

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Why is there an increase of £350 in this vote?

The PREMIER: The purpose of the increase is to provide books for the travelling library. We were told that the country districts needed books, and that if the money was provided additional cases of books would be sent to country centres. Books are, in fact, sent to any country centres, where they are greatly appreciated.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That has always been done.

The PREMIER: But not on a very large scale, as at present.

Mr. ANGELO: On visiting the Zoological gardens a little time ago, I was very disappointed to observe that the fences and buildings were in poor state of repair and badly in need of painting. The gardens do really good educational work, and are a very nice pleasure resort for the people. Some little additional amount should be allowed for purposes of renovating and painting. This would really be an economy, because the buildings and fences are allowed to remain the same state as at present, the cost of renovation and painting later on will be considerably greater. Mr. LeSoeuf is giving valuable figures, and doing all he can to make the gardens successful. The Government should encourage the director in the work he is doing and make the park and its surroundings as attractive as possible. By this means people will be encouraged to remain within the State and not go East.

The PREMIER: I am willing to give the director every encouragement possible but I am not willing to give him any more money. The gardens are not in a condition I would like to see, and the baths are not in a satisfactory condition either. If a considerable sum had been spent on the baths in years gone by, the health of the people would have been greatly improved. Additional accommodation is required there, and if £10,000 had been spent in erecting suitable baths years ago, we would not be asking the House for £975 or anything like it at the present juncture. During the past ten years upwards of £15,000 has been spent in connection with these gardens for upkeep and so on. It is necessary that better facilities should be provided for the women and children, adequate tea rooms and increased accommodation at the baths. People suffering from rheumatism have come away cured for a time as a result of a course of baths. There is no need for people to go to New Zealand in order to take the mineral baths there, and people from South Australia have been living in South Perth lately recently in order to take the baths at the gardens.

Mr. Angelo: Too few people know about them.

The PREMIER: That is so. As it is, I think the vote is sufficient.

Mr. TEESDALE: I oppose any increase in the vote. It is quite adequate at present. If these baths are so beneficial, let these people from South Australia pay 2s. 6d. instead of 1s.

Vote put and passed.

Department of Lands and Repatriation (Hon. James Mitchell, Minister):

Vote—Minister for Lands and Repatriation, 1921, 1922: 33,442

[50]

Mr. PICKERING: There is an area in the Sussex electorate to which I have drawn the attention of the Minister for Lands on previous occasions. This area is suitable for closer settlement. I have asked that a report should be made upon it but so far as I know nothing has been done. To render the land suitable for settlement, it would be necessary to go into the question of drainage. Some expenditure would be entailed in snagging the Vasse River and in other directions to open up the country. The area is situated behind the Busselton Commencement and is within a few miles of the township. It could be easily cleared.

The PREMIER: I do not remember the hon. member drawing my attention to this area, but we have officers out now looking for suitable land for settlement. We are looking into the question of land settlement in the South-West, from Fremantle southwards, and this area will come within the scope of that investigation. I will instruct the district surveyor to look into this matter. If there is land there we want it at once.

Progress reported.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

- 1, Supply Bill No. 3, £1,047,000.
 - 2, Northam Municipal Ice Works.
- Without amendment.

RESOLUTION—STATE FOREST DEDICATION, REVOCATION.

Message received notifying that the Council had concurred in the Assembly's resolution.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 25th October, 1921.

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

WYNDHAM MEAT WORKS.

Select Committee's Resolution.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES (North) [4.33]: As chairman of the select committee appointed by this House to inquire into the administration and working of the Wyndham Meat Works, and the State Steamship Service. I have been directed by the select committee to report to the House the following resolution, passed at a meeting held to-day, when four members were present:—

That, in view of the statement given in evidence by Mr. McGhie, the manager of the Wyndham Meat Works, that owing to the appointment of this committee there is hesitancy on the part of the department in carrying on negotiations for operating the works during the coming season, the committee decline to accept any responsibility in this connection.

QUESTION—MINERS' PHTHISIS.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education: 1, Has any request been received by the Government to appoint a committee to inquire into and report upon miners' phthisis? 2, If so, from whom was the request received? 3, What was the text of the request, and do the Government intend to give effect to it?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, No. 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—ESPLANADE, FAIR GROUNDS, VESTING.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay on the Table the files relating to the vesting in a board of the Fair Grounds on the Perth Esplanade and the files relating to the subsequent dealing by the board with those reserves.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: The files are in constant use, but may be seen at the office of the Secretary, Premier's Department. If after seeing them the hon. member desires their production he can move in that direction.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Minister for Education, Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clauses 5, 6, and 13. Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 5—Powers of Minister:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I explained on the second reading that arrangements had been made with the Commonwealth Bank for financing this scheme, and that an agreement is being prepared between the Government and the Commonwealth Bank in this connection. During the drafting of that agreement, it was suggested that in

order to put the matter beyond all doubt, it would be advisable to make provision in this clause that the money advanced should be a charge against the wheat. Accordingly I move an amendment—

That the following be added to paragraph (b) of Subclause 1:—"and may charge the wheat acquired under this Act and the proceeds with the repayment of advances."

Hon. G. W. MILES: The Minister has said the amount to be guaranteed will be 3s. per bushel. That limit should be stated in the Bill.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It has been said that this is a matter exclusively for the growers of the wheat and the Westralian Farmers Ltd. But, however, we may look at it, the financial responsibility is thrown on the State.

Hon. J. A. Greig: With the wheat as security.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Certainly, or at least we hope the wheat will be there. The essence of the contract is the wheat. But what is the use of saying that we have nothing to do with it? I agree with the proposal to limit the guarantee to 3s., and I suggest that we ought to have a copy of the agreement between the Government and the Commonwealth Bank. Seeing that we are pledging the credit of the country, we are entitled to the fullest information. I want to know the terms of the agreement.

The Minister for Education: It is now being prepared.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Well, we should have it here before we sanction it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Commonwealth Bank, I understand, will advance up to 3s. per bushel, but only on the wheat that comes into the pool. Surely, then, there is no great risk attached to that guarantee, since the wheat in the pool will be the security.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I am not opposed to the amendment, but I want to see in the Bill a limit to the advances to be made. Would I be in order in moving an amendment at this stage?

The CHAIRMAN: Only if the Minister agrees to withdraw his amendment.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am willing to withdraw.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I move an amendment—

That after "advances" in line 3 of paragraph (b) "not exceeding 3s. per bushel" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to paragraph (b) of Subclause 1:—"and may charge the wheat acquired under this Act and the proceeds with the repayment of advances."

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added—
 "Provided that notwithstanding the provisions of this section in cases where the Minister has occasion to engage or employ outside agents or persons for carrying out any of the duties hereby imposed upon him he shall only appoint such agents or persons by public tender."

It is difficult to draft an amendment of this nature. My object is to have a radical change made in the way wheat is handled at Fremantle. Between the 1st January and the 30th September last 113,962 tons of wheat were shipped away from Fremantle. Of this the firm of Laurie handled 96,319 tons, the Fremantle stevedoring company got 11,248 tons, and the firm of Nichols only 5,395 tons. I understand it costs more to handle the wheat at Fremantle than it costs to put it there, and I am told that the rates at Fremantle are the highest of any of the wheat producing States. It is peculiar that one stevedoring firm in Fremantle should handle practically the whole quantity. Mr. Nichols, of the firm of Nichols, is a returned soldier and employs returned soldiers. On their behalf we approached the wheat scheme in order to have a better arrangement made, but were met with a flat refusal by the manager of the board. Later, a deputation waited on the Minister for Agriculture, who said he would not be a party to altering the position.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You have given a monopoly on the one hand; why not on the other?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I understand there is a section of lumpers at Fremantle who follow the firm of Laurie, and get more opportunities of employment than the other lumpers. If the handling of the wheat was distributed equally, there would be greater opportunities of employment for all.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not think the amendment will effect the alterations desired by the hon. member. The stevedores are not engaged or employed by the Minister, but by the ship.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: They are paid by the ship, but engaged by the wheat scheme.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: They are nominated by the wheat scheme. There are objections to the amendment. The question of engaging agents in the Old Country, for instance, could hardly be settled by tender. I am in accord with the hon. member that the present arrangements are unsatisfactory, and am authorised by the wheat scheme authorities to say they will call for tenders. This amendment would have a damaging effect in many directions.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: If possible I should like to see tenders called for this work. I am in favour of that system. If tenders are called I do not know whether one firm would have an opportunity of quoting below another

firm. It may be that there are certain men who get most of the work. I should like to know more about this.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The most important question is that of the employment of the lumpers. The men have to assemble at a given point, which is called Poverty Point, and are picked up, irrespective of which firm is handling a commodity, or what the commodity is that has to be handled. Each stevedore has his own men for his own particular class of work. It is not every man who can handle wheat, and those who get this work are generally the best of the men. If it costs more to handle wheat in Fremantle this must be due to excessive profits made by the stevedoring companies. The men get the same wages throughout the Commonwealth, and Western Australia holds the record for the loading of wheat.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: The work would be done better at Fremantle if the lumpers handled it without the intervention of the stevedores. The lumpers should get the opportunity of showing that they are capable of doing the work. With that object in view I support the amendment.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If the amendment dealt only with the handling of wheat at Fremantle I would be inclined to support it. To carry it as it stands would greatly hamper the operations of the scheme. We have the assurance of the Minister that tenders will be called. If the Fremantle lumpers put in a tender, and show that they can successfully carry on the work, it will be the beginning of the end of the trouble at Fremantle. We should eliminate the day labour system and get back to piecework.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I support the amendment with a certain amount of misgiving. The principle of asking manual labourers to offer their services by public tender is one of the worst systems ever brought into use. We fought over it 30 years ago in South Australia. If Mr. Cornell would delete the words "by public tender" I would support the amendment with more readiness. When we set one section of workmen looking for employment and competing with others, we set a very bad example indeed.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I realise from what the Minister said that it would be difficult to carry the amendment into effect, in view of its far-reaching character. I accept the Minister's assurance that the work will be done by tender in Fremantle, for I consider that is only right. The position at Fremantle is that up to this year, there were two firms operating at that port—Capt. Laurie, and the Fremantle Stevedoring Company. I believe the latter company is now merged into the Port Adelaide Stevedoring Company, so that the Port Adelaide Stevedoring Company practically controls the position. However, these two companies meet and make what is known as the current rate for the Port of Fremantle. These two firms carry out that agreement and under the charter party, a

ship coming in to load, must accept the nominee of the charterer to do the stevedoring work. In my own case, I put in a price to a big firm in Fremantle, and my price was lower than that of another firm. I was told, however, that the people could not accept my tender because they were not satisfied that I had the qualifications and, in any case, the charter party gave them the right to nominate their own man at current rates. That rate is not the current rate in the ordinary sense of the word, but has merely been established by these two firms putting their heads together and saying what shall be the rate for Fremantle. That rate is subsequently known as the current rate. At the beginning of this year, another firm was established at Fremantle. It is a well-qualified firm and the head of it is a young man who returned from the war with the best of credentials. He is a man who is maimed and unable to follow his calling at sea. He became associated with the company; he broke away later and started for himself. This other firm claims the opportunity to do this work. The firm is doing a considerable amount of work at Fremantle but it is precluded from doing any work for the Wheat Board because Mr. Keys, the manager of the Wheat Board, says that Capt. Laurie is his stevedore and he gives the work to him at the current rate for the port. Some members have stated that the rate is very high for this class of work. Personally, I have never stevedored a ship and I cannot say whether it is high or low, but I have my own opinion.

Member: What is your opinion?

Hon. R. J. LYNN: It is that the rate is a very lucrative one indeed and that the rate charged should leave a very handsome profit to the firm. This year we will have a harvest of 250,000 tons, and for one firm to hold the monopoly for the handling of that wheat will mean a very handsome return indeed. In Fremantle we have stevedores, then foremen, and then pannikin bosses. There is no more conservative man on the face of the earth than the pannikin boss on the Fremantle wharf. The pannikin boss has his own particular circle and the foreman has his own circle as well. A great deal of the work done at Fremantle should be distributed. If it were, it would not perhaps be sufficient to find work for all the men at that port but, at any rate, the distribution of work would be more satisfactory than it has been in the past. If the work could be done as well at current rates by one firm as another, the Government should distribute that work, or else call tenders, instead of allowing one firm to have a monopoly at the current rate. The current rate is nothing but merely an agreement between two firms to work at a certain rate. I had intended to deal with the ramifications of the stevedoring business at Fremantle to show what it has meant to the port and to the employers and employees as well. Having the assurance of the Minister,

however, that tenders will be called for this work—I cannot object to that—or at least that the work will be distributed, I need not go further. The Minister raised a fine point in connection with the chartering. Members should understand that the ship pays for the stevedoring but that the ship has to accept the nominee of the charterer. It should also be remembered that the harbour and light rates, the Commonwealth rates and port charges, to some extent, regulate freights. If these are excessive, then high rates generally will prevail. If the port is made attractive with reasonable rates, the freights will come down and ships will be attracted to the port. The charter party, as I have indicated, contains a clause to the effect that the stevedore shall be nominated by the charterer at the current rates of the port. Applying that to a wheat ship, when the vessel comes to Fremantle, the ship pays for the stevedoring work done, but the manager of the Wheat Scheme nominates the stevedores. There is no getting beyond that point. I want the Minister to realise that when Mr. Keys nominates the stevedore, the ship has to pay for the work done, but it has to accept the stevedore so nominated to do it. It has been raised as a fine point that objection can be taken under the charter to the stevedore, but I know of no instance where such an objection has been raised to the stevedore. My own firm had never handled a big timber ship, but when one did come to our agency, I nominated myself as stevedore and carried out the work successfully. It is all a question of getting good foremen to supervise the work. There is a good deal of talk about how clever a stevedore must be to load a ship, to load it in accordance with a captain's instructions, and so on. It has been stated that the stevedore has to see that the ship is loaded as the captain may require, down by the head or by the stern or on a level keel. I have known ships down by the stern, and the captain has come along and said, "I want the boat six inches down by the stern." This is not so hard a thing to regulate as one would imagine, and if one wants to alter the loading, all one has to do is to stick a knife into the bags or jag them with the hooks so that the wheat runs down from the bags, and soon the ship is loaded as required. Perhaps that is one of the secrets of the trade.

Hon. A. H. Panton: And they blame the lumpers for it at the other end.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: We will have a heavy harvest next year and the position is one that the wheat board might well consider to see whether a reasonable opportunity to cater for it can be given to all people engaged in this class of work, so that no particular firm shall have a monopoly in connection with stevedoring at Fremantle.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I feel indebted to Mr. Cornell for bringing forward this amendment because it has thrown a considerable light on the question we are dealing with. Having been defeated in the open on

the question of the Westralian Farmers Ltd. and the wheat pool, I am not going to try to stab in the dark. From the speeches of Mr. Lynn and other members, and of the Leader of the House as well, it is obvious that we have power to make or break this party's trading at Fremantle. Instead of holding the scales evenly and being independent, whether we like it or not, we are dragged into the loading of wheat at Fremantle. I am certain that the statements—I will not say "revelations," because they must be common knowledge to those at Fremantle engaged in this business—of Mr. Lynn and Mr. Panton, both speaking with special knowledge, come as news to ordinary members, but unless the Leader of the House accepts that amendment, I shall not vote for it, as it may affect the management of the Wheat Scheme this year. I hope, however, that this information will be borne in mind by the House, and by the outside public in future, because this is one of the things I felt certain must happen, namely, that we would have power to put cash into the pockets of one section of the community.

Hon. A. H. Panton: No one has a better right to have it than the man who is doing the work.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: That is a powerful argument, but I am not discussing that aspect. We are asked, however, to hold the scales of justice evenly, and if we bring this sort of scramble into the House, we may by a vote put so much cash or, as Mr. Lynn put it, a very handsome profit, into the pockets of one firm.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Why should not the State do it and get the handsome profit?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I do not want to discuss that matter just now. Next year may be the proper time to bring that up. The Leader of the House said he would not accept the amendment, but would see that something of the kind was done. Having been defeated on the second reading, it would not be seemly for me to attempt to defeat the Bill in Committee. If the Minister gives the assurance that the amendment will be inimical to the working of the scheme, I shall support him.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I can only repeat that, as this amendment applies to persons engaged or employed by the Minister it could have no application to the stevedores at Fremantle but it would apply to a number of other persons in regard to whose employment it would be practically impossible to call for tenders, such as selling agents in London. I entirely agree with the remarks of Mr. Cornell. I have had occasion to inquire closely into this matter, and it is highly desirable that tenders should be called for the stevedoring. I discussed the matter with the manager to-day and he has undertaken to do this. I can say nothing further.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The discussion has revealed facts which overtures for months have failed to bring out. Such a provision may impose hardship on the board. The Minister

said it would have no application to stevedoring, but the actual position is as stated by Mr. Lynn: Mr. Keys said, "I am the man who can nominate the stevedores." In order that hardships may not be imposed on the wheat board and in view of the Minister's assurance that the matter will be rectified, I ask leave to withdraw the amendment. If the men who do the work formed themselves into a co-operative society as the returned soldier stevedores in Melbourne have done, they would be entitled to whatever profit there was from the work.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause, as previously amended, agreed to.

Clause 6—Prohibition of sales, etc. except to Minister:

Hon. T. MOORE: In order to make Sub-clause 4 clearer, I move an amendment—

That the words "The Minister may, as prescribed, exempt either generally or in any particular case, from the operation of this section" be struck out with a view to inserting "The following sales and purchases shall be exempt from the operation of this section."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The clause as previously amended gives ample exemption for all legitimate dealings of this class, but we cannot close our eyes to the fact that these exemptions might be open to abuse. Therefore it is necessary that the Minister should have power to revoke any exemption in case of abuse. If we make it a specific exemption under the Act, there will be no power to check abuses which might arise. It is vital to the measure that opportunity should not be given to go behind the provisions of this clause.

Hon. T. Moore: The Minister may revoke even under my amendment.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, the Minister could not revoke.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: We should state in ordinary language what we desire, and then hand our work over to the legal adviser of the Government to put our words into proper form. I am surprised at the objection raised by the Leader of the House on the ground that there may be abuses. My answer is, if there are abuses why are not the penalties put into operation? If we provide that the Minister may at any time by notification in the "Gazette" revoke any exemption, after having previously stated that the Minister shall make certain exemptions, we shall lay ourselves open to just ridicule by the courts.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is a contradiction of terms.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It may be so or it may be that, by some legal subtlety, our decision will be destroyed. It is important to make our intentions clear. We made the exemptions mandatory instead of permissive only by a very narrow majority.

The Minister for Education: A majority of one.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: This is a question of political strategy and we have a pretty clear statement from the Minister as to what would be done. I am not desirous of having a snatch vote, but it should be established beyond contradiction that inside the State there should be practically free trade in wheat. I have no objection to a clear vote being taken on this point, if it is possible to take it. It is difficult to convey in moderate language the intense irritation, suspicion and fear that consumers entertain regarding this clause of the Bill. I do not blame the farmer; he is not desirous of penalising the pig, poultry and dairy farmers. Whether we accept the amendment or not, members should consider the effect of Subclause 5.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must discuss the amendment.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I cannot see that the amendment is of great importance, but if the hon. member wishes to make assurance doubly sure, I have no objection to it.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: A careful perusal of the clause will lead hon. members to hold, as it has led me to hold, that "shall" should not be substituted for "may." All poultry and pig raisers should be assured of the right to purchase wheat under this clause, be assured that the Minister shall agree to their doing so, and the Minister should not be permitted to cancel that right unless the holder of it has done something shady. The clause as it stands is, I think, perfectly right. The Minister should not be bound hand and foot. I note Mr. Sanderson's references to the penalty; but convictions might be very difficult to obtain, and men might be able to purchase wheat without the Minister's discovering the fact. Last year I saw truckloads of wheat sold labelled "oats." Nobody lost anything by it, while the wheat grower and the poultry farmer gained.

Hon. J. Cornell: I believe some farmers sold barley for wheat.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Not in this State, I understand. Last year the Minister had discretion, but did not exercise it, with the result that poultry farmers were compelled to buy dirty wheat.

Hon. T. MOORE: I wish to disabuse the minds of hon. members as to there being any desire on my part to obtain a catch vote. I drafted this amendment on the last occasion when the measure was discussed here. Under the law as it stands, farmers find difficulty in disposing of a few bags they may happen to have of second or third grade wheat; they must first write for and obtain Ministerial authority. My desire in moving the amendment is to obviate that circumlocution. The Minister should have the right to revoke the authority in the case of anyone who he has reason to believe is actually trading under these exemptions.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: If a man is fit to be a Minister of the Crown, he is fit to be granted a certain measure of dis-

cretion. Under the Bill the Government propose to do exactly what we want them to do: the Bill says "may," and not "shall," and thus gives the Minister discretionary power. Both the last speakers, it appeared to me, indicated that they considered the Minister should have some discretionary power. The only object in retaining the word "may" is that the Minister may be empowered to step in and prevent anything being done that is not in accordance with correct principles of business.

The CHAIRMAN: The word "may" has been struck out, and by a further amendment the word "shall" has been inserted in lieu.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: In that case I do not wish to add anything to my remarks.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The carrying of Mr. Moore's amendment would bring the subclause into reasonable phraseology. As it now stands, it presents difficulty in construction. Had the word "may" been retained, the language of the subclause in its present form would have been quite proper. But "shall" having been substituted for "may," the only reasonable words in which to frame the subclause are words somewhat similar to those which Mr. Moore proposes. In view of the fact that the imperative "shall" is now used in Subclause 4, it will perhaps be necessary to strike out Subclause 5. Certainly, if the amendment now under discussion is carried, Subclause 5 becomes quite unnecessary. Possibly some further amendment could be devised to safeguard the objects the Minister has in view. There should be some regulating hand. At present I support the amendment.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: Mr. Moore's amendment, if carried, should undoubtedly be followed by the deletion of Subclause 5; otherwise we shall be empowering the Minister to upset a section of an Act of Parliament. I am not, however, in entire agreement with Mr. Moore. Although the phraseology of the subclause as it now stands may not be quite all that could be desired, yet, on the other hand, it appears to express the opinion of the Chamber, namely, that the Minister shall confer an exemption when he is satisfied that an application for exemption is made bona fide. In my opinion, there is not much to cavil at in the subclause as it stands. The carrying of Mr. Moore's amendment may open the door to a great deal of subterfuge, with the result of much illicit trading in wheat. We have a happy little illustration in this connection from Mr. Greig, drawn from what he saw last year.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I think the Committee would do well to leave this subclause as it stands, and delete Subclause 5. The subclause under consideration, if allowed to stand, will put the Minister in a position to know what is going on in the wheat business. If Mr. Moore's amendment is carried, the Minister will have no information of what is going on in the matter of wheat dealing in

the country districts. In fact, the carrying of the amendment would remove all Ministerial control.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I am very much in accord with Mr. Holmes's remarks. The discussion of the previous amendment to Subclause 4 occupied a considerable time, and everything that could possibly be brought out in that connection was brought out; and I think the best course is to let Subclause 4 stand, and to delete Subclause 5. At the time when we previously amended Subclause 4, I called the Minister's attention to Subclause 5, as I was not satisfied that the amended Subclause 4 would harmonise with it. In fact, I intimated my view that Subclause 5 would be amended consequentially on the amendment of Subclause 4. If Subclause 5 is now struck out, poultry and pig farmers will obtain all their requirements, and in the near future we shall see considerable reductions in the price of bacon and so forth. In the circumstances, I shall support Subclause 4 as it stands, and shall vote for the deletion of Subclause 5.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: If I understood Mr. Moore rightly, he said that a person wishing to buy wheat should be able to do so without notifying the board. Clause 11 sets out that under certain conditions the Commissioner for Railways will not carry wheat. A poultry farmer will get an authorisation from the Minister that he may buy so many bags of wheat, but the Minister will have control of it. The hon. member might agree to withdraw his amendment, so that we may insert the words "subject to revocation at any time by the Minister, the following sales and purchases shall be exempt." If the words the hon. member proposes to strike out, are deleted, I will move in the direction of inserting the words I have quoted.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We have amended Clause 11 in such a way that it has no bearing at all upon this particular class of wheat which is exempted from the operations of Clause 6. The right of the Commissioner to refuse to carry wheat in excess of five bags applies entirely to wheat subject to Clause 6, and therefore, when wheat is exempted from the operation of Clause 6, the Commissioner's right to refuse to carry no longer applies.

Hon. T. MOORE: I am only trying to make the clause clear. In order to permit of the amendment suggested by Mr. Greig being moved, I will withdraw my amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment before the Committee is merely to strike out certain words. If those words are deleted, any hon. member may move to substitute others.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, agreed to.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: On the clause as amended—

The CHAIRMAN: The clause has already been passed by the Committee.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I rose as quickly as age and infirmity would allow—

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow any further discussion on the clause. If I put it too quickly I am sorry. The hon. member will have an opportunity of recommitting the Bill.

Clause 13—Price of wheat for local consumption:

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 after the word "wheat" there be inserted "provided that such price shall not exceed 7s. a bushel."

These words were struck out by a somewhat oblique vote. The Committee voted on an amendment to strike out these words, and it was understood that others would be inserted. The words were struck out without my quite realising that in striking them out the limit of 7s. would also be deleted. If the Bill were merely a Bill to give London parity to the farmer I would not offer any opposition, but there are other things. The Government are guaranteeing a minimum price to the farmers, not only on local sales, but on sales overseas, and what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. If we guarantee that there shall be a minimum, we should at any rate protect the interests of the consumer by saying that the price under certain conditions shall not exceed a maximum. The State has erected certain machinery under the Bill which, in effect, creates a combine or trust, and when such conditions prevail it is up to us to see that we are not creating a Frankenstein which will destroy us. We know that wheat is being sold in Adelaide at 4s. 5d., and we are paying 9s. locally.

The Minister for Education: That is next season's wheat.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: At any rate Adelaide wheat, I know, is being sold here today 6d. cheaper than our own wheat.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. The farmer is entitled to the full value of the wheat, and if we insert these words it will mean that up to a certain point we give the farmer the world's parity for wheat. After that the farmer makes a sacrifice. We take the farmer's wheat, put it into a pool, and having done so, the least we can do is to see that the farmer gets the full value, whatever it may be.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I support the amendment, for two reasons. One is that it will protect the farmer to a certain extent, and the other that it will protect the public. I have frequently expressed my opinion regarding the farmer and world's parity. Whilst we seem to be anxious to cause the farmer to accept the world's parity for everything he has to sell, we are not prepared to give him world's parity for those things he has to buy. For those things which are not made in Australia, we cause the farmer to pay 50 per cent. ad valorem duty. If we are so anxious to

give the farmer world's parity for those wares he has to sell, it is up to us to give him world's parity for what he wants to buy. The amendment provides that no more than 7s. shall be charged for wheat for local consumption. That is a good idea and affords protection for the public. When we give extreme powers to Ministers such as we propose here, and when we remember that Ministers are to great extent under the influence of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association, it is due to the House to see that the public are protected. The Leader of the Opposition in another place, in carrying the amendment which we now propose to restore, effected a fair compromise. It would not be right for this House, elected by a limited section of the community, to interfere with the clause regarding the price of wheat. As far as the handling of wheat generally is concerned, the sooner the pool is ended, and the sooner the farmer gets control of the wheat, the better it will be for the community.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I am surprised at the arguments used by Mr. Dodd. He said that the farmer was not treated fairly in regard to the articles he had to buy. In that case Mr. Dodd should allow the farmer to get the best price he can for the article he produces. There is no logic in the argument of the hon. member. The farmer is fully entitled to every penny he can get for his wheat.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: The farmer has to go to London to get world's parity for his wheat, and has to pay Australian parity for his goods.

Hon. G. W. MILES: That is where he is being killed both ways. I have never before heard such an argument! I am strongly opposed to the amendment. While the pool is in existence, I want to see the farmer get every possible penny for his wheat.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I hope the amendment will be carried. I have always advocated that in the country of origin there should be a reasonable limit to the price the farmer gets. I want to encourage gristing in Western Australia in order that we might get the offal for those industries depending on it. It has been said that if the price for local consumption is not satisfactory, the wheat will be all shipped abroad. However, I am sure it would not be allowed to go out.

Hon. A. H. Panton: How would you prevent it?

Hon. J. DUFFELL: For one thing, the men on the wharf at Fremantle would refuse to work it.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Then we should have another wharf scandal.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The hon. member has already said that will happen.

The Minister for Education: I remind Mr. Duffell that this amendment has no bearing on the question of wheat gristed for export flour.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: It has a distinct bearing. I made a statement last week that as

the result of the price for wheat for local consumption being fixed at 9s. a bushel, the millers of the State have been almost ruined.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Most of us are here to represent the consumer. Still I approve of the farmer getting all he can for his wheat. But I object to the dice being loaded, as undoubtedly they are loaded when Parliament sanctions a wheat pool to despoil the pig and poultry farmer and the consumer generally. I object equally to any attempt or even threat on the part of the consumer that he will insist upon getting wheat for local consumption at a cheaper rate than rules outside. There is an air of unreality about the whole discussion. Everybody knows we cannot prevent South Australia sending wheat into this State. Last year there was a pool for the whole of Australia. This year there will be a compulsory pool in Western Australia, but none in South Australia. Automatically then, if the market rises here, in will come the South Australian wheat. Therefore what is the use of our fixing any price whatever for wheat for local consumption? I cannot support the amendment.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Under the Bill we are compulsorily taking the wheat from the farmer and putting it into the pool. Surely then in common justice to the farmer we should allow him to get the best possible price for his commodity, locally or abroad. If the hon. member would suggest a minimum as well as a maximum price, there would be some reason in it.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: The minimum price is provided by the Government guarantee.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Last year's price does not affect the issue, because last year the whole of the wheat of Australia went into the pool. As against that, we shall have this year the free wheat of South Australia, which in itself will suffice to protect the public.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Dr. Saw is in error when he states that the 3s. guarantee represents the minimum price. As I see it, that is the maximum amount the Government are prepared to lend the wheat grower on his wheat. If the wheat does not realise 3s., the growers will still be under an obligation to the Government.

The Minister for Education: It is portion of the purchase price.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: The Government have the wheat in their possession, and against it they advance 3s. Dr. Saw referred to the fact that last year 9s. was charged for wheat for local consumption, while 6s. was charged for overseas wheat. But if Dr. Saw will look into the figures, he will find that the consumers have had all the advantage on the operations of the two years.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I will support the amendment. I do not know where Mr. Duffell got authority for saying that I declared the lumpers would stop the wheat going out. The lumpers on one occasion stopped flour going out, and as a result were starved by Mr. Duffell and his friends for 18 months after-

wards. I do not think they are likely to do that again.

Mr. Duffell: I ask that that be withdrawn.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Oh, all right, I will withdraw. Whilst I agree with Mr. Holmes that the farmer is entitled to the full results of his labour, still Mr. Holmes would never agree to allow the worker to get the full results of his labour. He would send the worker to the Arbitration Court.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I would abolish the Arbitration Court to-morrow.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Yes, and then starve the worker into taking what you might be ready to give him. So, too, the farmer, while he says he wants the full results of his labour, refuses to allow the rural workers to go to the Arbitration Court. Personally, I am not optimistic about the price of wheat for overseas coming down. I have too great a respect for the manipulations of some of those gentlemen who handle wheat all over the world.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. E. ROSE: I am inclined to support Dr. Saw's amendment. I see no reason why it should not be passed. The words were deleted on a catch vote. For the benefit of those who are dairying, and raising pigs and poultry, it would be better to have a maximum price so that they may know what is before them. I do not think we are likely to get much less than 5s. a bushel for wheat.

Hon. G. W. MILES: If it were a question of fruit or anything of that kind affecting the producers in the South-West the hon. member would be only too pleased that they should get the highest possible price. The primary producers are entitled to every penny they can get for their products. The committee should uphold its previous decision to keep this proviso out of the Bill. The farmer is entitled to the full results of his labour.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Do you believe in that for everyone?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes, and the worker, too, is entitled to every penny he can earn. I intend to oppose the amendment.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I appeal to those who are opposed to the State wheat pool not to vote for this amendment. Are we seeking by Parliamentary interference to regulate prices? If we carry this amendment we shall be placing a powerful weapon in the hands of the Labour Party and the farmers. This weapon will be used to show that this is an acceptance of the doctrine that Parliament can interfere with the price of commodities. If the farmer can get 10s. a bushel for his wheat by fair play, so long as no injustice is done to the poultry farmer and the pig raiser, no one will be more pleased than I.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I appeal to that section of the Committee which claims to re-

present labour. Statements have been made that the labourer is entitled to the very best he can get. We have never taken up the attitude that labour shall be compelled to sell labour. The most we say is that if they decide to sell their labour they shall not sell it for less than the rate fixed by the Arbitration Court. If we attempt to tell the labourer that he must sell his labour at any price, that will savour of slavery and will not have my support. The Labour Party say to the farmers, "You can sell your wheat for local consumption at a price not to exceed 7s. per bushel no matter what the world's demand for it may be." I ask the Labour Party to apply the same line of reasoning to the wheat producer as they do to the labourer.

Hon. T. MOORE: The hon. member believes that the farmer should get the full benefit of all the work he does no matter at whose expense it may be. The reason why the farmer has been getting such big prices for his wheat is because of trouble in another part of the world. If people on the other side of the world are compelled to pay an unreasonable price for their wheat, that is no reason why people in this State should pay more for their wheat. Rural workers have been prevented from appearing before the Arbitration Court. All that the worker can get is the cost of living, not the worth of his services. He only gets that which he can live on.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You get more than that.

Hon. T. MOORE: There are many married men who, after bringing up their families, have nowhere else to go but to the Old Man's Home. The worker has never received that which he has earned. He has built up a certain section of fat men in every community, while he himself has done the work of the country.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: The debate has progressed rather beyond the range of my amendment. He would be a bold man who would say what the price of wheat may be in 12 months' time.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Why put it in?

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: Considering the state of Europe, we cannot say whether it will be 10s. per bushel or 3s. 6d. per bushel. Every circumstance that I know of that has been urged as influencing things has been negatived by results. I maintain that as the State is creating the instrument whereby the farmers are enabled to get a high price for their wheat, and to create a monopoly, it is only right that the interests of the consumers should be safeguarded.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Since the last meeting of the House I have been assailed on every hand as being responsible for the defeat of the maximum price.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: You should be proud of that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I knew what I was doing and members, perhaps, may not have been quite so clear on the point. My inten-

tion was to achieve what would be the natural corollary to a maximum price, namely, the minimum price, and the Committee on the voices struck out the proviso, which Dr. Saw is now endeavouring to replace. Now that members find that the gun was loaded, they are endeavouring to replace this provision in the Bill. I maintain that we should have a flat rate for home consumption and give the farmers what we think is a fair thing.

Hon. A. Sanderson: That is another matter.

Hon. J. CORNELL: As a matter of fact, there is no minimum. We know what has happened in the past regarding the guarantee, which has been backed up by the taxpayers of the State.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: That was not a guarantee; it was an advance.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Government guaranteed so much per bushel as an inducement to encourage greater production. That is not the case on this occasion, but an instrument has been created under which an advance of 3s. per bushel is to be made on delivery of the wheat but not before. The Lower House was influenced in fixing the maximum price because it was not intended that a repetition of what happened last year, should be witnessed this year. Assuming that we require two million bushels for home consumption, will that quantity be kept in the State? I contend we should keep it. By doing that, however we may place a further embargo on the farmer, indicating to him that he must grow only for the requirements of the State, but if the price rises above 7s., he shall not receive benefit for the balance. I do not intend to support any provision which will have the effect of pointing a double-barrelled gun at the farmer. There is no justice in saying that there shall be a maximum price but absolutely no minimum. If there is to be London parity for what wheat we do not want, there should be London parity for what we do want.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I promised Mr. Stewart that I would pair with him on this measure. I am strongly in favour of Dr. Saw's amendment and would vote with him but for the arrangement with Mr. Stewart. Another place was prompted to fix the maximum price at 7s. a bushel for wheat, because members there did not desire to see last year's experience repeated this year. When wheat was 9s. a bushel in Western Australia last year, it was being sold elsewhere at 7s., and people became disgusted with the management of the wheat pool. The amendment, which was inserted in another place, constituted an endeavour to prevent such an injustice to the consumers.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: On a point of order, is it competent for a member, who has paired with another, to address the House although he cannot vote?

The CHAIRMAN: Most decidedly, it is.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: It is stated that it is possible the price of wheat may go beyond

7s. and that it would be an injustice to the farmer if the maximum were fixed at that figure. The reply to that, is that the farmer is getting considerable advantage at the present time. There is an advance of 3s. per bushel, and the least the public may be expected to require is that wheat for local consumption shall be sold at a reasonable price.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: There is no limit to what those engaged in the gold mining industry can get for their product. They established what is practically a co-operative concern, known as the Gold Producers' Association, and export their product themselves. There is no charge upon the State whatever. I would take up the same attitude regarding the farmers and the wheat pool were this a voluntary or co-operative pool, similar to that established in connection with the gold mining industry. In this case, however, the credit of the State is at the back of the wheat pool. In the circumstances I claim that the limit of 7s. is one that may be maintained. I support the amendment.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Regarding the conditions under which wheat is produced compared with the experience of other industries, the farmer has to buy his machinery under a high protective tariff.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The same thing applies to the mining industry.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: At the same time he is compelled to sell his wheat in competition with other parts of the world and to compete particularly with countries where black labour is employed. If the farmer were free from the pool, or running a co-operative pool and dealing with the community in the same way as those engaged in secondary industries, the position would be this: Members know that the manufacturers take advantage of the tariff and place a price upon their implements and goods which is only a few shillings below that at which we can buy the imported article. Take boots: The hides and tanning barks are produced within the State and yet the manufacturers charge for the local article within 3d. a pair of the price of the imported article. If the wheat grower dealt with the consumer in the same way, he would argue that it cost 2s. a bushel to send Home wheat which, if worth 6s. here, would make the price in England 8s. To bring that wheat back would cost another 2s., making the price 10s., and the price of the local article on that basis would be fixed at 9s. 9d. a bushel. That is what is being done with regard to secondary industries. The farmers have never attempted to do this. The most they have asked for is export parity.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The manufacturers have not the Agricultural Bank, the I.A.B. or the pool.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: If the farmers had 50 per cent. protection, they would not require those institutions. The manufacturers have divided the difference with the workers and have fleeced the rest of the community.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	11

Majority against .. 5

AYES.

Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. A. H. Pantou
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. T. Moore	Hon. E. H. Harris
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagb	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. R. J. Lynn	(Teller.)

PAIR.

Ayes: Hon. J. W. Kirwan. | Noes: Hon. H. Stewart.

Amendment thus negatived; the clause, as previously amended, agreed to.

Further recommittal.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, Bill further recommitted to reconsider Clause 6.

Clause 6—Prohibition of sales, etc., except to Minister:

Hon. G. W. MILES: Seeing that Subclause 4 has been made mandatory instead of permissive, Subclause 5 should consequentially be deleted. I move an amendment—

That Subclause 5 be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: For reasons I have already given, I cannot agree to the amendment. It is essential for the carrying out of the provisions of the measure that the Minister should have power to revoke an exemption which has been abused.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Subclause 4 having been made mandatory, how can we give the Minister power to revoke an exemption? It would be inconsistent to retain Subclause 5.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I agree with Sir Edward Wittenoom. I cannot see how the Minister can justify the attitude he takes up. If we retain Subclause 5, the clause will not be worth the paper it is printed on.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: When we made the exemptions mandatory, Mr. Duffell suggested that Subclause 5 should be deleted consequentially. The Minister told us that one of his first duties, after amendments had been made, was to consult the legal adviser and ascertain the effect of the amendments. Has he consulted his legal adviser on this? The Minister for Education: Yes.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: And his legal adviser has passed Subclause 5, making it permissive to revoke any exemption?

The Minister for Education: Yes.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am glad to have that on record. I do not think we could get a more experienced man in business affairs than Sir Edward Wittenoom, and we have heard his opinion. The point is, what is our intention? If we delete Subclause 5 we shall be carrying out our intention. I am indifferent to what the legal adviser of the Government has said, though I would like another legal opinion on the point.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It would be ridiculous to retain it.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am astonished to hear that the Minister in this is fortified by his legal adviser.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I opposed the amendment to strike out "may" and substitute "shall," but it was carried on a division by one vote. The effect of the amendment was to compel the Minister to grant certain exemptions which he had undertaken to grant. I consulted the legal officers and they say that as the clause stands, the only effect of the amendment is to compel the Minister to do something which he intended to do, but that if Subclause 5 is struck out, it will be beyond the power of the Minister to rectify the matter if any abuse occurs. Therefore, I cannot agree to the deletion of Subclause 5, as the Minister, in the event of exemptions being abused, should have the power to revoke them.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: If the word "may" had been retained in Subclause 4, Subclause 5 would have been perfectly consistent; but I cannot understand any legal adviser telling the Minister that Subclause 5 should be retained after Subclause 4 has been made mandatory.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The position to-day is that no person can sell wheat of any grade to anyone other than the Minister unless the Minister so prescribes. "Prescribes" means prescribes by regulation. The Committee have amended the clause to read that the Minister "shall" prescribe. But the word "shall," I contend, can have no effect unless the Minister does prescribe. If the word "may" is restored, the Clause will be all right and there will be no compounding of felonies.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I voted for the word "shall," and for the life of me I cannot see yet why we should not insist upon the Minister making those exemptions. If he cannot see any reason why those exemptions should not be revoked, I fail to see why we should not have that word "shall" in the subclause.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: On the hon. member's own argument, we are reducing this thing to a joke. At the beginning of the clause we say that the Minister shall do so and so, and at the end of the clause we say that the Minister may revoke exemptions at any time. Thus at 9.55 a.m. the Minister may grant an exemption, and at 10 a.m. he may revoke it. Because I do not wish to be a party to farcical legislation, I shall vote for the deletion of Subsection 5.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: 1
move—

That the question be now put.

Motion put and passed.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	11
Majority against				3

AYES.

Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Mills	(Teller.)
Hon. J. Nicholson	

NOES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. R. J. Lynn
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. A. H. Panton
Hon. J. W. Hickey	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: In view of the decision of the Committee, I ask now whether it is intended to alter the third word in the first line of 'Subclause 3 from "may" to "shall," as a consequential amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly not.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

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

BILL—PERMANENT RESERVE (POINT WALTER).

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [8.26] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this very short Bill is to authorise the Melville road board to grant a lease of a small piece of ground at Point Walter for the erection of refreshment rooms. The road board have spent a good deal of money in improving the reserve. As hon. members are aware, Point Walter is a very popular holiday resort. The reserve in question is a Class A reserve, and for that reason no portion of it can be leased without the sanction of Parliament. It is desirable that conveniences in the form of refreshment rooms should be provided for visitors, and the board are not in a position to erect the necessary buildings and to carry on refreshment rooms. Probably if they were, it would be better that they should do as they now propose to do, and give the lease to some private person to carry on the refreshment rooms. Members will observe that the

area which may be leased for these purposes is limited to one acre. The lease will be for a short period; and the rights of the public so far as the reserve is concerned, will not be in any way infringed. A great deal of money is spent from time to time on the various reserves in the metropolitan area; and this Point Walter reserve is one of the few that are to a large extent self-supporting. By means of the Bill it is intended to give the road board power to make the reserve self-supporting even to a larger degree. Personally, I cannot see any objection to the proposal, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. R. J. LYNN (West) [8.28]: Seeing that the lease is to be subject to the approval of the Governor, I should like an assurance from the Leader of the House that any lease which may be granted shall in no way interfere with the shore rights of the people as regards the beach.

On motion by Hon. A. H. Panton debate adjourned.

BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th September.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [8.29]: I was unfortunately absent when the second reading of this Bill was moved. I believe that in another place it was introduced by a private member, and that the Minister for Education moved the second reading here. On the surface, the measure is very simple. It merely declares that an executor shall have equal position with an administrator. According to the existing Act, an administrator administering an estate can have a remuneration awarded to him by the court to the extent of 5 per cent.; but an executor cannot be awarded any remuneration whatever. Consequently it is argued, why should not an executor be entitled to have remuneration awarded him by the court in the same way as an administrator? Further, it is argued that a similar measure to this Bill is in force in several of the Eastern States. On the face of it, no doubt, the Bill seems exceedingly simple; but we must always bear in mind that an executor is not in every instance able to carry out all the duties connected with a will. A confiding person may go to an intended executor to have a will made, and may find him very sympathetic in the making of the will. As the law at present stands such a person can get no fees for acting in such a capacity. Previously, on engaging an administrator, that administrator would be entitled to fees up to 5 per cent. Now it is proposed to put an executor and administrator on the same footing. The only point is whether it is wise in the public interests to do this. We must always remember that

an executor is under no obligation to carry out all the duties in connection with an estate. For instance, he may be awarded up to 5 per cent. by the Court, but he is under no statutory obligation as to how he shall discharge the duties imposed on him. He has to put up no money and he is in the position to employ anybody he likes and pay for the work done. In such circumstances the question arises as to whether it is wise that such a power should be given. It might be argued, and possibly would be argued, that a trustee company would be opposed to legislation of this description. I point out on the other hand that there is nothing a trustee company would welcome more than this for the reason that such a company is bound by law not to charge more than 2½ per cent. Such a company is also bound by law to put up a large sum as security, and it is also compelled to discharge its duties in a statutory way, and in fact is in every way responsible. Such a company has at its command the best experienced men who invest money, and the company employs a large staff. Its charges are limited to 2½ per cent. on the capital value of an estate up to £50,000; 1½ per cent. on an estate between that amount and £100,000 in value; and one per cent. above £100,000. Apart from that a judge may award, if this Bill passes, either the administrator or the executor up to five per cent., and there are no safeguards as in the case of a trustee company. A trustee company for instance must have its accounts audited by a recognised public auditor once in every year.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: This is the best advertisement a trustee company could have.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: The hon. member anticipated the remark that I was going to make. It is hardly likely that business people would put their estates in the hands of an executor or administrator who could charge 5 per cent. for his efforts when it would be possible to get everything necessary done by a recognised trustee company, acting strictly under the law, for considerably less. The only point to be considered is whether it is wise to extend this privilege to executors as well as to administrators. There might be many trusting people, women for instance, who know nothing about the conditions applying to these matters and who would be inclined to place their affairs in the hands of an executor without being aware of the costs that would be involved. I need only refer to a case which was quoted in the "Sunday Times" a few days ago. Someone died and left a certain amount of money to be divided amongst the family. The executor in the case had to employ an administrator. He authorised the administrator to sell the property under any condition he liked, and the end of it was that a good estate was divided up amongst the beneficiaries who only received about £20 each. One is almost inclined to move an amendment that the con-

ditions which apply to a trustee company should also be made to apply to executors and administrators who, at the present time, are able to do what they like. However, it is not my intention to move in that direction, but if any hon. member should do so, it will be worth the while of other hon. members to give it the fullest consideration. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

BILL—RECIPROCAL ENFORCEMENT OF MAINTENANCE ORDERS.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH—East) [8.40] in moving the second reading said: This is a very simple though necessary piece of legislation. Provision has been made by an Imperial Statute for the enforcement in England and Ireland of maintenance orders. Maintenance orders are defined in the interpretation clause of the Bill as "an order for the periodical payment of sums of money for or towards the maintenance or support of any person, and includes an order of affiliation." Provision has been made by an Imperial Statute for the enforcement of these orders in England and Ireland and in other parts of the British Dominions, and it is necessary that the Dominions should now pass reciprocal legislation so that the Dominions may obtain the benefit of the English Statute. It is hoped that similar legislation will be passed in every one of the British Dominions. Provision is made at the end of the Bill that the Governor may, by Order in Council, extend the measure to any British protectorate, and where so extended it shall apply as if such protectorate was a part of His Majesty's Dominions to which the Act extends, with such modifications as the Governor may declare. The earlier portions of that clause provide that Sections 10, 12 and 13 shall apply to, and in respect of, any part of the King's Dominions to which the Governor may see fit to extend them by Order in Council. That is to say he will extend them by Order in Council to every other portion of the Dominions where similar legislation is passed. The provisions of the Bill are perfectly simple having reference to the methods of evidence and matters of that kind. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [8.42]: I support the second reading of the Bill. I merely desire to ask whether the Eastern States are taking steps in a similar direction. It is necessary, so far as we are concerned, that similar legislation should exist in the

other States because a number of maintenance orders are enforced from Western Australia.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [8.43]: All the Eastern States have been asked to introduce this legislation, and some have already moved in this direction. I have no doubt that all will do so, as it must appeal to them that it is essential that such a Bill should be passed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Enforcement in Western Australia of maintenance orders made in His Majesty's Dominions outside of the Commonwealth:

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It is stated in the memorandum that the whole of the Bill is applicable to the United Kingdom, and includes Scotland, which is excluded from the Imperial Statute. What does that mean?

The Minister for Education: It is as stated. I cannot give any explanation why Scotland is excluded from the Imperial Statute.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I think there must be something radically wrong there. It would seem to indicate that there is a special Act dealing with Scotland. However, I do not wish to press the question.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Application of Justices Act:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I should be glad if the Minister would consult the Crown Law authorities and see whether we ought not to insert also the State Children Act, since maintenance orders are now dealt with under that Act.

The Minister for Education: They are dealt with in the children's court, but under the Justices Act.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Under the State Children Act as well.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 10 to 14—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

MOTION—ELECTRICITY, GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION.

To inquire by Royal Commission.

Debate resumed from 28th September on the following motion by Hon. J. Ewing:—

"That in the opinion of the House the Government should appoint a Royal Com-

mission for the following purposes:—1, To investigate the workings of the Perth Electric Power Station and the generation, sale, and distribution of electricity. 2, To report as to the best means of generating cheap power for all purposes within the State. 3, The best location for the establishment of such a plant."

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [8.51]: Although I cannot support the motion, I congratulate the mover upon keeping this subject before the House and the people, because at some time in the future it will be of very great importance. I cannot support the motion because, in the first place, modern electricity is a highly technical subject and the methods of generating and transmitting are being improved upon every day. In view of this we can hardly expect to get a number of qualified gentlemen to act as a Royal Commission to report upon electrical schemes of a magnitude such as the hon. member has in view. The Minister spoke of sending a Commission abroad to learn what is going on. I hardly think we want to send unskilled persons abroad to learn; rather do we require skilled persons from other parts to come here and tell us what is going on elsewhere. I suggest that instead of going to the expense of appointing a Royal Commission we might a little time hence get, say, the superintendent of such a scheme as that in Calgary, in Canada, where they have side by side one scheme generating current by black coal and another with the current generated by what is known as white coal—water power. In both instances the current is generated at about the same cost. They are able to send the current to the consumers at a very low rate, because in both cases they go to the source of supply for fuel, in one instance, coal and in the other water. Current for lighting purposes is supplied at about 2½d. per unit; for domestic power one halfpenny, and for industrial power in large quantities one halfpenny, subject to discounts ranging to 50 per cent. Ultimately, of course, we shall have to follow the example of Canada and other places and go to the fuel source for our electric supply, instead of bringing the fuel to the generating station as at present. From inquiries made, I am afraid that to go to Collie would not be altogether a good commercial proposition at the present time, when we have our existing plant working at less than its full capacity. As far as I can gather, given a fairly evenly balanced load factor, which largely governs the output, we can produce about 70 million units, whereas at present the demand reaches only 23 million units. So it will be seen that until we can largely increase our consumption we shall not reach the limit of the existing supply station. On the basis of our annual increase it is estimated that seven years will elapse before we reach the full capacity of the station. Therefore, it will be some time before we require to go to the source of the fuel supply, and so I think the present is

altogether an inopportune time for the appointment of a Royal Commission. Judging by the developments being made in the generating and supplying of electric current, the next seven years may put an entirely different complexion upon things.

Hon. J. Ewing: What do they propose to spend during that seven years?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: As far as I can understand, not more on the existing plant than they are at present committed to. When they reach the full capacity of the existing plant it is proposed that they shall have recourse to Collie or some other source of fuel supply and transmit the current by long distance wire. Again, great developments are taking place in the use of the wireless. By this means small ships are being controlled from afar. Not many years ago the limit at which the British Board of Trade would allow current to be transmitted was 3,000 volts, which to-day is a very small scheme. We now have 2,000 volts running around our streets, and nobody takes any notice of it. In the Chippawa scheme, Queens-town, the current is transmitted at 220,000 volts. We do not know what the next few years will bring forth. I wish to indicate what these developments are. When I was in Canada some 12 months ago, discussions were taking place as to the possibility of running what are called electric steam boilers. They were stating then that by using electricity for boilers they could get for .4 lbs. of coal the same quantity of steam that could then be had from a kilogram (2.2 lbs.) of coal in an ordinary steam boiler, and that the electric steam boilers would save all the sludge and water trouble that occurs in the ordinary boiler, and would be fool proof in that anyone could manage them. This was said at one meeting I attended. Only a few weeks ago I received a paper in which there is a report of a lecture by Capt. Ollsen of Sweden, in which this matter was discussed, and in which this principle has already been applied to paper making plants in Sweden. Paper making plants require a tremendous lot of steam because it takes a ton of coal to make a ton of paper, and steam is required up to 700 h.p. Cappin Ollsen, who was dealing with this matter before the Technical Association of Paper Manufacturers in Sweden, said—

The problem of producing steam by electricity presents few difficulties. Electric boilers have very great advantages over the ordinary fired boilers; they occupy little space, are easily mounted in the mills, and, above all, they are independent of chimneys and smoke stacks. The care of the electric boiler is quite simple, as they generally require nothing but an attendant to manipulate the switches and regulate the feeding. In most cases, the construction of the boiler is such that the efficiency of the attendant is of little importance, because the steam is made automatically and with absolute uniformity. Boiling dry and subsequent inconvenience, danger

of explosion, etc., are eliminated. In electric boilers incrustation does not occur, since all the waste matters or sludge drop to the bottom, whence they can be easily removed by the blow-down process.

That is something which is coming. As a matter of fact, knowing what I do about it, I have already sent Home to see if I can get a 10-horse power boiler on these lines for myself. I have also made inquiries to see whether these boilers can be used for hot water services. I have instanced the Perth Public Hospital, which spends a tremendous lot of money every month for hot water, and I want to see if this system can be applied to that institution. When I get these particulars I will convey them to the hospital committee so that they may be considered. If we are going in for this sort of thing it is obvious that we must have electric current in bulk and at cheap rates. I think there is no doubt that in our electricity scheme we have been sold a pup, just as we have been sold other pups in connection with our State enterprises such as steamers, trams and other things. The electricity scheme in operation here is what is known as a 40-cycle scheme, 20,000 volts. We were told by the engineers that the reason why this 40-cycle scheme was installed was that it was the most suitable scheme for light and power combined. It is a curious thing that in America, which is the home of electricity, where they are using millions of units, they have the 60-cycle scheme. If we had the 60-cycle scheme, which is the recognised standard for alternating current, we would be able to go to America and buy motors and accessories and everything we want at a cheap rate. The parts are all turned out from standardised patterns and are therefore made cheap to the consumer. Take the small motor which people use in America and Canada in their houses, the half and quarter horse motor. If one buys a quarter horse motor in America one can do so for 23 dollars, namely, £5. If one wants a 40-cycle motor instead of a 60-cycle, one has to pay 123 dollars, because it has to be specially constructed. I imported some household articles in the shape of washing machines and received 60-cycle motors. I had to send them back, and get 40-cycle motors at a cost of £31 10s. We have made a mistake in the periodicity of the scheme and we will have this millstone around our necks for all time.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Does that apply to bigger engines in the same way as it does to small ones?

Hon. R. J. Lynn: We have to re-wind all motors.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: And that makes them very expensive. One can buy a little motor in America that a woman can attach to a sewing machine, for 16s. If one has to purchase a 40-cycle motor instead of a 60-cycle, one has to pay £4 16s. We have got out of the standard. It was said that a great favour was conferred upon us

by being allowed to have this plant. In my opinion a great favour has been conferred upon some other place or customer for that particular plant so that some other country or customer should have the 110,000 volt installation on the standard periodicity instead of this bastard periodicity. I am sorry we have so many of these millstones around our necks. The Labour Government were in power at the time and thought they could run everything, and so plunged into everything. There were no officers in the service capable of advising the Government upon these schemes. Civil servants are not commercial or industrial people. They are trained to carry on the usual functions of government, that is the administration of law and order. They know nothing about industrial matters or electricity schemes, or the running of steamships.

Hon. T. Moore: Last year they even opposed law and order by going on strike.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The Government when they embark upon these technical schemes should get skilled advice.

Hon. J. Ewing: They had Merz and McLellan.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: We have steamers which are admittedly unsuitable for the work they are called upon to do. We have an electric lighting plant and various other things about which we are in trouble, and so it is we have these millstones around our necks. A sum of nearly £40,000 was spent on the foundations of the power house. We were told by the engineers that this expenditure was necessary on the ground that the Swan River was a tidal river. There should have been some officer here, before the Government embarked upon the scheme, who would have seen this mistake and drawn attention to it and so saved that expenditure.

Hon. J. Ewing: Who is responsible for that?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not know.

Hon. J. Ewing: What engineer?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The Government had not that expert advice they should have had when they were embarking upon this scheme.

Hon. J. Ewing: Had they not Merz and McLellan?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: When it was proposed in 1902 to generate current from Collie the engineer reported that it was not safe to bring it up at more than 3,000 volts.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: He was a telephone attendant.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: This is the advice the Government had, and this is how we are placed to-day. If we want to buy our requisites cheaply we cannot get them, but have to pay dearly for what we want owing to this scheme that has been thrust upon us. The Minister told us that the arrangement with the City Council, by which they received current at .75d. per unit, was made because the trams were taken from the city, and this was a sort of quid pro quo.

The Minister for Education: I did not say anything of the sort.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I think he said it was to recompense the council that we should give them current at a cheap rate.

The Minister for Education: That was not so.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The reason was that the Government wanted the lighting of the city. The City Council at present are getting that current at .75d., which is less than it costs the Government to generate it. The power house is, therefore, losing money. The people who are buying the current are being profiteered upon by the City Council who supply the current, because they pay 6d. for lighting, whereas the council only pay ¼d. to the Government for that current.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It is the ratepayers who are being exploited.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: That is what I say.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Then the remedy is in their own hands.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not think it is, but perhaps some attempt might be made to alter the position. The Government are producing the current at a loss, and the people are being exploited on one hand through the cost of their lighting, and on the other hand through taxation to make up the loss on the power station. The sooner that position is rectified the better. There should be one concern supplying the current for the whole of the metropolitan area.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is one point into which an inquiry could be made.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: There are many ways in which savings could be made. There are at present two sets of overhead charges and two sets of officers where one set of officers would be sufficient. If lighting could be supplied—and it can well be supplied—at the Government power station for 2d. or 3d. for lighting and 1d. for power, the station would make a large profit, and out of that profit we might well be able to take over and provide a sinking fund for the £400,000 or £500,000 sunk in the scrapped plant in the hands of the Perth City Council. It is said that the reason the ratepayers are being exploited regarding the price they pay for current, is that the loss must be made up in connection with the bad deal made with the gas company.

Hon. J. Ewing: Will you not support an inquiry into that aspect as well?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I would support an inquiry into that aspect. Mr. Ewing in moving this motion made particular reference to the Collie River as a source for the supply of electric current. Unless my knowledge of the rivers of this State is much more limited than I imagine, this proposition can be put aside altogether. Our present plant at East Perth has a capacity of 1,200 kilowatts. It must be obvious that in time we shall require more power, and I am certain that the Collie River cannot for a moment supply that additional power. From the Niagara Falls, 20

million tons of water fall every hour. It is calculated that this volume of water with a head of 135 feet, will generate five million horse-power. On this basis, the Collic River would have to be capable of giving 215,040 tons or 2,150,040 gallons per hour with a head of 135 feet every hour of the day and night to meet the capacity of the present plant. Unless large sums of money are spent in constructing dams to store the water to give that flow, the Collic River, as a source for the generation of electric power judged by Niagara, must be counted out. In these circumstances, we must stick to the coal supply, using Green's economisers, mechanical stokers and so on, to make the generation cheaper.

Hon. J. Ewing: You should agree to an inquiry regarding the Collic scheme.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: For the reasons I have given, I do not think the time is opportune for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into this matter. I want to support Mr. Ewing in every way possible, and to assist in developing the supplies of electric current in Western Australia, because I think such a development will be most beneficial to us and helpful to our industries. In view of what I have said, and in view of the fact that we have 73 million units to sell and only sell 23 millions, it is advisable to wait a little while before we consider any further development, particularly in view of electrical progress taking place in other parts of the world to-day.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [9.26]: I have listened very attentively to the speech delivered by Mr. Ewing in his attempt to justify the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the operations of the power station at East Perth. The hon. member's motives are very laudable. He seeks to secure a cheaper current to assist the various industries. The establishment of the East Perth power station was materially affected by the war, and likewise the extension of the tramway system. The station was affected considerably in the amount of current consumed both in connection with secondary industries and in connection with the trams. Mr. Ewing, in his rather hypercritical reference to the East Perth power station, dealt with many phrases but one of the chief points, to my mind, was the price of coal. Obviously so long as coal is at a high price, so long will the current be high priced. If I thought that the motion before the House was likely to be carried, I would be inclined to move an amendment to the effect that the Committee should also investigate and report upon the advisability of the Government acquiring a coal mine.

Hon. J. Ewing: That would mean greater cost for coal.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The chief trouble is the price of coal, and if we take as our guide what has happened in the Eastern States, we will find that where the Governments there have supplied current, it has been

found essential to have a State coal mine in order to keep up supplies and secure cheap current. We are confronted with the hard fact, however, that our plant has been erected at East Perth. Had that plant not been erected, there would be some justification for Mr. Ewing's motion and for an inquiry into the probable source of supply of power from Collic. We have to view the position as it is. We have already a station erected that is quite capable of catering for the requirements of the industrial community for many years to come. One of the chief points we have to consider when deciding whether a Royal Commission would be justified is that the power station is already capable of catering for the requirements for years ahead, and that the authorities are about to instal a 7,500 kilowatt plant in addition to that already established.

Hon. J. Ewing: What will it cost? It will cost £108,000.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: That is so. We have to bear this in mind, too, that the Government have a monopoly of the generation of current and in the handling of it over a radius of 10 or 15 miles from the G.P.O. There is the Fremantle monopoly as well. In view of the existing monopolies and the existence of the present plant, the question arises as to whether the Government, having entered into an agreement covering a period of 50 years, would be prepared to grant a concession to any private company. Even if they were and it were found after inquiry to be desirable to erect a plant at Collic, the advantage in favour of Collic would have to be weighed against the possibility of the Government granting the concession, even if warranted. Mr. Ewing has stated that he wants this question gone into thoroughly by experts and not dealt with in any half-hearted manner. If we are to get the best expert advice, considerable expense will be involved and the question arises whether it will be warranted. Regarding the generation of current at Collic, the cost of coal at the pit's mouth has been quoted at 12s. 6d. per ton. The freight to Perth is given at 11s. 8d. and if we were to generate electricity at Collic on the basis of 12s. 6d. per ton for coal, the money that would be saved would really be the 11s. 8d. per ton, being the amount it costs to rail coal to the East Perth power station.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is not so.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The East Perth power station consumes 38,861 tons of coal, which at 11s. 8d. per ton means an expenditure of £22,610 per annum that would be saved in freight on the coal if the current were generated at Collic. Against that has to be put the capital outlay involved in the purchase of cables, the installing of step-up and step-down transformer stations and the transmission line, which is an important factor. In addition to that, we would have to allow for a percentage loss in current. In view of the reference made by Mr. Ewing in his introductory speech to the Morwell Scheme, I looked up particulars regarding

it. I found that the transmission line cost £323,102 and the terminal stations £226,755 or a total of £549,857. The transmission line covered 82 miles. It has been suggested that we might establish works at Collie, which is 43 miles further distant than is the Morwell scheme. The latter scheme according to the last report indicates that the losses in transit amounted to 12.35 per cent., and when we add an additional 6 per cent. for losses at the distributing stations, the total percentage loss rises to 18.35. On that basis it will be noted that the saving on freight would not be sufficient to pay interest on the money involved in the erection of the necessary line to transmit current from Collie to Perth. For these reasons the hon. member, in my opinion, has not justified the expenditure which would be involved, and a considerable amount would be necessary to inquire by Royal Commission into the working of the Perth Station with a view to generating current elsewhere. Because of these facts and the reasons put forward by Mr. Lovekin, I do not feel disposed to support the motion.

Hon. J. W. EWING (South-West, in reply) [9.31]: I am somewhat disappointed at the reception given to this simple motion. I have no real fault to find with the generosity of the speakers as to the manner in which the motion was brought forward and the value to the State of discussing such a motion, but by the Leader of the House and almost every member who has spoken, I have been informed that the time is inopportune, and that if I lived for another 20 years it was highly improbable that I would see attained the end I have in view. It seems to me a simple thing that I am asking the Government to take in hand, but from the speeches I have listened to, which have been able and interesting, I am inclined to think that members have over-stated the case as regards the expenditure. The small expenditure I ask the Government to incur is fully justified by the facts which have been placed before the House. Members are quite willing at any time, and on almost any pretext, to grant the Government the right to expend money to inquire into matters which will be of advantage to the industrial life of the State or of advantage to Western Australia. In connection with this matter, which has been admitted by every speaker from the Minister downwards to be of the greatest importance to the State, I am inclined to think that, when the division is taken, I shall find myself in a hopeless minority. If I thought members were favourable to having the fullest inquiry made, I would not delay the House at this stage, but I intend to try even at the last moment, to change the minds of some members, and give them an opportunity to be a little more generous towards my motion and to consider the matter further before casting their votes. Mr. Harris has stated that at the Perth station the Government have a long way to go before

they overtake the demand, but he also admitted that to carry on for the next four, five or seven years, a further capital expenditure of £180,000 would have to be made on the Perth station. Now I ask members to think of this. A further expenditure of nearly £200,000 will be required, and the money, I believe, is provided for, in order to supply current to Perth and districts within a five-mile radius of the city. If this is not sufficient reason for inquiring into the matter, I do not know what is. Fancy the expenditure of £200,000 at a time like this, when members know perfectly well and have acknowledged that the time is at hand when the greater scheme must be considered! The Minister has been most sympathetic regarding the motion except that he says the time is not opportune. There we have procrastination again, putting off from day to day what it is necessary to do to-day.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I understand they are confining this to their commitments which are for economies.

Hon. J. EWING: But nearly £200,000 is to be spent on the station in the near future to meet the ever-increasing demand for electricity. Mr. Harris also stated that if he had any idea that the motion would be carried, he would move for the addition of a clause to get inquiry made into the coal supplies and ascertain whether it would not be in the best interests of the Government to get coal mines to supply the coal. I do not think that this proposal will appeal to members of this House.

Hon. T. Moore: To some of them.

Hon. J. EWING: But members must abide by the decision of the majority. I am satisfied that under such a proposal the coal would cost the Government half as much again as it is costing them at present.

Hon. T. Moore: Oh, no.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Harris has calculated that it would cost less to bring the coal to Perth than to pay interest and sinking fund on a big scheme. In his calculation he did not take into consideration the waste coal amounting to 10 to 15 per cent. which could be utilised in a scheme at Collie. All members are indebted to Mr. Lovekin for his remarks on this motion.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You have not indicated that you would sell the waste coal at a cheaper rate.

Hon. J. EWING: The price is absolutely ruled by the rate of wages. I say unhesitatingly that the Government have adopted a wrong policy with regard to the railways and the coal supply for electrical works, as a result of which they are actually charging the tramways 1.24d. per unit for power, the highest rate I suppose in any part of the world. When the Government seriously consider the position they will no doubt find it advisable to reduce the freight to a minimum. Mr. Lovekin has pointed out that in Canada electricity is supplied in bulk at ½d. per unit. This is exactly what I am driving at. If this big scheme were inquired into at an early date,

the Government would see the necessity for taking it in hand in order to make available bulk supplies at less than $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per unit.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Not in Perth for 50 years.

Hon. J. EWING: I think it might be done. One would think that I was asking the Government to expend £200,000 or £300,000. I say without fear of contradiction that this inquiry would not cost £1,500. Later on I will justify this remark. Mr. Lovekin stated distinctly that he is not prepared to vote for this motion because it is premature, and that I shall be a very old man before I see the scheme carried to fruition. In other parts of the world, he stated, electricity is being generated from coal and by hydro-electric power at a very low rate. I wish to reply to what he said regarding the 40-cycle periodicity of the Perth plant. It is well known to people in Perth and to engineers that what was done in connection with the equipping of the Perth station was absolutely against the best interests of Western Australia. The hon. member has inferred that some party purchased this plant and simply palmed it off on to us in order that they themselves might get a 60-cycle plant. If this sort of thing has gone on in connection with the present power house, should not it be inquired into? Surely we should inquire how these things came to be done, and how Western Australia was taken in. We want a plant of 60-cycle periodicity, and we want to know who was responsible for the instalment of the 40-cycle plant.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is on the file.

Hon. J. EWING: Then let us have the inquiry and ascertain the reason for an inferior plant being palmed off on to Western Australia and let those who were responsible suffer for it. The hon. member spoke of hydro-electric schemes, and pointed out that in his opinion it was not feasible to generate electricity on the Collie River. I do not know that his opinion is one on which we can altogether rely. The hon. member said that Niagara, a great source of hydro-electric supply, falls an enormous distance and that the power is there, and he stated that in the Collie and the flat country of Western Australia such conditions did not prevail. I do not profess to be able to say whether he is right or wrong, but this is an important reason for holding an inquiry. I believe that members will yet change their minds before the division is taken. Lots of people, including engineers in this State, especially in the South-West, are writing and talking of the wonderful supply of water in the Collie River, and they have figured out that there is sufficient water every day of the year to generate electricity for the whole of Western Australia.

Hon. A. Lovekin: How many million gallons?

Hon. J. EWING: I do not know. I am inclined to agree with the hon. member that it is not possible to generate by a hydro-

electric system sufficient electricity for the whole State, but the question is worth inquiring into. Not only would the inquiry cover electricity, but it would show the availability of water to irrigate all the beautiful land in and around that district. It is a well-known fact that the Collie River can easily be dammed to give seven times the volume of water impounded in the Mundaring scheme, and surely it would be worth demonstrating that, if the generation of electricity for supplying Perth and Bunbury is impracticable, a wonderful work could be done with irrigation. That land will smile again if water is made available at the right time of the year. I have asked members to support this motion. Surely when we are trying to populate our lands, we should inquire into this important question to ascertain whether we can not only generate electricity there, but make available sufficient water for irrigation to supply a prosperous and flourishing community. I do not know that I need say anything further regarding Mr. Lovekin's remarks. I have to thank him for placing so much information before the House. Although he does not at present seem disposed to support my motion, I feel satisfied that when he realises how important the matter is and how little expenditure will be involved he will, like a good many people, gain a good deal by changing his opinion at the last moment. A lot of valuable information was given by Mr. Stewart, but he, like other members, thinks the motion is premature. He said I was a few years ahead of the time; that I wanted to do to-day what could be done in seven or eight years' time. There is no time like the present. I am sure hon. members must recognise that any matter of such importance as this deserves their consideration and that of the Government. Last year, when I moved a motion on this subject, it was not considered to any great extent; at the last moment the Minister asked me to withdraw it. This year, I am pleased to say, a great deal more interest has been taken in the matter. The Minister himself has dealt very fully with this great question. Mr. Stewart emphasised the hydro-electric phase of the question, and said that if an inquiry was held it would be necessary to have a hydro-electric engineer. That was my proposal. Before I conclude, I shall be able to show the Government how they can secure the services of a first-class hydro-electric engineer who is in Australia at the present time. Mr. Stewart went on to deal with many matters which are most interesting to me. He mentioned that in Italy, in the Val d'Arno, Tuscany, 4,300 B.T.U. were being generated from coal in its natural state, and 5,400 B.T.U. from coal in a dried state. As against those figures, Collie coal in a natural state yields 10,500 B.T.U., and 13,309 B.T.U. in the dried state. From these figures it is apparent what a superior article we have in our Collie coal. Not only are the Italians generating elec-

fricuity there, but they are applying that electricity to iron and steel works. If that is being done in Italy, it can be done here. We speak of our manganese deposits, and our iron deposits at Yampi Sound. Surely it is within the range of practical politics to bring those deposits together with coal, and produce at, say Bunbury, or some other suitable place, the steel that is required in Western Australia. I repeat, if those things can be done in Italy, they can be done in Western Australia; and the steel question is intended to form part of the inquiry for which I ask the Leader of the House to ask the Government to supply the necessary funds. Mr. Stewart is a practical man, of course, and he has said distinctly that the motion requires the greatest attention that can be given to it, and that perhaps in a few years' time we might be able to get an inquiry of this kind. Just like the others, the hon. member suggests putting off the inquiry for a year or two. I am going to ask hon. members to vote in favour of an immediate inquiry. The Minister, in speaking to the question, said the inquiry would serve no useful purpose, and therefore he asked members to vote against the motion. The Minister is the most generous of men, and in view of his observations of a few years ago on this particular question I feel sure that, although he has asked members not to vote for my motion, he will not be very sorry if it is carried. I feel that to be the case because the Minister was a very severe critic in 1915 of the policy with which Merz & McLellan were associated. I am not able to put up such a case as he puts up, but I acknowledge that in opposing me he has done it in the most generous manner possible. He is in a difficult position, having to justify his Government in the action they are taking on this question. I want hon. members to bear in mind that there are two agreements in existence. I want to get at the bottom of those agreements and see how we can rectify the position. The prices at which electricity is being sold by the Government to the Perth City Council and the Fremantle Municipal Council represent a most serious loss, and this loss must go on as long as fuel supplies continue to cost what they are now costing. I feel bound to say the coal owners are making no undue profits. Unless the Government can reduce the cost of coal by a reduction of railway freights and reduction of wages, the position cannot be improved. Suppose the Government say, "We cannot reduce railway freights," and the miners say, "It is not possible for us to accept lesser wages"; then the price of coal must indefinitely remain as it is to-day. Mr. Harris suggested that the Government should open a State coal mine. I believe we have been trying here all this session to put an end to the State trading concerns. I have said on all occasions that I am utterly opposed to State enterprise. I am willing that my motion should be amended even at this late stage, so as to have an inquiry into the fuel aspect of the question.

Such an inquiry would show the position to be as I have stated.

Hon. T. Moore: Would not a State coal mine improve the position?

Hon. J. EWING: Coal from State-owned mines invariably cost a great deal more than coal from privately-owned mines. Hon. members have got to consider this 50 years' contract. Mr. Lovekin, speaking to-night, said that the Minister in replying to certain remarks had said that the purchase of the trams by the Government made it necessary that some sort of compensation should be given the Perth City Council, and that the electricity agreement having been made, it represented a compensation.

The Minister for Education: That was not the intention, however.

Hon. J. EWING: No. The Minister in effect said that the electricity agreement, having been made, might be regarded as in the nature of compensation. It is no use beating about the bush: things are not as they should be in the Perth electric power house. If we let the power house go on for another two years without inquiry, the position will be serious. Similarly we cannot allow the action of the Perth City Council in charging such an exorbitant price for electric lighting to go on without inquiry. One hon. member said that the price was two or three times too high. But what is the use of that statement being made if hon. members are not given an opportunity of inquiring into the matter? I fail to understand the attitude of hon. members. The Minister has said many things on this subject, and one of the most important was that the demand for current at the present time did not justify any really large scheme. I take that to be the attitude of the Government. Mr. Lovekin said to-night that even if we were supplying 70 million units per annum it would not be necessary to have a big scheme. The Minister himself pointed out that while in 1918 we sold 9¼ million units, in 1921 the sales had risen to 22½ million units, an increase in four years of 13 million units. If that rate of increase in in consumption continues, then in five years' time we shall be supplying in and around the city of Perth 60 million units per annum. The scheme I am advocating does not suggest that electricity should be generated at Geraldton or at Collie, or at any other particular place. The figures I have quoted to-night as obtaining in Italy must appeal to the hon. member in whose district Geraldton is situated, seeing that there is coal in that district. The Italians are making use of their coal and electrifying all sorts of things, and surely there must be some sort of use for our coal. Five years represent a very short period, and it will take us about 12 months to make the inquiry. Time is going on, and this large expenditure is being incurred at the Perth power house. We want to stop that expenditure, and I consider that the Government would be justified in having it stopped until inquiry is made as to whether

the project is wise or unwise. We have no electrical experts in this House; we seem to have few of them in Western Australia. I do not want Mr. Taylor to advise on his own work. There is no use in appealing from Mr. Taylor to Mr. Taylor. We want somebody to see what Mr. Taylor is doing. I have no doubt that Mr. Taylor is a very clever and able man, but we want to make sure that he is not perhaps obsessed with the position as obtaining in Perth, and going to build up here at enormous cost large electrical works which, when the time comes, will prove disadvantageous in respect of the development of industries. It is no use procrastinating and letting things just go on as they are going now. The Minister said that in his opinion it would be necessary for the Royal Commissioners to travel all over Australia practically. The hon. gentleman even hinted that the Commissioners might find it necessary to visit other parts of the world—to see what is being done in Morwell, in Tasmania, New South Wales, and elsewhere. That would be a very considerable itinerary, and such a proposition strikes me as untenable. I would not feel justified in standing up and asking for a Commission with such a scope. I know that is not necessary. We have at the present time in Australia a hydro-electrical engineer who has just returned from the Old Country and America. He is connected with the firm of Sir W. C. Armstrong & Co.

Hon. E. H. Harris: What is his name?

Hon. J. EWING: I do not know his name, but I know that he has just returned from those places and has opened an office in Sydney. I know also that he has obtained contracts in Sydney for hydro-electrical works. He is available to us, and I am informed by a gentleman living in the South-West that he can come here at any time, and this without great cost to the Government. We should require on the Commission also an engineer who has studied the Collie coal question, and we should require a good commercial man. I do not think such a Commission would take more than six months to furnish the Government with a very illuminating report. And what would be the cost? Not £1,500. If the Government are prepared to take the matter up and expend, say, a maximum of a couple of thousand pounds, hon. members will be enabled to know the position. They will be enabled to form an opinion as to whether it is worth while to go on with the Perth electrical works, whether another £200,000 should be expended in that quarter, or whether a hydro-electrical scheme should be established, or whether electricity should be obtained from the abundant supplies of coal at Collie and elsewhere in the State. I do hope that, when the division is taken, hon. members will bear in mind the magnitude of this question. I may not have been able to place the position before them in such a way as to appeal to them, but I have the satisfaction of know-

ing that every member who has spoken on the motion has acknowledged the necessity for the discussion, and has expressed appreciation of the opportunity afforded by the motion. In the end, however, they say that we must wait another seven or 10 years before having the matter dealt with. I desire to draw the attention of hon. members to an important statement made by Sir Edgeworth David. Professor David is one of the leading authorities in the world on geology, electricity, and other scientific matters, and we know what marvellous work he did during the period of the war. He never makes a statement unless he is perfectly satisfied that it is correct. I am going to read what he said before he left Western Australia. I was at Port Augusta when he was on his way through to Melbourne.

Hon. T. Moore: Was that before he made the statement?

Hon. J. EWING: No, afterwards. Naturally I asked him what he thought of the Collie coalfields and he replied, "You do not know what you have in the way of wealth in the Collie coalfields, and the people and the Government of Western Australia are not developing that coalfield in the manner that they should be doing." The professor dealt at some length with the Collie coalfields in the statement he made to the Press, and he referred to the possibility of supplying electric power to Perth and the South-West. I have not once mentioned the very important point of supplying the South-West with current. If this were done as part of the Collie scheme, it would add considerably to the importance of that part of the State. Hon. members know how the possibilities of that part of the State could be developed with the aid of cheap power. The professor in the statement he made to the Press, after dealing with the Collie coalfield and the possibility of generating there electric power for Perth and the South-West, made use of these words—

The coal is low in ash, the percentage being only from about 2 to 8 per cent., but it contains from 16 up to 22 per cent. of water. Before actually inspecting this field I was under the impression that the water contained in the sandstone formed a very serious obstacle to successful exploitation of the field. But I was agreeably surprised to find that the water difficulty was being quite successfully coped with by means of suitable electrically-driven force pumps. The conditions for mining the coal are on the whole very good. While the mines are damp underfoot for the most part, this leads to their being free from dust and so prevents any possibility of a coal-dust explosion, such as that which recently proved so disastrous at Mount Mulligan. They are well ventilated for the most part, the roof and floor are good and the roof, particularly that at the Greta mine, is specially impervious to water. The

seams dip at a convenient angle to work in, being inclined at the rate of about 1 in 10. When just after the armistice I visited the vast brown coal mines of Rhineland, to the west of Cologne, I found the Germans working on brown coal with not less than 50 to 60 per cent. of water in it—

Hon. members will bear that in mind.

—and utilising these mines as centres for generating a vast amount of electrical energy for distribution for power purposes and for lighting over a radius of 50 miles around the field. At one mine alone—the Fortuna, eight miles west of Cologne—I saw there was an output of some 30,000 tons of brown coal daily, and a considerable proportion of this was burned locally in furnaces for generating 120,000 continuous kilowatts of electrical energy. This power was transmitted to the vast arsenal and factories at Essen—

This will appeal to hon. members.

—and adjacent manufacturing areas, from 50 to 60 miles distant. It seems to me that the day is probably not far distant when the Collic coalfield will be a vast centre for generating electrical energy—

This supports my case wonderfully, and the words are almost identically those I used when submitting the motion.

—which will be transmitted thence to Perth and other nearer areas in the South-West. A scheme of this kind on a large scale is being developed under the able administration of Sir John Monash at the great Morwell brown coal field, some 80 miles east of Melbourne, for transmission of power to Melbourne. Morwell coal contains double the amount of moisture of Collic coal. If, therefore, the Morwell coal can be successfully utilised for this purpose, much more should Collic coal be suitable for such a purpose.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: Did the professor make any reference to the cost of Collic coal to the State?

Hon. J. EWING: I do not intend to refer to that subject because I would be out of order in doing so. I need only remind the people of the State what they owe to the Collic coalfields. I do not intend to delay the House any longer except to express the hope that the division on this motion will have a favourable result. The position is serious for Western Australia in that we are supplying electricity to Perth and Fremantle under a contract for a period of 50 years at great loss. This will continue unless we can get cheaper coal. I am not blaming either the Perth City Council or the Fremantle Council for being able to get their current at such a low rate. What I do desire is that electricity should be produced at below three-farthings per unit. Hon. members should consider whether the question is worthy of investigation. I say, let us have this inquiry,

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

Ayes	6
Noes	7

Majority against	..	1
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AYES.

Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. G. W. Miles	(Teller.)
Hon. E. Rose	

NOES.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. R. J. Lynn
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 25th October, 1921.

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

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Council's Requested Amendment.

Amendment requested by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

Clause 5.—Add the following proviso:—Provided that, in any assessment made under this clause, a deduction shall be allowed for interest or other expenditure incurred by the person in the production of the income derived from dividends.

The PREMIER: I have no objection to the amendment. It is not the practice now to make such a deduction. Last year we