

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 2nd December, 1931.

Questions:	Wool trade dispute, as to Arbitration	PAGE
Act suspension	...	5573
Railway refreshment rooms	...	5573
Coal industry, Collie, royalties, railway supplies, etc.	...	5573
Loan authorisations	...	5574
Additional sitting day and hour	...	5574
Bills:	Industries Assistance Act Continuance (No. 2), 3R.	5574
	Debt Conversion Agreement (No. 2), 3R.	5574
	Companies Act Amendment, 3R.	5574
	Secession Referendum, 2R.	5574
	Licensing Act Amendment (No. 6), 2R., etc.	5591
	University Buildings Act Amendment, all stages	5598
	Insurance Companies Act Amendment, 1R., 2R.	5599
	Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment (No. 2), 1R., 2R.	5599
	Companies Act Amendment, Assembly's Message	5601
	Deeds of Separation Allowances Reduction, 2R., etc.	5601
	Appropriation (No. 2), 2R.	5602
	Land Act Amendment (No. 2), Com., Recom., 3R.	5607
	Electric Lighting Act Amendment, Com.	5608

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

QUESTION—WOOL TRADE, DISPUTE.

As to Arbitration Act Suspension.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Chief Secretary: 1, In view of the present dislocation of trade at Fremantle caused by the refusal of certain employees to obey the Arbitration Court award, is it the intention of the Government, before the House prorogues, to introduce legislation to suspend the operation of the Arbitration Act? 2, Is it the intention of the Government also to introduce legislation similar to that which has been introduced in Queensland, making it a crime to intimidate men who are desirous and willing to continue work?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, No. The required provision already exists under the Criminal Code.

QUESTION—RAILWAY REFRESHMENT ROOMS.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What are the conditions respecting, and what supervision is exercised over, railway refreshment rooms? 2, Is he aware that the travelling public are being exploited at Chidlow's Well refreshment room by having to pay 4d. for a penny pie and 4d. for a wafer sandwich? 3, Will he take such steps as will ensure the travelling public obtaining reasonable value for the money they have to pay?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The conditions will be laid on the Table of the House. 2, No. 3, Answered by No. 2.

QUESTIONS (2)—COAL INDUSTRY, COLLIE.

Royalties, Railway Supplies, etc.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is royalty on the production of coal charged against all Collie coal mines? 2, How long has this charge been levied, and what amounts have been paid by the respective mines in operation at Collie during the past five years? 3, What was the cost of construction to the Government of the sidings for the Co-operative Mine, Westralia Mine, Cardiff Mine, Stockton Mine, Proprietary Mine, and Griffin Mine? 4, What are the distances from Collie of each mine? 5, Under what agreement, if any, was the Stockton line constructed, and what security was lodged with the Government in connection with such cost? Was the siding constructed departmentally or privately? 6, What amount, if any, is paid to the Railway Department for haulage from the respective mines to Collie? 7, How much has been paid to each mine respectively? 8, If any charges are not collected, what is the reason for the differentiation? 9, Does the Railway Department sheet all local coal going long distances, such as to Geraldton, Meekatharra, and Kalgoorlie? If not, what mines receive differentiation, and why? 10, From which mine at Collie are the best results obtained at the power house and other Government undertakings? 11, Did the Government refuse an offer of 500 tons of extra coal from the Griffin mine during the recent alleged shortage of coal supplies, and if so, why? 12, Is it a fact that recent trials of coal from two of the mines supplying the Railway Department could not be completed owing to the dirty nature of the coal? 13, Will the Minister lay on the Table of the House the analytical tests as conducted monthly by the Railway Department, showing moisture, hydro-carbon, ash, etc., of coal from all the Collie mines from November, 1930?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, Since inception of production. Amounts for past five years are shown in a statement which will be laid on the Table of the House. 3, Co-operative, Westralia, Cardiff, Stockton, and Proprietary, nil:

Griffin, £23,231. 4, Co-operative, nil; Westralia, 3 miles; Cardiff, 7 miles; Stockton, 6 miles; Proprietary, 3 miles; Griffin, 3 miles. 5, The usual private siding agreement, all costs being paid by the company who constructed the line. 6, Actual mileage charged on all coal, plus 2s. and 4s. per 4 and 8-wheeled truck respectively, from all sidings except Griffin. Griffin mine, Collie mileage, plus 4s. and 8s. per 4 and 8-wheeled truck respectively. 7, Haulage charged one way only. See answer to No. 6. 8, See answer to No. 6. 9, Yes. 10, Power house, all coals are about equal. Railways, Co-operative and Westralia mines. 11, Yes, because it was not economical to use an additional 500 tons of Griffin coal. 12, No. 13, Provided it is the desire of the House. The compilation would entail considerable expenditure, and the return would be of doubtful value.

Imported versus Local Coal.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What quantity of coal has been imported from the Eastern States for the railways and power house? 2, What is the freight to Fremantle per ton on such coal, and what are the port charges? 3, Would not the use of local coal assist to find employment for local men? 4, What is the freight per ton for coal from Collie to Perth and from Collie to Fremantle? 5, Will the Government reduce the freight upon coal considerably to enable the Collie mines to compete with the imported article?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Since 1st July received and in transit, 22,506 tons. 2, Price, c.i.f., Fremantle, 32s. 6d. and 31s. 9d. per ton. Port charges, 4s. 4d. per ton. 3, Yes. 4, Collie to Perth, 11s. 9d. per ton; Collie to Fremantle, 11s. 10d. per ton. 5, No, it is not a question of competition.

QUESTION—LOAN AUTHORISATIONS.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What was the amount of loan money authorised, but not raised, as at the end of June, 1931? 2, For what purposes were those loans authorised? 3, Has any work been done on the works for which the money was authorised, but not raised?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, £2,809,269. 2, A statement will be laid on the Table of the House. 3, Yes.

ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY AND HOUR.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, ordered: That unless otherwise ordered, the House sit on Friday, the 4th December, at 2.30 p.m.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Industries Assistance Act Continuance (No. 2).
- 2, Debt Conversion Agreement (No. 2). Passed.
- 3, Companies Act Amendment.
Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—SECESSION REFERENDUM.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: The question as to whether or not Western Australia should be permitted to say that she has had enough of Federation, as practised by the Commonwealth Parliament and the Commonwealth Government, has been thoroughly digested, and I am doubtful whether there is an hon. member who has not yet made up his mind on the subject. Consequently, I do not propose to weary members with details of the main reasons for this Bill to authorise the taking of a referendum to ascertain the wishes of the people in regard to the withdrawal of the State from the Commonwealth. In the first place, I regret to hear that the Bill has met with any opposition, and can only conclude that those who are opposed to its enactment are afraid of the views of the people and, regardless of the merits of the question, are prepared to reject the Bill as an expedient to prevent the holding of a plebiscite.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is not a fair statement.

Hon. Sir Charles Nathan: Of course not.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Some opponents of the Bill argue weakly that the expense of the referendum should not be incurred in these times, but as it will cost not more than £5,000, we need not consider seriously that subterfuge to defeat the measure.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Will you guarantee that it will not cost more?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, that is absolutely the limit.

Hon. G. Fraser: I shall not be surprised if it costs more.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Again, others contend that it should not be passed because separation is not legally possible, and a few maintain that the Statute of Westminster is a formidable obstacle. The latter view is hardly worthy of consideration as the Statute of Westminster deals with repugnancy as between the laws of Great Britain and those of the Dominion, and, perhaps, the sovereign rights of the States in their relations with the Commonwealth Parliament. Neither of those questions arises in the agitation for this State's separation from the Commonwealth, because Federation was brought about by an Act of the Imperial Parliament, and to that Parliament we must go for relief. And in going there we shall not be unreasonable in expecting to receive sympathetic and favourable consideration, as this State entered Federation on the advice of the Imperial authorities. Those hon. members who were in this State when Federation was consummated, know that the people were without direction from their leaders until a few months before the taking of the vote, and that it was very late in the day when the people were advised to cast a favourable vote for the union with the Eastern States—the error of which was almost at once perceived, and ever since regretted by a great many of our people. In explanation of the uncertainty which prevailed, it is necessary to explain that the late Lord Forrest had appealed to Her Majesty's Government to make certain amendments in the Constitution Bill which was then in the hands of that Government, but, for reasons which I will disclose later, the request, to which the Home authorities were sympathetic, could not be acceded to. About the same time a great movement for Federation or separation arose on the goldfields, and the views emanating from that part of the State seriously affected, or rather destroyed, the representations made to the Home authorities by the Government at Perth, as the following telegram discloses—

Correspondence as to the inclusion of Western Australia as an Original State and Addresses to the Queen from the Legislature.

Mr. Chamberlain to Acting-Governor Sir A. C. Onslow.

(Western Australia).

(Sent 4.5 p.m., 27th April, 1900.)
Telegram.

Referring to my telegram of 5th April, as you are probably aware, Premiers of Federating Colonies have declared that they have no authority to accept amendments in Bill, and they have not given the delegates any instructions in regard to any suggestion. I cannot in these circumstances press the matter further, and I would now urge your Ministers earnestly to consider whether they should not, in the best interests of the Colony, as well as of Australia, make a resolute effort to bring the Colony into Federation at once.

Western Australia, unless it joins as original State, can only enter later on condition of complete intercolonial free trade. It will thus lose the temporary protection offered by Clause 95, and, looking to present population of Colony, it may also be found difficult to secure such large representation as it would receive as original State, and which will enable Colony to secure adequate protection for all its interests in Federal Parliament.

Your Ministers will also, of course, take into consideration effect of agitation of the Federalist party, especially in goldfields, if Western Australia does not enter as original State.

In these circumstances it appears to me of utmost importance to future of Western Australia that it should join at once, and as your Ministers have done their best to secure modifications desired by Parliament, I would urge them to take early steps for summoning new Parliament and laying position fully before it with a view to the action necessary for ascertaining wishes of people as to entering Federation.

If they agree to this course a clause will be inserted in Bill providing that if people have intimated desire to be included before issue of Her Majesty's Proclamation, Western Australia may join as original State.

The Government at Perth could not ignore the threat in that telegram, and it took the action suggested by Mr. Chamberlain. A few days later, on the 14th May, 1900, that gentleman, when introducing the Commonwealth of Australia Bill to the House of Commons, said—

... Western Australia asked for the right to come in as an original State, on terms slightly different from those provided in the Constitution. The differences arose as to the question of tariffs; and undoubtedly it was admitted by the five federating colonies, that, owing to the peculiar position of Western Australia, she was entitled to some period of interval before she adopted the common tariff of the Commonwealth; and accordingly five years were allowed her for that purpose, subject to the condition that each year one-fifth of any difference that might exist between the tariff of Western Australia and the tariff

of the Commonwealth should be reduced. I confess that it seemed to me that a condition of that kind imposed, and I still think it imposes, on the financial system of Western Australia a very considerable strain. I do not envy the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer who is before-hand tied down by a statutory and Constitutional law to reduce his tariff by one-fifth in every successive year for five years to come. It is perfectly evident that that must interfere to a considerable extent with the production of his annual budget. But, as I have said, having appealed to the Premiers, and having put forward the views of Western Australia, and having received from them the statement that they did not feel justified in assenting to any amendments, we reported the result of our inquiries to Sir John Forrest, the highly-respected Premier of Western Australia; and we ventured—although it was perhaps hardly our business—in the interests, as we believed, of Australia as a whole and even of Western Australia, to press upon him that his Government should now reconsider their position, and that in spite of the arrangements of which they complained they should seek to enter the Federation as an original State. I am very happy to say—as will be seen by the Blue-book which I have laid upon the table—that Sir John Forrest and his Government have assented to our request to take this step. Their Parliament will be shortly called together; and I hope the result will be that the Constitution will be submitted to the people of Western Australia, and that Her Majesty's Government will be able to proclaim the whole of the six colonies of Australia as taking part in this great scheme.

That happened 31 years ago. Forrest was forced into Federation, and to-day's position justifies his apprehensive attitude to and lukewarm advocacy of the union.

Now I come to those worthy people who claim that Western Australia must for ever remain a member of this "one and indivisible Federal Commonwealth." Some of them say that the Imperial Parliament cannot or will not alter the Constitution Act or that it can only be amended by reference to the people of Australia.

Hon. J. Cornell: Mr. Thomas stated the other day that they would not interfere.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He is only one man. Let me show what the Home authorities think about that possibility. When the Bill was under discussion in London, a representative delegation from Australia urged that it should be passed as printed, but Her Majesty's Government thought otherwise and promptly replied *inter alia* in these terms:—

... The Memorandum of the Delegates requests that the whole of the draft Bill as received from the Colonies may be submitted

to Parliament and passed into law. The distinction which was drawn in the discussions of the Federal Convention between the "covering clauses" and the "Constitution" is no longer recognised, and it is contended that the whole Bill, covering clauses and Constitution alike, ought to be passed by the Imperial Parliament without alteration, on the ground that it embodies the Agreement at which the people of the Colonies have arrived.

While there is every desire to give effect, as far as is possible, to the wishes of the people of Australia, it must be pointed out that the enabling Acts under which the referendum was taken formally referred to the "Constitution" only, and the Addresses from the Parliaments pray that the "Constitution" may be submitted to the Imperial Parliament and passed into law.

The distinction between the covering clauses and the Constitution was clearly pointed out by Mr. Barton on several occasions in the course of the debates. Speaking at Adelaide at the sitting of the 14th April, 1897, on Clause 5, with reference to the provision as to the operation of the laws of the Commonwealth on British ships: "This appears to be a concession to Australia, and the best thing to do is to let the Imperial authorities deal with it." In the course of the debates at the Sydney meeting of the Convention in 1890, Mr. Barton again expressed himself more fully to the same effect. "We do not expect," he said, "that the Imperial Legislature will amend the provisions which are in the Constitution itself, although they are an endeavour to extend our autonomy; but these covering clauses are suggestions to the Imperial Legislature, and it would be absurd to expect that, as regards these clauses, the Imperial Legislature will not make such amendments as they please."

It is clear therefore that the covering clauses were not regarded as a part of the Agreement between the Australian Colonies as to the Constitution under which they are prepared to unite, but rather as suggestions as to the terms of the Agreement between the Colonies and the Mother Country.

An examination of the covering clauses shows that they deal with matters in which Australia, being a part only of Her Majesty's dominions, could not properly claim to have a final voice. They affect in important respects the prerogative of the Crown and the powers and privileges of the Imperial Parliament and of the Legislatures of other parts of the Empire. In regard to these matters, the Imperial Parliament and Government are in the position of trustees for the whole of Her Majesty's dominions, and the responsibility attaching to that trust makes it incumbent on them to examine with the utmost care any proposal which would in any degree affect their power to discharge the trust efficiently. They cannot relieve themselves of responsibility to those for whom they are trustees by divesting themselves of their powers by delegation. In putting the provisions of the draft Bill which affect these powers in the form of suggestions, and not as an integral and essential part of the Federal Constitution,

the statesmen who framed that instrument and the Parliaments and peoples who have endorsed it have fully recognised this principle.

The alterations suggested, as shown in the copy of the draft Bill handed to the delegates, were limited to those which appeared essential for the safeguarding of the powers intrusted to the Imperial Parliament and Government for the protection of those common interests and the discharge of those common duties which form the peculiar sphere of the central authority of the Empire.

This disposes of that aspect of the matter. Coming to the present day, the situation is peculiar in that few voices tell us that Federation has been a blessing to the State. Speaking before the Disabilities Commission, Mr. Keenan said that the birth of the Commonwealth was due to forces purely political, and it had lived a political life ever since. It is a unique position in that even the opponents of this measure, generally speaking, admit that Western Australia has suffered grievously because of Federation, but they believe that our difficulties can be adjusted in Australia by a Federal Convention, or the recognition by the other States that the circumstances warrant special treatment and by an amendment of the Constitution to permit of that course. In my opinion none of those things is possible of achievement, and furthermore, in view of the political situation in Australia, I believe that no action to rectify our wrongs is available to us in Australia.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have you Sir William Lathlain's opinion about Western Australia being in the fo'castle?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: For a great number of years this State agitated for relief and eventually, in 1924, the Commonwealth Government appointed a Royal Commission to investigate our circumstances. The Commission recommended—

That the State of Western Australia shall, during a period of 25 years and thereafter until the Parliament otherwise provides, have the absolute right—

- (a) to impose its own Customs tariff as in pre-Federation days, provided the State of Western Australia shall not impose higher duties upon the importation into the State of Western Australia of any goods produced or manufactured in or imported from other States of Australia than are imposed on the importation into the State of Western Australia of the like goods produced or manufactured in or imported from other countries;
- (b) to impose its own Excise tariff.

The amount of money to be contributed by the State of Western Australia to the Federal expenditure of the Commonwealth in excess of Federal income tax, land tax, and the probate duties, etc., to be determined by negotiation between the Commonwealth Government and the Government of the State of Western Australia; or, in case of disagreement, by an arbitrator who shall be a citizen of the British Empire.

That until the State of Western Australia is granted the right to impose its own Customs and Excise tariffs, the Commonwealth shall pay to the State a special payment of £450,000 per annum in addition to the 25s. per capita payment made in accordance with Clause 4 of the Surplus Revenue Act of 1910, the aforesaid special payment to include the special annual payment now being made to the State of Western Australia in accordance with Clause 5 of the said Act. The above special payment of £450,000 to commence on the 1st of July, 1924.

There were many other recommendations of equal importance to the State but all were flouted by the Commonwealth except that which is known as the Disabilities Grant. The Commission recommended a grant of £450,000 each year but that amount was paid for one year only, and then the recommendation was violated to the extent that the amount was reduced to £300,000 a year. Even now there is no certainty that it will be continued. As a matter of fact, knowing the people we had to deal with, we were never so foolish as to believe that they were genuinely interested in our troubles or thought for a moment they would be honest enough to honour the recommendations of their own commission. Nor can we be heard in the Commonwealth Parliament.

Hon. J. Cornell: Cannot be heard!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We have only five representatives out of 75 members in the House of Representatives and equal representation in the Senate, so nothing can be done in that cesspit of political corruption, swinging as it always does to the interests of high protection, or to those of the bounty-mongers, or to the continuance of the sugar agreement which is costing Western Australia approximately £400,000 per annum.

Reporting on the Commonwealth Customs Tariff, the Disabilities Commission said—

Your Commission is of opinion that if the State of Western Australia had not joined the Federation, that State might have imposed Customs duties partly protective and partly revenue producing, and derived advantage therefrom; that having joined the Fed-

cration, whatever benefit the Commonwealth protectionist policy may have conferred upon other States of the Commonwealth, it has not benefited the State of Western Australia; that the primary producers of the State of Western Australia have to pay more for their agricultural machinery, etc., than the primary producers of the Eastern States; that the primary producers of the State of Western Australia have not the benefit of home markets like Sydney with its 1,008,500 population, or Melbourne with its 885,700 population—home markets of such value that three-fourths of the primary products of New South Wales and Victoria, other than wheat or wool, are consumed within those States; that the primary producers of the State of Western Australia have to sell their products in the markets of the world; that it is impossible to give the primary producers of Western Australia relief by way of reduced Customs duties without injuring the secondary industries of the Eastern States; and that the only effective means of removing the chief disability of the State is to restore to the State, for a period of years, the absolute control of its own Customs and Excise.

All might have been well under Federation had the statutory authority been content to administer the few affairs set forth in the Constitution Act, but it has always been restless for meddlesome action in defiance of the rights of the States, and what better instance of that can I cite than the non-fulfilment of the agreement made in 1909 with the Premiers in regard to the distribution of surplus revenue.

The competition of the Commonwealth Savings Bank with the State Savings Bank was another glaring example of the infringement of State rights.

Hon. J. Cornell: It was quite constitutional.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In addition, the State suffered huge losses in consequence of the acquisition of gold by the Commonwealth during the war years; also has not industry been handicapped by the Federal Arbitration Court, the Navigation Act, and the heavy direct and indirect Federal taxation? The Commonwealth have encroached on matters of Government reserved for the States, and as a result the Federal expenditure in 1928-29, exclusive of the war costs, was £32,000,000. It is interesting to compare that amount with the anticipated expenditure when Federation was entered into. Quick and Garran gave it on page 827 of their Annotated Constitution, in the following words:—"It appears that the amount required for Federal expenditure would not exceed £1,500,000."

Bulletin No. 124 of the Quarterly Summary of Australian Statistics, page 43, reveals that the actual Federal expenditure during the year ended 30th June, 1931, totalled £69,212,000, made up as follows:—

Total expenditure as per schedule	£80,324,000
Less amount paid to States	£11,112,000
Net expenditure	<u>£69,212,000</u>

Such expenditure has beggared Australia. The basic principle of sound Government is equitable Parliamentary representation of all portions of the country, and we recognised that locally by liberal representation of the North, and by placing a higher value on the country and goldfields vote against that of the city vote. Some such equalising feature is needed in the Federal sphere, because at present the inequality of representation debars the voice of Western Australia in the framing of tariffs or the imposition of taxation. Neither have we any effective say in the setting up of Commonwealth Departments which so often lead to duplication, overlapping and waste. Locally, those features of bad Government had been exploited to the full by the Commonwealth Government.

We have tried to establish industries in this State; successive Governments for years past have helped to establish secondary industries, but those industries have been overwhelmed by the dumping of goods from the Eastern States. Taking the population of the Commonwealth at about 6,500,000, and dividing it into the total revenue received by the Commonwealth, the cost is about £10/14/10 per head of the population. That is roughly the cost of Federation to the more populous States such as Victoria and New South Wales. When we add the disadvantages on account of the extra price of goods made in the Eastern States because of the tariff, and the disadvantages imposed upon us, the cost of Federation to Western Australia is about £13/2/10 per head of the population.

Federal expenditure in Western Australia, except such as we get by way of grants, plays no real part in the development of the State. To develop is an obligation of the State and we cannot do it and shoulder the burden of the tariff and all the other local disadvantages of Federation. If we separate development work from production, we must realise that we have a great deal to

do in the shape of development, whereas Victoria and New South Wales have probably completed their development work, at any rate to a large extent. Their work of development was carried out under much cheaper conditions. I could refer to many other matters to show the unhappiness of the State in Federation, but do not propose to do so, as hon. members already possess a full knowledge of Federal administrative acts in this State which have been resented, and it is therefore unnecessary in that regard to occupy the time of the House.

We got our Constitution from the Imperial Parliament; and if it could be shown by the people of Western Australia that it is a disadvantage to remain federated, and that we can no longer bear the burden of the cost of government under Federation, surely the Imperial Parliament will relieve us in our distress. There is a distinct wish on the part of our people to be given the opportunity to declare their votes whether they favour continuing the Federation or not, and this Bill merely proposes to afford them the opportunity of so declaring. It will be wise to pass the Bill, otherwise great bitterness will arise, that can easily be avoided if we give the people the opportunity to say "yes" or "no." I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central) [5.7]: The main object of the Bill is to make provision for a State referendum on the question of secession. For the sake of the good sense of this House, I hope that short shrift will be given to the measure because, not only will it miss its mark, but it will not achieve anything. If it passes it will, in my opinion, make us the laughing stock of the States. It is proposed to hold a referendum to ask the electors whether they are in favour of Federation. Suppose the answer is "no," how much farther do we get, and what results are likely to be obtained? We shall get nowhere, and every member of this House should know that the step proposed by the Bill is absolutely unconstitutional and cannot possibly have a good result. It is not necessary to go into the pros and cons of Federation, as the Chief Secretary has attempted to do. That has nothing whatever to do with the case. If it could be shown that the Bill will have any effectiveness about it, if that could be proved, then it would be worth while for the opponents of the measure, and the supporters of it, to

voice their various views. The secessionists have a far more difficult path to tread than their leader, the Dominion League, has pointed out.

HON. E. H. HARRIS: Which leader do you refer to?

HON. J. M. DREW: The secretary of the Dominion League. To achieve success, the secretary of that league and his satellites would have to go back over the road they travelled 31 years ago. It is only by that means that any result can be secured in the direction they desire. In the first place they must induce the Commonwealth Government to introduce a Bill to authorise the holding of a referendum, and if that Bill be passed by a majority of the States, and a majority of the people of Australia, and receives the Imperial sanction, it should become law, unless there are obstacles which are not perceptible to my view. But a private member cannot introduce a Bill of that character into the Federal Parliament. It would be a money Bill, authorising expenditure, and could only be preceded by a message from the Governor-General. That is the first hurdle that the supporters of the Bill would have to face, and it is a very ugly-looking hurdle to my view. What Federal Government would introduce a Bill for the holding of a referendum for the separation of the Commonwealth? Would any past Government have done so? Would any future Government attempt it? Suppose a Bill were submitted to the Federal Parliament, would it be passed? There are 75 members in the House of Representatives with voting power. Of that number New South Wales has 28 and Victoria 30, nearly two-thirds of the whole of the House. The Dominion League says in effect that if they get a majority at the State referendum, they will petition His Majesty the King, and we should have secession by next post.

HON. J. CORNELL: Like the Tookay-street tailors.

HON. J. M. DREW: And the bond which we deliberately signed 31 years ago, so far as we are concerned, will be so much waste paper, and all through the action of the Dominion League. I ask, could folly go further than that? The King acts only on the advice of his responsible Ministers. If we were to send a petition to the Home authorities, accompanied by the result of a State referendum, it would be returned with an intimation that we should pass our documents on to the Commonwealth Government.

In other words we would be snubbed, and we would deserve to be snubbed. It must be remembered that the whole of the States were brought into Federation finally by an Act of the Imperial authorities, and His Majesty the King—

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Her Majesty the Queen.

Hon. J. M. DREW: Yes, Her Majesty the Queen issued a proclamation in which there was a special reference to Western Australia. It read as follows—

Whereas by an Act of Parliament passed in the 63rd and 64th year of our reign entitled an Act to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia it is enacted that it shall be lawful for the Queen with the advice of the Privy Council to declare by proclamation that on and after the days therein appointed not later than one year after the passing of this Act the people of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania (and also if Her Majesty is satisfied that the people of Western Australia have agreed thereto) of Western Australia shall be united in the Federal Commonwealth under the name of the Commonwealth of Australia and whereas we are satisfied that the people of Western Australia have agreed thereto accordingly we therefore by and with the advice of our Privy Council have thought fit to issue this our royal proclamation and we do hereby declare that on and after the 1st day of January, 1901, the people of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia shall be united in a Federal Commonwealth under the name of the Commonwealth of Australia.

In such circumstances how can we expect from the Home authorities much sympathy with our request? And we have it from the Chief Secretary that Mr. Chamberlain, then representing the British Government, said the Forrest Government should make a resolute stand to bring about Federation; and later the Chief Secretary said Sir John Forrest was forced into Federation. Forced into it by whom?

The Chief Secretary: By the British Government.

Hon. J. M. DREW: By the British Government. And now the main burden of the hon. member's speech is that he relies on the British Government to cancel Federation in so far as Western Australia is concerned. The tone and temper and aims and aspirations of British Governments have not changed to any extent during the last 31 years, and if they have changed it has been in the direction of endeavouring to solidify the Empire.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: We were told that if we did not go in we would lose the goldfields.

Hon. J. M. DREW: There is no doubt Mr. Chamberlain did bring great influence to bear on Sir John Forrest in the direction suggested by the Chief Secretary. And Mr. John Winthrop Hackett, later Sir Winthrop Hackett, who had previously been in strong opposition to our entering the union, turned round and put the whole weight of his force into the movement, influenced no doubt by Mr. Chamberlain. And Mr. Chamberlain looked at the question, not from a parochial standpoint, but from an Empire standpoint, and he could see ahead. And we have in the recent war, with what followed and what Australia did, ample justification for the conclusion at which he arrived.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Did they not do the same thing in South Africa?

Hon. J. M. DREW: Only to a limited extent; not the same thing. Most of the arguments now used against Federation were then used by Sir Edward Wittenoom, Mr. Holmes and me, considerably more than are used at the present time. Here are just a few of the objections raised against Federation in 1900:—

1. That we would be dominated by the voting power of the Eastern States and fail to receive equitable treatment.
2. That loss of control of the tariff would mean that our secondary industries would be strangled in their infancy by the competition with the Eastern States.
3. That while the removal of the interstate duties would deprive our secondary industries of necessary protection, duties on goods from overseas would be heavily increased to finance the Commonwealth.
4. That our infant industries would be further affected by double-barrelled taxation, taxation by the State and by the Commonwealth.
5. That the States were entitled to a return of more than the three-fourths of the Customs revenue we thought we would get under the Bill.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Who is the author of that?

Hon. J. M. DREW: Those are some of the arguments, not all, that were used when the Bill was before the people. Therefore, the position was fully realised at that time. Those arguments have turned out to be true, so the people of Western Australia could not have been fooled. They had both sides of the question placed before them and they

came to a conclusion—whether wisely or unwisely is now irrelevant. Fully a score or more of arguments were employed. What was the result? That 44,700 people of Western Australia voted for Federation, and only 19,691 in opposition. It is often said that the people of the goldfields were almost entirely responsible for this large vote in favour. I believe they were very largely responsible; not only the goldfields, but the metropolitan area and other important centres gave a vote in favour of the Bill. It could not be suggested that we should have treated the goldfields as Oom Paul treated the Uitlanders. Still it is not a fact that the goldfields were entirely responsible for the result. The metropolitan area and some other centres polled very strong votes in favour. Albany, for instance, polled 914 in favour and 67 against; Plantagenet, in the Albany country, polled 359 in favour and 214 against; Fremantle polled 532 in favour and 277 against; North Fremantle polled 1289 in favour and 678 against; East Fremantle 1322 in favour and 804 against; Perth 2386 in favour and 1328 against; East Perth 1128 in favour and 820 against; West Perth 2078 in favour and 1388 against; Gascoyne 53 in favour and 66 against; De Grey 84 in favour and 15 against; Ashburton 32 in favour and 17 against; East Kimberley 57 in favour and 1 against; West Kimberley 97 in favour and 34 against; Roebourne 98 in favour and 18 against. But the case does not rest solely on what we did in 1900. At a later date we confirmed our attachment to the union. In 1928, three years ago, we entered into a financial partnership with the Commonwealth, and that not for to-day or to-morrow or next year, but for 58 years.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And I think you supported it.

Hon. J. M. DREW: Well I did, sincerely, as the only alternative I could then see. That is a partnership which it will be very difficult to dissolve, and if it be dissolved serious complications are likely to arise. That Financial Agreement Bill was carried in this House and I can say that no Parliament in Australia—I read the debates in them all—subjected the measure to such a masterly criticism as was made in this Chamber. It was viewed from every standpoint and every possible defect was discovered and pointed out by a number of members of this House. Despite that, it ran the gauntlet of this Chamber and became

law. But more than that, it was subsequently submitted to a referendum of the people, including the people of Western Australia, and in Western Australia 96,913 voted for it and 71,055 against it. Thus we had a majority of 25,000 votes, the same number as we had previously, to further confirm the union and join in a financial partnership with the Commonwealth. After entering that union with a large majority of the people, 28 years later we entered into another partnership with the Commonwealth for a period of no less than 58 years. Is it not childish to think that a petition to the Home authorities asking them to sever the bond will be received by open arms and elicit a favourable response? I said just now that the proposal in the Bill is childish; it is more than childish, it is cruel. For it will deceive some people not well read in politics who will honestly believe that a majority from a State referendum will mean the death knell of Federation. They have been told that by emissaries of the Dominion League. I have met several of them, and I was very much astonished that they should have come to such a conclusion, many of them intelligent men; it is astounding to me that they could accept such assurances from such a quarter as gospel truth. We are told, and the Chief Secretary has laid emphasis on it, that the referendum is going to cost only £5,000. One would think that £5,000 was something to play with these times. Even if we were flush—and we are anything but that, according to the financial statements that have been presented to the House—it would be madness to expend money on a proposal of this kind which will only bring Western Australia into contempt. It would be a great surprise to me if the Bill passed the Legislative Council and thus became law. I do not propose to discuss the second question to be submitted to the electors, except to say that it is equally out of place with the other. If a convention is needed, and in my opinion it is, we should see to that matter through our representatives in the Federal Parliament. I wish to offer my strongest protest against the contemplated waste of public funds at a period like this when poverty is stalking the land, and when the approaching Christmas season, instead of being a time of joy, is likely to be a time of sadness in many homes.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East)
[5.35]: One might almost gather from Mr.

Drew's remarks that he is advocating a policy of despair. He assured us that even if the referendum gave a majority for secession, we would have no chance of getting out of the Federation.

Hon. G. Fraser: Is that not correct?

Hon. J. Cornell: Which is the better, a policy of despair or a policy of futility?

Hon. A. THOMSON: My view is that the policy of secession is neither one of despair nor one of futility. I would remind members of the fight that was put up by Ireland, when it attained that independence for which it struggled for many years. Many people referred to that as a policy of despair, but Ireland accomplished its objective. I hope, of course, we shall never have to descend to the tactics that were adopted in that country in its endeavour to gain independence.

Hon. J. Cornell: What about the policy of Germany?

Hon. A. THOMSON: An important conference was recently held in England when India sought to obtain a measure of self-government. That was looked upon as a policy of despair by many, but seems now within measurable distance of success. If there is one justification for giving people the opportunity to say whether they favour a continuance of the Federation or not, it is found in the statement of Mr. Drew when he quoted the objections which were raised by those who opposed Federation in 1900. He admitted that the justification for every one of those objections had been proved, and that the opinions which had been advanced by the objectors were well founded. I do not believe it is impossible to obtain justice at the hands of the Imperial Government.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: What do you call justice?

Hon. A. THOMSON: We know what were the opinions of the Bruce-Page Government. We also know that a Royal Commission took exhaustive evidence concerning our disabilities, and after giving the matter grave consideration, recommended that we be given the control of our own Customs for 25 years, or, alternatively, should receive a grant of £450,000.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: For how long?

Hon. A. THOMSON: I think for 25 years. This was recommended because our disabilities were clearly proved to the satisfaction of that Royal Commission. A com-

mittee was also appointed in Western Australia to submit our case to the Royal Commission. At that time the member for Nedlands (Mr. Keenan) said that the tariff could not be dealt with at the inquiry. It was then regarded as a policy of despair to inform the Federal Parliament that this State was suffering from disabilities through the tariff. Notwithstanding this, one of the Royal Commissioners, Mr. Entwistle, stated that this State should never have entered Federation. Mr. Drew remarked that Mr. Chamberlain took the Empire view and claimed that if we did not enter Federation we would lose the goldfields. Mr. Chamberlain knew something. If the southern portion of the State had remained out of Federation, it would have been a good thing for it. At the time the vote concerning Federation was taken, many thousands of people had come to this State from Victoria, having been starved out of that part of Australia. If any State benefited from the opening up of our goldfields, it was Victoria. Thousands of pounds a week were sent to families over there. No one had any objection to this at the time. The vote that was taken was governed, to a great extent, particularly on the goldfields and in the larger towns, by those who had not yet become Western Australians.

Hon. J. Cornell: They were Little Australians.

Hon. A. THOMSON: We have every reason to hope that, if the majority of our people vote for secession, and Parliament puts up a good case with regard to our grievances, justice will be done to us by the Imperial Parliament.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: There is not a hope.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That was said in the case of Ireland. It was also said by those who declared the time was not opportune for India to seek a certain amount of independence. We know the independence that has been given to the South African Union. The Imperial Government sent a commission to Kenya Colony and other places on this question, but those parts of Africa decided not to join up with the Union. We know the conditions that were offered by the Union of South Africa to Rhodesia.

Hon. J. Cornell: No offer was made to Kenya.

Hon. A. THOMSON: An offer was made to Rhodesia, but the Rhodesians declined to

accept it. But we do know that the Imperial Government would have liked to see the union brought about. It can be proved conclusively that Western Australia is suffering from Federation. Mr. Drew said it would be futile even to ask for a convention. When I had the privilege of being a member of another place, there was considerable discussion with regard to that matter. On the 10th August, 1926, the then Premier, Mr. Collier, moved the following motion:—

That this House is of the opinion that there should be no departure from the basis upon which the financial relations of the Commonwealth and States have rested without the fullest consideration at a constitutional session of the Federal Parliament and the approval of the people by referendum, and that no financial scheme should be assented to by the States which does not provide for their receiving from the Commonwealth Government an annual payment of not less than 25s. per head of population.

Mr. Collier was in favour of a constitutional convention. What position will Western Australia be in if we have a constitutional convention? Again we shall be outnumbered. What position will Western Australia be in if we ask for a Federal convention upon which we shall have equal representation? I wish to draw attention to the excellent work done by the Dominion League. It is the minority who have to put up the fight. Members of that league have worked strenuously in a voluntary capacity to place before the Western Australian people the disabilities of Western Australia under Federation, with a view to educating our people to ask for a referendum. I am surprised that members of the Labour Party should be opposed to giving the Western Australian people an opportunity to say yea or nay to the question whether they are in favour of secession.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: First give them all the facts.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The facts have been placed before them.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: When?

Hon. A. THOMSON: The original Bill asked not that this section or that section should put forward its views, but that the Western Australian people should be given the opportunity of declaring whether or not they favour a withdrawal from the Federal bond.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do you believe in wasting money on a futile referendum?

Hon. A. THOMSON: What right has the hon. member to say the referendum will be futile?

Hon. G. Fraser: Every right.

Hon. A. THOMSON: In my opinion, he has no right. I might ask what right had the present Federal Government to cast Australia into the throes of a general election? One might as logically argue that it is futile to appeal to the people on the question now before them. By this Bill we seek to ask the people whether they are in favour of seceding from the Federation.

Hon. J. Cornell: The cost will be about £6,000.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The referendum will not cost £6,000.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: It will cost a great deal more.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Numerous men have offered their services free in connection with it.

Hon. J. Cornell: I will bet they are partisans!

Hon. A. THOMSON: To judge by the interjections, one might say that hon. members interjecting are partisans. They declare themselves big Australians.

Hon. G. Fraser: Suppose a member of our party were opposing you, and suppose we agreed to staff the various polling booths, would you accept the offer?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes, because I would have my own scrutineers there. As Mr. Drew stated, the King acts on the advice of his responsible Ministers. The hon. member seems to assume that on this question of seceding from Federation the only advisers the King would have would be the Federal Government. I contend that the King's advisers on this question would be the Western Australian Government.

Hon. J. Cornell: The King is a sensible man.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The Bill asks that the electors of Western Australia shall be accorded the same privilege now as was accorded them in 1900, when the majority of Western Australian electors decided, wisely or otherwise, to become part and parcel of the Commonwealth. Surely, in asking for the same privilege in 1931, we are not asking for anything unreasonable. I hope the Bill will pass so that the people may have an opportunity of expressing their opinions. If there should be an overwhelming majority in favour of adhering to Federation,

the minority would have to accept the position. If there should be an overwhelming or a considerable majority in favour of seceding, surely the residents of this part of the Commonwealth have a right to say under what laws and conditions they shall live. There is no more loyal citizen of the British Empire than myself. A severance of Western Australia from the British Crown is not being asked for. In early days Western Australia was a Crown Colony under the rule of Downing Street. We began to progress when we became a sovereign State. All that is asked now is that Western Australia shall again become a sovereign State and be permitted to administer its affairs in the way the Western Australian people desire. All we are asking for is home rule for Western Australia. I hope, therefore, that the House will pass the Bill.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [5.55]: I wish to say a few words on this question, because I have been intimately associated with it. At the time of the original referendum on Federation I happened to be Agent General in London, and on the 30th July, 1900, which I think was the day before the taking of the referendum, I was knighted by Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

Hon. V. Hamersley: That did the trick.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I went to Osborne Palace on the 30th July, and I said to the Secretary of the Household, with whom I was luncheoning, "It is unfortunate that this is not occurring to-morrow, because on the 31st July the referendum is to be taken whether or not Western Australia shall join the Federation." Later on the Secretary returned from seeing the Queen and said to me, "Her Majesty is greatly interested about the referendum, and hopes that Western Australia will join the Federation." Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was my Minister all the time I was Agent General, and he was very keen on Federation. Thus I happen to know a good deal about the business. Mr. Chamberlain was most anxious that Western Australia should join the Federation. The movement for Federation was extremely strong on the goldfields; and Mr. Chamberlain gave me to understand that unless Western Australia agreed to Federation, the Colony might be cut off at Southern Cross. Sir John Forrest and Sir Winthrop Hackett were not

prepared to sacrifice that portion of the State. Of course, the only reason why the Eastern Colonies wanted us to join Federation at that time, was that they might be able to secure our goldfields markets. Those were very fine markets, and that was the obvious reason. So Western Australia joined, and I am entirely in accord with those who say that this State has not had the best treatment from the Commonwealth. Now comes the question of secession. I am inclined to ask, with members of the Labour Party, why we should incur the cost of a thing which must be futile. I feel confident it will prove futile, because the British Government would say to us, "You went in with the Eastern States originally, and you wanted to be in with them. If you can tell us that the other States are in accord with your seceding, you can go out." Is it conceivable that Victoria or New South Wales will join with us in making such a request? There is not a hope of it. The whole thing is futile, and therefore I must vote against the Bill. It has been said that the referendum will cost £5,000. A man who is most enthusiastic over the business came and asked me would I vote in favour of it. I said, "I will think it over. What will it cost?" He replied, "To take the referendum will cost £15,000." I said, "We cannot afford it, and even if you got a decision in favour of secession the British Government would never agree to your wishes." I will go a little further now and say that I do not see how Western Australia is going to make secession pay, supposing we could get away from Federation. Where are we going to get revenue from? I was four years in the Forrest Government. We put on what Customs duties we liked. Our idea in those days was to put a duty on everything we could grow in this country, and to let in free everything we could not grow—rice, tea, sugar and like things. We did very well. A lady said to me the other day, "Why cannot you do the same to-day?" I replied, "I will tell you in a few minutes. In the first place we have loans amounting to £71,000,000 upon which we have to pay interest. If we were separated from the rest of Australia, we would be required to pay our share of the war debt. The rest of Australia would ask us to pay our share of the Great Western Railway to our boundary, to pay for the expensive Post Office building, and also for the foolery that is going on in connection with the erection

of the Commonwealth Bank buildings, which are not at all necessary. How could we pay for all that with our population of 460,000, half of whom are children?"

Hon. H. Seddon: And they might ask us to take back our State Savings Bank.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: They might ask us to take back quite a lot of things. Personally, I am very dissatisfied at the way we have been treated by the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: What do you propose to do about it?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: We must do the best we can.

Hon. J. Cornell: Grin and bear it.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Take all the kicks.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: We have put up with it for so long that I do not see how we can make any alteration at this stage. If anyone can convince me that it will be to our advantage to separate from the rest of Australia, then I will vote for the Bill. I do not see how it can be done. We are supposed to be part of a nation. We went into the Federation willingly; we can separate only with the consent of the other States. Assuredly we shall never get that consent. In the circumstances, it seems to be futile to take a referendum that may cost £5,000 or £15,000. If we take the referendum, it will get us nowhere. I am sure the British Government—I know something about them: I have been in London—will remind us that we entered Federation willingly.

Hon. A. Thomson: I thought you said we were forced into it.

Hon. V. Hamersley: And so we were.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I do not know that we were forced into it in a sense, because the majority of the people decided the matter.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I understood you to say that the goldfielders pushed Western Australia into Federation.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I claim we were forced into it owing to so many people on the goldfields having come from the Eastern States where their relatives remained, and they desired to keep up the connection. I know a good deal about this question. In the Forrest Government I was Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, and I know of the hundreds of thousands of pounds that were despatched from Western Australia by miners and others to their families who were residing in other States.

I believe that in those days we maintained Victoria, which was practically in a state of ruin before that, and other States as well. The amount of money that was so transferred was astonishing. It was those men who voted against us, and supported Federation, with the result that we became part of the Australian Commonwealth. In those days there was great activity on the goldfields, and the people there desired to import their requirements from the Eastern States without the payment of duty. If we secure secession now, it will be necessary for Western Australia to impose duty on the £2,000,000 worth of commodities that the Premier says we import from the Eastern States. Thus we will have the same trouble that confronts us now. The State will require revenue, and it will have to be derived from the imposition of duties. Unless I hear more convincing arguments than I have listened to so far, I shall vote against the Bill.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [6.7]: I have listened with keen interest to the debate on a question that has been so prominently before the public of Western Australia during the last few months. There is an aspect of the problem that has not, so far, been stressed when dealing with the proposed referendum. I was interested in the historical accounts given to us by the Minister, Mr. Drew, and finally by Sir Edward Wittenoom, relative to the circumstances that led to Federation. When we consider the authorising of a referendum on the question of secession, we are confronted with the democratic idea that the people should have the right to express their opinions on any important question.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: If it does not cost too much.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is the principle underlying the taking of referenda, and the people of Australia have adopted that principle. The point that has not been stressed regarding the secession referendum is that there appears to have been no provision for the initiative that usually precedes the taking of such a vote. It may be pointed out that the public have indicated their desire for the referendum, but have those who have participated in the agitation, sufficient authority and numerical strength to warrant notice being taken of their claims? One is inclined to question whether the initiative that has arisen from outside sources has the

numerical strength to warrant the House agreeing to the referendum proposal and involving the expense that will be entailed, particularly seeing that such divergent views have been expressed regarding what that cost will be. Other members have spoken regarding the futility or advisability of taking a referendum. Surely we should ask ourselves, before we agree to any such proposal, whether the agitation has been backed by sufficient numerical strength to warrant any such course being adopted.

Hon. A. Thomson: If you go into the country districts, you will find that the people are strongly in favour of the referendum.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Can the hon. member say whether the Government have obtained any information with regard to the number of the people who are asking for a referendum. It seems to me to be largely inspired from certain sources by people who have used their influence in the Press and elsewhere to stir up the agitation.

Hon. A. Thomson: The road boards have been circularised.

Hon. J. Cornell: The agitation has been inflated as well as stirred up.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The road boards may have been circularised from inspired sources, and, as a result of their resolutions, it may be that the boards have appeared to be spontaneously inspired in various parts of the State. No data has been advanced to demonstrate the demand for the referendum, and, in the absence of such information, we should judge the influence behind the movement and the numerical strength of those conducting the agitation for secession. The whole of the circumstances governing our connection with Federation have been traversed thoroughly, and it is apparent that the question turns upon the insertion of the word "indissoluble" in the preamble of the Federal Constitution. In the face of that word, I have not yet heard any argument advanced that, in my opinion, carries weight as a set-off against the indissolubility of the compact.

Hon. A. Thomson: They say the marriage tie is indissoluble, but frequently it is broken.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I do not claim to be an authority on that question, but I, too, have heard of the marriage tie having been broken. I do not see any parallel between that tie and our connection with Federation.

Hon. A. Thomson: It was an unfortunate marriage.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The question we should consider before we take a referendum is whether such a referendum represents the best way by which we can secure the redress of our grievances. We must ask ourselves whether certain grievances that can be attributed to Federation alone, and whether we are not mistaken in ascribing to Federation certain grievances that can be attributed to other causes. Assuming that a sufficient number of people do demand the referendum, and evidence is produced to that effect, I consider those people should be in a position to demonstrate that they know exactly what they are talking about. All I have read for and against Federation has really resolved itself into an argument relative to the merits or demerits of free trade and protection. That question will be just as prominent and as vital if we secure secession as it is now with Western Australia as an integral part of the Commonwealth. Many figures have been quoted for and against—I do not intend to delve into statistics on this important question—but I consider the question is one for argument quite apart from the statistical aspect. At the same time, those figures tend against the proposal to take a referendum. Most of the statistics refer to the effect of the Federal tariff on Western Australia, which is regarded by many people as entirely devoted to primary production. The secessionists seem to base their main financial claims on the assertion that the State will be able to establish and control its own tariff. If that be so, then it appears to me that the only ground upon which the secessionist can base his claim is that we can profitably carry the responsibilities involved in secession. The financing of the State as a separate unit can be accomplished only by the imposition of our own tariff, and when we realise the responsibilities Western Australia will have to shoulder, I am afraid the tariff will press just as heavily, especially on the primary producers, as the tariff of to-day. I have heard nothing to indicate how the proposed tariff of the secessionist can be imposed in such a way as not to place such a severe burden on the primary producers as the existing tariff.

Hon. G. Fraser: The chances are it will be much heavier.

Hon. A. Thomson: The chances are it will be much lighter, and that will mean more employment for the people.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I am afraid the secessionists do not realise what tremendous relief Western Australia has received financially under the Federal regime, on account of so much of the expenditure being shouldered by the people in the Eastern States. In those circumstances, the tariff proposals of the secessionists can be seriously challenged.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Before tea I made a statement that did not exactly convey what I intended. I said the Eastern States had provided much of the money expended in Western Australia which had been of assistance to us. What I meant to convey was that Federal taxation is largely on a population or per capita basis, whereas expenditure on behalf of the Commonwealth must necessarily be more or less on a territorial basis, and therefore Western Australia must benefit on account of its extensive area as compared with the Eastern States. Most of the argument against Federation is merely an argument against protection. Supporters of secession contend that there is practically no chance of persuading the Eastern States people to drop high protection. I am inclined to think that recent developments have caused a considerable swing of opinion in the Eastern States, and that many of the people there do not now make the fetish of high protection that they did a few years ago. They are beginning to look behind protection—

Hon. H. J. Yelland: The report of the Prime Minister's speech in to-day's newspaper does not bear that out.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I said many people in the Eastern States are beginning to look behind protection, realising that many of the evils they are suffering cannot be ascribed to free trade. It is quite evident that if this State is going to meet the financial responsibilities of self-government, it will have to impose a very high tariff.

Hon. A. Thomson: Not nearly as high as the tariff of to-day.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The alternative would be very much higher direct taxation, which would perhaps take many forms that the people would resent. Therefore, it appears that a Government would adopt the more

easily disguised course of imposing a high tariff and obtaining revenue by those means.

Hon. A. Thomson: I doubt whether Federal taxation could be much higher.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: I thought that 20 years ago.

Hon. H. SEDDON: A point is overlooked by those people who contend that self-government would make for the benefit of the primary producer. The primary producer is certainly marketing his products on the world market, and if we are going to compete successfully against other countries producing similar products, we will have to face the possibility of reducing the standard of the primary producers, owing to the handicap of distance from the market. The people who advocate secession appear to have lost sight of that logical outcome of endeavouring to benefit the primary industries under self-government. Arguments have been raised against the competition of the Eastern States, arguments that are sound. The first is dumping. The contention is that the more solidly established secondary industries or manufactories of the Eastern States have a producing and marketing organisation that enables them to underquote us and therefore compete successfully against the comparatively weak industries or manufactories of this State. The answer to that, however, is that any industry starting in Western Australia on sound lines would necessarily be equipped with the latest machinery and would adopt the most modern methods, thus placing the Eastern States at a serious disadvantage in that they would be working with antiquated machinery and under less modern conditions. Further, a personnel inspired with the idea of developing local industry would be an advantage. It appears that a more effective result is to be expected from pursuing the great principle of efficiency in industry rather than attempting to create a prejudice against the Eastern States, as many people, unfortunately, are trying to do to-day. Much more would be gained by developing a loyal spirit toward local factories. If we pursue the proposal for secession, well, distant fields invariably look greenest, but frequently, on being approached, they are found to disguise bog, and we may find ourselves in more serious trouble than that which confronts us to-day. In dealing with the question whether a referendum would justify the expense, I wish to consider it from a standpoint different from that dealt with by other

speakers. The State has very little money to spare and we could find far better ways of spending what we have than by devoting it to taking a referendum which, after all, will be doubtful in its results on Western Australia, whether carried or not. To be of any material effect and to carry much weight either in the Federal sphere or with the Imperial authorities, the referendum would have to be carried by an overwhelming majority. If it were carried by a narrow margin, much of the force of its result would be lost, and opponents of secession would have a powerful argument to advance against separation.

Hon. A. Thomson: To have a referendum is the only way to ascertain the feelings of the people.

Hon. H. SEDDON: When we propose to put to the people the question of secession we are immediately confronted with two forces that are admittedly diametrically opposed to separation. The first force is the Labour Party. The Federal Labour Party have announced that they are entirely in favour of unification. There we have a strong united political body which would naturally be arrayed against any attempt to carry secession. Another powerful force against secession is the organisation known as the Australian Natives' Association. That organisation is undoubtedly in favour of Federation. One of its ideals is nationhood, and its members contend that any attempt to introduce secession would be a departure from that high ideal, a departure that they would not countenance. Their case has been presented to the public, and it is entirely directed against secession.

Hon. C. H. Wittenoom: We are asking you to give the people an opportunity to say "yes" or "no."

Hon. H. SEDDON: With those two forces against secession, what chance would there be of securing anything but a very narrow majority? On the other hand, is not there a chance of the referendum being defeated, and possibly by a large majority? In addition to those two forces, there are the people of the goldfields who have always supported Federation.

Hon. G. Fraser: You are trying to save from themselves those who favour the referendum.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Exactly. Such a decision would place us in a most awkward position. Thirty-one years of Federation have had the effect of moulding the outlook

and attitude of the citizens of this continent, and if they were put to the test, I think it would be found that they were bound to the Commonwealth by sentimental ties. Then again the whole organisation of business has been in the direction of establishing unification of control. I instance the number of business houses with branches in different States, the banking institutions, all of which are now Federal in their ramifications. Let me refer to the statement that the banks have used a tremendous amount of Eastern States money in the development of Western Australia.

Hon. A. Thomson: At a profit to themselves.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Those organisations are not likely to regard with favour any idea of secession. They will consider that they can carry on better by working under the Commonwealth Government, as against having a conflict of interests that would exist under divided counsels.

Hon. A. Thomson: Not if they got some of the Federal legislation outlined in respect to banking.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That would depend upon the party in power. Many ideas have been suggested which might recommend themselves if the banks could be assured that requisite safeguards were provided. I wonder whether secessionists have considered the enormous expenditure that would be entailed in the way of controlling effectively the long frontier line which extends along the border of Western Australia to South Australia and to the Northern Territory. The whole of that country would have to be effectively patrolled. It is a big area to cover: the conditions of living would be hard in the extreme, and the expense involved in patrolling it would be very heavy and would probably upset the calculations made to show that Western Australia would benefit under secession. The taking of a referendum might have a reverse effect to that expected by secessionists. In support of that contention I should like to ask what would be the effect if the referendum were lost. If it were lost, the expenditure on the referendum would have been wasted.

Hon. A. Thomson: It might be more profitably spent on a referendum than on some of the work now being done by the unemployed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Perhaps so, but the effect would be detrimental to any later attempt by Western Australia to obtain relief

from the disabilities under which it is suffering at present, because the obvious conclusion as the result of a defeat of the poll would be that the people of Western Australia were entirely satisfied with the existing position, and any attempt made to ask the Federal authorities to relieve us of the disabilities from which we were suffering would be discounted by the statement that the people of the State were satisfied as shown by the referendum that had been taken. From that standpoint the proposal to take a referendum is far too dangerous. It will bring in its trail serious consequences which will affect the attitude taken up by the secessionists. We have been in the Federation for 31 years, and they have been years of experience. Like any other institution or machine, the 31 years have led to the discovery of defects. That is inevitable. The wisest course would be to remedy those defects which have developed in the machine and try to make the machine work more satisfactorily rather than scrap it and introduce a new one which might be doubtful in its benefits to the community, and which in itself might disclose defects in the course of its operation. The whole position which was laid out as the basis of preparation has been entirely different from what has resulted, and the time is overdue for asking for a convention to discuss our disabilities on friendly lines in the hope of finding a basis on which both State and Federal Governments could act. At the present time there is a considerable amount of overlapping which could be done away with, and the State and Federal Governments each could have their own sphere of operations and their own field of revenue raising. At the present time both fields are more or less entered upon by both parties, and while the Federal Government has the tremendous advantage of the tariff, on the other hand there are social activities which are within the province of the Federal Government, and the great task of developing our industries—this is more peculiarly the function of the State—is being handicapped by the fact that the State is carrying responsibilities which should rightly be taken by the Federal Government. The State Government could be restricted to taxation proposals in a field from which the Commonwealth Government would be debarred. The result would be entirely to the benefit of the people of Australia. It ought to be possible to enter into an amic-

able working arrangement. If there is to be a referendum, why not submit to the people the question of the holding of a convention, and suggest the time limit in which that convention should take place. The people of the Eastern States themselves are feeling the disabilities arising out of Federation, and therefore we could rely on their co-operation to secure a convention. There is and has been quite a considerable feeling on the goldfields that their interests could better be handled if there were local government. And if we are to take a referendum on the subject of demanding remedies for the disabilities from which the people of the State are suffering, and protection against the people of the Eastern States, is it not logical that the people of the goldfields should also be permitted to take a referendum on the right to separate from control by the Perth Government and have some form of local government of their own.

Hon. A. Thomson: Have they asked for it?

Hon. H. SEDDON: We could give them the right to determine that position.

Hon. A. Thomson: I have an amendment drafted which will give them the opportunity to do that.

Hon. H. SEDDON: If there is logic in one argument, there is logic in the other respecting the goldfields people. The proposed poll on the question of secession is of itself far too dangerous because in the event of its being carried by a narrow majority the result will be to discount the effect. I intend to oppose the second reading.

HON. W. H. KITSON (West) [7.52]: Nobody will deny that Western Australia is suffering disabilities as a result of Federation. That has been admitted by every responsible person and organisation. Even the Federal Parliament has from time to time recognised that fact, but in my opinion the proposed referendum is no way out of our difficulties. We are passing through a time of crisis that is world-wide and we in Australia are feeling it particularly severely. I venture the assertion that any question which may be put to the people at the present time which would suggest a change in the existing state of affairs would be welcomed and would be supported overwhelmingly, particularly by people in the country areas who have not at their disposal

all the information which it is possible for the people in the industrial centres to secure. I have even heard it said that the cause of the present depression can be traced to Federation. Only last week I heard a discussion in a country town where the statement was made by one gentleman, who I think knew better, that if we had never entered into Federation, our wheat and wool would be bringing better prices. Of course that was a ridiculous argument, but the gentleman who uttered it apparently thought there was something in it. At the present time we are hearing quite a lot about the goodwill and co-operation of all sections of the community being required if we in Australia are going to pull through the present crisis. There is a lot of truth in that. But what will be the position if a question of this sort is submitted to the people at the present time? It will introduce nothing but bitterness among our people; there will be disruption and discord instead of goodwill and co-operation, which are so necessary. Then with regard to the cost. It has been said that this will amount to £5,000. My opinion is that it will cost a lot more. Is it suggested that a referendum shall be sought without an adequate exposition of the case for and against? How is that to be done? Is it to be done on lines similar to those adopted in connection with Federal referenda, where the case is set out so that everyone who desires to do so may read the case for and against? If so, the referendum will cost a good deal more than £5,000. That sum of money will hardly pay the cost of printing. We can ill-afford the expenditure of that amount of money on a referendum at this stage. The sum could be devoted to many better purposes and the result would be more beneficial to the people of Western Australia. I wish to emphasise that this is nothing less than a futile measure. I have never heard of anything more ridiculous being brought forward. So futile do I consider it that I am going to endeavour to end it by moving—

That the question be not now put.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	..	12
<hr/>					
A tie	..	..	..	..	0
<hr/>					

AYES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Corned	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. W. H. Kitson	(Teller.)
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. G. A. Kempton
Hon. J. J. Holmes	(Teller.)
Hon. W. J. Mann	

The PRESIDENT: The voting being equal, it is for the President to give his casting vote. If I vote with the ayes the Bill will be defeated, and while the Bill is not in agreement with my personal opinions, at the same time I shall vote in accordance with parliamentary practice, which is to give further opportunity to consider the Bill. My vote will be cast with the noes. The question is thus negatived. Now the principal question, "That the Bill be now read a second time," must be put, forthwith, without further discussion.

Question (that the Bill be now read a second time) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	..	12
<hr/>					
A tie	..	..	..	..	—
<hr/>					

AYES

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. V. Hamersley
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. Corned	Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. G. W. Miles
	(Teller.)

The PRESIDENT: As before, and in accordance with the recognised parliamentary practice, I give my vote so that the House may have opportunity for further considering the matter. I vote with the Ayes, and so the question passes in the affirmative.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 6).

Second Reading.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central) [8.6] in moving the second reading said: Another member of the House had arranged to move the second reading, but he is absent through illness and I have acceded to a request to take his place. On various occasions the House has already given recognition to the fact that a state of financial emergency is existing, and has passed measures to help those suffering injustices. This Bill comes within the same category. While it concerns only a few persons, those persons will, in consequence of the absence of legislation to meet their case, suffer a great injustice unless power is given them to seek the relief which they require. There are only four persons concerned, but the sacrifice involved for each is substantial. The facts are these: Last year four persons applied for provisional certificates. Three of the hotels were to be in the metropolitan area, and the fourth in the country. The applications were made strictly in accordance with the Act, the usual petitions were presented to the court, evidence was taken, the court granted the provisional certificates and in each case stated a period during which the building had to be erected. That period has expired and the court has no power under the Act to grant an extension. Failure to erect the buildings within the specified time is due entirely to the financial situation. All the applicants had completed arrangements to finance their propositions before they applied for the licenses. But there was delay, in one case so long as five months, in getting a decision from the court. Meanwhile the financial depression set in and the result was failure to obtain the accommodation that had been promised. Money then could not be borrowed on scarcely any security. That position will be recognised by every member. The applicants, I may remark, are not adventurers, but men of substance who have been connected with the trade for many years. They enjoy good reputations and stand to lose a considerable sum of money unless the relief sought for in the Bill is granted. One of the proposed hotels was to be at Milng, in my province. The court was influenced to grant the license by the fact that there is no hotel between Bullsbrook on the Midland line and Pithara on the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line. I had occasion

to visit Milng last year. It is an important farming centre. As there was no suitable sleeping accommodation available at Milng I had to travel 20 miles to Moora, although my business at Milng had not been completed. The applicant for the certificate in respect of Milng gave proof of his bona fides to the extent that he had a quantity of material on the ground ready to begin the work when his financial arrangements collapsed. He intended to erect a substantial building with up-to-date equipment, but although he has considerable property the state of the money market defeated his plans. Regarding the license granted for Mt. Hawthorn, the applicant paid £950 for the land, £200 deposit on the tender, £212 in legal fees, £54 for advertising, £100 for architect's fees, £12 16s. to the Electoral Department for checking the petition, £5 5s. for the provisional certificate, and £150 for incidental expenses, or a total of £1,585. In addition, he had to provide two sureties for £1,800 for the completion of the building within the specified time. So it will be recognised that these men will suffer severely if no amendment be made to the Act to enable justice to be done. In reference to the Wembley certificate, the applicant had to go through the money-eating process, and the court, after considering evidence, granted him a provisional certificate for which he actually paid £1,500. He put down, I am informed, £1,500 in cash.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Paid into court?

Hon. J. M. DREW: Yes, for the Treasury. He had decided to meet the following costs: £150 for legal expenses, £1,000 for the land, £50 for other expenses, and £358 for the preparation of plans and specifications, or a total of £3,212. The fourth applicant applied for a license at Victoria Park. He complied with the Act in every respect, and was granted a provisional certificate. He involved himself to the extent of £2,800 on the strength of the assurance of financial accommodation. The promise of this money was never fulfilled. In each case except one, that is the case of the gentleman who secured a provisional license, for which he paid £1,500, the Licensing Court fixed a premium of £2,000 to be paid to the Government. Each applicant had to pay 10 per cent. down of that £2,000, and find security for the balance. These men are in a terrible position through no fault

of their own. They wish to be given a further opportunity to carry out their contract with the court, and this can be afforded only by an amendment to the Act. The effect of the Bill will be to give them until the end of 1932, that is to say, a further 12 months, in which to erect the buildings. I feel sure members will realise that in view of the injustice that has been done this relief should be afforded. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [8.17]: I was asked the other day by one or two men in the town how it was that, whilst people could get a colonial wine license for the sale of wine, it was impossible for anyone to buy a glass of beer in the same establishments. A colonial wine license is given in connection with the manufacture of wines in this State. Those people asked me why it was not possible to get a glass of beer at wine saloons, seeing that the beer is also manufactured in Western Australia. Perhaps the Leader of the House will be able to enlighten us upon the reasons for this.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They do not want to mix their drinks, you know.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Everyone is not like the hon. member. Some people do not like wine. The theory of the wine license is that the wine is made in Western Australia, and has to be retailed here, and yet it is impossible to buy a glass of beer, which is also made here, at one of the wine establishments.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [8.19]: I desire to correct what may give rise to a wrong impression. We have no power to create licenses for the exclusive sale of Western Australian wine. The Constitution Act prevents us from doing that. The Western Australian wine growers formed themselves into an association, and through that organisation applied for licenses, and secured two. Naturally, as they are producing the wine here, they are not selling wine which is made in any other place.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Why can they not sell Western Australian beer?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That remains for the organisation to look into.

HON. G. A. KEMPTON (Central) [8.20]: I do not want to cast a silent vote

on this question. I received a letter from one of the places referred to, asking me to vote against the Bill, so that an hotel should not be built in that district. The point is that these applicants went before the licensing bench. It is well-known that unless an hotel is absolutely needed in a district, and the people concerned are able to show that it is needed, the bench will always turn down the application. In these instances the bench granted the provisional licenses. Considerable sums of money have been paid. Inasmuch as we have placed Bills on the statute-book granting people because of the depression, some method by which they can be given relief, so do I think we should allow these applicants a little more time in which to construct their hotels. That is only fair.

HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.22]: I view the measure somewhat seriously. If we grant the concession asked for here, we shall create a serious precedent. Three or four persons are to be given certain concessions. The plea is put up that owing to the financial depression they cannot now raise the necessary funds. I am credibly informed that these contracts were entered into during the middle of the depression. It is stated that the applicant of the Mt. Hawthorn hotel said he had completed his financial arrangements for the erection of his establishment within the specified time. We are told that, immediately afterwards, his legal adviser asked the court for an extension of one month to enable his client to go to the Eastern States in order to arrange his finances. If this Bill is passed, we may in another 12 months receive a similar request for an extension. That will give people an opportunity to traffic in the licenses, which would be a very objectionable thing. A lot of money was spent in getting these concessions in the first place. The men who were organising sent out canvassers, and paid them 1s. for every name they were able to secure. The position is different to-day. No doubt many of those who signed the petition would not now do so. I do not think any more hotels are necessary for another five years. I hold strong temperance principles but nevertheless I think that we should look at the matter fairly and squarely.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Why do you not try a change?

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: That would not do much good. Other people in the same class of business have to be considered. It may be anomalous for me to be protecting their interests in view of my temperance principles, but the fact remains that several of them have made additions to their premises and are entitled to consideration. One man is said to have spent £1,000 on improving his premises, which had not been catering fully for the trade. It is said that in another place it was necessary to improve the premises in order that the occupant might cater for the traffic along the North Beach-road to Scarborough and other places. Surely there are enough hotels already to cater for all the traffic that goes towards that part of the metropolitan area. Whilst the licensing court may not have power to grant these extensions, I see no necessity for this being done. I would prefer to see the Government return the money that has been paid for these concessions, and allow the matter to drop until the premises become necessary. I shall, therefore, oppose the Bill.

Hon. G. Fraser: You are optimistic if you think the Government will refund the money.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: That would be a better thing to do than to penalise the community.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [8.27]: One would have thought from Sir William Lathlain's remarks that we were inquiring into whether or not these premises were necessary. We have passed that stage. The duly constituted authority that deals with applications of this sort decided that the premises were justified.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: They were justified then, perhaps.

Hon. G. FRASER: They are still justified. We must accept that until the court otherwise orders. What we are discussing is the applications that are dealt with by the Bill. The request is made that the construction of these premises shall be postponed for 12 months. In effect, this is merely legislation of the same kind that we have been passing for the past few months for the purpose of giving relief to those who find themselves in an awkward position.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Why not make it apply to everyone in the State?

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not think the hon. member could refer to any particular section of the community which has not benefited by the relief legislation that has recently been passed. Sir William Lathlain said we might receive a further application for extension in 12 months' time. We can take that hurdle when we come to it.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: This will be like the Industries Assistance Board, going on for ever!

Hon. G. FRASER: If justified, it would continue for ever. However, the Industries Assistance Board is something entirely different from the subject matter of this Bill. If it be found in 12 months' time, if relief is granted, that these persons have not stood up to their obligations, then the Chamber will be able to discuss the merits of each case. The applicants went into the matter after the depression had begun, but conditions now are utterly different from what they were even 12 months ago. Many people who were wealthy 12 months ago, are down and out to-day. I trust hon. members will support the Bill, irrespective of whether or not they are opposed to the liquor trade, viewing the measure simply from the aspect of whether it is justified.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [8.32]: I do not think any member of this Chamber has a greater objection to the liquor trade than I have. If I had my way, there would be national prohibition, and drink would be entirely excluded from this country. Still, while those are my views, I have to be fair. We have granted relief to each and every section of the community. Sir William Lathlain, who objects to this relief of 12 months being granted, was a party, I believe, to compulsory repudiation of our contracts under the conversion measure which was before the House last night. Sir William Lathlain's principal objection to this Bill is that we may have a similar request 12 months hence. So far as I am concerned, if I am here 12 months from now there will be no further extension. The requested extension of 12 months to enable contracts to be completed and the conditions of the Act to be complied with is fair and reasonable. The Licenses Reduction Board granted the provisional certificates with all the facts before them. In passing, I wish to pay a tribute to the board for the good work they have done in straightening up the liquor trade in Western Australia. Remembering what

country hotels were like before the board came into existence, and seeing them now, one must agree that their condition has been revolutionised. One must also agree that necessity for these proposed hotels has arisen, otherwise the board would not have granted the provisional certificates. The reason why the board have been so effective is that they have been given more power than any court in the British Empire. Their decision is final and without appeal. Parliament gave that power to the court because of a desire to have the liquor business conducted in a proper manner. Apparently the board have not power to grant the extension here in view, and the Bill is before Parliament so that the people concerned may have relief granted to them. Although I object to the liquor trade, I consider that these applicants are entitled to relief. Consequently I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [8.35]: I also have given consideration to this Bill. I confess that at first I found myself in somewhat of a quandary. Had it not been for the lucid explanation made by Mr. Drew regarding the moneys expended by the various applicants for provisional certificates, and regarding the difficulties which apparently attended their efforts to carry out the erection of the necessary buildings, I would probably have found myself looking at the matter from a different standpoint. I have also had to weigh the conditions which have prevailed for some time past, and which, although to some extent foreseen, eventually came upon us with a certain suddenness. It was about that time that these applicants seem to have found themselves thrown into a maze of difficulties. Mr. Drew has told us that the applicants have expended substantial sums, and that they are men of repute and desirous of carrying out their obligations and fulfilling the bonds into which they have entered. Unfortunately, the promised financial help has not been forthcoming. I understand that these parties had made financial arrangements before putting in their applications.

Hon. J. M. Drew: Yes, that is so.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Before the erection of the necessary buildings could be carried out, the promise of financial help

was withdrawn, owing to the stringency of the times. Is that right?

Hon. J. M. Drew: Yes.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We have been faced with a most serious position, which has demanded legislation to relieve many sections of the community from the difficulties confronting them, difficulties which would not have arisen in the ordinary course of affairs. I presume that the people engaged in this particular business are as likely to suffer as is any other section. We know that when the Licensing Bench grant their authority for a provisional certificate, they do so upon express conditions. Amongst these is the execution of a bond by the applicant. If the applicant fails to carry out the conditions, his bond is forfeited. A provisional certificate runs only for a period not exceeding 12 months. Apparently that period has expired, and I am wondering whether the Bill is sufficient to revive that which has already expired. Proposed Subsection 3, to be added to Section 62, reads—

An application may be made at any time on or before the 31st day of December, 1932, in respect of any house and premises approved or referred to by or in any provisional certificate which has been heretofore granted in the year 1930 or 1931, and the time specified in any such provisional certificate (whether it has already expired or not) is hereby extended for all purposes to the end of the year 1932 accordingly.

One has to assume, but it is not indicated, the purpose for which an application has to be made. But what is it to be made for? Presumably for the purpose of extending an expired provisional certificate. I think that should clearly be expressed, and I suggest that Mr. Drew reconsider the clause before the Bill goes into Committee. If the Bill passes into law, the result will be that the provisional certificate will be renewed automatically for a period of one year. I put it to hon. members whether, having regard to the fact that these licenses expired last October, or so I understood Mr. Drew to say—

Hon. J. M. Drew: I did not say so, but it was about that time.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: In view of that fact, the question is whether it would not be fair and reasonable for this House to suggest that the extension should be for six months instead of 12.

Hon. J. M. Drew: No.

HON. J. NICHOLSON: Probably Mr. Drew will explain that when replying. It has occurred to me that six months' extension from, say, the present time, or six months' extension from the end of December, equivalent to eight months' extension, would be reasonable. I quite realise that the period between October and the present time could have been of little benefit in carrying out the arrangements, but surely six months from the 31st December would be ample time to enable the applicants to carry out their arrangements and erect the premises. The other alternative, suggested by Sir William Lathlain, should also receive consideration, in view of the times. It is that in the event of the Bill not being passed, if the Government are in a position to do so, they should refund the moneys which have been paid by the applicants. That would be only fair to the applicants. In view of the difficulties which are being experienced, and in view of the emergency legislation which has been passed, I see no alternative to supporting the second reading. If need be, I shall move some amendments in Committee.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [8.43]: As practically only four persons are involved in this Bill, and as conditions undoubtedly have altered materially within the last 12 months, it seems to me that possibly the fairest and best way out of the whole difficulty would be to adopt the suggestion put forward by Sir William Lathlain—that the Government refund the moneys paid over by the applicants. In my opinion, not only have conditions altered from the financial aspect, but local conditions also have altered considerably, especially with regard to hotels located in the metropolitan area. In the circumstances, the fairest way to all concerned would be to let the whole thing start de novo on a suitable occasion, instead of passing special legislation to meet the case. When a Bill was dealt with a little while ago in the interests of certain individuals, the House indicated emphatically its disinclination to consider legislation of that description. I think the suggestion that has been made for refunds in the event of the extensions not being granted is the fairest way of handling the matter.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [8.46]: The only serious objection to the Bill emanated from Sir William Lathlain, and in a lesser

degree, from Mr. Seddon. We appreciate the watch-dog attitude of Sir William regarding the City of Perth, but I think that in the hour of his triumph he can afford to be somewhat magnanimous and agree that the proposal is a fair one. The question is not whether the licenses should or should not have been granted, or whether the holders of the licenses will be able to build their premises in the immediate future. We should be concerned with what is fair and reasonable in view of the fact that licenses were granted after a full public inquiry by the members of the Licensing Court, and of the further fact that the period of depression made it practically impossible for the conditions, under which the licenses were granted, to be carried out. There is one thing upon which members of the Legislative Council can pride themselves, and that is their breadth of vision and fairness of attitude. I trust that Sir William Lathlain, having sounded his note of warning, will not press the Bill to a division, but will withdraw his opposition to it. As to Mr. Seddon's suggestion that the easiest way out of the difficulty would be for the Government to refund the money to the applicants for the provisional licenses, it has to be realised that we cannot get blood out of a stone. Even if the Government could refund the money, that would not clear up the whole position, because the applicants were involved in expenses in other directions.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain interjected.

HON. J. CORNELL: I hope the hon. member does not desire to bring the side that opposed the applications into the discussion. It must be remembered that the applications were favourably dealt with by what has been described as one of the most impartial tribunals in the Empire. I hope the Council will grant the relief sort, because it is fair, equitable and reasonable.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [8.50]: I support the Bill because I believe it to be fair. I agree with what Mr. Drew has said regarding the necessity for granting relief to the applicants affected by the Bill. Those who are required to travel extensively through the country districts know only too well the advantages of a good hotel, and the disadvantages of poor hotels. Western Australia is to be congratulated upon the improvement that has taken place in country hotels during the past few years.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Of the hotels covered by the Bill, one only is in the country.

Hon. W. J. MANN: If that were the only hotel referred to, it would be sufficient. If Sir William Lathlain had lived as long, in country hotels as others have had to do, he would agree with me in that remark. There is one point regarding which I desire a clear understanding. It is that those who hold the provisional licenses referred to, will proceed with the erection of their hotels and will not be allowed to traffic in the licenses. I trust they will not be allowed to dispose of their rights to others and make profits out of the deals. That is the only point regarding which I have some doubt. I do not suggest that anything of the sort is intended, but I would not countenance any such trafficking. As to Mr. Seddon's suggestion that the Government should refund the money if the extensions were not granted, seeing that the hon. member is the apostle of gloom—perhaps I should not use that exact word—and is always telling us that we are in the financial doldrums, and unless we do something heroic, we will flounder and sink. I do not know where the money will be obtained. In one breath Mr. Seddon tells us that we cannot get 6d. and in the next breath he talks about the Government refunding thousands of pounds!

HON. H. J. YELLAND (East) [8.53]: I do not wish to place obstacles in the way of justice being meted out to people who have met with misfortune owing to the depression. From that point of view I would be in favour of extending leniency to the applicants covered by the Bill. I am in somewhat of a quandary, however, as to whether we shall do right in granting the extensions. In the first place, as Sir William Lathlain has pointed out, conditions have altered considerably since the applications were made. He suggested that the applications were lodged at the beginning of what might be termed the period of depression, and that the obligations involved were entered into by the people concerned with a full sense of their responsibility. They swore on oath that they were able to carry out those obligations. Now we find that the time has already elapsed within which, if the law were enforced, the provisional licenses granted would have lapsed. Those who lodged the applications gave a guarantee that they were able to carry out the finan-

cial obligations and they have failed to do so.

Hon. G. Fraser: How many guarantees have been altered during the past 12 months?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: These people stated they could comply with their obligations within a given time. Sir William Lathlain has given one instance, which I have every reason to believe is correct because it can be verified in the records of the court, in which a guarantee was given that certain sums could be raised and the financial obligations met.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Many farmers have given guarantees that have not been fulfilled.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That is so.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Many people have given guarantees that they could not meet.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That is quite true, but such people did not give the guarantees and then immediately asked for extensions of time. That is what happened in one instance before the Licensing Court. I am informed that one applicant gave his guarantee that he could carry out the obligations he sought to undertake, and that he had made the necessary financial arrangements. Before the court rose that applicant asked for an extension of time within which to find the money. If that sort of thing is to be permitted, is justice meted out if we extended the licenses, seeing that the obligations were not fulfilled in such circumstances?

Hon. J. M. Drew: Is that statement correct?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I have not seen the report myself, but I was shown extracts from the evidence. If my statement is not right, I am open to correction. I believe the statement I have made to be correct.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Did I understand you to say that an applicant gave an assurance to the court, and that before the court rose he asked for an extension of time?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That is the information I was given.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What can be thought of such a court?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I have given the information as I received it. I want to deal with the applicants fairly and justly but I am doubtful whether a man who could be guilty of such an action is quite worthy of the consideration it is proposed to extend to him.

Hon. J. M. Drew: You should prove the serious statement you have made by means of quotations.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Perhaps I should have done so, but I did not have time to get the report. If the debate is adjourned I can probably do so. If what I have stated is correct, it makes one rather diffident about supporting the Bill.

Hon. A. Thomson: But you are not quite sure about the information.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I think the question should be investigated more closely before we arrive at a final decision. Another point arose from a remark made by Sir William Lathlain and would tend to show that those who secure signatures for petitions receive payment accordingly. I think that practice might lead to corruption.

The Chief Secretary: That procedure is always followed.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: While it does not affect the position very much, I think the principle underlying such a procedure is to be deprecated by every right-thinking man.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It is really payment by results.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That is so. The most serious objection I have is that the obligations were entered into by the applicants with a full knowledge of the difficulties confronting them, and they failed to carry out their obligations. The question is whether we should extend leniency further. The difficulty could be overcome if the Government were prepared to refund the money paid.

The Chief Secretary: I cannot give you any such assurance.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Then the only fair way would be to give those concerned an opportunity to make fresh applications. If the conditions have changed in respect to the applicants, the conditions may also have changed in respect to the areas in which the hotels were to have been built.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Do you think the population would have decreased?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The population may have altered and the psychological condition of the people, as a result of the depression, may cause them to reverse their previous opinion, or endorse it even more strongly. The best course would be to enable the applicants to approach the court once more, and permit the fees already paid to apply to the fresh applications. In the

circumstances, I feel it my duty to vote against the Bill.

Hon. G. Fraser: At the outset you said you would support the Bill.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [9.2]: I feel that this debate has already continued much longer than was necessary. The matter is a simple one. It is to afford consideration to a few individuals that no reasonable-minded man would refuse to give. The matter was lucidly explained by Mr. Drew, and no doubt he will seize the opportunity to clear up a few points raised by members in the course of the debate. Mr. Yelland expressed surprise and disapproval that canvassers should be paid 1s. for each signature obtained by them to the petition. Like the flowers that bloom in the spring, that has nothing to do with the case. Whether a canvasser is paid 1s. or 5s. per signature, the hon. member should know that it is not sufficient to get 500 or 1,000 signatures. The officers of the Electoral Department are called upon to swear that the signatures are those of bona fide electors of the district. In the altered conditions, the applicants should be treated in a fair and equitable manner, just as other sections of the community have been treated.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central—in reply) [9.4]: I thank members for their favourable reception of the Bill. It is almost unnecessary for me to make any explanations because Mr. Holmes, Mr. Cornell and others have largely covered the ground. Some members suggest that the Government should refund the money. The Government have no power to refund the money except by legislative authority. If they did refund the money, it would not cover the whole of the cost of making the applications to the court.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Is it suggested that the Government should refund the cost?

Hon. J. M. DREW: No, the amount paid to the Government and the amount of the sureties. I trust to the good sense of the House to pass the Bill. There has been a period of national emergency certainly during the last 12 months. One of the applicants had arranged his finance in May, 1930, but then came the collapse. To-day, we find Governments unable to arrange their finances, and even resorting to compulsory conversion. The collapse has affected every section of the community. Men I know

have had overdrafts from the Associated and Commonwealth Banks against good securities and have been asked to pay off their overdrafts.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And could not do it.

Hon. J. M. DREW: Members who object to the Bill should consider the circumstances. The applicants applied for provisional licenses. Everyone knows the rough road that has to be travelled to get a license in these days. It was necessary to get signatures to the petitions, and I do not think any canvasser would give his services in an honorary capacity. Probably it is the custom to pay 1s. per signature. I saw a man in the country who had occupied a high position in the community and he was travelling in a motor car collecting signatures. I do not suppose he gave his services free. Those who applied for provisional licenses had to defray the cost and could not get a license unless they showed that a certain proportion of the neighbouring electorate favoured the petition.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They ought to be given a chance.

Hon. J. M. DREW: When the Bill was introduced in another place, I marvelled at the opposition to it. On investigation I discovered that some hotelkeepers rather distant from the sites of the proposed hotels, had been defeated in the court after having put up a big fight against the petitions and they were exerting efforts secretly to provoke opposition. When members of another place realised the position, those efforts were defeated and there was solid support for the Bill. It was said that one applicant had told the court he could finance the proposition. In one instance the relatives were financing the proposition. They held an £8,000 mortgage which was falling due in two or three months, and they relied upon getting the money. The mortgagor, however, could not pay, though he was regarded as a rich man. Certainly he owned a considerable amount of property. The mortgage had to be renewed for a further term. The mortgagees could have sold him up had they desired, but they would not do so. Consequently, the applicant was unable to proceed with the erection of the building. As to trafficking in licenses, I know those men and they have never trafficked in licenses previously. They have always been associated with the liquor trade, have conducted hotels themselves and through other

people, and have conducted them in a respectable manner. We are told that there should be no increase of hotels for five years. That might do for the metropolitan area, but it would not do in the country. Still, that point is irrelevant. The applicants received a provisional certificate and, through no fault of their own, were unable to carry out their contracts within the specified time. We have been asked why the measure should not be made to apply to everyone in the State. There is no necessity for that; only four applicants are concerned. Suppose the applicants do not build the hotels within the extended period, I would certainly oppose any application to Parliament for an additional period. An extension of six months, as proposed by Mr. Nicholson, would not suit. It would take more than six months to erect some of the hotels, particularly the one in the country. I trust the House will pass the Bill. I cannot see that any harm can be done by granting the extension, which would be a simple act of justice.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS ACT AMENDMENT.

All Stages.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [9.15] in moving the second reading said: This is a short and simple Bill and it is submitted at the request of the University. The University Building Act of 1930 gave the Senate the power to sell any portion of the Hackett Bequest investments for the purpose of carrying out the building operations mentioned in that Act. The times are inopportune for the selling of investments and the Senate desires that it be

given the power to borrow on the security of those investments instead of selling them. The bank in which the Senate has its account is prepared to advance the money on the security. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Nicholson in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 7:

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Does this include the grant from the Government of £25,000? It was £31,000 last year, and I understand the Premier said that total would be reduced by 22½ per cent.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This is in no way connected with the grant by the Government. Section 7 of the Act deals with the Hackett Bequest.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Is it the intention of the Government to grant £23,000 or £24,000 to the University this year?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That question will have to remain unanswered for the time being.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—INSURANCE COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [9.20] in moving the second reading said: The principal Act fixes the rate of interest which the Government must pay on deposits belonging to the insurance companies. The Government is now pay-

ing 4½ per cent. in respect of those deposits. The amounts deposited are invested in Government stocks. Those stocks have all been converted with a reduction of 22½ per cent., and to bring the Act into conformity with the facts of the conversion, the amendment is necessary. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. J. Holmes, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly, and on motion by Hon. W. H. Kitson read a first time.

Second Reading.

HON. W. H. KITSON (West) [9.23]: in moving the second reading said: The Bill deals with one section of the Industrial Arbitration Act. Members will be aware that in 1930 the Act was amended to provide that the basic wage should be determined every quarter instead of annually as previously. That amendment also provided that the wage should be decided upon figures to be supplied by the Government Statistician. If there is one thing that causes a lot of dissatisfaction in connection with the Act, it is the fact that those figures are not available to either of the parties interested, and from time to time suspicion has been aroused as to their origin. From inquiries made it seemed strange that the statistician could arrive at the decisions he actually came to in view of the experience of the various parties in different parts of the State. I say this without any desire to cast a reflection on the Government Statistician. His calculations in the past have been based on figures supplied to him and they have been absolutely correct. The Bill provides that the figures which are submitted to the statistician shall also be submitted to the Employers' Federation and to the workers' representative. It is not intended that the source of the figures shall be disclosed, and it is also provided that the statistician shall not supply his statement to the court until after the expiration of 14 days from the date on which the copies of the schedule have been supplied to the two parties. This proposal has passed another place, and I understand it there met with the approval

of the Government. While it does not go as far as I should like it to go, I consider it will tend to improve the Act in the direction that it will at least give the parties who have to appear before the court a little more satisfaction than they have experienced in the past. It will not mean that the source of the statistician's information will be violated; it merely means that the parties concerned will at least have a knowledge of the figures on which the statistician bases the basic wage. Under the existing law the parties have no right to argue one way or the other when the court is delivering the basic wage. That phase of the position has not been altered.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It does not jeopardise their powers at the annual inquiry by the court.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: There is no annual inquiry now. The basic wage is determined quarterly instead of annually, and the court fixes the basic wage strictly on the figures supplied by the Government Statistician. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [9.28]: I intend to vote against the Bill. Mr. Kitson must indeed be possessed with a fair amount of courage to come before the House with such a Bill at the present juncture in view of what is transpiring at Fremantle, where the people he represents are setting the Arbitration Court at defiance. As I understand the position, the only effect of the Bill will be to extend the period in which the court will arrive at a decision.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Not at all.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The delay in arriving at decisions through objections raised by both sides has become almost a menace to the country. The hon. member said that he was perfectly satisfied with the Government Statistician, but he wants to get behind that officer, for what reason he did not explain. It is desired to see how he arrives at his figures, and the Bill asks that the figures shall be supplied to both parties, and both parties are then to have 14 days in which to try to influence the statistician one way or the other. There was no question of any alteration of existing conditions when the cost of living was going up. Now that we have reached the stage where the cost of living is coming down, we are getting a squeal from those who always squeal, from those who, the more they get the more they

want. There appears to me to be something underlying this attempt to discover whence the figures are supplied to the statistician. I can quite see that, in view of the recognised attitude of the unionists to declare certain trades people black, if they can get hold of those figures supplied to the statistician they will soon find out who supplied them, and the next stage will be to declare certain people black. I will vote against the second reading.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [9.31]: I will support the second reading and will in fact do everything I can to remove that suspicion and mistrust referred to by Mr. Kitson. I am afraid that no matter what we do, we shall not be able to satisfy the leaders of a certain party that we desire to remove all doubts and suspicions respecting the Arbitration Court. But is that to be wondered at when leaders of that party are continually, in Parliament and out, both orally and in their writings, fanning this flame of suspicion which most of us desire to allay? The hon. member who introduced the measure in another place is one of the worst offenders in this respect, and I am wondering whether the time has not come when we should do something drastic with this much boosted Arbitration Court system. We have to-day an exhibition of the law being defied in a most flagrant manner and no action being taken by the Government to deal with those who break the law. What is the use of talking about law and order, when the Government stand weakly by and allow law and order to be set aside? I wonder how much longer the community will put up with this kind of thing. If any other law is broken, the law officers promptly take action, but in matters affecting the industrial life of the community, which the Arbitration Court was set up to protect, the responsible officers seem to take no action at all. Disputes are allowed to drag on and the business and commerce of the country are held up, whilst the Arbitration Court bench use all possible means to bring the parties together so that an amicable settlement may be arrived at and the business of the country allowed to proceed. In other words, everything is done but the right and proper thing. The law of the land is being broken and the Governments, both Federal and State, stand weakly by and take no action. Is it any wonder that members like Sir Edward Wittenoom, a man of vast

experience of these things, clamour for the abolition of the Arbitration Court? Personally I desire to keep the court so as to enable the man who has only his wages to live upon to retain a system which will allow him to appear before a constituted authority and get a decision. Why cannot we have the awards of the court obeyed as any other law has to be obeyed; and when the arbitration law is broken why do not the Government put into operation the power they possess for such emergencies? Is it any wonder that men whose finances are affected by these happenings clamour for the abolition of the court?

Hon. E. H. Harris: Why is not advantage taken of the machinery provided in the Act to deal with men who break the law?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That is what I want to know. One would think the leaders of the men would use their influence to persuade the men to carry on under the court's award. But nothing of the kind happens. The men are allowed to go on, and although all sorts of steps are taken, they are steps other than those which ought to be taken. I should like to see the worker get every consideration. How can he get that better than by going before a duly constituted court surrounded with all possible safeguards? But the very people who should support the court seem determined to destroy it. I will support the Bill with the object of trying to relieve those men who deserve relief.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Council.

BILL—DEEDS OF SEPARATION ALLOWANCES REDUCTION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th November.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [9.40]: I listened with interest to the hon. member who introduced this measure. He was followed by Mr. Holmes, who said that

in a sense the measure was brought in for one case only. I then had some doubt as to whether the House was wise in giving any further consideration to it. But during the week-end I have consulted a number of solicitors as to the desirability of the amendment contained in the Bill, and I am now perfectly satisfied that the measure is long overdue, having regard to the circumstances the people are facing to-day. Let us assume that a husband and wife have lived harmoniously together. When the husband was in affluence his wife shared his prosperity, and when a serious decline occurred in the husband's income the wife shared in his adversity. There have been quoted to me cases of men who were in a position to make suitable allowances for their wives in accordance with the income the husbands were earning when it became necessary to arrange deeds of separation. Under the Financial Emergency Act interest and rents have been reduced. A case has been quoted to me. Under a deed of separation the allowance made to the wife was £4 10s. The husband was then earning a salary of £6 10s. But subsequently the husband's salary was reduced to £4 10s., notwithstanding which the wife demanded a continuance of the agreement which had been entered into. In consequence a certain amount of arrears accumulated, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the wife could be persuaded to agree to a reduction in the allowance. When a private arrangement has been made, one which without the consent of both parties cannot be amended, a Bill such as this should be on the statute-book to deal with it. Of course this legislation may operate the other way. The separation agreement may have been drawn up at a time when the husband was not in as good a financial position as he may subsequently be. The allowance given to his wife may be only £2 or £3 a week. Later on, when he becomes more affluent, his wife is not permitted to participate in his improved position. The provisions contained in the Bill are fair and I commend them to the consideration of the House. They will go a long way towards remedying the disabilities from which some husbands are suffering to-day.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What about the widow who has no other means of support?

Hon. A. THOMSON: There are always exceptions to the rule. If she has no other

means of support, I am sure a judge in Chambers would see that justice was meted out to her. It is unfair to insist that a wife should get her full allowance when the income of the husband may be unable to meet it. The Bill will give relief to many husbands who are thoroughly deserving of it.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan—in reply) [9.48]: I thank Mr. Thomson for his support of the Bill. Mr. Holmes was of opinion that it was brought down to meet one particular case. No one knows better than he does that all legislation must be founded on some experience which shows the necessity for its introduction.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I know of several cases.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I do not know of one.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The case to which Mr. Holmes referred showed the necessity for the Bill. Since its introduction many more cases have been brought under my notice. The Bill seeks to protect the rights of the parties concerned, and to provide a fair and reasonable measure of relief which has been necessitated solely through the prevailing conditions. Had it not been for the state of affairs through which we are passing, I would not be sponsoring this measure, which would have been left to the discretion of the Government. After my conversation with the Attorney General I was surprised that the Leader of the House should oppose it.

The Chief Secretary: Is the Attorney General in favour of it?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I saw him and discussed the matter with him and I understood the Bill was prepared in a form which would meet with his approval.

The Chief Secretary: He is definitely opposed to it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Conditions have arisen under which people who have entered into these separation agreements have lost a considerable part of their earnings, and can no longer keep up the payments provided in the deed. The only thing to do is to give the court power to deal with such cases. Equitable provision is made for the wife, and especial reference is made to the wife who may have children to support. The court will take all circumstances into consideration.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	..	10

Majority for	3
--------------	----	----	---

AYES.	
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. W. H. Kitson	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. E. H. Harris	(Teller.)
Hon. J. J. Holmes	

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—APPROPRIATION (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [10.0]: I wish to preface my remarks by stating the reason why I voted against the Loan Bill. I did so to register my protest against the Government for having, without Parliamentary authority, embarked on a scheme of the magnitude of the Collie Irrigation proposal, which is estimated to cost £331,000. I have gone carefully through the Appropriation Bill and the Loan Bill, without finding any mention of this particular work in either measure. I again refer to it because I desire to stress my great disappointment at the lack of consideration on the part of the Government for the findings of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the disabilities affecting the agricultural industry of Western Australia. The Government appointed a body of men who, acting in an honorary capacity, rendered to this Parliament, to the farmers, and to the State a vitally important service. They submitted

a scheme for the rehabilitation of the wheat industry, but so far the Government have shown no desire to profit by the Commission's deliberations. In my opinion, that fact constitutes a gross insult to the busy men who were asked by the Government to give their services on the Commission. True, the Government have given the farmers an Act for the adjustment of their debts; but what is the position of the farmers to-day? The newspapers publish statements from farmers who are being severely pressed by merchants. In to-day's "West Australian" appears the following statement from a farmer:—

Quite a number of things have been done for the farmer in an endeavour to keep him on his farm, but so far with very little material benefit. It is true he can ward off a persistent creditor by applying for a stay order and arranging for someone probably less competent to manage his affairs, which is distasteful to a man competent to manage his own. It is also true that banks and creditors generally have been most forbearing, a condition of affairs which obtains more from the fact that there was nothing to get however much they wished it. However, conditions have altered and there is a changed attitude in the creditors; already the little bits of blue paper are finding their way to many farmers. It is the "writing on the wall." Because of a little rise in wheat all are getting ready to grab, and, if wheat goes a little higher, there will be such an unholy scramble for the proceeds that the farmer will be blotted out in the process.

He goes on to say that he is being pushed, and may probably have to seek protection. Because there have been slight increases in the prices of wheat and wool, the farmers are being harassed by their creditors. It is true that the creditors have no other course open to them if they do not wish to be left in the lurch. I am honestly afraid that many hundreds of farmers will have to seek the protection of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act, or worse still, may have to walk off their farms this year. The Royal Commission went into the question exhaustively, and prepared a scheme for the Government's consideration. So far not one Minister has made a pronouncement as to the Government's intentions regarding that scheme. I quote from page 14 of the Royal Commission's report—

The Director of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act estimates that a fund of £350,000 per 1,000 settlers will be sufficient to finance cropping operations at least, and that harvesting requirements could be obtained on credit with a guarantee of payment out of the fund should the crop proceeds prove insufficient to meet current liabilities. Your

Commissioners are of the opinion that this method of finance is reasonable, and accordingly suggest provision be made to finance, say, 2,000 settlers under Part 2 of the Plan in the manner already set out. From the procedure already outlined, it will be seen that bank overdrafts will be secured primarily by hypothecation of statutory liens and charges held by the trustees and collaterally by the trustees' guarantee of payment out of the fund. The fund, therefore, need not be really subscribed in cash, but may itself partake of the nature of partly cash, including proceeds of the proposed Flour Acquisition Act, and partly guarantee by merchants and the Government. At the close of operations under the Plan the fund should be distributed amongst its subscribers proportionately to their respective contributions, the residue of the flour acquisition proceeds going to Consolidated Revenue.

I do not propose to go through the whole of the Commission's report, but I am of the opinion that grave discourtesy has been shown to the Commissioners. The Government ought to have made an honest attempt to put into effect at least part of the Commission's scheme. What is the value of the Commission's findings to the industry? On turning to page 7 of the report, hon. members will find the following passage:—

One significance of the above figures is that whereas in 1921 only £572,000 was paid directly to the community, in 1931 £3,174,000 was distributed directly in wages for railway men, clerks, lumpers at sidings and at ports, workers in superphosphate factories, and through them indirectly to coal miners in Collie, and tradespeople generally throughout the southern section of the State. In addition to this, the community received indirectly £3,469,500 paid out by the growers of wheat for commodities and services of all kinds. In other words, the value of the wheat produced in 1931 was sufficient to provide at least one quarter of the population of Western Australia with a living somewhat better than that allowed for in the basic wage . . . All witnesses examined, including farmers, merchants, storekeepers and representatives of associations connected with the industry, are unanimous in stating the following propositions:—(a) The prosperity of the State depends on the wheat industry; (b) the present financial crisis in the industry, to a great extent, has been occasioned by the price failure in the 1930-31 harvest; and (c) the rendering of financial assistance to the farmers, at the present time, is a community obligation.

We have been informed by the Government that while the Commission's recommendations have been examined, there has been no money available to put them into effect. I stress the point, because probably £500,000 is going to be spent in providing work for the men on the Collie scheme, which will

deal with only 11,000 acres of land. Here is the opportunity to provide £350,000 to carry on 1,000 farmers. If we provide £700,000—we shall have merely to guarantee the major portion of the amount, as the balance will be paid out of crop proceeds—it means, on a basis of 300 acres per farmer, the cultivation of close on 60,000 acres. At 12 bushels per acre, that area will return 7,200,000 bushels; and this, at 3s. per bushel, will mean new wealth to the extent of £1,080,000. I draw the comparison to show the relative value of the two schemes. I had hoped that an endeavour would be made to give effect to Part 2 of the Commission's report. I understand that there are practical men who would have been willing to give their time in an honorary capacity so as to carry the scheme into effect. I know I am merely beating the air by raising such matters at this late hour. To judge from the interest taken in this debate, one is wasting one's time by drawing attention to the lack of consideration for the Commission's report. Nevertheless there are large bodies of men who are seriously affected by the Government's failure to do their duty in this respect, and who are wondering why Parliament does not do something. As the representative of many farmers who are on something worse than the bread line, who are not as well off as many of the people who are termed unemployed, I must raise these questions. Let me draw attention to the assistance given to the man who is endeavouring to maintain his farm, and to the assistance given in the shape of sustenance. I do not suggest that those who are unemployed and cannot obtain the means of livelihood for their wives and children should repay to the Government the amount of sustenance when they again obtain work. Therefore those who are in receipt of sustenance are not expected to give any return for the money they receive. That is quite different from the conditions under which farmers have been assisted. Those farmers whose financial position had declined to such an extent that they were not able to carry on were assisted by the Government, who advanced them 30s. per week, but that amount is a charge against their assets. I hope I shall be proved a false prophet, but I am afraid that hundreds of farmers this year who, owing to lack of security of tenure and the absence of protection to the extent some of us con-

sider necessary, are confronted by an increasingly difficult position, will have to seek the protection of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act. I contend the Government should have given greater consideration to their position, and should have extended the provisions of the Tenants, Purchasers and Mortgagors' Relief Act, so as to provide the farmers with adequate security of tenure. I speak of what I know. If we were dunned weekly by creditors demanding payment, and we knew we could not meet their claims, we would become somewhat apprehensive. In view of the importance of the agricultural industry it is regrettable that the Government have not given further consideration to the report prepared by the Royal Commission. When we seek the appointment of Royal Commissions or select committees, we are invariably told that no good will be accomplished. In my opinion the Government made a serious blunder when they decided to terminate the scheme for subsidising farm labour. Under the scheme many single men were taken from the ranks of the unemployed, and were provided with fairly good homes and good food, with which those men were quite satisfied. In my opinion it was a breach of contract to the farming community when the Government terminated the scheme.

The Chief Secretary: Do you say that we should have financed those men in connection with harvesting and general farming work?

Hon. A. THOMSON: It was a breach of contract.

The Chief Secretary: Nothing of the sort! There was no contract.

Hon. A. THOMSON: It was a breach of contract on the part of the Government.

The Chief Secretary: Nonsense!

Hon. A. THOMSON: When the scheme was introduced no conditions were laid down. The Government merely said that provided the farmer employed one of the men without displacing any regular farm hand, they would subsidise the employment of that man to the extent of 15s. a week. Many men were employed although the farmers could have done without their services. It is true that the farmers desire to improve their farms, and the unemployed who took advantage of the scheme were engaged upon work that would produce more wealth to the State. I ask the Minister to consider the way in which sustenance money

has been expended in connection with road construction. The Minister is a practical man, and knows the conditions operating in the country districts to-day. It will be agreed that it is a waste of money, or at least making the work more costly, to put men on road construction in the country districts to-day. I am justified in voicing a protest against the action of the Government for not having given proper consideration to the Royal Commission's report, and also in regard to their cancellation of the farm labour scheme. I wish briefly to refer to a report that appeared in the "West Australian" of Saturday last, and to sound a note of warning to country residents regarding the trend of affairs. The report was headed "Rail and Road Competition," "Law to be altered," and read—

A deputation from the State executive of the Australian Labour Party waited yesterday upon the Under Secretary for Works, Mr. C. A. Munt, with a request for the amendment of the Traffic Act, tightening up its provisions against competition by motor vehicles with the Government railways. The deputation, which was led by Mr. S. Munsie, M.L.A., had arranged to meet the Minister, Mr. Lindsay, but influenza had kept him from his office. In the main, the substance of the deputation's complaints was similar to those made to the Minister for Railways, Mr. Scaddan, at an earlier deputation. It was claimed that owners of motor trucks by overloading, and by other breaches of the Traffic Act, were competing unfairly with the railways, and it was suggested that motor traffic with goods be specifically forbidden between country centres and Perth, and that exemplary penalties be provided for overloading of motor vehicles.

What are we coming to? The members of the State executive of the A.L.P. overlooked the fact that many millions of pounds have been spent on road construction, and many thousands of pounds have been spent on wages paid to members of their unions who have been employed on these roads. If we are content to allow this sort of thing to apply, then we in the country districts deserve what is coming to us. According to the report, this is what Mr. Munt had to say—

In reply, Mr. Munt said that 13 officers of the Midland railways and 140 officers of the Government railways had been appointed inspectors under the Act and had proven very vigilant.

In effect, so as to cope with what might be regarded as motor competition—I do not hold any brief for the motor owners, but I blame the Railway Department for not

showing business ability and going out after the traffic that is available—the Government have appointed 140 officers of the Railway Department to act as informers.

The Chief Secretary: I ask that the hon. member withdraw the word "informers." The men are inspectors under the Act, and it is unseemly that any hon. member should make use of such a term respecting them.

The PRESIDENT: I am sure Mr. Thomson will follow the usual parliamentary course, which is that when any member objects to a statement made by another in such circumstances, the latter will withdraw the remark.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I will withdraw the remark. I have no desire to hurt the feelings of the Minister.

The Chief Secretary: Not my feelings. You are reflecting on a body of men.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Would Mr. Thomson call land inspectors and stock inspectors "informers" too?

The Chief Secretary: Yes, they are in the same position.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Well, I will call them inspectors. I would point out, however, that they are honorary officials. Mr. Munt, in his remarks, continues—

Only two full-time inspectors had been appointed, and most of the recent prosecutions had been due to them. In six months there had been 45 prosecutions for overloading.

There is the position. These men have been appointed to obtain convictions against those who use the roads. I draw attention to the dangerous position that has arisen. Here we have the Government, aided and abetted by the State executive of the Australian Labour Party, solemnly suggesting that motor traffic shall be prohibited as between Perth and the country districts. When many of the transport workers realise what is being put over them, they will protest strongly against the action of the A.L.P. in asking for such drastic action against the motor traffic. Mr. Munt also said—

Little more could be done without amendments to the Act, and this was appreciated by the Ministers for Railways and Works, Messrs. Scaddan and Lindsay, who had recently appointed Messrs. Hall (Public Works) and Hickey (Railways) to overhaul the Act and report on amendments which it would be wise to make. These officers had nearly finished their labours and would report shortly. It might be accepted by the deputation that the Act would be amended.

I hope that the Bill will not receive an easy passage through Parliament. I object to

such a request being put forward by a deputation, and to the action of the Government in appointing honorary inspectors to report upon breaches of the Act. I hope I shall be able to show that while the railways have cost a large sum of money, and I wish that they could be made to pay more handsomely—I believe they could be made to pay much better than they do to-day if the Government were to adopt proper business methods—it must also be remembered that vast sums of money have been spent on the construction of roads, which belong to the people as well. Therefore it is not fair to endeavour to make one section of Government activities pay by penalising another. I recognise the difficult task confronting the Government. I appreciate their difficulty in financing the affairs of the State. I understand that all we in this House are permitted to do is to accept the Appropriation Bill or to reject it. The main reason why I voted against the Loan Bill was to enter a protest against the action of the Government in embarking upon a scheme of the magnitude of the one in question without first obtaining the consent of Parliament. In doing so I had no desire to condemn irrigation or the Collie scheme. One of the difficulties to-day is the fact that large sums of money have to be found to pay interest on schemes that are not reproductive. It is time we endeavoured to conduct the affairs of the State on lines similar to those that would be employed in business.

HON. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [10.32]: Under this Bill opportunity is afforded members to discuss any subject they choose, but I intend to confine my remarks to one subject, namely, the mining industry. In times of transition and uncertainty one has to bear with the Government when debating the needs or requirements of the community or of an industry, owing to the limited amount of revenue available. The Commonwealth Government and the State Governments have severely restricted loan funds at their disposal this year. With the limited sum available the State Government have to submit their Estimates of expenditure for industries and public works. Naturally some districts are dissatisfied with the allocation, believing that they have not received the consideration that might have been extended to them. By legislation the Government have endeavoured to assist many industries. They have endeavoured to assist

the farmers with their disabilities, the pastoralists with their difficulties, the group settlers and the men engaged in the timber industry. In the mining industry relief has been extended in the shape of reduced water rates to mines, a cartage subsidy to prospectors, free crushings of 15 tons to those holding prospecting areas, and in other ways. Because of the difficulties confronting the Government and because of the higher price being paid for gold, the Minister has imposed some restrictions, and a big agitation has been worked up by the prospectors' associations throughout the goldfields, whose duty it is to watch the interests of the many men engaged in prospecting. Naturally, they regard it from the viewpoint that they have had concessions extended to them in the past and they resent any restriction being imposed now. The Minister for Mines, when replying to criticism, said—

Service hitherto given by State batteries at a loss was not now justified when regard was given to the increased price of gold.

In view of the financial troubles afflicting the Empire, gold mining is probably the one and only industry that has benefited to any extent by the unusual conditions prevailing. Believing as I do that the golden key to prosperity will prove to be, as in the past, the gold mining industry, which embraces such a huge area of Western Australia, I appeal to the Chief Secretary and to the Minister for Mines that, notwithstanding what has been done, there is a call for increased crushing facilities. Owing to the larger number of men operating in the various centres and owing to the number of State batteries that have closed down or have depreciated to such an extent that a large sum of money would be necessary to put them into working order, it is necessary for prospectors to cart their ore long distances. Consequently the batteries situated in central positions, such as the one at Coolgardie, where the battery is alongside the railway and facilities are available for men to have their ore transported by railway, are booked up for many months ahead. Former goldfielders who have been living in the metropolitan area and who have lately resumed prospecting, backed by the help of a few friends, have worked hard and lived hard to extract ore and now they find that facilities are not available for crushing it, unless they wait for some months. While there has been an increase

in the price of wool and wheat that has materially assisted producers of those commodities, they are really relying on the exchange rate, which may or may not last for any considerable time. The producers of gold are receiving a premium, and the present outlook is that it will go higher and probably will last for an extended period. That is my reason for preferring a request that if the Government have not the money to erect additional State batteries, they should endeavour to lease some of the privately-owned batteries. It has been suggested that owners of private batteries might come forward to provide the facilities instead of the Government having to do so, but the consensus of opinion amongst prospectors who have had crushings at Government and private batteries is that a ten-head battery at least should be made available in a central position near Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie. If it is the final word of the Minister for Mines that he cannot find money for the purpose, the Government should endeavour to get private batteries to undertake the crushing and subsidise them in order that the prospectors may get their ore treated. The prospectors would then be encouraged to engage in the further production of gold which is so desirable and necessary. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. G. A. Kempton, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—Area of certain free homestead farms may be increased.

[The clause had been amended by adding the following proviso:—"Provided that in no case shall the area of cultivable land included in any free homestead farm exceed 160 acres or its equivalent in second or third class land as the case may be."]

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amendment would not work in with the customary procedure of the Lands Department. Reference is made to second and third-class land, but those terms are not used by the Department. The terms used are grazing land or mixed cultivable and grazing land.

Therefore I should like the Committee to agree to recommit the Bill to re-insert "twenty" in Clause 2 and to amend the proviso in the terms suggested by the Lands Department.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clauses 2 and 3.

In Committee.

Hon J. Cornell in the Chair: the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Adjustment and appraisalment of rentals of pastoral leases:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Some days ago the Committee struck out the word "forty" in line 7 of paragraph (a) of Sub-clause 1. I now move an amendment—

That in line 7 of paragraph (a) of Sub-clause 1 the word "forty" be reinserted.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: On the same lines, I move the following amendment—

That in line 10 of paragraph (a) of Sub-clause 1 the word "twenty" be reinserted.

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

Clause 3—Area of certain free homestead farms may be increased:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That the proviso inserted by a previous Committee be struck out, with a view to inserting the following:—"Provided that in no case shall the area of such homestead farm exceed 160 acres of cultivable land or the equivalent area of grazing land or mixed cultivable land and grazing land."

The new proviso is thoroughly workable.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I hope this amendment is in order. It seems to me that we are still limiting the department to 160 acres or the equivalent area. I should say that the equivalent area is 160 acres.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Can the Minister state what proportion of grazing land is granted as compared with what is termed cultivable land?

The Chief Secretary: So far as I know, the proportion is five acres to two.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: In that case the amendment is likely to hamper the department considerably. The Minister wants a maximum of 400 acres for a free homestead farm. I suggested 160 acres of cultivable land. Suppose a block contains 100 acres of cultivable land, with the remainder grazing land. Then the holder already has 100 acres of cultivable land, and the grazing land being in the proportion of five to two of cultivable land, for the 60 acres that are left he will have 150 acres of grazing land in addition to the 100 acres, so as to make up the equivalent of 160 acres of cultivable land. That reduces him to 250 acres, and will not meet the obligation of the Government as regards the 400 acres already granted to some settlers. Let us get back to the 160 acres and assume that it is all grazing land; then at the outside the settler will have only 400 acres.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not want to prolong the agony, but I am still not satisfied. I think the Committee erred in making the area 160 acres of cultivable land or its equivalent. The limitation of the whole block to 500 acres would meet the situation much better than the amendment already carried. Under that it is quite possible for a person to be allotted a block which will be all grazing land. The Committee would be wise to revert to the original suggestion of 160 acres of cultivable land, with a maximum of 500 acres for a free homestead block.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amendment I had drafted was intended to meet the wishes of the Committee. At present, in connection with the group settlement and land purchase schemes, we have the right at any time to increase the holding, but this Bill is aimed to assist special settlements that I have indicated, quite apart from the group settlement scheme.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Does not your amendment meet the wishes of the Government?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Certainly not. It was to meet the wishes of the Committee.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Why not adopt the clause as it appeared originally? That would not impose any restrictions at all.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think there is any need for restrictions. The clause as it appeared originally was quite all right. The amendment I have moved to meet the wishes of the Committee will decidedly hamper the wishes of the department.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Try the amendment and see how it goes.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But it is desired that the clause shall apply to specific settlements. The amendment will hamper and restrict the department and it will saddle a few settlers with increased acreages that they should not be asked to pay for, but should be paid for improving.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If the amendment will hamper the Government and they cannot get on without the clause, I suggest that we pass the clause as it appears in the Bill. We have haggled over it long enough and have got no further.

The CHAIRMAN: The clause leaves the matter in the hands of the Minister, and this is the seventh attempt to give a direction to the Minister. Members are just as far off doing that as ever they were. If the Committee vote against the proviso agreed to in a previous Committee, that will leave the clause in its original form.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Have we not already voted the proviso out?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Amendment (to strike out proviso inserted by a previous Committee) put and passed; the clause, as further amended, agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time, and returned to the Assembly without amendment.

BILL—ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Nicholson in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That after the figure "(1)" in line 1 of Clause 2, the words "with the consent of the Governor" be inserted.

It was pointed out that local governing authorities might grant licenses to different companies to extend their operations beyond their boundaries, and entrench upon the preserves of the Government electricity

supply. The amendment will overcome that difficulty. It will mean that the local authority cannot grant these licenses without the consent of the Governor.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I think the amendment will overcome the difficulty pointed out the other night. When speaking on that occasion I omitted to mention another important factor, namely, when the railways shall be electrified. It will then be practically compulsory for the Government to take current generated at Collie.

Hon. G. FRASER: While the amendment gives a certain safeguard, I do not think it meets the objections raised on the second reading. During the past few years the Government lines have extended into the outer suburban areas, and we do not know how far they may yet be taken. Even if the amendment be carried, it is quite possible the Collie company will move much faster than the Government department, and so it may be found at a later stage that the Government will be powerless to extend their lines because licenses will have been already granted to the Collie company. Whilst the Government have a monopoly of the supply of electric current the people have a better chance of getting it cheaper than they would from a private company.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Fraser fears that unless we do something drastic the day may come when the Government will be unable to supply their current to more distant areas. But are we going to stop the progress of the Collie company merely because some day the Government may want to extend their own lines? Surely it is not suggested that we should hold up progress in that way!

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I am satisfied the amendment will meet the position. The point I want to safeguard is the future of electricity, but I do not want to hold up all progress in the meantime. The fact that the consent of the Governor must be secured makes the position safe. In every country in the world the supplying of electric current has been made a public utility of the very greatest importance. Therefore it would be unwise to give power to any company which might eventually debar the Government from carrying out a big national scheme.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I want to point out that this is the most extraordinary Bill that has ever come before the Council. There are four clauses in it, yet not one with a

marginal note, and there is no reference whatever to show which part of the principal Act the Bill amends. Yet it purports to be an amending Bill. I do not blame the Minister but I think if we agree to the amendments, the Chief Secretary should not take the Bill beyond the report stage to-night.

Hon. G. FRASER: Immediately this measure becomes law it will sound the death knell of any Government scheme at Collie.

Hon. J. T. Franklin: This will not give sole rights to anyone else.

Hon. G. FRASER: No, but would any member here vote for the Government establishing electricity works at Collie to compete with a first-class system already operating there?

Hon. A. Thomson: The Government may need it for the electrification of railways.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am pleased that the Collie company have established their power station because many districts will be benefited, but I hope members will realise the effect of passing this measure.

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

Clause 3:

Hon. J. CORNELL: This clause appears to be unnecessary. Section 3 of the Electric Lighting Act of 1892 provides that any local authority may contract for the supply of current for 21 years. The amendment means that, with the consent of the Governor, a local authority may not only agree to such a contract for 21 years, but may license any person to erect poles and transmit current. The period for the erection of poles is 21 years, the same as for the supply of current, but in the next clause it is proposed that the Governor-in-Council may provide for a period in excess of 21 years but not exceeding 50 years. The Legislature should be the authority to grant any period in excess of 21 years, not the Governor-in-Council. I suggest that we pass Clause 3 and strike out Clause 4.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4:

Hon. J. CORNELL: I suggest that Clause 4 be negatived. If it be necessary to grant a period of 50 years, let the Legislature do it.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I am in accord with Mr. Cornell and am not prepared to grant any extension beyond 21 years. That is a fairly long period in view

of what we know concerning the erection of the power house.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It must be borne in mind that the Collie Power Co. have been put to very heavy expense. I do not think the power sought here is contained in the other Act or that authority is given to enter into contracts for lines which cross through different municipalities. It is possible that a line may go through the territory of a local authority which has no current of its own.

Hon. G. FRASER: I, too, would oppose the granting of an extension to 50 years. It is quite long enough to legislate for 21 years. The Collie Power Co. knew when they spent their money that they had only that period to look forward to. If they have acted fairly at the end of that term, no doubt they will get a further extension.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The legislature ought to set a definite period to this extension, especially as it relates to electricity.

The Chief Secretary: We do not want another Perth City Council contract.

Hon. J. CORNELL: We should vote against the clause.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I should prefer to have my amendment embodied in the clause, even if the clause is subsequently struck out. If on recommitment the inclusion of the clause can be justified, it can be reinstated as amended. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 the word "three" be struck out and "four" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and negatived.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 11.32 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 2nd December, 1931.

	PAGE
Questions: Dalkeith bus route	5610
State Trading Concerns	5610
Leave of absence	5611
Motions: Standing Orders suspension	5611
Federal tariff	5632
Bills: University Buildings Act Amendment, all stages	5611
Debt Conversion Agreement (No. 2), returned	5613
Industries Assistance Act Continuance (No. 2), returned	5613
Companies Act Amendment, returned	5613
Insurance Companies Act Amendment, all stages	5613
Bills of Sale Act Amendment, 1R., 2R.	5614
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment (No. 2), 2R., Com., etc.	5615
Tenants, Purchasers, and Mortgagees' Relief Act Amendment (No. 2), 2R., Com., Bill defeated	5616
Companies Act Amendment, Council's amendment, Standing Orders suspension	5625
Hospital Fund Act Amendment, Com.	5625
Bills of Sale Act Amendment, 2R.	5628
University Buildings Act Amendment, returned	5632
Licensing Act Amendment, (No. 6), returned	5632
Deeds of Separation Allowances Reduction, 1R., as to 2R., defeated	5637
Discharge of Orders	5637

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

QUESTION—DALKEITH BUS ROUTE.

Mr. THORN (for Mr. North) asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is legislation necessary before the offer of the Dalkeith Bus Company can be accepted by the Government? 2, Is he prepared to give the offer a three months' trial?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Assuming that the offer refers to a proposal by the United Bus Company to institute a bus service instead of present tramway service, and pay a royalty for every passenger carried, legislation would first be necessary. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

Mr. PIESSE asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Will the balance sheets of the State trading concerns for the year ended 30th June, 1931, be laid upon the Table of the House before the close of the present session? 2, If not, what is the reason for the delay in their presentation?

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