not say because it would not show a profit. That is what you are arguing.

Mr. CARPENTER: There are business men on these local bodies.

The Premier: Why did you not read the next paragraph where they mis-stated the position?

Mr. CARPENTER: I will read it. It is as follows:—

The council desires very respectfully to express the hope that Parliament will not allow the Government to enter into competition with the Fremantle Electric Lighting scheme, which has been established by the citizens out of loan funds amounting to £150,000—

The Premier: Absolutely incorrect. That includes tramways and everything else. That is not the electric lighting scheme alone.

Mr. CARPENTER: I take it that they refer to the whole scheme.

The Premier: They are trying to mislead members.

Mr. CARPENTER: It is the one electric scheme. The extract goes on—

at the time when neither the Government nor anyone else were prepared to provide the commodity.

It might reduce the margin of profit if the Government came in and interfered with their business.

The Premier: It would not.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

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

Mr. CARPENTER: I have been trying to show that the Government in seeking the powers which this proposed amendment would confer are really asking for power to do something very much to the disadvantage of an existing public body. The Premier, in moving the second reading of the Bill, used these words: "I wish to give an assurance that there is no desire or intention on the part of the Government to compete with local authorities who have their own electric works already established." I presume when the Premier used those words he meant what he said; he meant to convey a certain idea that the Government did not intend to compete or interfere with any existing electric light company or trust. In spite of that assurance however, if hon. members will read the Premier's speech again, they must realise he does intend to interfere very seriously

with the operations of the Fremantle Electric light concern. I have already pointed out that that Board was established by the municipal council for the purpose of supplying existing and prospective customers, and we have this afternoon passed a Bill to enable it to increase its borrowing powers for the purpose of extending its works to cope with the business which it rightly expects to get from the expansion going on in and around Fremantle. But, although it has supplied current to all existing Government institutions in Fremantle, the harbour works, the railways, the hospital, and the gaol, it is the declared intention of the Government now, if this amending Bill is carried, to come in and interfere with and compete with the Fremantle Tramways Electric Lighting Board to the extent of depriving it of so much of its business as can make it possibly unprofitable and bring about a loss to those who have invested their money in that concern. If there be any great advantage to be gained, if the present supply from the Fremantle power house was not satisfactory, if the Government had not been getting a fair deal; then I could understand the desire on the part of the Government to come along and supply their own institutions from the power house, the erection of which is not yet completed. But, seeing that it is a question of a public body doing its work and doing it satisfactorily, what reason is there for the Government to step in and interfere with that work and cause a loss to those who have been serving them satisfactorily and well up to date. The Premier claims, according to his speech, that the Government have a right to supply the naval base.

The Premier: I did not say that.

Mr. CARPENTER: The amending Bill says so. It refers to Government concerns, State or Commonwealth, and the word "Commonwealth" is put into the Bill for the purpose of allowing the Government power house to supply the naval base with electricity.

The Premier: The naval base is not in the Fremantle municipality.

Mr. CARPENTER: It is a good deal nearer to Fremantle than it is to Perth, and I would like to ask the Premier whether he is using the power he has to prevent the Commonwealth authorities from making an agreement with the Fremantle Tramway and Electric Lighting board?

The Premier: What do you mean by that?

Mr. CARPENTER: Whether it is true that the Commonwealth authorities and the Premier have agreed that the Fremantle power house shall not supply the naval base with electric current?

The Premier: No, they have never been consulted.

Mr. CARPENTER: It has been stated officially that the only reason that the Federal people would not make an agreement with the Fremantle Tramways Board was, that they would probably take their current from the newly constructed Government power house.

The Premier: I have never discussed the matter with them.

Mr. CARPENTER: Will the Premier give the assurance that no such understanding has been arrived at or undertaking given?

The Minister for Works: The man who made that statement could not back it up when he was asked to do so.

Mr. CARPENTER: It has been stated that this is the case.

The Minister for Works: I asked the man who said it what authority he had and he could not give me the authority.

Mr. CARPENTER: It would be a wise thing if the Government had the power to do so.

The Premier: What power?

Mr. CARPENTER: The Government have some influence with the Commonwealth authorities.

The Premier: If they could get it cheaper they would take it; why not?

Mr. CARPENTER: The statement has been made more than once.

The Premier: It is not correct.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am glad to have that assurance from the Premier. It would be a serious thing if one public body were using its power to the detri-

ment of another public body administering a public concern. The Premier further stated "The Fremantle council should not be permitted to interfere with the business we have established." I do not know to what business the Premier refers, because the State Electric Lighting business is not yet established. The boot is on the other foot. It is the intention of the Government to interfere with the business already established, as I have been pointing out, doing its work satisfactorily, and, I ask, is it a fair proposition to give the Government that power? If it were a question of a private concern bleeding its customers, charging them more for their services than the value of the services rendered, or if there were complaints that the Fremantle Board were not giving the Government and its other customers a fair deal, then there might be some excuse for the Government doing what they propose to do. But, there have been no complaints; the supply has been satisfactory, and the taking away of Government business from the local concern will probably cause it to totter. I ask hon. members in the interests of local Government not to give the Government the powers they are seeking in the Bill, powers which they intend to exercise if they obtain them. There is really no reason for this amending Bill to be carried. I have put the position fairly, that if any local governing body is preventing the Government from carrying out any legitimate business, then there might be an amendment sufficient to meet the objection, but the amendment in this case goes so much further and it is so dangerous that I ask the House in the interests not only of one section but of all who may be interested not to agree to the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [7.40]: I have listened carefully to the remarks of the hon. member and it is necessary I think for me to say something on the second reading. The hon. member referred to the fact that I was a member of the Fremantle Tramway and Electric Lighting Board and also a member of the

Government and he inferred that I was selling the Fremantle Board for the benefit of the Government.

Mr. Carpenter: I did not insinuate that.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I formed that impression on attending a conference on one occasion in regard to the scheme and I had to assure those present that so far as the Government scheme were concerned, outside of the legitimate business of pounds, shillings and pence the matter did not interest me one iota. The position was, what would be best for the Fremantle ratepayers and the residents of Fremantle as a whole but the hon. member has forgotten that there are other districts concerned, districts adjoining Fremantle, which this scheme will affect equally with Fremantle.

Mr. Carpenter: They were at that conference.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: They were not.

Mr. Carpenter: Not East Fremantle.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: East Fremantle forms part of the scheme. The Fremantle scheme to-day is supplying Cottesloe, Cottesloe Beach, and North Fremantle which are outside this scheme as far as having any monetary interest in it; they merely receive a supply of current and those districts have entered into contracts for the next four years to have electricity supplied. The position is whether for all time those people are going to be allowed to pay a high price for electricity when they can get it at a cheaper rate. So far as North Fremantle is concerned, they have already approached the Commissioner of Railways with a view to getting a supply of electricity. The block has come not from Fremantle but from Claremont, and, if the hon. member's contention that the Government have power to-day to carry their line over the road crossings were correct, the no block would exist and the Government could, without the authority of the Bill carry their cables from East Perth to the Naval Base without any stoppage whatever. The Claremont council say in effect, "We refuse you permission to carry

your line through our territory." The Solicitor General says there is a doubt on the question because the measure passed last session provides that the line would constitute electric works, and no electric works may be established in any district without the consent of the local authority. That overrides the Government Railways Act immediately, because it deals with this particular question. I do not know whether hon. members would prefer the advice of the member for Fremantle to that of the Solicitor General.

Mr. Carpenter: That applies to Clause 5.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No: a line would constitute electric works under the Act, and no works may be established without the consent of the local authority. This not only applies from Fremantle to Perth but from Perth to Midland Junction and even to Northam, because it is the intention, eventually, to electrify the railway from Fremantle to Northam and there is no possibility of doing so unless the local authorities give their consent. As regards Fremantle, if the line could pass Claremont—North Fremantle has already consented—the whole of the territory through which the line would pass is outside the boundaries of the Fremantle council because the line would pass through the property of the Harbour Trust and there would be no difficulty in that direction. The Government have approached Fremantle fairly and undertaken to supply electricity at .85d. in the station at Fremantle. It is costing Fremantle about 1d. per unit to generate electricity and the Government have promised, in addition, not to enter into competition with the Fremantle scheme in any area being supplied by that scheme to-day. I thought that a portion of my electorate, North Fremantle and Cottesloe Beach, would object to that, because they were in the position of not having the opportunity to purchase from the Government at a rate which would be cheaper than the Fremantle Tramway Board can supply them. This question was considered: the manager went into figures and pointed out that.

if the business increased at the same ratio as it had done since the tramway and lighting scheme was instituted, by the time the North Fremantle and Cottesloe agreement ran out, it would be able to make a profit as it is doing to-day. That was some time ago. Since then the manager has been considering the scheme carefully and has come to the conclusion that it could not compete with the Government scheme. He said—"I think it necessary that the Fremantle council should again consider the matter," and at the conference to which the hon. member referred, he said—"If this was my private scheme, I would take the supply from the Government." I suppose there was no man who had more to lose than the manager if such a course were adopted. Naturally he would stick to the scheme because the greater the responsibility the greater his position would become and his salary would be in proportion.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Would the Government allow them, if they took current in bulk, to supply the Naval Base?

The Premier: Yes, for 50 years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. Under the measure passed 12 months ago, there was no compulsion on the Commissioner to supply, and if he entered into an agreement to supply a certain area within the area now being supplied by the Fremantle scheme, it would constitute a breach of the agreement for which he would be liable to pay compensation. It is true, and I regret it, very much, that the hon. member is correct in saying this scheme will make a great difference to the Fremantle supply. Owing to the increased output of electricity, the generating charges have decreased. That applies also to the Government scheme; the larger the supply is, the lower the generating costs become. In the draft agreement submitted to the Fremantle council it was provided that, if the costs fell below .85d., the Fremantle council would reap the benefit by decreased costs accordingly, as in the case of Perth.

Mr. Smith: What guarantee would the Government give that they could produce current at .85d.?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is not in the scheme at all.

Mr. Smith: It might be like the bricks.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Taking the output of Fremantle from the 1st September, 1913, to the 1st September, 1914, if that scheme had not supplied the Harbour Trust, the railways, Cottesloe Beach, Cottesloe and North Fremantle, it would have shown a loss of over £900.

Mr. Carpenter: You are using that as a bludgeon to force them in.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not at all. As a matter of fact the scheme has shown a profit of over £2,000. Even if Fremantle had supplied those places under the Government scheme at 1.7d., which would have meant a reduction to them of over ½d. per unit, of which the ratepayers would have had the benefit, the scheme, instead of showing a loss, would have shown a profit of £500, and there would have been a reduced charge to the outlying parts of the district. There is no prospect of the Fremantle ratepayers getting a reduction in their lighting cost for many years unless they join in the Government scheme, and the people there have a grievance to-day because the cost of private lighting is too great. Without doubt this matter has not received fair consideration from the Fremantle council. Members may be under a misapprehension as regards the management of the Fremantle scheme. Parliament refused to give the Fremantle council charge of a scheme but made it compulsory that there should be a special board elected by the ratepayers who elect the mayor of the district. Consequently, the council are responsible for raising the money while the board are placed in the position of expending it. The scheme is owned by the Fremantle and East Fremantle councils, but it is useless for the East Fremantle council to consider the matter, because they own only one-seventh of the scheme. I repeat that the statement made that someone has been using influence with the Commonwealth authorities to block Fremantle from supplying them with electricity is not correct. I admit

that the manager made a statement at the conference to the effect that this appeared to be so. Immediately I asked him what authority he had for saying so, and he had no authority. I have not told the Premier, as the hon. member inferred, what price we have quoted to supply electricity to the Naval Base, but I know what price the Government have quoted. I am under the impression that, so far as the Naval Base is concerned, it is the intention of the Commonwealth to have an electric scheme of its own. It would be necessary to have an independent scheme for such a large base, as it would not be wise to rely entirely on an outside source. I can go further and say that, in the course of a conversation with the Engineer, Mr. Fanstone, on one occasion, he said it was intended to provide their own scheme.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Will it pay the Government then to take the line to Fremantle if you do not get the lighting of the Naval Base?

Mr. Bolton: Yes.

The Premier: If we can supply our own requirements it will pay.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: What do you intend to supply, the railway station?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Take the Harbour Trust. A great deal of the supply is a day load, and the greater the day load the better the scheme pays, because most of the electricity is consumed at night. After giving the matter careful consideration. I think the Government have acted very fairly towards Fremantle. I will not criticise the Bill, though there are one or two items which I would prefer to see deleted.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: What do you think of Clause 4?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think it makes any difference at all. There is not the slightest doubt that the Fremantle scheme would be affected.

Mr. Carpenter: It would be knocked out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not say it would be knocked out, because some members of the board are satisfied that, even with the Government running

in opposition, by the time their present contracts cease they will be in a position to meet interest, sinking fund and depreciation, as in the past, and have a small profit in addition. Fremantle has extended its lines a little further, and has a 21 years' contract with the most prosperous part of the district, East Fremantle, which will require a big supply later on. I have no fear whatever that this Bill will affect the Fremantle scheme to a very large extent in that it will lose the Government business. I have some doubt whether the Government should supply the hospital, the Immigrants' Home which is now being used as a military base hospital, or the Women's Home, but I am doubtful whether they could supply those places without a loss, because the capital expenditure necessary to carry the lines in this direction would be such that they might not be able to supply the current at a price which would enable them to compete with the amount they are paying at present. I can assure the member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) that, so far as the Fremantle municipality are concerned, they supply no one unless it pays them to do so. Now let us take Cottesloe and Cottesloe Beach. At Cottesloe the charge, if I mistake not, is 2½d. or 2¼d. for electricity. Is it not reasonable that the Cottesloe and North Fremantle people should do their utmost to get a supply from the Government if they can obtain it for .85d.? In addition to paying about 2¼d. they have to bear the cost of distributing. The position is that the Cottesloe and North Fremantle municipalities cannot supply their ratepayers except at the price which the ratepayers of Fremantle have to pay. Now, is it likely that the Cottesloe people will keep on paying 2½d. when they can be supplied at .85d.?

Mr. Allen: By the agreement they are tied until 1925.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not wish to say much on that point at the present time. But there is another point which hon. members overlook. The Fremantle Gas Company have an Act of

Parliament which enables them to supply within a 5-mile radius of the Fremantle town hall, in spite of any Government scheme and in spite of any Fremantle municipal scheme. If the Fremantle Gas Company so desire, they can put up an electric lighting plant and supply that area in the same way as the Perth Gas Company could do here previously. I have thought about this before, and it is always advisable to weigh these matters from every point of view and see who is going to get the benefit. In conclusion, I honestly think the Fremantle council have made a great mistake in turning down this scheme.

Mr. Carpenter: That is not the question on this Bill.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe—in reply) [8.4]: Before this goes to a vote I should like to reply to a statement or two made by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter), as well as to some remarks of the member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly). First, however, let me congratulate the member for Fremantle on having so well organised his forces by bringing the public here for the purpose of protesting. I wish to emphasise one remark made by the member for Fremantle, that it has been rumoured that I inferred the Commonwealth authorities would, unless we were permitted to supply the naval base, decline to take current from the Fremantle electric power station. Having made that statement, the hon. member, it is true, accepted my denial; but he went on to say that, if it was true, it was a mode of business to which he objected. I was glad to hear him make that remark, because I want to tell him that that is exactly the mode of business which the Fremantle council are adopting; and he should object to it just as strenuously from them as he would have objected to it from me if the statement I denied had been correct. The Fremantle council in refusing to allow us to take current inside their bounds are compelling the Commonwealth Government to take current from them or from no one. The Fremantle council know very well that under the present Act we cannot, unless we ob-

tain their consent, carry our current through to the naval base. By refusing their consent they are compelling the Commonwealth Government to take current from them or else to generate current for themselves. I want to point out that the hon. member, while complaining of what he considered unfair action on the part of the Government, is supporting the Fremantle council in doing something that the Government have never attempted to do—and are not even now attempting to do—something in the nature of bringing about a monopoly in the supply of current for a certain district. Let me point out that the hon. member has absolutely misconstrued the present Bill and the manner of its application. In the first place, we distinctly provide that we cannot distribute current without the consent of the local authority where an electric power station is already erected; distribute current, that is, except to our own departments. And I ask, can there be anything more absurd than for Parliament to withhold from the Government, and that is from the people, the right of generating current and supplying their own requirements irrespective of whether some other authority has or has not a station erected? That in itself would be an absurdity, and I do not think the member for Fremantle will contend that in supplying their own requirements the Government would be interfering with the generating of current in his district. Taking the principle as it stands by itself, we have no idea whatever of interfering with Fremantle further than it is desirable that when the Government have a generating station they should be empowered to supply their own requirements. I hope the view which the hon. member takes of the legal position is correct. I hope he will be able to get the Crown Solicitor to agree that his interpretation of the law is correct, that the Government can take their cable to Fremantle and supply the harbour trust, and then continue, outside the jurisdiction of the Fremantle municipal council, along the Government railway line to the naval base, without touching any municipal ground at all. In that case, the Govern-

ment would not need to consult the Fremantle council at all. Such a view, however, does not alter the fact that the present Act places the Government in a position which is both false and unfair; and, in the circumstances, that ought to be put right at the earliest opportunity. If I came to this House and asked for authority to take current anywhere without safeguarding the interests of those local authorities who had power stations already operating, then there would be some reason to complain. But the fact remains that if the doubt expressed by the Crown Solicitor is correct, the Government cannot take a cable along railway property and cross over a street which is under the control of a local authority, even to North Fremantle. If all the municipalities west of the Claremont municipality required Government current, and if the Government wanted to supply them outside the boundaries of Claremont altogether, still we could not do it if Claremont objected. That makes the position doubly absurd. After all, we have something to consider as trustees and representatives of the people. We have erected the Government power station with a set object in view, to supply by the most modern methods current generated as economically as possible, and thus to supply the whole of the area within the influence of that station. In order to show the hon. member that we have acted fairly and squarely in the matter, I mention that we have twice approached the Fremantle municipal council. The price we submitted is one at which, with their present power houses, they cannot generate the current. That being the case, surely anyone can see at once that they are in exactly the same position as the Perth City Council were in. The Perth City Council scrapped plant worth half-a-million of money rather than continue their old expensive system of generating current. It will pay the municipalities surrounding Perth to scrap their plant in the same way.

Mr. Carpenter: Who convinced the Perth City Council?

The PREMIER: Their manager convinced them. To judge from the discussion which took place at the Fremantle council meeting, the whole of their objections amounted to this, that the purchase of current from the Government would mean the closing down of the Fremantle station, where a number of men are employed. Now, whether that is good business or bad business from the point of view of the civic fathers, is a matter entirely apart from this Bill. The question is whether the Government are acting fairly and squarely, whether they are obtaining powers which will inflict hardship on anyone. I do not think this Bill will operate unfairly in any way, but the present Act does undoubtedly inflict hardship on the Government as owners of a power station intended to supply current to the metropolitan area. I shall not pursue the hon. member's argument any further. The Government are prepared to re-submit their offer to the Fremantle council to-morrow. The Government did not approach Parliament until the Fremantle council had definitely turned down that offer for the second time.

Mr. Carpenter: I have expressed no opinion on that.

The PREMIER: But I am expressing an opinion now. I never attempted to approach Parliament on this subject until the Fremantle council had been approached twice. Our offer meant that the Commonwealth and every other consumer would take all their current from the Fremantle station, and that we would supply the power at the Fremantle sub-station for .85d. That price is very little more than we are charging Perth; as a matter of fact, the only additional charge levied on Fremantle is the actual cost of transmission from the East Perth power station to Fremantle. A better offer than that could not possibly be made. I may inform the House that the North Fremantle council are prepared to allow us to take our current into their district. Further, the Mount Lyell works are prepared to take current from us. Then we have the State Implement Works, which will be consumers of current in the day-time: and this applies also in the case of

the Fremantle Harbour Trust and the Mount Lyell works. In view of that consideration, although the price is low, the business is advantageous to the Government, because the bulk of our load would be a day load as against a night load. The supply of current under those conditions at .85d. will reduce the cost of generating at East Perth. The more day load the better, from that point of view. If the council will take up the attitude of insisting that because they have a generating station producing at a cost of over 1d. they will not take Government current, then it is time for Parliament to step in and say "Anyhow, as we claim we can generate so much more cheaply we are going to insist on your competing with us on fair and reasonable terms." The hon. member says the Fremantle council, in accepting the offer, would lose £25,000.

Mr. Carpenter: The board say so.

The PREMIER: They will do nothing of the kind. In the first place, the Fremantle municipal council have issued a circular letter to hon. members. If the council wanted to be fair, they would have stated the position fairly and squarely. The last paragraph of their letter, however, is absolutely misleading. It reads—

The council desire very respectfully to express the hope that Parliament will not allow the Government to enter into competition with the Fremantle municipal electric scheme, which has been established by the citizens out of loan funds amounting to £150,000. What would hon. members infer from that? That if we came into competition with them, they would have to scrap £150,000 worth of material.

Mr. Carpenter: Nonsense!

The PREMIER: One could not deduce anything else from that statement.

Mr. Carpenter: I have given the figures.

The PREMIER: The £150,000 includes tramlines, cables, tramcars, and other plant incidental to a tramway system and to reticulation of power in the district. All those items will remain intact under our proposal, just as they are to-day. The

only thing the Fremantle council would scrap would be a generating station which produces current at a much higher cost than that at which the Government have offered to supply. Moreover, the Fremantle council would have the whole of the customers to supply within a radius of five miles of the Fremantle town hall. The power proposed in the Bill is necessary. The member for Perth made reference to an amendment which is proposed in connection with giving notice to the owner of any land when it is intended by the Commissioner to carry out any works. I may point out that the only objection that could be raised is that we ought first of all to find the agent. That is so. If we know where the agent is, and where we can deliver a copy of the notice, that is all right, but many people go away and they do not appoint an agent. There are some people who stay away up to six months and let their houses and arrange to have the rent paid into an account at a bank. How then can we deliver a notice? It is recognised sometimes it is necessary to proceed urgently with these works, and therefore three days' notice is requested, but how are we to reach the man who is holiday making and who may not have left an agent behind? The only thing we can do is to post the notice on the premises, and if there is anyone there they can notify the owner if they know where the owner is to be found. We are not going to hold up works until someone returns from a holiday jaunt from the Eastern States. The precautions of the hon. member might be necessary if this power had been given to a private company seeking to make profits. But this is a concern operated by the Commissioner for the Government and the people, and if the Commissioner adopts an attitude of putting up unsightly posts or putting wires through people's bedrooms or breaking down walls, do hon. members think that Parliament would tolerate that for a moment? If it can be shown that the Commissioner is abusing the powers Parliament gives him, those powers will be taken from him, but until that happens why should we

adopt all these round-about methods of doing things which will only mean delay and extra cost without any gain being obtained. It is suggested by the Perth City Council that we should approach them before we do any of these works, and that in the event of a dispute the matter should be submitted to arbitration with a Supreme Court judge as the arbitrator. Imagine two authorities each acting on behalf of the citizens, because they cannot agree, having to secure the services of a judge to sit as an arbitrator! I hold there is no reason why we should make the amendment as suggested by the member for Perth, but I do not want to take up an attitude that might be considered hostile. If we can protect the interests the hon. member has referred to, I would have no objection to doing so provided that any amendment which might be proposed was reasonable, but I am not going to agree to put anything in the Bill which will mean holding something over the head of the Commissioner and which would have the effect of preventing him carrying out necessary work.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: I only want something in the way of a notice which will ensure the matter being brought before the Commissioner.

The PREMIER: We practically agreed that we would erect ornamental poles in the city streets and we are always likely to meet the wishes of the municipal authorities as far as possible. Does the hon. member imagine that the Commissioner will put up unsightly wires and poles, and carry out other works in a slipshod manner?

Hon. J. D. Connolly: It is not the appearance only but it is the cutting up of the streets, etc.

The PREMIER: That has to be done now. It is a question of which will be the most economical method to adopt. I am prepared to meet the Perth City Council as far as practicable, and if the hon. member will see the Parliamentary draftsman to-morrow, and an amendment is drafted which will meet the wishes of the municipal council, there will not be any objection to it, but I do not want Parliament to be continually placing restrictions upon

the Government. The local authorities should not be considered as having equal powers with the Government. If we do these things wisely there can be no reason for complaint. Of course if the Commissioner does something which is detrimental to the interests of the city the powers he holds can be taken from him. We have attempted to meet the Fremantle Municipal Council fairly, and both the Perth City Council and the Fremantle council will recognise after this has been operating for a period that it is in the interests of both parties that we should supply current in bulk and that they should retail it within the sphere of their influence, namely, five miles of the post office. I hope the second reading will be carried.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th August.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [8.22]: I have gone carefully into the provisions of this innocent measure which the Honorary Minister introduced the other evening, and it occurs to me that the objects of it are sound and are in the interests of the community. They provide that purchasers of bread should obtain the weight they expect to receive, and I think that is a reasonable proposal. At the same time the effect of the Bill will be that if its provisions become law fancy bread must then in the future be sold in 1, 2, or 4lb. loaves. I do not think that will affect trade detrimentally, but it will no doubt deprive us of those delightful French rolls which some of us have eaten in our travels in France. I trust however that the measure will not have the effect of doing away entirely with those little delicacies which we like to find on our breakfast tables, and which bakers will still be able to supply and dispose of so long as they do not weigh more than 8 ounces. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr. VERYARD (Leederville) [8.25]: I have been associated with this trade for a good many years, and I ascertained the opinions of those who are at present engaged in it. I did this as far as I could and I found that most of the master bakers were in favour of the alteration. It will make some difference to them in the weighing of fancy bread.

Mr. Heitmann: And it will make some difference to the consumer, too.

Mr. VERYARD: It seems to me that most bakers recognise that there are men in the trade who will take full advantage of the law so far as the weighing of bread is concerned. Hon. members, however, must not think that the bakers are the only traders in the community who take advantage of points of law within their scope. I think I am justified in saying that there will be found in any trade those who will always take an advantage when they get the opportunity to do so.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You will find them in all walks of life.

Mr. VERYARD: As a result of the alteration some master bakers will experience a difficulty in making up for the deficiency in the weight of dough required. It seems rather an inopportune time to bring about such an alteration when trade is now being carried on at a minimum of profit. Many of the bakers are just working from hand to mouth. The quality of flour received lately from the Argentine is not by any means equal to Australian. The difference lies in that it requires more working and more baking, and it also returns less bread per ton than the Australian. There are one or two other amendments in the Bill which will be welcomed, namely with regard to the appointment of inspectors. This is an alteration in the right direction because it is impossible for one man to do justice to the inspection of bread in a large centre. I intend to support the Bill.

Mr. FOLEY (Mount Leonora) [8.28]: Ever since I have been a member of this Chamber it has been my endeavour to see something done in the direction of

securing for the people who purchase bread the weight for which they have paid. The Bill introduced by the Honorary Minister, to my way of thinking, is a fair one, and we have it on the authority of the member for Leederville, who has been connected with the trade for a considerable time, that a majority of the master bakers are in accord with the proposed change. Then he went on to say that for once the Australian article is better than the imported. I am glad to hear at last that something Australian is as good as what we can import. Long before Argentine flour was imported into this State there was need for an amendment of the Bread Act. The hon. member says it will inflict a hardship on many men in the baking trade because of the high price of flour, and of the very small margin of profit on which the trade is working. What a good time these master bakers must have had when flour was cheap, and they were providing any class of bread they could get off on the public! Where the Bill will do a little good will be in the direction of protecting those people not in a position to protect themselves. Under the existing Act there are only about four classes of bread which have to be sold on full weight. The master bakers, in this State particularly, prefer making the loaves which do not require to be full weight. Again, the big traders send round their bread carts very early in the morning, and the proprietors of the larger boarding houses and the hotels see to it that they are served with full weight bread, leaving all the short weight stuff to be dealt out later in the day to small householders, who, as I have already suggested, are not in a position to protect themselves from these master bakers and their practices. I am positive that is right. I have gone round myself, and am therefore absolutely certain that what I state is right. Under the Bill we will be assured of a full-weight loaf, and fancy bread or no fancy bread, the baker will have to conform to the rules laid down, and see that the bread is of guaranteed weight. The Bill provides for an altogether improved inspection of bread, and it is in-

deed time that this reform was brought about. I congratulate the Government upon having brought down the measure and I trust the inspectors to be appointed under the Bill will be zealous in protecting the interests of the people. However small a margin of profit secured by the master bakers, that of the working man who has to purchase the bread is still smaller.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Male in the Chair; Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendments of Sections 3, 4, and 5:

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The words proposed to be omitted from Section 4 occur in two places in the section. Should we not provide for their omission wherever they occur? I move an amendment—

That after "bread" in line 3 the words "wherever they occur" be inserted.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: In the opinion of Parliamentary Draftsman and of the Crown Solicitor the wording of the clause fully covers the point raised.

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

Clauses 3, 4, and 5—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

MESSAGE—HORSE RACING CONTROL, TO INQUIRE BY JOINT COMMITTEE.

Message from the Council received and read notifying appointment of select committee to act jointly with that appointed by the Assembly.

House adjourned 8.45 p.m.