

# Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 26th November, 1912.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Report of the Governors of the High School for the year ending 30th June, 1912.

By the Minister for Lands: Report of the Department of Agriculture and Industries for the year ending 30th June, 1912.

By the Attorney General: Papers dealing with fees received by public officers who are commissioners for taking affidavits.

## PAPERS—FEES RECEIVED BY PUBLIC OFFICERS.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker): In laying on the Table the papers in connection with the taking of fees by public officers in the Supreme Court, I desire to make an explanation. The other night when discussing the Estimates an allegation was made regarding the taking of fees by officers in the Supreme Court as commissioners for taking affidavits, and the name of Mr. Sherard, the Taxing Master, was mentioned as being possibly one suspected of having committed that act. I desire to say in regard to that officer that he never takes any fees whatsoever though he is a commissioner for taking affidavits. The person alluded to, I believe, was Mr. Clifton, but he was within his rights in doing so

as in that case it was a private action. For the information of hon. members I lay these papers on the Table, and I desire to explain that they show that no commissioner for taking affidavits, acting in the service of the public and being a public officer in the performance of his public duties, is allowed to take any fees whatsoever, and that fees for the swearing of affidavits in such circumstances are paid into the public revenue.

## QUESTION—ABORIGINES PROTECTORS.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Premier the names and addresses of all those appointed and at present acting as protectors of aborigines.

The PREMIER replied: Gale, C. F., Chief Protector, Irvine street, Cottesloe; Broekman, G. D., Corunna Downs, Marble Bar; Bostock, G. H., Staunton Springs, Pingelly; Bischofs, Revd. Jos., Beagle Bay; Bachmair, Rev. Father, Beagle Bay Mission; Bake, H. C. (P.C.), Junction Police Station, Gascoyne; Brodribb, H. H., Aborigines Department, Perth; Bell, David, Weedong Station, Pender Bay; Bates, Daisy M., Mrs., Perth; Camerer, A. B., Doorawarrah, via Carnarvon; Coesar, Fred., Milly Milly, Upper Murchison; Dempster, C. E., Northam; Doran, W. A., Postmaster, Eucla; Emo, Revd. Father Nicholas, Broome; Gillam, A. C., Chirritta, Roebourne; Hall, Aubrey, Cossack; Hadley, Sydney, Derby, Sunday Island Mission; Haly, A., Superintendent Nicholson, Plain Station (Kimberley); Isdell, Jas., Marble Bar; Irving, K., Darlot, Beringa Station, Upper Murchison; Lanigan, R. P., Mogumber; Male, A., Broome; Mann, F. J., Bullfinch, McLeod, D. N., Minilya, Gascoyne; Olivey, G. I., Perth; Planas, Revd. Father, New Norcia; Phillips, John, Culham; Piesse, C. A., Wagin; Squires, F., Lake Darlot; Sinclair, Rob., Wagin; Sleeman, H. R., Whim Creek, Roebourne District; Taylor, A. J., Duketon; Torres, Rt. Revd. Father, New Norcia; Walsh, H. B.,

Mileura, Murchison; Wilson, R. H., Perth. N.B.—Resident magistrates and inspectors of Police are protectors of aborigines by virtue of their office.

#### QUESTION — RAILWAY PROJECT, MARGARET RIVER.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (for Hon. Frank Wilson, without notice) asked the Premier: Is it the intention to introduce a Bill for the construction of the Margaret River railway during the present session in accordance with the promise made last session?

The PREMIER replied: I want to be candid enough to say that we will not introduce a Bill for the construction of the Margaret River railway this session, the reason being, if it is necessary to explain, that we have not sufficient data to decide on the route which it is necessary the railway should follow. As we are not satisfied with the report of the Advisory Board it would be inadvisable to introduce a Bill for the construction of the line on a route not recommended by the Advisory Board unless we have complete data, which we have not as yet obtained. The Bill will be introduced as a certainty next session, and that will not delay the construction of the line a single day.

#### BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Newcastle-Bolgart Railway Extension.
- 2, Hotham-Crossman Railway Extension.
- 3, Wyalkatchem-Mount Marshall Railway.
- 4, Wagin-Bowelling Railway.  
(Introduced by the Minister for Works).
- 5, Workers' Homes Act Amendment.  
(Introduced by the Premier).

#### BILL — ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### BILL—VICTORIA PARK TRAMWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

#### BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

##### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 22nd November.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): This year again we are called upon to consider the question of the Agricultural Bank Act. When the Act was introduced by Sir John Forrest and Mr. Throssell, it was intended to be helpful to the people settled on the land. In the early stages it was merely development, but, of course, as time went on it was considered advisable to extend the operations of the Act and to enlarge the bank's capital. Indeed, every extension was undertaken with the full determination of allowing the people of the State the benefit by the liberalisation of the provisions of the Act, and last year, with no exception to the rule, the Minister for Lands introduced a Bill, and I am quite certain it was with the intention of making available to the people of the State a better and more liberal measure than we had enjoyed to that time. The capital was increased by £500,000 and there was provision for extending and liberalising the conditions, but I venture to say that after 12 months' experience there has been no extension and no liberalisation. The Minister, in introducing the Bill, said that there were a number of limitations set against the trustees, and that hitherto they had deemed it to be their duty to limit the amount of the advances to £750 because the funds at the disposal of the bank were limited. The Minister, in accordance with a promise, brought down a Bill which meant that a man could get just what he required so long as the security was sufficient. With the other limitation as to the manner in which the money advanced by the bank ought to be expended, the Minister disagreed, and he said that he did not see that the bank need inquire how the money was spent. He removed the limitation which threw upon the trus-

tees the need to examine closely the expenditure of every penny advanced. When the Agricultural Bank had carried the farmer on to the producing stage it often happened, the Minister said, that the farmer had to go to a private institution and pay a higher rate of interest than that charged by the Agricultural Bank. The Minister told us he was going to save the farmers the need to go to a private bank where a higher rate would be charged, and where the farmer would not be in safe hands, such as would be the case if he borrowed from the Agricultural Bank. I venture to say that there was no justification at the time for questioning the honesty of purpose of the various banks. All have done their best to help forward the work of settlement.

Mr. O'Loughlin : They are pressing the farmers very much at the present time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : Because of the action of the hon. member's friends in the Federal House and those here.

The Premier : Are you sure it was not due to some action in the House of Commons or in Japan ?

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I do not know what the rate of interest is in Japan, and I fail to see what Japan has to do with it.

The Premier : And I fail to see what the Federal Government has to do with the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : If the Premier raised some pertinent objection I might understand him.

The Premier : I wish you would be serious yourself sometimes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : The Premier looks serious only when money is mentioned. The Minister for Lands also said that he had always held that if it was good enough for the ordinary banks to help the people it was good enough for the Agricultural Bank to do so, and it would be an advantage to the State. These were the contentions of the Minister only a short year ago. I want the House to realise that 12 months have passed since these courageous words were uttered and I should like to con-

trast them with the speech which the Minister made in introducing this Bill.

Mr. Gill : Do you not agree with his statement.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I agree with it, but I would have done it and not talked about it. The Minister said he sought to accomplish his object by introducing this amending legislation to make it unnecessary for the farmer to go to the ordinary banks and he sought to give the farmer what was necessary to carry him along. Let us see what he has done in that direction. The Minister said he wished the Agricultural Bank to have power to lend money providing, of course, the margin of security was sufficient. In the future he said it would be an ordinary bank to all intents and purposes. It will be remembered that Ministers spoke of this bank from time to time during the elections. The Minister for Works, speaking at Midland Junction, said it would not be a big step to bridge from the Savings Bank to the Agricultural Bank and to give the people the opportunity of doing their business through it. No doubt the object of the 1911 Bill was to fulfil all the pre-election promises. I pointed out that the Minister was at some pains to make it clear that the trustees had no particular interest in the manner in which the money was spent when he introduced the Bill 12 months ago. The Minister said that the bank would always be safe because they would have the power of foreclosure. He urged that the money could be lent to any amount, and to make it quite clear that he intended this should be done he said that it would still be possible for the bank to make progress payments to enable a farmer to carry on improvements and to make a home for himself, also to provide money for breeding stock and for the purchase of agricultural implements. These things were all to be done as they had been done before, but instead of being part of the work of the bank as before they were to be subservient to this great work that the ordinary mortgage bank was to do. Under the old Act the bank made full advances for the work of improvement and every man knew what

he had a right to expect. There was no question about it, no uncertainty. If the managing trustee thought the land good he could make an advance which enabled the farmer with limited capital to make a home for himself. It is true that the limit of £2,000 was fixed, by an amendment made in another place. The Minister reluctantly accepted this amendment, and it is interesting to know that the Minister said there should be no discrimination between the rich man and the poor man, both of whom should share alike. By the Bill which is now before us the Minister admits failure; he could not have admitted failure more clearly.

Mr. O'Loughlen: In what respect?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is true he claims, and rightly of course, that the bank lent £100,000 more last year than in the previous year, but when we remember that the amount of the advance was increased from £750 to £2,000 and when we remember that money was particularly tight, and interest had gone up considerably during the past 12 months, the wonder is the Minister did not lend more than twice the amount he did. If the trustees had been able to agree to all the requests made, they would have lent an enormous sum of money. The Minister had been at some pains to tell the ordinary banks that they were not wanted. He did this by means of his regulations and by his speeches and he said that the Agricultural Bank would do all the work. The Agricultural Bank had not done the work that the Minister promised and the people have been sadly disappointed. There have been hundreds of refusals for loans and I have some correspondence here that would interest the Premier.

The Premier: Read it out.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am not going to read it out. I have letters here from men who have been refused advances. In one case the trustees not only refused the advance but refunded the application fee, presumably because the security was satisfactory. The managing trustee has no right to refuse an advance under the Act; of course he has discretionary power, covering the value of security and the personal risk and when he found he had

to refuse it, he thought, no doubt, a £2,000 loan was too big for the funds available, he refunded the inspection fee. I cannot mention the name of the person here, but I will give it to the Premier.

The Premier: It is due to the House that it should have the name.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Was it to lift a mortgage?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I will give particulars later. It was to lift a mortgage, but we must remember that the Minister for Lands said there would be no inquiry and no questions asked, that the money was to be had for the asking so long as the security was there.

The Premier: This is not a maternity bonus.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am protesting that the public were told that £2,000 would be made available for farmers having security of a satisfactory character. It has not been the custom of the bank, and the Minister will admit that he found it altogether impossible to say yes to every applicant producing a satisfactory security. The sum of £2,000 has been advanced in a few cases, but the Minister, if he gets a return, will find that many applications have been refused.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Very few.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister should know and he should tell the House whether he has found it impossible to meet the demands of these people who wanted £2,000. As the Act stands the farmers are entitled to ask and get advances up to £2,000. It is sheer fraud on the part of Parliament to pass an Act of the sort if the Minister has the right to set it aside. When we passed the Act of last session we did incalculable harm, because we brought down on the Agricultural Bank demands from all quarters, made at the instigation of private banks. Money had become tight the farmer naturally wanted 5 per cent. money, and in many cases the banks were putting on the screw. They said, "The Minister for Lands has passed a Bill under which you can get £2,000 from the Government; go and get it."

The Premier: Can you mention any one instance?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, many.

The Premier: Produce one.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We had the case of a ruined man who came down the other day to see what he could do. He had been called upon by a private bank to settle up. It is of no use the Premier trying to make a joke of it. The people of the country were led to believe that the limit of the Agricultural Bank was £2,000, and that all who had satisfactory security were to get it. Will the Premier argue that the £2,000 limit was for the chosen few, and not for the many? Of course he cannot argue anything of the sort. If the limit be £2,000, then £2,000 should be available to every reputable citizen who produces satisfactory security. Advances should not be refused, except for want of money, and in those cases it should be clearly stated that the advance can not be made for that very reason. Parliament has determined that this bank shall be a bank with a £2,000 limit, and the Minister promised the Chamber that there would be no discrimination. He promised, further, that no questions would be asked. He did not see why the bank should know how the money was to be expended. Will it be urged that because a man owes £1,000 at 6 per cent. he has no right to ask the Agricultural Bank to pay off that mortgage with money costing 5 per cent.? Of course he has a perfect right. The Chamber should make it clear to the Minister that they expect him not to disappoint the people, and I am going to propose an amendment which will make it imperative that all shall be treated alike. I have no wish to go into details here as to the advances, but if the Minister will inquire he will see that £2,000 has been advanced while in many instances refusals have been made to people who wanted to borrow fairly large amounts. It is not necessary to say to the would-be borrower, "You owe to someone else, and you require the money to pay off someone else." It is altogether foreign to the Act of last session and to the Minister's statement when he introduced that measure. I am prepared to believe that the Minister was in earnest and meant to do all that he promised; but he promised without

knowing. His experience was not sufficient to show him the difficulties, and so, for the first time in the history of this bank, men have been denied advances to which they are entitled.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did you not promise to amend it in the same direction last session?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I promised to make the limit £1,500 and if I had the controlling of the bank the limit would be £1,500, and would be available to all with satisfactory security.

The Premier: You would get the money in millions.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This is not a joking matter at all. We are pledged to the people, and so far as I am concerned I am going to enter a protest against the manner in which the people have been deceived.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Scores of them have had the benefit of the bank.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Of course scores of them year after year have had the benefit of the bank. I am not talking about the people who have been benefited, but about the people who have been refused; they are the people we should consider to-day.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The institution cannot stand the lot.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am much obliged to the hon. member, who says the institution cannot stand the lot. Let us have an institution with a limit that will enable it to stand the lot. I enter my protest against the benefits of the Act being limited to a special few, and I will ask the hon. member to assist me in increasing the capital from £3,500,000 to £4,000,000.

The Premier: You cannot do that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, I can try.

The Premier: You cannot even move that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I did not hear any Message referred to when the Bill was introduced.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have a Message here.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, I am going to urge the Minister to make the capital four million pounds and so justify the

action of Parliament in increasing the limit from £750 to £2,000. This increase of capital is altogether ridiculous in the circumstances. The Minister knows the capital is too limited. Business cannot be done for want of capital. This £500,000 by which he proposes to increase the capital would give the £2,000 limit to 250 farmers. I contend that every man who has satisfactory security has an equal right, and so I urge the Minister to endeavour to live up to the speech he made in introducing the Act of last session, and give the House an opportunity of doing justice to the State. If he desires to do it he will agree that this increase of capital which he proposes is altogether too small. It is necessary to increase the capital by £500,000 a year. The trustees can only authorise advances to the extent of their capital. These authorised advances are sometimes not drawn for months, sometimes not at all, but hon. members will see that it is impossible for the bank to do more than agree to lend the total amount voted by Parliament, and, as Parliament knows, it has been arranged that payments can be made as the work proceeds, and so it is imperative for the trustees to be careful to keep within their limits in fixing their authorisation. I would like this point to be quite clear to hon. members, because I think they should join with me in urging the Minister to take authority sufficient to meet the requirements of the Act. I hope, too, that there will be no discrimination, that all will be treated alike. Here again I venture to say that when the trustees did discriminate they had no option, because they had to grant a multiplicity of smaller borrowers money which consequently had to be denied to large borrowers, because only a few large borrowers could be accommodated with the capital available. Not only are we asked to increase the capital by too small an amount, but it is incredible that we should be asked to increase the interest rate on money to be borrowed by farmers who are already struggling hard. We are asked to increase the interest on certain advances to 6 per cent. We had an improvement bank, and then we were told that it should go by the board and that we should have a

mortgage bank. Having got that, with a rate of 5 per cent., and having had it for twelve months, the Minister finds it advisable to alter the rate on advances for purposes other than direct improvements to 6 per cent. A man will pay 6 per cent. on machinery and stock advances, and on advances for the purpose of paying off liabilities, or for any purpose other than for the work of actually clearing the land. This is illogical and wrong. If 5 per cent. is right in the case of a man effecting improvements it is right also in the case of a man buying horses and machinery, or borrowing money to pay off liabilities. In the case of a man who receives progress payments for work to be done there is much greater cost set against the bank, so the advantage the Minister referred to in introducing the Bill of last session, the advantage to the Crown in lending money, if we are to regard the Crown as a money-lender, does not refer to any advances made to pay off liabilities. The Minister has said that interest is higher, that money is dear, and so they must have more for their money than they had previously. I would like to point out to the Minister that under the Agricultural Bank Act he may not pay more than 4 per cent. for his money; yet he has made no attempt to increase the rate which he may pay. It is unnecessary to have two per cent. to cover the cost of running the bank. Yet the Minister proposes there shall be a clear two per cent. between the rate paid for money and that charged for money. Will the Minister tell us why he wants this 2 per cent., and why he discriminates where he said there would be no discrimination? I protest against an increase in the rate to be charged, because I believe two per cent. is altogether unnecessary. If the Minister for Lands had shown us that in order to accommodate people he would be obliged to pay more than 4 per cent. for money, we would, of course, have had to give some consideration to his suggested amendment of the rate of interest to be charged; but he has not done that, nor has he taken power to pay more than 4 per cent. He rightly said the Savings Bank money is convenient because they can draw from day to day as they require it for cus-

tomers. It simply means that the Agricultural Bank is not obliged to keep a capital of its own, but uses the Savings Bank capital and so saves interest on working capital. I believe that so far as the Savings Bank is concerned the passing of it will be a very serious blow to the operations of the Agricultural Bank and I suppose when Mr. Fisher opens his Commonwealth Bank here on the 1st January next we shall lose a good deal of the Savings Bank money. There are over four millions now in the bank and it will be clearly understood by everyone that more money will be available for the Commonwealth Bank than for our State Savings Bank. Now I urge the borrowing of English money for this purpose. The Minister said that it could not be done.

The Minister for Lands: I did not say it could not be done.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Advantageously, certainly. The Minister combated my suggestion that the money should be borrowed in England.

The Minister for Lands: Absolutely no.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am very pleased to hear it.

The Minister for Lands: I said we would probably have to do it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I understood the Minister to disagree with my contention that the money should be borrowed in England. I would point out to the Minister that he could lodge certain Agricultural Bank bonds with the Agent General in London and arrange by cable from time to time for amounts to be raised as he needs them. Year after year the amount loaned by the Agricultural Bank increases, and that means that money has to be borrowed from some place. I would suggest that the Minister consider seriously the question of borrowing at home now. We ought to give those people the accommodation we promised them, and the Minister ought to get the money away from Australia, because the taking of money away from circulation in this State at the present time would probably be doing as much harm as he does good by his Agricultural Bank loans. If the Pre-

mier, for instance, sent Agricultural Bank bonds to the Eastern States it would simply mean that money would be drawn from circulation here to take up those bonds. I contend that the private banks should have been encouraged. The very fact that the Minister is putting up the rate to four per cent. will have the effect of further hardening the rates charged by the private banks. The bank rate for advances on freehold securities was down to five per cent. a few years ago and it is to-day up to eight per cent., and I think the Minister for Lands' proposal is very unwise at this stage of our history and must mean dearer money. It has to be remembered that in the past Australian banking was carried on in a way altogether different from the ordinary banking of the world. Our banks were really banks that devoted themselves to the improvement of the country. They loaned money on mortgage against farms or for investment, but with the taking over of the note issue by the Federal Government and by the fact of many of our Treasurers borrowing money within the States, banking methods have changed, and I fear we shall not again have the banks of usefulness that we have had up till now. So I believe that these changes justify the Minister in going still further with the Agricultural Bank than he has done. I believe it would be well if in addition to meeting the requirements intended to be met by the bank we now have, he would include amongst the things the bank could advance money for, the putting in and taking off of the crop. It must be remembered that the cropping charge against the farmer is considerable. As I have previously pointed out, over a million and a quarter of money will have been invested by the people who put in the million odd acres of crop we have harvested this year. It is impossible for the farmers to have had this money, and if the use of the ordinary banks is to be restricted we should fill the gap if we can, and I believe we can if the Minister will make his capital sufficient and extend the Act to cover the things I have mentioned. I have pointed out to the Minister that money has not been available in the past.

I hope he will remember that, when dealing with the measure in Committee and permit some of the amendments I have mentioned. It would not be so easy a matter to urge all these things if it were not for the fact that the life of the country depends on the development of agriculture, and the development of agriculture depends, to a greater degree than ever before, upon the operations of the Agricultural Bank. Let us make it possible for the development we all believe in to be proceeded with. Let development go on apace, and let the agriculturists be given money at as low a rate of interest as possible and for a term sufficient to enable them to pay off their liabilities. Every one knows that the work of making a farm is a costly one, so costly that we can well advance money for a fair term of years in order that the work may be thoroughly done. But the Minister proposes, in connection with the borrowing of money to pay off a mortgage, that the trustees shall have the right to say what the term of the loan shall be. There may be some cases where that is all right, but if one man is to have 30 years in which to repay money borrowed to make a farm, why should not the man who borrows money on an improved farm have an equally fair chance to pay off his debt? The Minister gave no good reason for the alteration in this regard, but I have no doubt he will do so in Committee. In the meantime I see no reason for the change. I urge the Minister to give very serious consideration to the needs of the farmer. I can assure him in all honesty and without wishing to criticise the work of the past, that we are faced with a time of difficulty, and so far as I can read the signs there will not be for years the same desire on the part of the ordinary banks to take up mortgage business that existed in the past, so that farmers are placed in an altogether different situation. I think the Minister should extend the usefulness of the bank. People have been disappointed during the past twelve months, and I know full well that many will have to be refused during the next twelve months unless this capital is made much larger. There has been no desire to meet the re-

quirements of the people to any extent up to £2,000, which is the present authorised limit for any individual loan. The Premier knows that the bank must have much more money if it is to give effect to the Act as it stands to-day. I want this bank to be a real thing. The Minister cannot extend its operations too far to suit me, but I do not want it to be a sham. If we tell the people that we will lend them up to £2,000 let us do it, but the Government have no intention of doing that. So little intention have they of lending the people this £2,000 that they propose to give the trustees an amount that will not enable them to give effect to that clause in the Bill. I have nothing more to say except to again express the hope that the Minister will endeavour to make this bank do the work that the people expect it to do. It is not doing that work now, and I think it is to the everlasting disgrace of the Government that men have been disappointed and refused as they have been during the last twelve months.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Seaddan) : The hon. member for Northam, in bringing a charge against the Minister for Lands that he had been inconsiderate in his treatment of the farmers, attempted at one or two stages to produce some evidence to prove his assertion, but when he was challenged to adduce something definite by way of letters sent by the bank to the farmers he carefully shifted his ground and got on to another track. I do not propose to follow him in the whole of his arguments, if they can be termed such, more than to say that the volume of business done by the bank last year is sufficient to prove that the farmers are being treated as liberally, if not more liberally, by the present Government than ever previously in the history of the State.

Mr. Monger : I retire.

The PREMIER : The hon. member had better retire to the corridor where he spends so much of his time.

Mr. Monger : I can never make a mild interjection without the Premier trying to be very rude.

Mr. SPEAKER : I do not think the hon. member has much to complain about



because in rising from his seat and saying that he would retire he was showing discourtesy and rudeness to the Premier.

The PREMIER: As I was saying the volume of business done by the bank, is the best answer that can be given to the statements made by the hon. member for Northam that the Minister has not been considerate in his attitude towards the farmer. I want to explain that for a long time we have been endeavouring to impress upon our friends in Opposition that we have passed through a very trying period in the history of the State during the last twelve months, but notwithstanding that very trying period we have gone to the assistance of the farmers in such a way that they are grateful to the Government and have expressed their appreciation on many occasions. But we might easily, had we desired, in order to avoid some of the difficulties which I may claim were faced boldly and manfully, have closed up to some extent the operations of the Agricultural Bank, particularly in view of the fact that a great demand was made on the bank by those who had accepted the offer previously made by the chartered banks to lend money just as freely as the farmers were prepared to accept it. I want to say here that the fact that the chartered banks thought it desirable some years ago, when we had magnificent seasons, to have agents in the country offering money and almost compelling the farmers to take it, without being very cautious about their security, should not compel us, when a trying period overtakes the State, to boldly step into the breach and say, "Notwithstanding the condition of your security we will lift your mortgage with the chartered banks." Of course this matter is kept apart altogether from party considerations, but if we had cared to take into consideration the attitude adopted by the banks in order to prejudice the Labour party in the eyes of the people, we might easily, as a counterblast, have refused to assist all the farmers who had got into the clutches of the private banks

and on whom the institutions were trying to foreclose.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You could not refuse.

The PREMIER: There is nothing in the Act which compels the trustees to lend money to all and sundry. The trustees have power to use their discretion, and I, as Treasurer, have power to refuse to lend them money if I think it is in the interests of the State to so refuse. Whilst the trustees are operating as a bank and are responsible to us that the money provided for them by Parliament is properly loaned, yet the finding of the money rests with the Treasurer.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You must find the money.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is stating what is incorrect.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But Parliament says you must provide the money.

The PREMIER: Parliament says nothing of the kind. It increases the capital to a certain extent, but if, as Treasurer, I consider that it is not advisable to find the money that the trustees desire I can refuse to do so. Surely the hon. member must appreciate the fact that if it should happen that we had to pay an exorbitant rate for our money—

Hon. J. Mitchell: But you cannot pay more than 4 per cent. under the Act.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows very well that that itself may prevent the Treasurer from finding the money.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You must try to get it.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is shifting his ground. I say there is no compulsion.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I say you are compelled.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: I am not compelled. The hon. member says that I am only to find the money as long as I can get it at 4 per cent.; and he sees that if I cannot get it at 4 per cent. I could take advantage of that fact and refuse to advance money to the trustees of the bank for the purpose of helping the farmers to get out of the clutches of the chartered

banks. But we have not done that. While we have provided further money to assist the farmers in clearing and improving their land, at the same time we have given them assistance to get rid of liabilities to private institutions, and this was through the very trying period through which the State has been passing. I want both these facts to be taken in conjunction.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But you increased the limit to £2,000.

The PREMIER: It is absolutely in the discretion of the trustees of the bank as to whether they shall advance to the limit, and that was absolutely understood by Parliament when the provision was made.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No, it was not.

The PREMIER: What is the use of the hon. member taking up such an attitude?

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Minister for Lands said there would be no discretion.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is endeavouring to make the Minister for Lands as irresponsible a person as he is. It is only such an individual as the member for Northam who would make such a statement as that, that we are not going to ask any questions about security or anything else, and that we are to lend the money to all and sundry, all they ask for. Surely the hon. member as a manager of a bank would not suggest such a thing.

Hon. J. Mitchell: On a point of order, I said nothing of the sort. I made no such assertion, that we should advance money without security. The trustees must have the security.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a point of order it is an interjection.

The PREMIER: The hon. member continually says that the Minister for Lands stated no questions would be asked and that the money would be found and lent to the farmers without any questions being asked, but the position is too ridiculous for this Chamber to consider. We must ask questions to decide whether the security is right. The best answer to the hon. member is the amount we loaned last year under different purposes.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What has that to do with it?

The PREMIER: It has everything to do with it. One would imagine by the hon. member's remarks that we closed down the bank for the last 12 months.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You did, to a lot of people.

Mr. Munsie: Did you ever turn down applicants?

The PREMIER: The hon. member knew nothing about it. He left it to the trustees, the same as we are doing. He found the money and the trustees loaned it. Has he not come to the House as Minister for Lands and boasted of the fact that the trustees of the bank were the gentlemen to decide. He left it in their control; we are doing the same, the only difference being that by the liberalisation of the conditions under which loans are made we are having a greater demand upon the Treasury. For the year ending 30th June, 1911, when our friends opposite were in power, they lent £283,157 through the Agricultural Bank, of which only £4,517 was to lift liabilities.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Of course interest was cheap outside then.

The PREMIER: I want to make the point that of this £283,000 only £4,500 was loaned for this purpose.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We did not profess to do that.

The PREMIER: For the last financial year ending 30th June, 1912, we loaned from the Agricultural Bank £405,942, or £122,000 more than our friends opposite in the immediate preceding year, and we did it at a time when we had depressing conditions in the State, and when money was not flowing so freely as when they were in power, with the result it had on the condition of the Savings Bank deposits, which the hon. member will admit.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Savings Bank deposits have increased.

The PREMIER: In the year following the greatest harvest experienced in Western Australia all they could find was £283,157, of which they advanced £4,517 to lift liabilities, whereas we found £405,942 in the worst period of the State,

and of this £43,267 was to relieve farmers from the pressure of chartered banks.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What did you refuse to find?

Mr. Munsie: Not as much as you did.

The PREMIER: I want to mention that we authorised £88,000 for the purpose of lifting liabilities, but only £43,000 was taken up, but we pledged ourselves to provide £88,000 for the purpose.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The private banks would not release them.

The PREMIER: Probably; and then the hon. member says we refused to do this. We approved of £88,000 and we pledged ourselves to find that amount, while £405,000 was actually taken up by the agriculturists in this State.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What is the use of multiplying the limit by three if that is the best you can do?

The PREMIER: If the hon. member cannot find a better argument against the Government than the operations of the Agricultural Bank it is undoubtedly weak. We find that £405,000 was advanced last year, but what is the position to-day? The very moment that the hon. member is complaining about the bank refusing to advance to farmers—

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why did you put up the rate?

The PREMIER: Never mind about the rate. I am only trying to tell the hon. member something about the operations of the bank he knows nothing about. For the four months of this current financial year up to the 31st October we authorised £249,425, almost as much as the hon. member did in his full year.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Have you paid that away?

The PREMIER: We have paid away £223,000.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is very good. Multiply it by three and you will be all right.

The PREMIER: The hon. member evidently recognises the weakness of his case.

Hon. J. Mitchell: How many men have you refused?

The PREMIER: This money has been paid away already in the first four months

of the financial year, but I can tell him something better than that—that at the very moment the hon. member is complaining that we are not assisting the farmers in the hands of the chartered banks we are providing £70,393 to lift liabilities, only about 20 times the amount the hon. member provided in his whole year; and yet the hon. member says we are not trying to assist the agriculturists against the pressure of the chartered banks.

Mr. Layman: There is plenty of scope for you to continue.

The PREMIER: There is another croaker.

Mr. Layman: I appreciate the work the bank is doing.

The PREMIER: The hon. member apparently appreciates the work the bank is doing, and he will not support the statements of the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell). On the contrary I contend the member for Northam spoke out of his turn. He did not first furnish himself with the proper information. There is no record to compare with the operations of the Agricultural Bank for the past four months. There is nothing on record in any part of Australia to compare with it.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is only £2,000 to 110 people, if each got the limit.

The PREMIER: The hon. member will harp on the question of the limit.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is all-important.

The PREMIER: It is not all-important. The object of making the limitation was to give discretion to the trustees of the bank if they thought it desirable, so that if they thought settlers should be loaned up to £2,000 they should be able to do it.

Hon. J. Mitchell: To discriminate?

The PREMIER: It allows them to discriminate to a pound if they like.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I think I will have a sleep now.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member intend to lead the House to believe that if a farmer asks for £500 the trustees should not be able to question him as to whether it should be £300 or £500? Frequently the trustees discriminate, not

from the standpoint of the land itself, but from the standpoint of the man who is occupying it and working it. Is it not wise to do so?

Hon. J. Mitchell: They must do that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member will appreciate the fact that the security of the land itself is not always taken into account, and that while one may make an application for £2,000 and be turned down after consideration by the trustees, another man may obtain it. I hope that will always be done, and that we will not have the policy in the bank that the hon. member urges, that the trustees should lend the money without asking any questions.

Mr. Dooley: The hon. member does not mean that.

The PREMIER: That is what the hon. member says. It would be a policy that would bring about ruination to the bank, to the settlers, and to the State as a whole. We have heard a lot about the Treasurer looking serious at the question of finding money.

Hon. J. Mitchell: He ought to.

The PREMIER: It looks as if I am very serious about the matter when I point out that I have found £223,000 for the four months of this year at the time our friends opposite have been croaking and permitting all and sundry to do such injury in regard to further loans by sending telegrams to the Eastern States to print in the *Argus* what they would not print in our local journal.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Who sent them?

The PREMIER: The friends of members opposite, the Liberals.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I deny that any member of this side of the House did any such thing.

The PREMIER: I am not referring to the hon. member. I am referring to those he represents, the Liberals of the State, who would do anything in the interests of their party, even to the extent of injuring the interests of the State. In the last four or five weeks they have done more to injure the interests of the State than ever in the history of the State, and it was all done for the purpose of damaging this party. Those gen-

tlemen on every occasion talk about patriotism to the Empire. I say the first duty is to be patriotic to one's State, even if it means at times to put one's party in the background, but our friends opposite are more concerned about party and their desire to damage the Labour party than they are concerned with the interests of the State.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We are not.

The PREMIER: Why was it desired to publish telegrams in the *Argus* damaging the State?

Hon. J. Mitchell: Who published them?

The PREMIER: Our friends opposite, or those they represent, the so-called Liberals, are responsible for supplying information in telegrams which our principal morning journal, the *West Australian*, refused to publish because they knew it was discrediting the interests of the State. But our friends opposite are not concerned about that; they are more concerned with the interests of the party. Does it look as if we are unable to obtain money when we are able to provide £250,000 in four months of this bad year to lend to the farmers, when our friends could only lend £283,000 in their year at a time when the State had the best harvest in its history? Is it not time our friends opposite knocked off their croaking; when they find we are doing something in the interests of the State, is it not time they gave us credit for doing something?

Hon. J. Mitchell: Then why put off men from the public works?

The PREMIER: The hon. member is again shifting ground. He finds that there is nothing in his arguments and now he asks why should we put off men from the public works.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You say you can get the money, well, get the money.

The PREMIER: The hon. member will know all about that in time. I have never been refused money when I have asked for it, but I know that it was the concern of our friends opposite, and they have done their very best, to prevent us getting money, but the interests of the State will be considered by those who desire to in-

vest money and not the interests of the party as desired by our friends opposite. However, I do not propose to follow the arguments of the hon. member any further. I have shown the House by the figures I have quoted that the farmer has got more consideration from the operations of the Agricultural Bank during the past year than ever previously in the history of the State, and at the very moment that the hon. member is accusing us of refusing to render proper assistance to the agriculturists we have done as much in four months as they did in twelve months.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You are an optimist.

The PREMIER: Whether I am or not I hope I will ever be one of those who have the courage to stand up for the credit of the State and who do not try to belittle it on every occasion.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Who does that?

The PREMIER: If the hon. member and his colleagues opposite have not been doing it during this session I have yet to learn what it means.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You said the Liberals did it.

The PREMIER: I am not accusing the hon. member of being one, but our friends opposite are endeavouring to discredit the State. The hon. member now demands the right in something else. I am speaking of what is occurring at the present moment. I hope the time has arrived when our friends opposite will cease from croaking and see the wisdom of assisting the State.

Mr. Layman: We all enjoy seeing you get unlimited credit.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is too amusing for notice. I would rather believe that he is still acting as whip of his party, and therefore must take his policy from his leaders sitting on the front bench, and that even if it means discrediting the State he will whip the party up to it. I have no misgivings about the future operations of the Agricultural Bank, but I want to ask the House, when we are finding this huge sum of money at four per cent. interest, is it desirable that we should continue to relieve the farmers of their obligations with the char-

tered banks immediately we strike a bad period in the State, farmers who are responsible for the position in which they have got themselves? I say we should only do it as far as it assists the agricultural industry and not the individual.

Mr. Gill: And particularly not the chartered banks.

The PREMIER: If the action of the chartered banks during the last few months has been detrimental to the industry—

Mr. Layman: It is worse than detrimental, it is criminal.

The PREMIER: Well I hope the hon. member is speaking with the authority and in the capacity of whip of his party. If it has been criminal I am not going to refuse to borrow money at any price within reason for the purpose of assisting those in the agricultural industry, but I have yet to learn that it is possible to do more than we have been doing. Within four months we have, to the extent of £70,000, relieved the strain put on farmers by the chartered banks, besides lending the farmers over £180,000 on improvements. Under the circumstances I think I have said sufficient to prove that the operations of the Agricultural Bank are more liberal to-day than at any time previously, and that through the bank we have done a great deal to prevent disaster to the agricultural industry. Therefore, is it not a fair thing to ask those who have previously run to the chartered banks, which can put on the screw whenever they desire, that instead of dealing with the chartered banks they should bring themselves under the operations of the Agricultural Bank, in which position, so long as they make the interest payments and the proportionate instalments due, they will never have pressure put on them, no matter what the condition of the State may be? But if they prefer to go to the chartered banks and pay seven, eight, or nine per cent. in good times, just in order that they may get a little more than the Agricultural Bank will lend them, is it fair that we should borrow money at any price for the purpose of coming to the assistance, not so much of

the agriculturists themselves as of the chartered banks? I say it is not fair. We have done all that we can do, and it is not fair that we should be asked to provide at five per cent. money to lift these six or seven per cent. mortgages. I contend that the Bill is a fair one to all parties, and should be accepted.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore): I think there is much in what the Premier has said. It is not incumbent upon the State to lift mortgages of the chartered banks at a rate of interest as low as that at which the Agricultural Bank is prepared to advance money for improvements on property on first mortgage. It is not unreasonable that if a man desires to lift a mortgage so as to enable him to obtain an advance from the State at five per cent., he should at any rate have to pay a rate rather in excess of what he is likely to obtain money from the Agricultural Bank for. I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that the large area of country between here and Geraldton is utterly exempt from the operations of the Agricultural Bank, and I regret that no means have been devised by the Government under which the men who have taken up areas from the Midland Railway Company can be assisted by the Agricultural Bank. This is an important area of country, a splendid wheat-producing country, and there are to be found in it many crops which, this season, will go as high as 40 bushels of wheat to the acre. This is just the time when these people are likely to require assistance, owing to the fact that those who purchased land from the Midland Railway Company were unable under the Act to obtain advances from the Agricultural Bank. This land has been taken up by persons with a certain amount of means, limited in many instances, and now, at this period of their operations, many of them are coming to the end of that limit. Now is the time the assistance of the Agricultural Bank would be invaluable to them. Moreover, as power is given under the Act to advance money to pay off mortgages, it seems to me there is a way out of this difficulty by the Government advancing money to pay off the amount

due to the Midland Railway Company, and then bringing those people under the operations of the Agricultural Bank without any risk whatever to the State. For instance, a man who has bought 1,000 acres from the Midland Company at, say, £1 per acre pays 10 per cent. deposit and 15 annual instalments on the balance, with interest added at four per cent. Suppose that man has purchased 1,000 acres; he pays up the £100 deposit and the balance of the £1,000 is paid off in annual instalments of virtually £60 with four per cent. added.

The Minister for Lands: Is it four per cent. or five per cent.?

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: It is four per cent. Say a man has held his land for five years: he will have paid off his £100 deposit, and in five years will have paid another £300; so that will have brought the liability on his land down to £600. He may have cleared 500 acres out of his 1,000 acres, built a home, fenced, and perhaps paid for water provision. Now he desires to continue operations and clear the rest of his land, and at this time an advance from the Agricultural Bank would be of the very greatest assistance to him. I think, therefore, the State would be running no risk in paying off the Midland Railway Company the balance of £600 on such a property as I speak of, for which the settler has to pay £1,000, and upon which will be found improvements probably to the value of another £1,000. The State will be acquiring a mortgage on property worth certainly £2,000. The State will be paying to the Midland Company, which is not in the position of a chartered bank, the sum of £600, and thus will enable the owner to borrow another couple of hundred pounds with which to clear the rest of his holding, and get the whole of it into working order. If assistance such as this could be given to many settlers in this area it would be of great advantage to the State. I fully recognise that, as far as the railways are concerned, the State would not benefit by the increased production of this land; but still in other ways the State would benefit, although the Government railways may not get any traffic, for every 100

acres brought into use and rendered productive is of great value to the State, outside the question of bringing traffic to the railways. The Minister for Lands was good enough to inform me last session that he would go into this question, but up to the present, I believe, he has not been able to devise any scheme by which the settlers in that area might be assisted. At the same time I am quite certain the Minister must be sympathetic towards them, although it has been the policy of the past to as little as possible assist the development of the Midland Company's country, owing to the fact that the railway does not belong to the State. I recognise that has been the accepted policy of the past, and if there is any objection to be raised against that policy it is not to be laid at the doors of the present Government any more than at those of past Governments.

The Minister for Lands: Not so much.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The Midland railway is still in the hands of a private company, but I am pleased to say that the railway is being run very much better than it was in the past, and every assistance is being rendered to settlers to lift their produce and enable them to get to market. For that reason I think the Government might take this matter into consideration and endeavour to help those settlers in that vast area of country.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Would the Midland Railway Company lift their mortgage to allow the Agricultural Bank to get a first mortgage?

[Mr. McDowall took the Chair.]

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Under the Agricultural Bank Act the money cannot be advanced except on first mortgage. That is perfectly right. I have nothing to say against that; still if the Government were able to lift that mortgage, as they have the power to do, then they would come in as first mortgagees and might be able to render the settlers a certain amount of assistance: perhaps not so much as they render to settlers in other parts of Western Australia, but still something might be done to render assistance to those in

this district who require it. There are many settlers in this area who do not require assistance. Some have been established for a long time, and others have been men of capital from the beginning. They, of course, do not require assistance. But there are many men of limited means in Western Australia, and we want to see these men settled on the land. These men, perhaps, have a few hundred pounds and after this money has been spent they get into difficulties owing to their funds being depleted. Those are the people the Agricultural Bank was intended to assist. The bank was not established so much for the people who go on to the land with nothing at all, because it is impossible for men to go on the land with nothing. A man requires so many things in the first instance to enable him to make a start; it is very difficult for a man to go on the land without some capital. He has his team to buy, horses, carts, and ploughs, and machinery to purchase, and it is impossible for a man to go on the land with nothing at all, unless to save time he spends six months of the year in taking contract work and in this way making money. I hope the Minister for Lands has not lost sight of this matter. I shall be glad to hear that he has been giving it his attention. It has exercised the minds very materially of a large number of settlers in this area, extending from Midland Junction to Walkaway, and if any means can be devised by which assistance can be given to those settlers by paying off the Midland Railway Company and taking a first mortgage on the land, the Government will be doing a great benefit to the people and a lasting benefit to the State. I shall be glad to hear that the Minister has considered the question, and I shall be glad to learn, and it will be interesting for the House to learn, and for the people to learn, whether the Minister has found the objections there are to starting on a scheme such as I have mentioned insurmountable. As far as the Bill itself is concerned I cannot see that really there is any very great objection to it. The Agricultural Bank has been of very great advantage, and I am sure the Government are desirous of seeing that the bank should, during their

regime at any rate, be of equal advantage to the farmers of Western Australia, while at the same time conserving the interests of the State.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin): I heartily congratulate the Minister for Lands in introducing this Bill, the object of which is to increase the capital of the Agricultural Bank by half a million pounds, thus making the capital  $3\frac{1}{2}$  million pounds. I find on looking at the last available report of the Agricultural Bank, namely that for the year ending 30th June, 1911, that up to that date the bank had actually advanced £1,540,241, for which amount improvements to the value of £1,729,291 had been effected. It is certainly remarkable that although the Government have only been in power for one year they have had to increase the capital of the bank twice, bringing it, as now proposed, up to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions; and the Premier has told us that the bank are advancing now at the rate of practically a quarter of a million pounds every four months, which is as much as the late Government advanced in a whole year. This shows the splendid work the present Government have done in liberalising the Agricultural Bank. At the same time I would have cordially supported the Minister for Lands if he had seen fit, while he was about it, to decide to increase the capital of this institution to five million pounds. There is no doubt the Agricultural Bank requires to be largely strengthened to meet the requirements of the people on the land and to fight the private banks, and even if the money was not raised in London or elsewhere straight away I would have been glad to see the Minister increase the capital to five millions while he was about it. If the advances are to continue at the rate of a quarter of a million every four months, and I hope at a much greater rate than that in the immediate future, we shall certainly require a greater capital than that now proposed. I wish in passing to briefly refer to the attitude the members of the Liberal party have taken over this measure. It is gratifying to see their complete conversion to our policy of a liberal Agricultural Bank, and it is also gratifying to see that they are anxious

that the capital of the Agricultural Bank shall be so largely increased especially as we remember that less than two years ago when the Liberal party were administering the government of this country they strongly opposed any liberalising of the Agricultural Bank. The limit of advance at that time was £750, and when the member for Albany tried to increase the amount that could be made to a settler to £1,000, the member for Northam, then the Minister for Lands, opposed it strenuously by voice and by his vote.

Hon. J. Mitchell: He wanted to buy machinery.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: And that unfortunate action was followed by the whole of his party at that time. The member for Albany did propose that the amount available for machinery should be increased from £100 to £250, which the member for Northam opposed. The member for Albany also made a second proposition that the amount of advance should be increased to £1,000 irrespective of the purpose to which the money was required, and the late Government opposed that. I hope the farmers will contrast the present action of the Government with the action of the late Government. As soon as the present Government came into office they made the limit available to each farmer £2,000, subject to the discretion of the trustees, I would like to point out that at the time when the limit was £750 under the conservative administration of the late Minister for Lands, that is at the end of 1910, only eleven people had succeeded in getting the limit of £750, and the hon. member quoted that as a reason that a larger limit was not required, although he knew that reason was not the correct one. I am glad that under the present Government the administration has improved, and the limit for advances has largely increased.

Hon. J. Mitchell: They cannot get the money.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: They are getting the money, and the Labour Government have advanced more money to the farmers in the last four months than you gave them in a year. Although to-



day the farmers are obtaining from the Agricultural Bank more money in four months than previously they got in a year. I would like to see farmers getting in a month more than the late Government gave them in a year, and I believe it will come to that. I am sorry in introducing this measure that the Minister for Lands has not decided to decrease the application fee of one per cent. that is required by the bank. Now that we are making such large advances and people are applying for £1,000, £1,500, and £2,000 at a time, I think the application fee should be reduced to an amount sufficient to cover the actual cost of inspection by the Agricultural Bank officer. It was never intended that we should ask a man to deposit as much as £20 with his application for a loan, and that the bank should retain that amount. I hope the Minister will consent to amend the Act so that the deposit with the application shall be only enough to cover the cost of the inspection. At any rate if a larger deposit is required to be lodged only a sufficient fee to cover the cost of the inspection should be retained by the bank after the application is dealt with. I wish to express my disagreement with the proposal to increase the interest to 6 per cent. on certain loans. The Government are still retaining the interest at 5 per cent. on all loans for future improvements on the land. That will certainly cover most of the advances being made, but when a man has done improvements with money from a private banking institution and the Agricultural Bank afterwards decided to take him over, it should not be desired to penalise him by charging him 6 per cent. interest, especially as we remember the Savings Bank are only paying 3 per cent. interest to depositors, and that all our loans so far have been floated under four per cent. Why is it this increase is being made?

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Because we are paying more for money.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Not yet. We are not paying the Savings Bank more. Surely one per cent. is a sufficient margin for all expenses. I cannot understand why

it is not, because the last report of the Agricultural Bank available, that for the year ending 30th June, 1911, says that the profit for the year was £6,752 18s. 6d. as against £6,823 3s. 11d. for the preceding year. In view of the fact that we have shown a profit of £7,000 a year—

The Minister for Lands: Work that out on the capital involved.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We do not want to make a profit out of the farmers on these transactions. The desire of the Government should be to cover the cost of administration and working expenses only. It is a pity we have not the report of the Agricultural Bank for the past year before us; perhaps that would show a reason for this altered policy. If we still make a profit of £7,000 a year I for one strongly oppose the suggestion to increase the rate of interest to 6 per cent. to farmers who are being taken over from other financial institutions and to the farmers buying stock and machinery, and I hope the Minister, whose sympathies with the agriculturists are so well known, will reconsider his proposals in this connection. I would like to remark that under the Workers' Homes Act to those people who pay their interest up to time only 5½ per cent. interest is charged, and many private money lenders are willing to lend money on good securities as low as 5 per cent. There is money available on good securities at that rate from time to time, but whether it is so or not, one per cent. allowance is a sufficient margin for the Government, and there is no reason to charge any farmer a higher rate of interest than the Government are charging to an applicant for a workers' home. He has been let off with 5½ per cent., and I hope the Minister for Lands will stick to the rate of 5 per cent. originally introduced by Sir John Forrest, which has been charged right up to the present time, and on which the bank has every year made a fairly substantial profit.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You took no exception to the 5½ per cent. for workers' homes.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I would have strongly supported the fixing of the in-

terest at 5 per cent., and will support the Minister if he brings down a Bill.

Mr. Foley: You did not object when the Bill was before the House.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I hope the Minister will give us fuller reasons as to why 6 per cent. should be charged. The bare statement that perhaps in future we will have to pay a higher rate of interest on our money does not cover the case. With this reservation, I have pleasure in supporting the measure.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (in reply): I have little to say in reply because I think the figures which I was able to supply to the Premier in regard to the operations, not only for the year in comparison with the year which preceded it, but also for the four months ending 31st October, very effectively dissipated the criticisms of the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) in regard to the bank not being of assistance to the agriculturists at the present juncture. All those who have any knowledge of the work of the bank since December, 1911, will realise that the pressure of work in that institution has been tremendous, and that not only the Managing Trustee, but the Deputy Managing Trustee and all his staff have been working at top pressure, and it was only necessary to go there at any time during office hours and even after office hours to find that institution thronged with agriculturists whose wants were being met by that institution. As a matter of fact I think that a certain amount of good work was being partially nullified by the delays occasioned by this pressure and to obviate that we not only had portion of the staff taken from the Crown Law Department and placed under the roof of the Agricultural Bank to facilitate the preparation of mortgages, but I authorised increases in expenditure, which are in evidence in the Estimates we have passed, in order that the work might be facilitated and that the delays which have been occasioned owing to this pressure might be obviated so far as possible. In regard to the question of capital, I have to point out that this capital is to carry us over the interregnum between

now and the next assembling of Parliament. If we find it insufficient for the term for which the increase is authorised, then on the assembling of Parliament in June next we shall be able to authorise sufficient capital to carry on the institution. In regard to the question of the future operations of the bank and the rate of interest to be charged, I wish to point out to the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) in the first place that the profit may seem to be a substantial margin, but if he will calculate it on the amount of the capital involved he will see it is a very small margin, and that is earned by reason of the fact that many of the advances have been provided in the past by mortgage bonds, which were issued in some instances at  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. and in other instances at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., but when the present leader of the Opposition was Colonial Treasurer he decided that it was not a sound proposition for the Savings Bank to pay depositors 3 per cent. and to lend the money out at less than 4 per cent., and in order to make the Savings Bank perfectly solvent the rate of interest to the Agricultural Bank, to the Water Supply, and to other departments using Savings Bank money was increased to 4 per cent. The bonds which were issued by the Agricultural Bank at this low rate of interest are being redeemed, and we have a constantly increasing amount of capital which is bearing interest at 4 per cent. and therefore that margin is going to be less in future than it has been in the past. Again, owing to the extension of the work of the Agricultural Bank, particularly in the far wheat areas, the work is naturally more expensive than when the field of the operations of the bank was compact and comparatively small in relation to what it is to-day, and these factors have to be taken into consideration, and I say the margin of 1 per cent. is insufficient in so far as the conduct of the bank is concerned. It has been pointed out by the member for Northam that the interest under the existing Act is set down at 4 per cent., but loans at 4 per cent. may have to be floated at a discount, and that

fact has to be taken into consideration. If we go on the market in London, as urged by the hon. member, which I say will probably be necessary owing to the enormous increase in the operations of the bank, we not only have to take into consideration the interest we pay but also the expenses of flotation and we also have to consider the fact that a great portion of that capital will not be earning the interest paid by the Agricultural Bank clients, but the interest on it will have to be paid to the bond holders in London, whereas under the provision by which at present we get money from the Savings Bank, we need only call on the Savings Bank for the money as we use it, and from the time we pay interest to the Savings Bank we secure interest from the clients of the Agricultural Bank, and so we have no unremunerative money or money earning a lower rate of interest than that received from the clients as we would if we went on the London market for a loan for a specific time. In regard to the question of making advances to settlers on the Midland Railway line, it is true that during last session I promised I would go into the matter and if the Midland Railway Company were willing to meet us so that we could comply with the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act, I could see no reason why we should not afford the same assistance to settlers in the Midland Railway area as to other settlers, and in pursuance of the promise I asked that the matter should be discussed between the Managing Trustee and the local representatives of the Midland Railway Company, but there has been no result. I have asked for some proposal from the Midland Railway Company by which we could meet the wishes of the settlers in that locality, but we have had no suggestion or offer of assistance so far from the representative of the Midland Railway Company, and if this is to be done they will have to meet us in this direction, or as a part of their activities in connection with the settlement of their lands institute some such system as that upon which the Agricultural Bank is being worked in the way of making advances to settlers under

their auspices. It will be better for the institution in existence and carrying on the same work in other parts of the State to do the work for the Midland settlers, and if they are willing to meet us in this respect and enable us to make these advances and at the same time comply with the Act, I for one will not stand in the way but will rather facilitate that being carried out.

#### *Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 16:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Again he urged the Minister to increase the capital by more than £500,000. While it was true Parliament would probably be called together again in eight months' time, it was equally true that the pressure of business did not permit of considering such legislation on the first day Parliament met.

The Minister for Lands: There is no difficulty in getting a Bill of that kind in.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There was difficulty, and the Minister had had insufficient authorisation in the past. He was not hostile to the proposal, but the Minister should have sufficient authority to enable him to give effect to the law. There should be no discrimination. All entitled to advances should receive them. As he intended to move an amendment in this direction, the Minister should agree to increase the amount. The trustee could only lend the money once. Since the Minister had some money at a cheap rate it would have been wise to amend the Act and fix the capital at a certain sum, so that the money could remain with the trustee. That would mean losing a little interest, but the business would have been more satisfactory, as we would have been dealing with  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. instead of 4 per cent. money.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This was a matter which was entirely for the

Treasurer who was more immediately concerned. It would be no use for him as Minister for Lands flying a kite and saying he would add another million or two million pounds, but if he did not have the assurance of the Treasurer that he would be able to make that money available, in conjunction with the other requirements of the State, during the time it would be needed, it would not be of much use making the promise the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) desired. The amount provided for in the Bill had been framed after consultation with the Treasurer, and therefore, under the circumstances, the hon. member's suggestion could not be accepted. If, as it was urged by the hon. member, we had to go elsewhere than the Savings Bank for the necessary money for this institution then this would have, to stand with all the other requirements of the State for railways, public works of various kinds, and it would have to be included in the total amount which the Treasurer would have to finance from time to time. The amount mentioned in the Bill would be quite sufficient to carry us over to the beginning of next Parliament.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Treasurer had stated that he could get all the money he needed and we were wrong in saying that we were hard up. It was possible in a few months' time that money would be cheap in London and the Minister should have the power to borrow a larger amount. It was difficult to understand the Minister resisting the suggestion to increase the capital in view of the statement that the Government could get money.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The proposal of the member for Northam met with his support. The Minister need not borrow money straight away but he might agree to increase the capital.

The Minister for Lands: What is the good of making a pretence?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It was not making a pretence. It might be borrowed as it was wanted.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Interest on and repayment of advances otherwise than for improvements:

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved an amendment—

*That in line 1 of paragraph (a) the word "six" be struck out and "five" inserted in lieu.*

The object was to reduce the rate of interest from 6 to 5 per cent. He admitted that it was the Minister's responsibility to see that the bank had sufficient margin to cover working costs, but there was a discrimination here by imposing 6 per cent. in one instance and 5 per cent. in another. If the Minister considered that there had to be increased interest, let all be treated alike.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON found himself in unaccustomed accord with the member for Northam and he hoped the Minister would hesitate before he made one section of the farmers, even if it was a small section, namely those whose lands were taken over by the Agricultural Bank or who borrowed for stock or machinery, pay a higher rate than was charged the usual settler. This would be a most unpopular movement and it was wrong.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was not a question of doing a thing that might be unpopular, it was doing a thing which was considered necessary to safeguard the interests of the institution. He had already outlined the reasons which had actuated him, and also those who had the opportunity of considering the Bill, in making the increase in the amount of interest apply, as it would in the majority of cases, to obligations taken over from other institutions. There was good reason for differentiation between the rate of interest charged for effected improvements and the rate proposed in the clause. In effected improvements we were continually adding to the security of the holding and materially assisting the financing of the State, an argument which did not apply to anything like the same extent to an obligation which happened to be transferred. Moreover, the interest could easily be altered in the future if, as predicted by the member for Northam money became cheaper. What was being done now was merely to safeguard the interests of the institution. So far the institution had kept on the right side of the ledger,

but the smallest amount of maladministration or departure from a careful attitude on the part of the trustees would convert that small profit into a loss, especially when we took into consideration the large amount of money upon which that small profit was earned.

Mr. MONGER: It had been his intention to give the Bill further consideration at an earlier stage and he wanted to read for the information of the Premier a telegram which he had just received, asking him to arrange with the Premier to receive a deputation from one of the Minister for Works' favourite organisations at Emu Hill on the question of deferred rents. These people were arriving to-night. What he had desired to do was to get the consideration of the Bill deferred until this deputation had received a reply from the Premier. Would he be in order in moving the adjournment of the debate?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could move to report progress.

The Attorney General: That deputation has nothing to do with the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. MONGER moved—

*That progress be reported.*

Motion negatived.

Mr. MONGER: The increase in the rate of interest was not going to add to the credit of the Minister for Lands. The desire of the present Administration was to increase everything all round. He hoped that better counsels would prevail, and that those who were most closely allied with the land would say that 5 per cent. was a sufficiently high rate for the settlers to endure. This penal clause should not be given effect to.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: An advance of one per cent. on the £74,000 advanced to pay off loans and purchase stock and machinery would bring to the Minister £740 per annum. The bank had made a profit of something over £8,000 last year, and while he admitted it was not possible for the bank to make a greater profit, having regard to the small margin between the rate at which the money was borrowed and the rate at which it was loaned, still the

institution was not out to make a profit, and so long as it made ends meet we ought to be content. The bank had a fairly substantial reserve fund, and so long as its operations balanced, there was no need to increase the rate of interest. He asked the committee to consider whether it was wise and just to increase the rate of interest when such increase was not necessary to save the country from loss. A profit of £8,000 had been made by good management, and the increase of the rate by one per cent. would only raise the profit to £8,740.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The arguments against raising the interest to 6 per cent. in some cases were based upon the assumption that the bank was to continue working on the limited basis on which it had worked in the past. The object of the Bill was to enlarge the scope of the bank's operations and in doing so to enlarge the capital. That capital had to be borrowed, and the hon. member for Northam had admitted that at the present time there was some stress in the money market, and that money could not be obtained as cheaply to-day as a few years ago and as it would be some time hence. In the meantime the Bill made provision for the immediate position. The hon. member admitted that there was a profit due to good management, and that management was now asking for an increase of one per cent.; that was part and parcel of the good management; it was in the interests of good management that the increase was made. He would be glad if all settlers could get their loans at one per cent., or two per cent., or even without interest, but when the bank had to borrow its own capital it must have a margin for working expenses, for however good the management might be, when the scope of the operations was extended, there must be losses in the future, and the general taxpayer must be safeguarded against liabilities on that score. The hon. member said that the Bill made a distinction between one class of borrower and another; there was no distinction in the classes of borrowers. The same individual might borrow some money at 6 per cent. and some at 5 per cent.;

the distinction was in the purposes to which the loan was to be devoted.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why make it ?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was necessary to make it. The 6 per cent. borrowing was in the direct interest of the development of the State. The other borrowing, for which 6 per cent. was to be charged, might be considered more or less of a luxury. The object of the increment to 6 per cent. was to enable the institution to take over mortgages held by private institutions.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why should you not ?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The bank did that, and at a rate below what was being paid to the private institutions. It was only now, when money was dear, that the Government were asking to do this. In any banking institution to-day the mortgagee required more than 6 per cent., and if the Agricultural Bank took over the mortgage at 6 per cent. it was granting the mortgagor a boon; in fact, he was being saved 2 per cent.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Are you going to take him over?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That had been done repeatedly. The chief purpose of this 6 per cent. borrowing was to take over the mortgages from private institutions.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The borrower should have the money at 5 per cent.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: He should have it at 4 per cent., 3 per cent., 2 per cent., or nothing. If the bank was to extend the scope of its operations and take over these mortgages on a large scale, the cost of management would require the increment of one per cent., in order to cover expenses, and to give a safe margin for risks. The hon. member was trying to win some little feather to put in his cap when he wandered whistling and smiling amongst the cockies, but if he was controlling the bank he would play a different tune, as he always had done when he was in charge of another banking institution. Let us do all we could to help the settler through the bank, but at the same time see that the bank had sufficient vital energy to continue for more than a few years to come. We had to look to the

safety of the bank, and in extending its scope of usefulness to the settlers, this 6 per cent. for the luxuries of borrowing, as against borrowing for the development of the land, was a necessity and a right, and the settlers would not object to it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Attorney General had put it in an altogether different way by saying this was a penalty for borrowing to pay off a liability.

The Attorney General: I said nothing of the kind.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: According to the Attorney General it was payment for a luxury, and the man who borrowed to pay off a liability to another bank was a man who could afford to pay a higher rate of interest.

The Attorney General: We relieve him of some of his percentage.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The object of the bank was to help to make improvements. The Minister said last session in dealing with an amendment to the Agricultural Bank Act—

I see no reason, except, perhaps, in particular instances, why the bank should dictate as to how that money should be expended.

The Minister for Lands: That is the same thing. He gets his advance on security if he has effected improvements.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: When the man borrowed from another bank he had effected the improvements, yet in one short year the Minister turned back on his policy. Last year we were going to do the business of all banks: to-day we were doing the business of a small country bank.

The Minister for Lands: You are repeating the misstatements you made on the second reading.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister was going back on his tracks, and the argument that the man who borrowed to pay for a liability should pay one per cent. more than the man borrowing to effect improvements was absolutely opposed to the argument used twelve months previously. We were now making sufficient profit out of the bank to safeguard the public without asking for additional interest.

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

Ayes .. .. .	7
Noes .. .. .	25
Majority against ..	18

## AYES.

Mr. Johnston	Mr. Moore	
Mr. Male	Mr. F. Wilson	
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Harper	
Mr. Monger		(Teller).

## NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mullany	
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munslie	
Mr. Bath	Mr. O Loughlen	
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Scaddan	
Mr. Dooley	Mr. B. J. Stubbs	
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. S. Stubbs	
Mr. Foley	Mr. Taylor	
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Thomas	
Mr. Gill	Mr. Underwood	
Mr. Green	Mr. Walker	
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson	
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Heilmann	
Mr. McDowall		(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved—

*That the following be added to the Bill to stand as a new clause, "It shall be obligatory on the part of the trustees to lend money to every applicant except (1) where the money is not available, (2) the security is considered by the trustees to be insufficient, (3) the applicant is considered by the trustees to be undesirable as a client of the bank.*

There should be no discrimination. One could agree with the words used by the Minister last session in accepting an amendment from the Council—"That when Parliament provided State assistance on behalf of the citizens there ought to be no discrimination between the poor and the rich citizen; all should rank alike." It should be clear that the Act should be given effect to. If a man required £2,000 and the trustees thought the security was sufficient the advance should be made as long as the money was available. There were some whose names should not appear among the borrowers from the bank, so Subclause 3 of the proposed clause provided that the

bank need not lend where the applicant was undesirable. In the past some got the limit and others who offered perfectly good security were refused. One applicant whose security was valued by the inspector at £8,000 asked for £2,000 and was refused. If an application set out a value of security that was not in accordance with fact the application fee was not refunded notwithstanding the application was refused, but in this case the application fee was refunded, though the advance was refused. Discrimination was shown. No word could be urged against the applicant or his family of his security. It was entirely business the bank could undertake according to the Minister when he introduced the Bill last year. The first man to receive consideration should be the small borrower struggling to make a home for himself; but since we had made it possible to borrow up to £2,000, it was our duty to provide the funds to meet all demands. The advantages of the law should be for everyone alike just as the disadvantages of the law applied to everyone alike. The clause would merely fulfil the views the Minister held a year ago to treat all fairly and equally.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: One must emphatically object to this clause. It had nothing to do with the question of discrimination between borrowers. Since the bank was first founded the trustees had always been given discretionary power, and since he had been controlling the bank as Minister for Agriculture there had been no attempt on his part to in any way interfere with the discretion of the trustees in the administration of the bank. A measure which had been absolutely sufficient since the bank was first founded was sufficient for him as Minister, so he objected to the proposed clause.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Until the Bill was brought down last year the position was quite satisfactory, but it had not proved so satisfactory during the past year; because there were very serious complaints against the bank, as the Minister knew, for no doubt he had been approached. It should not be possible for the trustees to exercise discrimination if the Minister

could not find the money for the trustees to lend.

The Minister for Lands: The managing trustee is just as honourable to-day as he was before.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Of course, but the Treasurer in trying to keep the Treasury full might refuse to advance to the trustees. We should make it clear that there was to be no discrimination and that the Minister should give effect to every section in the Act which had been brought forward last session with such a flourish of trumpets.

The Minister for Lands: We have lent three times what you lent in a year.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We lent just under £300,000 in our last year.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Before tea he had been endeavouring to point out that, while in the previous year the Bank had not advanced as much as it did last year, yet the work accomplished by the borrowers in the previous year had been almost, if not quite, equal to that accomplished last year. The improvements effected last year were not much greater than those of 1910-11. However, that was beside the point. The point was that, prior to the amending Bill brought in last session, the Bank had been a development bank, advancing against work to be done, and, to a limited degree, for stock and machinery, and for the purpose of paying off liabilities. The limit of the Bank in those days was £750, whilst now it was £2,000, which made the proposition a vastly different one. Parliament should see that the Minister lived up to the laws we had passed. The limit of the Bank had been set at £2,000 for any purpose, subject only to the approval of the trustees. There should be no discrimination whatever exercised. Indeed, in this the Minister had agreed only last year. The amendment merely provided that, when money was available, it should be loaned out, subject only to the approval of the trustees. The advantage of this legislation should not be for a limited few, and even the Minister would see that, if the Bank advanced £2,000 to two or three

people, others who could not get it would be dissatisfied. It would be better to reduce the limit rather than to permit it to stand, and fail to provide the funds necessary to allow the trustees to give effect to our wishes.

New clause put and a division taken with the following results:—

Ayes	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	19

Majority against .. 11

#### AYES.

Mr. Harper	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. F. Wilson.
Mr. Male	Mr. Layman
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller).
Mr. Moore	

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Bath	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Collier	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gill	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Heilmann
Mr. Mullany	(Teller).

New clause thus negatived.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

### BILL—LOCAL OPTION.

#### Message.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending the Bill.

#### Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker) in moving the second reading said: This is a measure which has been promised by the Labour party, not only since the general elections, but prior to that period. It will be remembered that, in our proposals dealing with the liquor traffic generally, we made a definite avowal that local option pure and simple would be separated from the remainder of the Licensing Act. In the Licensing Act of 1911 we made certain local option provisions. By the measure now introduced, it is proposed to take Part V., as it were, out of the Act of 1911, and re-enact that portion with the modifications



which the Bill contains. We presuppose in this measure that an amendment of the licensing law will have to be made—I hope speedily—as soon as more urgent, if anything can be more urgent, business of the country permits. In the meantime this measure proposes to vest in the people of the State the control of the liquor traffic, proposes to do so, if I may say so, unconditionally, to give them by their majorities a complete say in the matter. It would, perhaps, be out of place if I were to enter upon a discussion as to the necessity of this measure. I do not think hon. members would care for a speech which might be termed a temperance address. It may be taken for granted that the liquor traffic is in itself a national evil, and we so recognise it by the legislation that is upon our statute book, and by the penalties attaching to the conduct of that traffic. Therefore I shall spare the House any discourse at all upon the abstract and debatable question as to whether the liquor traffic is the evil temperance reformers say it is, or whether it is the panacea claimed for it by other sections of the community. Whatever that traffic may be, it ought to be in the hands, in the management, at the discretion, at the will, and under the power of the whole of the people of the State. This Bill proposes that that shall take place. I need not remind members that it is by no means an innovation even in this State. Every State in the Commonwealth has a Local Option Act already in force, and therefore we are falling into line and I may add endeavouring to get a little ahead of the other States in this respect. In the Bill which was introduced in 1911 and became law the local option vote was restricted to certain licenses therein mentioned. This extends the number of licenses that will come under the operations of the measure. For instance, under the old law of 1911, packet licenses, railway refreshment rooms, gallon and two gallon licenses, eating house licenses, temporary or occasional licenses, clubs, etc., were excluded. This Bill, members will see by reference to the definition of licenses, includes all these forms of liquor licenses and therefore they will be subject to the popular vote.

There are two exceptions that I ought to draw the attention of the House to, and those are the brewers' licenses and the spirit merchants' licenses. They are not to be included under these provisions, or within this definition. For one reason the brewer's license, as members know, is not under the control of the State, and as to the other we propose to make the amendments required there for safeguarding the interests of the public in our amendment of the Licensing Act itself. I want to draw attention to what we are going to ask the people to decide upon. We are asking them to decide as to whether there shall be a continuance of the licenses now existing in any district, or whether there shall be an increase of the licenses existing in any district, or whether there shall be a reduction of those licenses; and finally whether there shall be any licenses at all. In our provisions in Part V. of the 1911 Act we virtually submitted these questions to the general public, but we made provision that the effect of the vote taken should not be realised until 1920. By this measure, it will be observed, we propose to take a local option poll in the year 1914, that is to say, we leave the effect of the provisions of the Act intact until 1914. We do not interfere in any respect with the decision of the people until then, but in 1914, or the date fixed under this measure, we will ask the people to decide on the questions I have mentioned and the result, it is proposed in this measure, shall be put into immediate operation. I am not quite convinced that that will meet with the general approval of the House. It is a matter for this Chamber to decide. I am stating what my views are: they are that as speedily as possible the will of the people should be put into operation, and that no interest should stand between the people and the expression and the materialisation, so to speak, of their will. The time compensation given to publicans under the old Act will, therefore, be removed. The measure, as it is drafted, and as it is submitted to this Chamber, makes no provision for any kind of compensation, neither in the shape of money

nor in the shape of time. This is a reversal of the attitude taken in 1911 when time compensation was recognised as a principle. Personally I take the view that there can be no vested interest beyond the 12 months currency of a license in a license. It is not a property that continues from year to year and that can be said to have a perpetual duration. It is only a permission of the Government to utilise premises and conduct a certain business in the interests of the liquor trade. It is no more than a permission at the best for the 12 months, not a right, not in the sense of the word of secured property an ownership, not a right but merely the State, on the payment of a certain sum, grants permission and only permission to sell for the space of 12 months at the longest, and each license, even what is called renewal, is a new license, is a fresh permission, and neither more nor less than a fresh permission, to do what the State has recognised it would be unlawful to do if it were not for this express permission which we call a license. Hence there can be no vested interests which accrue from year to year in property of this kind; in fact, so long has this question been agitated, so long have we had the matter debated in our public Press and our public halls and in Houses of legislature, that there is not a publican in the State but knows that he is liable to be dismissed from his avocation at the termination of his license. That is a constant liability that is known and recognised whenever a new license is taken out. Therefore, there can be no great wrong in putting into operation what is already anticipated, and what publicans of a sensible character everywhere admit ultimately must come with the development of our human intellect and with the improvement of our lives. We have provided, therefore, that there shall be a termination of licenses if there be a vote for reduction in 1914 and if it should happen that there is in any district a vote for no licenses whatsoever, from that moment at the end of the currency of the licenses then existing, all licenses in that district will cease, and, as I have said, cease without any form of compensation, without

compensation either in the shape of money or in the shape of an allowance of time. There is a point I wish to draw the special attention of the House to and that is the way in which, in case of reduction, the reduction shall be effected. We make provision that whenever a vote for reduction is carried there shall be a closing of at least one-fourth of the number of hotels or a cessation of the operations of one-fourth of the licenses, to be more accurate, in that particular district, and in any district, if such be possible, where there are fewer than four such licenses in existence, then there shall at least be one license forfeited. Let us suppose that the reduction vote has been carried and that the licensing court is called upon to decide which house shall go out of existence. We have provided in this measure tests that shall guide the licensing bench in their operations. In the first place we provide that when there are conditions like the following present, their judgment shall be directed by them. When, for instance, within the three years next preceding the taking of the local option poll, there have been either two convictions for one of the offences named in the clause or one conviction for two of the offences named against the same licensee, in respect of the same premises, and the offences are offences relating to the adulteration of liquor, selling or permitting liquor to be sold to children under 16 years of age, or to persons by law prohibited, for selling or permitting to be sold, or supplying to persons in a state of intoxication intoxicating liquors, or permitting unlawful games to be carried on on the premises, or allowing the gathering there of prostitutes or thieves, or suffering drunkenness on these licensed premises, or subletting apart the right to sell liquor on these premises, or selling liquor on prohibited days—if there be two convictions for any one of these offences or for more of these offences, that shall be the first house, the first license, to be forfeited under reduction.

Mr. S. Stubbs: That is pretty rough on the innocent landlord.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Why?

Mr. S. Stubbs: Because he may in all good faith lease the hotel to a tenant and

the tenant may be a man who allowed the offences to be committed and the owner will be penalised.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** Surely the owner will have some selection in his tenancy; surely he will make some observation in regard to his own property; surely he will take steps to see that he lets his premises to characters who are respectable, surely he will see to that! What is the effect in any other instance? If the hon. member owned premises and let them for immoral purposes, for a gaming house, or for any like illegal process, would he not have to take the penalties? Would he not himself perhaps have to forfeit his rents? Undoubtedly. Does he not in the ordinary business transactions of his career look to those who take his premises and ascertain whether they are of reliable character or not? It says this, that the landlord who best looks after his premises and sees that a person of good character occupies them, and who sees that by his supervision, his watchfulness, and his constant care over the place that the law is observed within the premises, he will stand the best chance of continuing the business. But the careless landlord, the reckless landlord, or the landlord who winks at the peccadilloes of his tenants, will be the one liable to suffer. It will only make the landlord more careful. And what is the purpose of dealing with the drink traffic at all, but to dissociate it from the attendant evils—for it is admitted to be an evil in itself. Let us keep that evil as much as possible to itself, let us not intensify it, let us not multiply evils, let us not link it with other vices, with other illicit purposes, with other acts and agencies against the law. This is the purpose, and we can only do that by being drastic. We cannot play with an evil of this kind. There is no traffic in the State that costs the State so much money to look after as this particular traffic. The bulk of our police force is kept for the guardianship of those who are suffering from the consequences of this traffic. Our lunatic asylums are swollen with inmates in consequence of this traffic, our gaols are bulging with those who are driven thither in the first instance by the insidious

poisoning of the moral character, and therefore if we are to stop this evil and save this expense we must circumscribe the drink traffic as much as possible. We must not only do it as a Government by virtue of the authority placed in the executive powers of the State, but we must draw to our service all those who, like the landlord, have some monetary or other interest in the furtherance or continuance of this traffic. There can be no wrong in that case, there can be nothing that is evil in letting the first man who is careless in the choice of his tenants be the first to suffer, and reward those landlords who have been more careful in choosing those who have to conduct the business in their premises. This is what will happen. If a license is discontinued in consequence of a reduction the landlord has the power immediately or within 14 days to give his tenant notice to quit; the tenant on his part, if the landlord takes no notice, can within three months also give notice to the landlord—any time, in fact the next day or any day between that and three months—of his intention to quit. It may so happen that in a district there are none of these bad tenants to whom I have made reference. It may so happen that everyone of those places is well-conducted, so far as this kind of traffic can be well-conducted, and I am not going at all to slander, to malign, or in any way to asperse those who are honestly engaged in this drink traffic. There are engaged in it respectable men and respectable women whose consciences are in no way injured or affected or perverted as far as their consciences disclose, by their occupation in the traffic. In these cases these people have observed the law, and there is nothing to be said in derogation of their character. Then it comes hard upon the tenant after having paid ingoing to have to clear out by virtue of this local option vote. It is hard because of the wondrous artificial value that has to be put upon the drink traffic by those concerned in it. When I tell members there are houses in this State in which as much as £7,000, £8,000, and £9,000 has been paid as ingoing, members can well understand it would be a hard thing if by virtue of the local option vote the man who had just paid £9,000 for the

ingoing, or any lesser sum proportionately, should be turned out by virtue of a vote for the reduction of licenses. It is therefore proposed in this measure that when a case of that kind happens a publican with a good character, with nothing against his record, with no offence against the Licensing Act recorded against him, that in such an instance the tenant shall be able to claim from the landlord a proportionate refund of the ingoing or of the premium he paid for the license.

Mr. Male: That does not make it any more just.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is only a rightful thing, but I hope to be able in another measure later on in a direct way, to attack this evil of the ingoing. Why should the State give to a man that increment—we talk about the unearned increment from the land, but look at it here—why should we give to the proprietor of a building called an hotel the right to exact from the incoming tenant these enormous sums?

Mr. S. Stubbs: They ought to be claimed by the Government.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I admit they ought to go into the public Treasury, and that the State ought to take advantage of it. At all events this is the first attack upon that principle by taking it out of the landlord's pocket.

Mr. Male: Probably he paid for it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If he paid for it he should get back the proportion he paid. This, as I have said, is the first attack upon that iniquitous principle which allows a landlord, because he has a monopoly of a certain kind of building, dependent upon the State granting a license, to filch from the ingoing tenant an enormous sum. I know of instances where out of pure speculation buildings have been erected costing comparatively very little, and worth only what they have cost to build at the most, but the very moment they obtained from the licensing bench a provisional license—

Mr. S. Stubbs: That is where the whole thing has been wrong.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Exactly. From that moment the property became enhanced in value almost to a fabulous

degree. Can the hon. member say that is legitimate?

A. R. Male: If a man has paid that enhanced value you have no right to rob him of it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If a man has gone into premises and paid that value he should have the right to a refund in proportion to the time he is deprived of it. A license is only for a year and having run for six months, if he is deprived of that license by the local option vote, then for the remaining six months he shall have a refund of the money, not the whole of it, but only that proportion. For what is this kind of premium when properly analysed but another addition to the rent? Whether you call it premium or not, it is after all what the tenant pays for the right to occupy the premises and conduct the business. Strictly speaking it is rent, and if a man is deprived of his tenancy through no act of his own he has the right to a proportionate reduction for the term of his lease which is unexpired. I think that is a fair principle to work upon, and as I say it is one that the first attack should be made on in the Legislature. There shall also be in that instance a proportionate reduction in the rent in a like manner. These are the principal features of this Bill without labouring it further. It will however be remembered that in the Act of 1911, in the case of no license it is required that the vote shall be carried by a three-fifths majority. This Bill makes no such obligation necessary on the part of those who attend the poll. It goes clearly upon a majority basis, which is purely democratic in that respect. The majority in every case shall rule, and I can see no argument against that principle. We apply it in the election of members of this legislative hall, we apply it to the election of members to another place, and in all our ordinary decisions where the public voice is concerned, we declare that it is right that the majority shall rule. Why there should be any distinction here I cannot understand. If in the matters affecting our perpetual prosperity the majority are sufficient to decide, then they should be able to decide upon this matter, which has intimately

associated itself with our homes, with our public life, with the general character of our citizenship, as no other question has done. There is one other feature that may even to my temperance friends seem inconsistent with a measure of this kind, and it is that we make provision here for the establishment of State hotels; we provide that there shall be a question asked in every one of the polls taken, and that question is "If resolution (c) be carried (that relating to increases) are you in favour of the establishment of State hotels?" If there be a vote for increase we ask the voters to vote whether they desire the State to build hotels and to conduct that business. We also provide that the State may in those districts, 15 miles away from other hotels, where new settlements are springing up, new towns rising, and accommodation advancing, build State hotels and conduct the business of a publican, provided the bench asserts that the accommodation provided is ample and adequate, and provided also that there is no petition against this course. On petition of the majority of those upon the electoral roll for the district where a new hotel is permissible against it, the Minister having charge of the State hotels will be unable to build a State hotel.

Mr. Male: Are you afraid of the local option vote? Will it not be necessary?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is in perfect accordance with the local option Bill that we make this proposal. The object is the limitation and ultimate extinction of the liquor trade. I for one am convinced that humanity would be better off if it had never known the taste of liquor. We should have sounder bodies, and healthier minds, and should be more capable of carrying on the duties of life, I am convinced of that fact, but, of course, I cannot force my convictions down the throats of others, and there may be those in the community who say that they want new hotels and have not got sufficient accommodation of this kind; and as this is a measure to put the power of saying what they desire in the hands of the people, if they vote for increment in the number of hotels, then we say that

so far as possible we will see that they are State hotels, because all through we are assuming that this is a trade that requires careful guardianship, careful hemming in, and constant watchfulness.

Mr. Underwood: We need to look after them all right.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: They admit it themselves; therefore, we want as far as possible to remove all the evils of private management, all the avarice of private gain, all that which a man in that situation in a poor population has to resort to in order to make his hotel pay. If the traffic is to be in any hands at all, let it be in the hands of the servants of the people, and I say that if by any possible means we can get a monopoly, and the State can be running all the hotels in the State, then, whenever the people are ready for it, with the least possible trouble all the hotels can be simultaneously abolished.

Mr. Taylor: That will never be.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Of course the hon. member prophesies.

Mr. Taylor: Not in our generation.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Perhaps not, but I have seen a great change in my generation. I have seen alterations in society that were almost incredible. When I was a boy, a young man was thought nothing of if he could not get drunk occasionally. He was thought to be an imbecile or to be lacking in some force of character. I remember those who were aged when I was a youth who told me of the revelry in their youthful days when it was a constant thing to see who should carry the last man to bed after a social gathering, and when it was a sort of accomplishment to be able to get drunk often and drink much before getting drunk.

Mr. Turvey: They were a good type of men.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: They were a good type of men, but they were so saturated and poisoned with the alcohol they took that they made the men we see about us to-day, degenerates in consequence of the abuse of alcohol. All these changes have taken place. Nowadays we know it is not a merit for a man to be

seen drunk even once in a lifetime; that it is not a special feather in his cap to be seen reeling in the street or making a beast of himself in private houses, and it is nothing that the people attach enology to to be found drunk in a public house. Drunkenness is discouraged even by those who are defending the liquor traffic at the present time. It is an enormous change that has taken place within the memory of all of us living in this day. I was having a chat with one of my friends sitting behind me during the tea hour, and I reminded him of the time when drink was in itself a sacred function, when the god of wine was a deity that stood supreme in the niches of the temples of devotion, and that the old Elusianian mysteries, and the miracle of Canaan live on even in our religious services right up to our own time when the imbibing of wine is considered more or less of a sacred character. All that has passed. We have changed from those days when we set up Bacchus as a divinity to the time when we despise him and set the police upon his track. A marvellous change has taken place, and I venture to think that those who will criticise me to-night, those who are interjecting, will in the vigour of their manhood live to see changes still further, and in their own character and their own appreciation make a new adjustment of their intellect with regard to this evil, for such it must be termed. We cannot foresee the marvellous changes that are possible within the next few years. In the old days it was looked upon as a necessity in the British Navy and Army to administer rum and alcohol; it was looked upon as necessary to stimulate them and fortify them.

Mr. Underwood: They take a drop now.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: They take a drop now, but the great leaders of the British Army are on the side of temperance, and by experience in campaigns and observation in the movement of armies they have discovered that those who best stand the extremities of heat and cold and the trials and fatigues of long marches are those who are total abstainers, and as far as possible they are in-

culcating temperance principles in the Army and Navy. In all the affairs of life they are carrying on the same principle, and men of business who compose this House will tell me that if to-morrow they were to employ a servant of any kind they would prefer the man who is an abstainer to the man who came to ask for the billet with the stench of alcohol in his breath. That is the position. Therefore, I say a different attitude in regard to this traffic is now being generated, and it is my opinion that within the lifetime of those who are now about me we may see such changes as those forecasted in this Bill. I do not want to preach on temperance.

Mr. Taylor: You are making a decent try.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I believe that if I was to attempt it I could make a fair effort and produce more solid argument than the hon. member who would champion Bacchus with all his evils, his red face, his reeling gait, and his breath that spreads poison, pestilence, and death wherever he wanders. Hon. members may think this is a subject for amusement, but it is a serious matter to me. I have step by step in my life's career seen graves filled by my friends, the brightest and the best, those with the biggest hearts, and the most susceptible and well tilled brains. Those under the touch of alcohol have dropped in the journey of life and are left behind. I have seen it again and again, and there is no man in this House to-night but can think of either ruin or blighted hopes, or graves filled by someone they have known and loved, the victim of alcohol. I have great pleasure in moving—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think we ought to go on. There are no new features. We have discussed the principles under the Act of 1911, and under the various Bills brought in for the purpose of establishing State Hotels, and there is not a single feature that is

novel. Therefore I think we are quite qualified to go on with the debate to-night.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : I must protest against this attempt of the Attorney General to force a debate on an important measure of this description. We have never discussed the principles of this Bill—principles far-reaching and miles away beyond anything we have suggested in previous sessions, if one may judge by the Attorney General's speech, because there has been no time to go through the Bill. There are very great principles to be considered, and I must ask for the adjournment of the debate.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : I do not like to adjourn it. We ought to be able to deal with a measure of this kind when it is submitted, but if hon. members prefer to have a day's rest, I will consent to the adjournment.

Motion put and passed, the debate adjourned.

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1912-13. . .

##### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 22nd November, Mr. Holman in the Chair.

Department of the Colonial Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew, Minister, Hon. W. C. Angwin, Honorary Minister, in charge of the votes).

Vote—*Medical and Public Health*, £105,709:

Mr. HEITMANN: One would have expected on coming to this vote to hear something from the Minister directly in charge of public health, but possibly the Minister's action was in accord with the feeling of the great majority of the people on the question of public health. We were entitled to hear from the Minister what was done in the last twelve months and what he intended to do in the future.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I spoke for two hours the other night. Surely that was long enough.

Mr. HEITMANN: The reference to public health was quite in accord with the general feeling towards public health on the part of the majority of the people.

Altogether too little importance was given to this question. When we had finished with everything else and had financially provided for everything else, we turned to the most important question in the country, that of public health. There were many important matters dealt with by the Public Health Department, such as infectious diseases, but it did not seem to be of sufficient importance to the Minister in charge to deal specially with them. He (Mr. Heitmann) had for many years endeavoured to give the subject that interest it deserved. Before the passage of the Public Health Act he was of opinion that once we got a good Public Health Act on our statute-book we would make great progress in stamping out various diseases, but he was keenly disappointed with the result of that Act and with its administration; because the same old system was adopted in connection with public health, the same lack of interest appeared to be displayed by members of public institutions, and the same old lack of interest appeared to be displayed by members of public institutions and the same old lack of interest seemed to be displayed by Governments; and he was forced to confess there was very little system in the administration of the Public Health Act. To prove this one could refer to the inspection of dairies and dairy herds. It led one to believe that there was not much improvement in these matters since the passing of the measure which had largely extended our powers. Only the other day when a certain dairyman was brought before the court on certain charges it was stated that an inspector had been receiving bribes, though happily the magistrate and the Minister showed there was no foundation for that, but the magistrate proved by the result of an inspection that the dairy was not all that could be desired though a certificate had been given by the inspector to the effect that it was in first-class condition. In fact, it was understood there were two certificates given, but the magistrate discovered it in a very filthy state. One of the chief features of the Act was the provision relating to the compulsory notification of

certain infectious diseases. According to the report of the Health Department this was carried out, generally speaking, fairly well; but while we expected a great deal from the medical men in private practice, it was necessary first of all to force our own civil servants to carry out these provisions. Only a few weeks ago he was led to believe that one of our public health officers casually walked into the department and reported that in one of the public institutions under his control he had quite a number of cases of tuberculosis, and he gave no excuse for not reporting it and for not giving these men separate treatment. This he (Mr. Heitmann) was led to believe was information to the Health Department and the Minister. While we expected the outside medical practitioners to report these cases we allowed an offence of this description to go without remark.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did the Minister hoodwink at this ignoring of duty?

Mr. HEITMANN: One was not prepared to say the Minister did, but the fact remained that this public officer was going on in his own sweet way, and such an offence should be severely punished. It was impossible to deal with tuberculosis and other infectious diseases unless there were united efforts from the public medical officers as well as from those outside. The midwifery sections of the Act were passed to reduce infantile and maternity mortality. It was agreed by Parliament it was high time to raise the standard of the nursing profession, particularly in regard to these cases, but the Minister in charge of the Act was not altogether in sympathy with the measure. The Minister was honest enough about it right through. When the Bill was before Parliament he had opposed the standard set up in the Bill and considered it was not necessary, but the Minister should have recognised ere now, after being in close touch with the department, that it was necessary to have the highest possible standard in any profession dealing with human life.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The board fixes that. I have nothing to do with it.

Mr. HEITMANN: To a delegation of ladies from some society or another the

Minister had expressed want of sympathy, to say the least of it, with the standard set up. One would at least expect from the Minister in charge of the administration of the Act that he would endeavour to keep up the present standard instead of lowering it. One was led to believe that there were numerous women registered who were not very well qualified for the work. At the inception of any Act it was necessary to issue service certificates, but the qualification set up by the board in issuing these service certificates should be strictly adhered to. The qualifications were usually very low. We were always prepared to deal leniently with those who had followed a profession prior to the inception of a new system, but there were quite a number of nurses registered whose qualifications would not bear looking into closely. The promise the Minister made a few nights ago should be carried quickly into effect. The time had arrived to take steps to supplement the nurses now in the State and to send out nurses to thinly populated parts now being opened up. If we wished to save the lives of the little ones, the best immigrants we had, we should get the best nurses we could possibly get. If we did not desire to do this, let us get back to the old state of affairs and abolish registration altogether. The Minister was handicapped in many ways in regard to public health. His staff was not competent to deal with public health matters. He (Mr. Heitmann) said this with every degree of sympathy for the gentleman in charge of the department, but the time had arrived when we should get a younger and more up-to-date man, one with more energy and initiative and more go in him. One could speak in the very highest terms of the gentleman now in control of the department, even though knowing him very slightly, but while having every sympathy for him it was necessary to say he was not competent to deal with public health matters. The Minister must be congratulated on his efforts in regard to getting a pure supply of milk for the various institutions—Government and semi-Government—in and around Perth. They had been the cause of saving many lives, but it rested with the Government to



extend the operations of the system at the earliest possible date. It must not be forgotten that while we were giving a good supply of milk to the hospitals the children were in the Children's Hospital as a result of bad milk. Therefore it was useless to stop where we were at present, merely supplying pure milk to assist in bringing back to health children who were in bad condition owing to an impure supply outside. While recognising that any party in power for the time being were of necessity limited in their operations in a State like Western Australia by reasons of finance, he believed a great deal could be done without any further expenditure. The idea that it was only by the expenditure of money we could improve conditions in regard to the various diseases was not in accordance with the experience of those countries which had treated health matters seriously. The first essential to bringing about a better state of health was to educate people in approved methods of maintaining public health. It was only from education that we could expect a higher standard of public health; it was useless to pass health laws which were not understood by the people; it was well enough to fine or imprison a man who spat upon the public streets, but it was much better to instil into that man a full appreciation of the necessity for refraining from the beastly practice. After all, people spent most of their time in their homes, where the laws regulating conduct on the streets did not apply. We required a popular crusade against spitting and other similar practices. For long he had attacked the administration of the Perth City Council in regard to public health. On one occasion he had said that the offence of spitting in a public place should entail a heavy fine in the first instance and, on the second occasion, imprisonment. In his opinion, Perth, the capital of Western Australia, was one of the dirtiest cities in the whole of the Southern Hemisphere.

Mr. Allen: We have quite other testimony from visitors who come here.

Mr. HEITMANN: Possibly the visitors did not observe as much as those who lived here. If anyone would take an opportunity of going round the back

premises of public places in Perth, he would find conditions anything but creditable to the public body in charge of health matters. It was known throughout the world, and had been testified on the word of the greatest living authorities, that spitting was the cause of more infection, particularly in regard to tuberculosis, than any other of our habits; yet no effort was being made on the part of the city council to minimise the evil. We heard of their taking precautions against the danger of ladies' hatpins, but there was not in this one-thousandth part the danger of spitting.

Mr. Allen: Have you ever come into contact with one?

Mr. HEITMANN: If we came into contact with hatpins every day of our lives there would not be the same danger as arose from spitting. One had only to walk through the streets of Perth to see to what a disgusting extent the habit was practised. The time had arrived when the Health Department itself should place on the statute book a law which would effectually prevent this habit. The Minister had intimated that the construction was about to be commenced of a sanatorium for the treatment of tubercular patients. It was to be hoped this would be carried out at the earliest possible moment. Anyone connected with the goldfields would recognise the serious danger of allowing tubercular patients to expectorate in public places. It should be the duty of the Government to gather these unfortunates together at the earliest possible moment and instruct them in habits of clean living, in order that they might go out to be educators for the rest of the public. A few months ago, at Day Dawn, he had been called in to see an unfortunate man who had contracted miners' phthisis in the mines of the district. There were in the home a brother of the first unfortunate, and the mother. Both were suffering from tuberculosis. Another brother had contracted it also, but he was struggling to work day after day in order to provide for his mother and brothers. Another man, a friend of the family, who had been treated in the Coolgardie sanatorium for

some eighteen months, had also come on the scene. Since then, the mother and one of her sons had died; another brother had gone to Victoria to die, and the fourth, the friend of the family, had also died. This state of affairs should not be allowed to continue in a country like Western Australia. We were for ever telling the people of the outside world that we required immigrants, and were emphasizing to them the immense wealth we could produce if only we had population; yet apparently we viewed with utter disregard the fact that we were losing many good citizens who could be saved to the State. Another subject of great importance to the community was that of patent and proprietary medicines. Section 187 of the Health Act gave power for the Health Department to prevent the sale of certain proprietary and patent medicines, and also dealt with certain publications in this regard. It was to be admitted that if we desired to abolish the sale of these nostrums we must first of all plead with the newspapers to refuse the advertisements lauding the alleged virtues of these useless drugs. Even in the *Westralian Worker* he had found to his disgust a letter of recommendation from some miner in Boulder stating what good results the author had had from the treatment of one Faiz Mahomet.

Mr. Monger: Faiz Mahomet was a fine white man.

Mr. HEITMANN: Well the advertisement had referred to a Mahomet. It was almost impossible to pick up a newspaper without finding advertisements which certainly did not tend to raise the standard of morality in the community or to prevent the robbery of confiding, innocent people. For his part he would abolish entirely the trade of the quack, and make it impossible for any unqualified man to deal with the ailments of the human body, or for a newspaper to publish certain advertisements to be found from day to day. He had mentioned the *Westralian Worker*.

Mr. Monger: That periodical is not very often read.

Mr. HEITMANN: The hon. member would improve himself if he read it. In the *Kalgoorlie Miner* and other papers these advertisements could be found. To the credit of the *Producers' Review* that paper published an advertisement to the effect that certain advertisements were refused. He had a list taken from an issue of the *West Australian* on a recent Saturday. It started off with the favourite remedy vitadatio, and stated that it would cure every ailment the human body was heir to. If people looked up the analysis they would find that the greatest proportion of vitadatio was a poor quality of gin. Then there was the advertisement of a Chinese herbalist, a man who was allowed to practise on the human body and who probably knew not one drug from another. It was remarkable the faith many people had in these quacks. As long as a man put up a sign that he was a herbalist there was a feeling that he possessed knowledge that was not possessed by chemists or doctors. Any curative properties in these herbs had been made known to the herbalist by the investigations of chemists. Some of the herbs were of no value and the knowledge of the herbalist did not entitle him to the confidence of the people or to practise his quackery. There was a list of these medicines each of which if dissected would be found to be a fraud. He believed there was not one patent medicine and not one medical institution in a thousand which was of any value to the community and which should not be wiped out of existence. He knew of not one medical institution where people could go with safety, and yet the medical profession had failed in their duty when a case was brought under their notice recently in which a certificate was given by the proprietor of a medical institution and sent to a State school setting forth that he was treating the child for certain diseases, for to his knowledge no action had been taken. There were scores of these quacks and it was remarkable what faith people had in their medicines. In every other trade or calling when the services of a workman were required one of the best men was employed; yet when people

wanted someone to deal with that most important business, the treatment of the human body, any old quack would do. He wanted to save the people from themselves. He hoped the Minister would see that the clauses dealing with quackery and patent medicines were administered. If he had not sufficient power to let him approach the Chamber and every member would enable him to get further power to deal effectually with them. In classifying these patent medicines the first was that of a man who manufactured a nostrum, which was harmless, but who, by fraud, lying and assistance from the Press, led the people to believe that it was of value and obtained thousands of pounds a year from its sale. An American journal recently stated that 20 million dollars worth of quack consumptive cures was sold every year in the United States, and it would probably be impossible to estimate what was spent in that country on patent medicines of different kinds. There was another one, the man who manufactured a medicine or pill and by fraud and lying and advertisements led the people to believe that it was valuable and harmless, while at the same time it contained dangerous drugs. From what he had been able to ascertain these medicines contained some poison or other, and their use was for the time being to stimulate the heart's action and relieve the patient from pain. There was another quack who should be dealt with severely and that was the one who manufactured and openly advertised and sold pills and obtained medicines which were used exclusively and advertised to procure abortion. Many quacks even in this city advertised what appeared to be legitimate business, allowing that quackery of any description was legitimate, simply as a cloak for the more serious business in which they indulged. Openly appearing in the paper in Perth was an advertisement from the Red Cross Pharmacy, William-street, Perth, which read—

Proprietary medicines for skin and other diseases, without the use of drugs that permanently injure the system. No delay; no humbug. Forwarded free of observation, and strictly confidential.

Dr. Scott's female pills—safe, certain, and reliable, to remove all irregularities—5s. per post. Elastic goods and all the requisites of the toilet (London price).

It might be said that these things should not be mentioned, and that members should close their eyes to trade of this description, but it was the duty of public men to, if possible, prevent the continuation of this trade. This advertisement had appeared in the *West Australian* for a very long time. Recently the business had changed hands, but still the same old advertisement continued. There were other advertisements which decidedly pointed to the same class of business. It was not his intention to affect any mock modesty, but to endeavour to show, hard though it was for a layman to do so, what injury was being done to the community as a result of Parliament and the law allowing these things to exist. It was his desire to show the public what they were getting when they bought some of the popular remedies in the shape of patent medicines, on which the civilised world was spending millions every year, and of all places the happy hunting ground was Australia. Any nostrum after having been kicked out of America and England was positively safe in Australia under an attractive name and if a little money was spent in advertising it, for the people would surely buy it. He wished to quote a paragraph dealing with many patent medicines which contained alcohol in large proportions. It had been found that the best business in these particular lines of drug could be done with the women-folk. In the report of a Royal Commission appointed by the Federal Government, Mr. Beale, who was instructed to inquire into secret drugs, cures, and foods stated—

Some of the alcoholic liquors intended more particularly for the use of women and girls, and especially urged upon the notice, are sold at retail prices similar to those of sound whisky, with reduction for six bottles at a time. Apparently women buy several bottles at once of vitadatio, Ayers' sarsparilla, or Warner's safe cure who would

not buy a like quantity of sound brandy, whisky, or gin. These alcohols are highly flavoured with non-official, or with official herbs which effectually hide any taste or smell of methyl-alcohol, or other poisonous constituents, but possesses no therapeutic property.

It was shown in paragraph 890 that analyses had proved the main ingredients to be gin. There was another well known remedy, Warner's safe cure, eight-tenths of which was proved alcoholic spirit. It was manufactured by the Kentucky Distilling Company, which manufactured in addition to patent medicines, whisky, and other spirituous liquors. Pink pills, another very popular remedy in Australia, was the greatest fraud ever placed upon the market.

Mr. Monger: So long as the partaker of it has confidence in it, that is all that is necessary.

Mr. HEITMANN: The partaker of it would pay 2s. 6d. or 3s. 6d. for a box of these pills which were manufactured for about a farthing. Then there was another favourite remedy known as bile beans, manufactured by the same company, also one of the greatest frauds again ever put on the market. Bile beans were supposed to have been the result of an investigation made by a clever scientist in the interior of Australia. He had forgotten this scientist's name.

Mr. Turvey: Carr Boyd.

Mr. HEITMANN: This scientist after years of supposed research turned out these alleged valuable beans. The company that placed the article upon the market spent something like £250,000 in advertising it in England alone. These things are supposed to cure anything from chilblains to consumption, and yet they have been proved by analyses to be a positive fraud. Another article produced by the same company is Zambuk soap, which is supposed to have curative properties. This is positively useless for the purposes for which it is advertised, and it is manufactured in Balmain near Sydney. One could go next to many popular hair restorers. People paid 4s. and 5s. for a hair restorer.

Member: Koko.

Mr. HEITMANN: Yes, koko was one and that was manufactured from borax, glycerine, and rose water. Tatcho was another and this was advertised as being the discovery of a well-known English dramatist. There were many others which were also positive frauds and it was the duty of the House to endeavour to protect the public from these frauds.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): What about Beecham's pills?

Mr. HEITMANN: That is another positive fraud. He had read an article only a few days ago in the *Review of Reviews* which showed beyond all doubt that Beecham's pills were a fraud.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Well, what pills would you recommend?

Mr. HEITMANN: For the hon. member he would recommend a packet of Epsom salts which would do him more good than all the pills he could buy and cart home. Another fraud that he wanted to refer to and which beyond all doubt had caused many deaths, especially among child life, was the soothing syrup medicine known as Mother's Friend. This was positively dangerous; it contained opium, the very worst thing that could be given to a child. It relieved the pain for the time being but caused death to ensue. All these things should be strictly examined by the Medical Department. We should give the department power to prevent the sale of dangerous drugs and also give them power to force the manufacturers to state distinctly on the outside covering what the contents of the box or bottle were. From the analyses it would be found that many of the medicines contained a great quantity of alcohol and many which were used by mothers for their children contained opium, or drugs of a similar character. The third matter he desired to deal with was with regard to the drugs which were manufactured, advertised plainly, and openly sold for the purpose of procuring abortion. He wanted to show the people, and particularly the women folk, the extreme danger they ran in the use of these drugs. Experts had this to say on the matter—

There is no known abortifacient safe to the mother. In all cases the risk taken is great. If effective the suffer-

ing from the direct effect of the pills or potions—sometimes ointments—is severe and often extremely cruel. Permanent injury by poisoning, or early death, are known to be frequent.

The report went on to say how often medical men met with cases of this description. Going on further it dealt with the various drugs used for this particular purpose and which were known to medical men. He was not going to say that one individual or a set of individuals were to blame any more than any other in the community. We seemed to be developing in Australia as in other parts of the civilised world the idea that child-bearing was something which should be avoided as being something more or less of a disgrace upon the woman, and it was with the idea of starting the ball rolling to do away with this belief that he wanted to appeal to the good sense of the people. So far as the report of the Royal Commission was concerned it showed how common these practices were. The report stated—

A most able and veracious physician has truly asserted that "quackery has destroyed more in this country (Great Britain) than the sword, famine, and pestilence united," and never was there a period in the history of British medicine at which the force and truth of this opinion was more obvious than at this day. That is a comprehensive statement, for few nations have suffered, or do suffer, so much from wars, pestilence, and starvation, as the British. And amongst the perversions that our sins and the neglect of our rulers have brought upon us, the *Lancet* would surely include unnatural interference with racial reproduction. Prescriptions are before me for the secret preparations alluded to, but it would serve no good purpose to publish them. They are still smuggled into the country, but are largely manufactured in the Commonwealth itself. There are special shops for the sale of "preventives" and "ladies' irregularity cures," whilst pharmacists also stock and sell them. As far as can be judged, the trade tends to increase, and newspapers of all grades accept the advertisements, of

which some photographs are herein supplied. With the purchasers shame appears to count for nothing. That subject is dealt with elsewhere herein. At the desire of a physician, a chemist's assistant called upon me recently. Amongst other information which merely corroborated an abundance taken upon oath by the former commission, the young man said, "A little girl, aged about 9 or 10, came into our shop, put some money on the counter, and said loudly, 'Mother wants a box of soluble pessaries.'" That is one kind of modern maternal training. The chief demand, the young man said, is from women who would claim to be of "the better class," and they ask for the preparations as openly and indifferently as they would ask for a tooth-brush. That agrees with the evidence of every pharmacist that came before the New South Wales Commission. Such women also purchase freely other means of interference which will not here be mentioned.

And so it went on, and one could deal with the report extensively in order to show the dangerous effects upon the woman and upon the nation. It had been proved that the result desired was only secondary to the other injuries which were caused to the woman and it had also been proved in the records of evidence given before the Commission that interference in regard to conception as well as interference at a later period had to a great extent been the means of filling the asylums in all parts of the world. It was known that there was some close relation between the records of our insane asylums and the practices to which he had alluded. The Royal Commission in New South Wales which in 1903 inquired into the decrease of the birth rate showing conclusively that shortly after a noticeable decrease in the birth rate in that State there had been a noticeable increase in the number of women admitted to lunatic asylums, and it had been proved beyond all doubt that there was extreme danger in the use of these things. It was said that the continual use of them had the effect of interfering with the brain and had a direct relation

to the insane statistics of various countries. He desired to get the people to understand their responsibility in this direction. We did not want said about us what was said about France; we were in a country requiring population, and the continuance of the practices adopted at the present time meant the ultimate extinction of the white race. He wished to see in Western Australia a huge population; we were crying out for immigrants, yet we were destroying the best possible immigrants, and hundreds of mothers were being killed who would remain amongst us if these practices were discontinued. Many reasons were put forward for the limitation of families. People said that they could not afford to rear a large family, but strange to say it was not amongst the people who could not afford to raise large families that this practice was most prevalent. It was said in this report that the practice was most common amongst people who could afford to do their duty to themselves and to the country. It would be interesting indeed for the men and women who had the public welfare at heart to read Mr. Beale's report on the question, and certainly education on this subject would do an immense amount of good for Australia as a whole. There was no doubt that Australia was no better in this respect than other parts of the civilised world, or at any rate, other parts of the British Empire.

Mr. Underwood : It should be.

Mr. HEITMANN : Of course it should be. He had never known a boy or girl to be badly done by on account of the fact that he or she was one of a large family, nor had he ever known a father or mother to be in poverty as the direct result of a large family. It was true that it cost more to keep a large family than a small one, but at the same time it was true that for those who were patriotic at all, who had any paternal love, or any natural sentiment, there was a great repayment in the love of the children whom they reared to maturity. He remembered reading in this book a case which showed the long-suffering and anguish which was imposed on those who

interfered with the natural functions of the body. Mr. Beale said there had been brought under his notice the case of a young couple who after marrying desired to live a life of luxury and ease for at least four or five years; at the end of that time, when it was found that there was no sign of a family, a medical man was consulted. After consulting several medical men, the husband suggested to his wife that a surgical operation might get over the difficulty, but she was informed that it was impossible for her to bear children because she had destroyed the organs of reproduction. He knew of no greater punishment or anything containing more anguish than the knowledge of a married couple that they could never have children born to them. Another case was that of an executive officer in the United States of America who was in a high position and mixed in the best of society; he stated that his wife on finding herself in a certain condition was induced by her friends to go to a person to be relieved of her trouble; after long argument she went and was interfered with but the operation was not directly successful—an idiot child was born. After some years the woman again conceived and the child, which at the time of the evidence was then twenty years of age, had been from birth an idiot. There were many other cases which could be quoted which showed the great danger to the woman, how her health was undone and how it was impossible for her to continue in good health and at the same time carry on the practices referred to. He was not appealing to her patriotic sentiment at all, but he was urging that she should avoid those practices in order that she might live out a fair length of life in peace, comfort, and good health. He had alluded to the various people who carried on these practices, and he desired in conclusion to refer to a report which had been before the Public Health Department of this State. Some years ago when Mr. Bath had moved an amendment to the present Health Act providing for the punishment of newspaper proprietors who advertised these nostrums, and when the various things he had men-

tioned this evening had been discussed, he thought it possible to discover if these practices were as prevalent in Western Australia as Mr Beale had shown them to be in Sydney and other parts of the world.

Mr. Turvey: You do not think they are.

Mr. HEITMANN: One was forced to believe that this business of selling both preventatives and abortifacient drugs was carried on by registered chemists. At that time he and another gentleman who was then a member of the House endeavoured to prove whether such was the case or not; after several tries he found the inquiry uncongenial to him, and the other gentleman also drew out of the inquiry in its early stages. Recently he had endeavoured again to secure the information, and with that object in view he had asked the Government to allow the Health Department to make investigations. The investigations had been made and he regretted to say that the report of the departmental officers proved that this business was carried on to a very great extent. Without making any comment on the people who carried on this trade, he wished to read the report to the Committee, not with a view to punishment, but with a view to appealing to the country and the chemists themselves to discontinue this trade, which was so injurious to the individual woman as well as to the State which formed part of what was to be at some future time a great nation. The report was addressed to the Honorary Minister (Mr. Angwin) and read—

Sale of abortifacient drugs by chemists. In pursuance of your instructions of the 15th instant, an investigation has been made with a view to ascertaining to what extent drugs and appliances used to prevent conception, or to bring about abortion, are sold by chemists. Immediately upon receipt of your instructions, a plan of campaign was decided upon in consultation with Dr. Atkinson (M.O.H.) and Mr. Greenhill (Acting Chief Inspector). It was apparent that the inspectors who were to obtain these drugs would have to act in their private capacities: an official presenting himself and demanding such

drugs would, of course, be refused. The various inspectors, when approached, readily agreed to assist in this delicate and somewhat unpleasant duty—unpleasant because each man had to represent his case to the chemists as being a personal necessity. It was decided that efforts should first be directed to obtaining abortifacients, as it was considered those who dealt in this class of drugs would not hesitate to stock and sell those for the prevention of conception, while the reverse would probably not hold good. The inspectors obtaining samples were instructed to make it clear that drugs were desired to bring about abortion, and this instruction was strictly followed throughout. In most cases the case of a fictitious female "in trouble" was represented to the chemist; in others a particular drug was asked for "to secure abortion," etc. In all 42 visits have been paid to 37 chemists, the shops being situated principally in the metropolitan area, while a few visits were paid to shops in Kalgoorlie and Boulder. Of these 37 chemists 23 supplied drugs: a few of these required some persuasion, a few were "keen on business," others supplied the desired drugs as they would supply any ordinary requirement. Percentage to total, 62.1 per cent. Six were willing, in certain circumstances, to supply, but for various reasons did not do so; of these six, the majority considered the risk too great (see reference to the "Midland Junction case"); in two cases the fictitious cases presented features which would not yield to drugs (pregnancy too far advanced); in one case the chemist desired to examine the "woman". Percentage to total 16.2 per cent. Two were evidently suspicious and refused to supply. Percentage to total, 5.4 per cent. Six positively declined to do business. Percentage to total, 16.2 per cent. A summary of the visits made to chemists shops is attached. In five cases a second visit to the same premises was made. Of these five chemists, two on the second visit, supplied a further and apparently stronger medicine; three on both occasions refused to sup-

ply; one though positively rejecting business on the first visit, on the second occasion, when the request was made in a different form, drugs were supplied, but probably by an assistant. Two glaring cases came under notice. In one, the chemist wanted to see the "woman," saying it was no good working in the dark, and the woman must personally consult him. In the other case, the chemist had at his disposal a "specialist" in this particular class of work: on seeing the specialist the inspector was supplied with pills and a mixture (cost 30s.) and additional business was solicited in the way of rubber goods (French Letters and "Wife's Friends"). It is most probable that the publication of the evidence given in a recent inquest at Midland Junction has hampered the investigation, and influenced some chemists in refusing to supply drugs. In that evidence, statements were made of certain drugs having been purchased from a local chemist, whose name was given. The fact that the services of a reliable female could not be secured to purchase these drugs on behalf of the department, added to the difficulties encountered; some who refused to supply a man would most probably do business with a female applicant. The price paid for the drugs supplied ranged from 30s. to 1s.: the average was 7s. In all, 27 packages of drugs were obtained: of these four only bore the vendor's name; all of the others, excepting proprietary lines, were unlabelled. The whole of the samples have been handed to the Government Analyst, whose examination is not yet completed. He verbally reports, however, that in all the samples of which examination has been made to date, drugs, potent for the purpose of abortion, have been found. It should be remarked that no particular premises have been selected for inquiry: certain shops at which it is commonly reported drugs of this description can be obtained have not been visited. The premises mentioned in the summary were selected quite haphazard, and the result should

represent very fairly the extent to which the class of business, the subject of this investigation, is carried on by registered pharmacists. The Criminal Code (Section 201) provides for a penalty of three years, with hard labour, for any person convicted of supplying drugs, etc., for the purpose of procuring abortion. Bearing this in mind, and also certain difficulties met with in prosecuting this investigation, it is quite safe to assert that between 65 and 75 per cent. of registered chemists have no hesitation in supplying drugs for purposes of abortion. For the reasons previously stated, the percentage who deal in the class of drugs known as "preventatives" must be still higher. Some who refused to supply abortifacients are known to freely stock and sell the first-named. Further comment is needless; suffice it to say that the state of affairs demonstrated by the results of this investigation have served to confirm the opinion previously held by those having some knowledge of the extent to which these nefarious practices are carried on. (Sgd.) F. J. Huelin, Secretary, Medical, Public Health, 30th October, 1912.

The completion of the analyses of these purchases proved that in every case drugs well known to be commonly used to procure abortion were discovered. He appealed to the members of the Committee to endeavour to bring about some method of dealing with this very delicate and serious question, to treat the matter as serious, and to take an interest in this most important phase of public health. He appealed to the public men outside, those who continually preached to members to adopt a high standard of morals, prominent members of the church and the ministers of religion, to assist in preventing the continuance of these deadly practices. He appealed to the Press to stay it if they possibly could and refuse to advertise those things positively known to be used simply to procure abortion. He appealed to the chemists. In doing so he recognised that it was in their profession a common practice for years past, the result being that they could see no harm in the manufacture and sale of this particular class of drugs. He recognised



that even beyond the chemists the evil existed. If one would look up the catalogues of the manufacturers of drugs supposed to be the finest in the world, it would be found that these in their various grades were supplied to the chemists without even breaking the seals of the boxes or bottles encasing the pills and drugs. He appealed to these gentlemen recognising that they had the opportunity of mixing in the best company, and the opportunity of gaining a first-class education, and of having a full knowledge of their responsibilities as citizens; he appealed to the national spirit in them and to their patriotism which lay dormant in the breast of every Australian to attempt as far as possible to cease this practice in order that Australia might come into her own and that Australia's population might increase as it should, and that the women of the country should be less injured than they were now, and that many hundreds of children were not to be blighted throughout life owing to the use of these drugs by their mothers. It was a matter for extreme sorrow that in this country, in common with most countries, there was a big proportion of the population who seemed so ready to destroy human life. If one were to ask: whether it be the mothers using drugs, or the man securing them, or the chemists providing them, or the manufacturers making them, if they would take the living child and murder it, they would think one a lunatic; yet it seemed the same serious crime was committed by the mother and by those who procured these drugs to destroy life in embryo. It was to be hoped the people of Australia would rise above these things. When that day came, when we could say with all honesty we were paying more attention to life, and that every child born or even every mother who conceived was protected, when these practices were no longer continued, the future of Australia would be much brighter, and public health generally would be much better, and happiness would be in greater quantity than existed to-day.

Mr. MULLANY: Although a great many diseases were spoken of, particularly by the member for Cue, there was

one not mentioned in any shape or form. It was a disease not generally referred to in public, but during the debate on the Aborigines vote its effect on the black people in the North-West was referred to at considerable length; he was referring to the question of venereal diseases. The report of the Commissioner of Public Health for 1911 said—

While we are doing so much for the natives, white people are left uncared for from the ravages of syphilis and gonorrhœa, two diseases which are productive of more harm than any other known disease. Tuberculosis does not cause more than a small proportion of the pain and misery that is caused by venereal disease. In England it is estimated that at least half-a-million cases of venereal disease occur yearly. When the consequences of syphilis and gonorrhœa are considered, the amount of disease in this State is appalling. The effect of gonorrhœa causes sterility and chronic invalidism in women, and we are continuing to find more and wider extension of the ravages of syphilitic infection. The danger is one that must be faced and not be put aside as unfit for discussion. The regulation of prostitution is impotent to stay the spread. Clandestine connection causes much of the spread of the disease. Notification of the disease has not met with favour, as this will probably lead to concealment by the patient. A modified system may be applicable in which no names are given. By this means we should at least be able to form an estimate of the cases, and compare the progress made under treatment. The anonymous form of notification is in use in Denmark, Norway, and elsewhere. It is most necessary that these diseases should be treated by medical men, as they are able to appreciate the importance of them, and the diseases must be treated with the full knowledge of their cause and effect. This is more necessary as new treatment has been introduced, which, although not yet perfect, has produced very satisfactory results, and must really be left in the hands of a responsible profession. The disease

syphilis, particularly, has been looked upon as almost incurable, and yet evidence has been accumulated to show that a cure is probably possible in almost every case in the primary stage. At this time every day is of importance; therefore early diagnosis and treatment are essential.

The Commissioner went on at some considerable length to suggest different methods of combating the disease. The attitude adopted by people in every English-speaking community in reference to this disease was appalling. If it were typhoid or consumption or anything else, it was treated at once, so that we could do the best possible to stamp it out or cure it, but it was entirely different in regard to venereal diseases. In the case of friendly societies when their members were provided with medical attendance for every other disease, this was excluded. If a man contracted typhoid even through his own fault, through the neglect of sanitary precautions, by virtue of his membership of a friendly society he got medical attendance to cure it if possible. But we found that in every case venereal diseases were excluded from the benefits of medical attendance by the various friendly societies. This was one of the reasons why the disease was ravaging the white people so much as it was, this and the fact that these diseases were not mentioned in polite society. Yet everybody knew of their existence, and in his opinion the time had arrived when the evil should be recognised. There was no great difficulty in treating the disease if taken early, but the popular attitude towards the disease made for its continuance. If a young man contracted this disease he was excluded from the benefits of his friendly society and, perhaps, from a natural shame he refrained from going to his own medical adviser, and so was forced into the hands of quacks, with the result that considerable time was wasted, and, perhaps, the disease went beyond cure, when for all practical purposes the man would be better in his grave. The very ravages the disease was making was his excuse for touching upon it. He desired to commend the Commissioner of

Public Health for having made the report, and he hoped the Minister would give the Commissioner every assistance in his desire to do something to attack this loathsome disease.

MR. THOMAS: It had not been his intention to speak on the Medical Estimates at all, nor would he have done so but for the fact that the member for Cue (Mr. Heitmann) had read a report from the Medical Board in connection with the chemists. As probably the only member who had any experience in these matters, and while disclaiming any, even the remotest, connection with individuals who dealt in abortion, he thought the facts of the case should be made clear to hon. members. He had been wondering what could be the reasons that had actuated the hon. member in submitting this particular report to the Committee. It seemed to him the hon. member had selected one particular profession, that of pharmaceutical chemists, notwithstanding that there were other professions, some of which might be directly connected with this business. He desired to know if the hon. member had selected this one body in order to get a condemnatory report to read before the Committee in connection with his long prepared oration. In his belief the hon. member had been preparing for this great effort for the last 12 months. It reminded him of the labouring of the mountain which brought forth a mouse. He was entirely at a loss to understand what the motives could be which had actuated the hon. member when he sought to secure this report. Even if it was in the public interests that such a report should be procured, there were other professions, and why should they not have all been reported upon? Further than this, if the individual chemists referred to had erred, if they had broken the law, why did not the Premier or the Minister, or the police, or the Medical Department prosecute them? Again, since when had Parliament become a police court in which to decide these contentions as to whether these men had or had not erred? It seemed there was something very peculiar about this matter. It would appear that

at the instigation of the member for Cue—who seemed to be under the impression that he was sent here by Divine power to correct all the medical misstatements and imperfections of the world—it seemed the hon. member had brought pressure upon some member of the Ministry, possibly it was not difficult to guess which one, and had at last succeeded in satisfying his detective instincts to learn whether some of these chemists were keeping strictly within the law. It would appear that to the staff of the Medical Department this job had seemed too unsavoury, and so they had secured all the individuals they could and sent them round with instructions to entrap every possible chemist into supplying some drug that would appear to be inductive of abortion.

Mr. Underwood: They told them what they wanted it for.

Mr. THOMAS: They had secured a body of individuals as informers to take upon themselves the most disreputable and disgusting attempt it was possible for a human being to take on.

The Premier: It is absurd to talk like that, because every inspector of meat must be the same.

Mr. THOMAS: These individuals were not regularly employed by the department.

The Premier: Yes, they are.

Mr. THOMAS: In any case, in order to secure this business, they had gone round to the chemists and told a fictitious story about having got a woman in the family way. An individual who was capable of going round on a mission of that description and who would make such representations was, to say the least of it, a disreputable blackguard.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: It might do more good if you answered the statements.

The Premier: It was done with a view to putting down crime.

Mr. THOMAS: If the hon. member desired to put down crime, instead of sending an individual—

Mr. Taylor: To encourage it.

Mr. THOMAS: Without any witnesses to secure an accusation against other individuals, not for the purpose of bringing them before the police court, but for the

purpose of making a statement before Parliament, which probably no hon. member would be game to make in public, there were other more effective means of putting down crime. Without making any appeal for a man who was a criminal—because as a matter of fact he would gladly assist to trace such a man and prosecute him—he would reiterate that informers had been sent amongst a body of hitherto honourable men, and the net result was the word of one man against the other.

The Premier: Oh, no.

Mr. THOMAS: In no instance was there any corroborative evidence.

The Premier: He brought along the article, and that is the best evidence.

Mr. THOMAS: There was not a single instance of corroborative evidence. Stephens' *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, a standard work, laid this down—

The testimony of an accomplice is in all cases regarded with just suspicion, and unless his statement be corroborated in some material part by unimpeachable evidence the jury are usually directed by the judge to acquit the prisoner.

The Premier: The unimpeachable evidence was the production of the article.

Mr. THOMAS: The greatest indictment was against the Ministry themselves and the individual who had sanctioned the inquiry. If these chemists had done wrong, why not set the law upon them? There was a law entailing three years' imprisonment for an individual who did that sort of thing. Why not get the whole truth, why come here with a fragment of proof and take advantage of the privileges of Parliament to make a charge, the biggest portion of which could not be proved?

The Premier: That does not affect the position as to whether these things occurred.

Mr. THOMAS: It was an axiom of British justice that every man was regarded as innocent until proved to be guilty. There was here an assumption on the part of hon. members that certain individuals were guilty.

Mr. Dwyer: They did not name the individuals.

Mr. THOMAS: No, but they had cast a slur upon the whole profession. Was it fair that one particular body should have been selected for this exposure? He was pretty well aware of the reasons why this report had been obtained. It was because a certain Bill had been introduced to the House and because that measure had justice as its foundation, and there was no other means to defeat it that this paltry subterfuge had been resorted to. The report showed that 42 visits had been paid to 37 chemists. There were in Western Australia 200 registered chemists on the roll, and probably an equal number of unregistered chemists. Forty-two visits had been made to thirty-seven chemists. Thirty-seven out of a probable 400, and as a result, without making further inquiry, an indictment was made before the House which cast a slur on the character of many honourable men in this country. And he asked where was the justice of it? Why were not these individuals brought before the police court? Why were they not put upon their trial and given a chance as in every British country of proving their innocence or guilt? It is said that six were willing in certain circumstances to supply, but for various reasons did not do so. In another part of this report, engineered by the menials of the Health Department at the instigation of a higher authority it was stated—and this showed the bias—that two were evidently suspicious and refused to supply. What evidence was there to prove that they were evidently suspicious? Was it simply because they proved to be honest men? It was even desired to cast an imputation on these men without giving any proof whatever, thus showing continual evidence of bias in one direction. Drugs were supplied but probably by an assistant. The registered pharmacist might have been absent from his business. An appeal was made to a pharmacist and he refused, and then, like the sneaking individuals they were, they got round a junior assistant—a boy perhaps who had been only a year or two in the business and who knew no-

thing of its dire results, and simply to make a report they wormed out of him, by what devious ways he did not know, probably by the threats or bribes or something of that kind, they got something from him, and that was the sort of thing that was brought forward to besmire an honourable profession. Members might well be ashamed of it.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Abuse is very poor argument.

Mr. THOMAS: No one was being abused by him, but the member for Cue had been accusing, abusing, and vilifying a profession whose boots probably he was not fit to polish.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must withdraw that expression.

Mr. THOMAS: I withdraw.

Mr. Underwood: He is fighting for the murderers.

The CHAIRMAN: I must insist on the member for Pilbara withdrawing that expression; it is distinctly out of order.

Mr. Underwood: I wish to say this—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must withdraw. There is no yes or no about it.

Mr. Underwood: I want to say I am speaking about men not in this House.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member said the member for Bunbury was fighting for murderers and he must withdraw.

Mr. Underwood: I withdraw.

Mr. THOMAS: Another passage said—

It is most probable that the publication of the evidence given in a recent inquest at Midland Junction has hampered the investigation and influenced some chemists in refusing to supply drugs.

What evidence had the individual to substantiate a statement of that kind? It was purely assumption. He had merely quoted that passage to show that the investigator was biased from beginning to end. Further on the report said—

The fact that the services of a reliable female could not be secured to procure these drugs on behalf of the department—

A reliable female to go round to chemists and designate herself a prostitute! A

reliable female to take up this dirty work for the department! Truly that statement was worthy of the whole report. The report continued—

He refused to supply a man, but most probably would have supplied a woman.

Mr. Taylor: He was no gentleman if he would not.

Mr. THOMAS: Truly this was a brilliant epistle. It was worthy of its authors. The report continued—

The price paid for the drugs ranged from 30s. to 1s.

A man supplying drugs for abortion, a criminal offence, murder, for a bob! It did not look too sound.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It does not say too much for the chemists.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must address the Chair. If he would persist in turning to other members, that of necessity caused them to interject.

Mr. THOMAS: It was difficult to continually gaze on the Chairman's countenance, and he should be allowed to look a little one way or the other. In the final effort—to show that this report was biased—it said—

Some who refused to supply abortifacients are known very well to stock and sell the firstnamed.

If they refused to supply them how was it known that they stocked them unless the individual had been there to get them for his own use?

The Premier: I have seen them frequently paraded in their windows and everybody knows it.

Mr. THOMAS: It was not his desire to say that wrong was not done. He believed wrong was done and he was prepared to join in the hue and cry at any time to punish the scoundrel who made a living by procuring abortion, because he was procuring murder.

The Premier: We have warned him.

Mr. THOMAS: The Premier should set the officers of the law at work and get evidence and bring the offenders before the police court and let them defend the honour of their characters. If they were guilty they should be in gaol, but the privileges of Parliament should not be used to blacken the character of a profession

simply because there was personal prejudice against its members.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Mr. THOMAS: An analysis of these drugs would place members in possession of information of which they were probably not aware. The result was that 12 samples were round black pills in which aloes, oil of savin, iron, and ergotin (the latter in quantity of approximately one grain per pill in each case) were detected. These were all practically the same as the well-known Benjean's pills. That statement was probably absolutely correct; but what was the proper position of affairs? There was a preparation known as Bonjean's pills imported from other parts of the world which came through the Customs and were sold under the label and address of the maker, and sold for the purpose of correcting female irregularities and not for abortion at all; a subject on which the member for Cue waxed so eloquent. If these medicines were admitted through the Customs—and the Customs could prohibit them—if the law permitted them to be advertised in the newspapers, and there was no law to prevent them from being used for legitimate purposes, why claim that these persons were abortionists? Where was the evidence to prove that? Only the statement of an informer who bought them for that purpose. The informer was an accomplice, and if these men were found guilty he would have to go to gaol with them. These were preparations which members had power to prohibit if they were earnest in their protestations.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We will do it.

The Premier: We have warned them.

Mr. THOMAS: Why warn them? Why not catch them? By the warning, the authorities were accusing dozens of men who were innocent; 37 out of 400 were approached, and a sweeping conclusion was drawn against every man who practised pharmacy in Western Australia. Could that appeal to any member as being justice? Could it appeal to anyone by taking 37 out of 200 registered chemists and probably as many more unregistered chemists, and out of that 37 probably not a quarter were guilty, and yet under the cover of the privilege of Parliament the

whole of the pharmaceutical profession were dishonoured. Had these men any chance of protecting their characters or refuting the statements? No. It went forth to the whole of Australia, and they were condemned unheard by the member for Cue who had set himself on a pedestal.

Mr. Underwood: You can put it down to all of the members on this back bench.

Mr. THOMAS: If the member for Ilbarra liked to set himself on a pedestal of purity he could do so. Among the pills mentioned some of them contained aloes, one of the most harmless and useful drugs known, yet that was put down as an abortifacient. Another contained iron, another oil of savin, and so it went on. It should be made perfectly clear that the law allowed and permitted these things to be sold for the correction of female irregularities, and these pills were advertised in the papers and sold without any apparent restraint.

Mr. Taylor: How would they apply to politicians' irregularities?

Mr. THOMAS: It would not be a bad thing to take some. To proceed further with these 12 cases in which there were sales and for which the Government were entirely to blame, No. 2 sample—supposed to contain an abortifacient—was composed purely of bitter aloes. These bloodhounds of the Health Department found that one sample supposed to be sold for the purposes of procuring abortion contained aloes. No. 2 consisted of borax—a wild and woolly concern of a drug to be sold for abortion. Borax could be bought from the grocer by the ton. No. 3 contained ergotin (one grain per ounce), oil of savin (doubtful), and aloes. One grain of ergotin to the pill! If one took eight pills at a time—a pretty considerable dose—one grain of ergotin in each, this would be only taking the dose as ordered by the British Pharmacopœia. The man or woman who took eight pills three times a day composed chiefly of aloes with ergotin would not have the inclination to take any more. Here was another of the drugs that branded the chemists as black-hearted degraded scoundrels destroying child life, according to the eloquence of the member for Cue. No. 4 contained aloes, pennyroyal, sulphate of iron and

ergotin (one grain per pill). Pennyroyal could be bought anywhere; any old woman took it; and the dose of ergotin could be taken 64 times a day without doing any harm; yet this was the abortifacient that based the hon. member's charge; this was what he laid before the House to discredit the pharmacists of the country. It no doubt reflected credit on the hon. member; he deserved all the bouquets Parliament could throw at him for the work he had done and for the attack made upon a defenceless body of men.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Look at the magnificent advocate they have now.

Mr. THOMAS: It was not a very pleasing task. All sorts of accusations could be made against him; but it was his duty as a member of the House to see that justice was meted out to everybody, and for that reason he took up this unpleasant task. No. 5 contained pennyroyal and tincture of iron. The latter made the red corpuscles of the blood; yet it was a dangerous abortifacient destroying child life!

Mr. Taylor: What is pennyroyal?

Mr. THOMAS: One of those things that are taken for a variety of ills. It was sometimes given when a child had colickywobbles and so forth. No. 7 contained potassium permanganate, commonly called Condy's crystals, which could be bought by the hundredweight or by the ton but yet was given as an abortifacient. This was the flimsy evidence on which the whole body of chemists were accused of being men who ought to be in gaol. Where could we reach if this charge was to be proceeded with? Nos. 12 and 14 contained sulphate of iron, aloes, and pennyroyal. We might as well accuse Beecham. Beecham's pills were solely composed of aloes. If one sold a box of Beecham's pills without the label, and if they were analysed, it could be said he was an abortionist. There must surely be some limit to such flimsy, ridiculous and unjust charges. No. 17 contained aloes and sulphate of iron. No. 17a contained borax. No. 18 was described as "red pills containing sulphate of iron, aloes and ergotin (one-third grain per pill), and white pills containing sulphate

of iron and aloes." Evidently this chap had put up a double-barrelled preparation, and there might have been reasonable ground for accusing him.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You are only transferring the charge from murder to one of robbery.

Mr. THOMAS: It was very easy for an hon. member to be facetious on a matter of this kind: it was very easy to make light of most serious things; but if the hon. member's intellect were a little broadened he would better appreciate the importance of the question and how it affected the people of the community.

The Premier: They were sold as abortive mixtures.

Mr. THOMAS: We had only the word of the informer as to that, an accomplice, a paid individual who went round and represented himself as being a seducer of some girl and as desirous of procuring abortion. The man who would go to another man and represent himself as a seducer and ask for an abortifacient was a disgraceful blackguard and a scoundrel, and the man who sold it was a murderer. He would put up no defence for that man.

The Premier: The man who catches him, by whatever means, is doing good for the community.

Mr. THOMAS: If the police were sent to get corroborative evidence to prove that any of these individuals had carried on these practices, let these people be incarcerated. But a hundred innocent men should not be punished by this vile report to get at one guilty man. That was unfair and wrong. In regard to No. 20a, no abortifacient was detected; and No. 21 contained tincture of iron and pennyroyal which cost 1s.

The Premier: And in some case 30s.

Mr. THOMAS: In some cases 2s. No. 21a contained aloes and ergotin (one grain to the pill), and No. 22 contained aloes. If a man for selling aloes was to be accused of being an abortionist he (Mr. Thomas) would plead guilty, because he had sold Beecham's pills by the thousand, just like any other chemist in the English-speaking world had done; and yet individuals in the State

were being accused of being abortionists for selling aloes. There was a preparation called Tansy cotton-root, which was taken for a variety of reasons. The analyst's report said—

These substances (cotton-root Tansy and Hellebore) either give no characteristic test or are so obscured by substances with which they are associated that they cannot be chemically detected.

Many of the charges were based on analyses that could not prove anything. Where did the case lie? Men's characters were besmirched and they were convicted by the member for Cue on evidence such as this where the analyst could not discover anything of a deleterious character. A rough list of drugs that could be used as abortive medicines was—borax, permanganate of potash, glycerine—the stuff that young ladies used to put on their faces—quinine, strychnine, cotton root Tansy, sulphate of iron, aloes, and pennyroyal, and a dozen others one could not think of for the moment. He had made an extract from Husband's *Forensic Medicine*, page 94—

Certain drugs, among which may be mentioned ergot, savin and a host of others, have been used for the induction of abortion. It is scarcely necessary to mention each drug individually, but it must be remembered that there is not one single internal medicament of which it can consistently with experience be asserted that even when abortion has followed its use, it must have produced this abortion.

It went to show there was no proof that any of the alleged drugs had ever produced abortion. There was very little more to be said on this particular question. Whatever the hon. member said about what should be done in future legislation, the Government possessed the power to deal with these individuals. He made no plea for the scoundrel who sought to augment his income by this practice. The Government with the powers in their possession should trace these men to their lairs and secure the necessary information and prosecute them

and put them in gaol and allow them no longer to exist to cast a reflection of their crimes over those who unfortunately received the same blame. If the member for Cue had proved anything he had proved laxity on the part of the administration. If anything was to be done it should have been done by the Police Department and the Medical Department who seemed anxious to make out a case against the chemists. Would they be so anxious to make out a case against another profession? These menials who sold their manhood at the behest of their superiors to try to intrigue men to their undoing, if they had been asked to secure evidence against others in another profession would they have done it? One confessed to feeling heated on the matter, when smarting under a monstrous injustice done to a section of the community.

Mr. Underwood: Bring in your Bill now.

Mr. THOMAS: It would be brought on to-morrow and the House would carry it against the hon. member's prejudices. Members should see that justice was done in the matter. The whole question would be sifted until it was discovered as to whether any of the statements made to-night were correct. Half of the articles mentioned were articles of commerce permitted by the Government to go into circulation, and he had proved that nine-tenths of the preparations contained harmless drugs. This thing could not rest, and all he asked of the House was that the ill-directed enthusiasm of the member for Cue should not be allowed to rest unsifted, that the slur he had endeavoured by his speech to cast upon members of the pharmaceutical profession would be wiped out, or else proven, and the guilty men put in gaol. That was not asking too much. Until some better proof had been procurable, the hon. member if he had been free from prejudice, and had a spark of manly feeling about him, would have withheld his condemnation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The unwarranted attacks which had been made upon the officials of the department could not be allowed to go unanswered.

During the time he (the Minister) had had the honour of being connected with the department he had found that all the officers had always tried to do their utmost to protect the community. While these men were carrying out the instructions issued to them they were endeavouring, as far as possible, and in the best manner possible, to see that the public were protected. The officers of the Health Department had to carry out many unpleasant duties, which they often wished they had not to carry out, for the purpose of seeing that the public were not imposed upon. They had to look after the meat sold, they had to look after the dairymen and they were up in the morning at three and four o'clock to see that the people were served with pure milk. They had to go into the stores to examine various tinned stuffs, in fact there were many duties they had to perform which those persons connected with the businesses condemned them for. But whatever the duties were they were carried out without fear or favour, and as far as the Health Department was concerned, Western Australia had reason to be proud of the officers connected with it. The hon. member would agree that it was the duty of the officers to see that the public were protected in every way possible. The member for Cue referred to various matters and it was necessary that they should be replied to. The hon. member went from Britain to America, and referred to a number of the drugs sold in Western Australia and thought that something should be done to carry out the desires of the present Minister for Lands who was responsible for the introduction of the sections in the Health Act dealing with these drugs. But while those sections were now in the Act they did not give sufficient power to the Health Department to carry out the wishes of Parliament. The Government, however, had been fortunate this session in bringing forward and in passing an Amending Bill which gave the Health Department power to deal with the drugs in the manner desired. In the future steps would be taken to see that the public



were not imposed upon. The hon. member also referred to the want of sympathy on the part of the Honorary Minister in regard to the standard fixed for nurses. So far as he (the Minister) was concerned, the standard for competency was fixed long before the present Government assumed office and it had never been altered. Now a board of experts of three medical men and two members of the trained nurses' association had been appointed to determine the standard. Personally he could never see the need for the necessity for the time stipulation before a nurse could receive her certificate. Immediately a person was qualified that person should have the opportunity of obtaining the certificate so as to practise straight away. There was no doubt the Health Act would be the means of increasing the charges, so far as nurses were concerned. Only two days ago the fact was brought under his notice that increased charges were being made for attending to midwifery cases. This, no doubt, was brought about by the increased benefits which were being derived as a result of the maternity bonus. It showed that the registration and confining nurses to a limited number of cases was going to be such, as he stated when introducing his Estimates, that he was afraid the time was not far distant when it would be found some of the districts would cry out because they could not get sufficient nurses in time of necessity. The member for Cue also referred to the fact that no action was taken in regard to an officer of the department because that officer did not notify a case of tuberculosis. When this was reported instructions were issued at once that a summons should be taken out against the officer for neglecting to report the case, but it was found that it would be a matter of almost impossibility to secure a conviction. These persons who were suffering from tuberculosis were segregated, and there was no danger of the community being affected. With regard to the question raised by the member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany) about venereal disease the Commissioner of Health had been asking

that steps should be taken with the view of preventing the spread of the disease. There was no doubt that steps should be taken at once to try if possible to cure and prevent the disease from spreading. The commissioner had gone so far as to arrange with the Perth hospital board that patients might be treated there free of cost, and there was a sum on the Estimates to provide for isolation wards to be erected for the treatment of these patients. It would be seen, therefore, that a start had been made in the direction of treating the disease. He could only repeat that he had every confidence in the officers of the department.

Mr. GARDINER: There was no vote on the Estimates for a medical officer in an important town such as Roebourne. Presumably the medical officer there was paid as a magistrate, and he was compelled to act in the dual capacity of magistrate and medical officer. He (Mr. Gardiner) had had occasion previously to point out that this was a most undesirable state of affairs, and he hoped now the Honorary Minister would take into consideration the necessity of appointing a person to act as medical officer in Roebourne independently of any other position. Speaking on matters of public health and dealing with disease amongst aborigines the other evening his remarks were misinterpreted. He stated that leprosy was in existence in one particular portion of this State, and also that other diseases were rampant. According to the Press it appeared that he had stated leprosy was rampant in the North-West. What he meant to imply was that leprosy existed in certain parts of the State, and right throughout the length and breadth of the North-West the disease from which the aborigines were suffering was rampant. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) subsequently in criticising him referred to him in disparaging terms, but the main arguments were against his (Mr. Gardiner's) youth. If such was the case he would not attempt to refute or deny them. At a later stage the hon. member went on to say that he had attempted to

disparage the North-West. The member for Kimberley should not justifiably make such a statement. There was no one in the House, when speaking upon questions affecting the North-West, who had been more optimistic than he (Mr. Gardiner) had. No one had greater faith in the possibility of the country than he and it was too bad on the hon. member's part to say that he had attempted to decry the country. What he had condemned was the system which was in existence in the North-West and which had caused so much disease to spread and so much dissatisfaction to exist amongst the people. The hon. member ought to be prepared to admit that he and others were responsible for causing that dissatisfaction in that part of the country.

Mr. Male: That is absolutely wrong.

Mr. GARDINER: It was absolutely a fact. On an earlier occasion he had dealt with the question of black and Asiatic labour. The member for Kimberley had stated the other night that in the interests of the State the present system was the best. On every occasion that hon. member had advocated a black Australia.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was getting away from the subject.

Mr. GARDINER: During his absence the other night the member for Kimberley had stated that he (Mr. Gardiner) was disparaging the North-West, instead of which it was, of course, the system which had been condemned. Even the member for Kimberley was not a greater advocate for that part of the State than was he (Mr. Gardiner).

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member would be required to confine himself to the subject.

Mr. GARDINER: The Minister should take into consideration the desirability of abolishing the system under which the Crown Law Department appointed a magistrate who was required also to act as medical officer, a dual capacity which it was impossible satisfactorily to fill. It was necessary that a medical officer should be appointed who would have no other duties to worry about. There should be a magistrate to attend

to the magisterial work, and a medical officer to attend to the health of the community.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Certainly some further consideration was due to the health affairs of the North-West. As for the subject to which attention had been drawn by the member for Cue (Mr. Heitmann) other hon. members should be thankful to that hon. member for having made public so important a matter. The reply by the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) had consisted almost solely of the contention that those who gained the information were informers. When a man relied on abusing those who had obtained the information he was practically pleading guilty, and the speech of the member for Bunbury was a plea of guilty to charges made by the member for Cue and by the Medical Department. Men had been sent round to these chemists and asked to be supplied with a drug which it was illegal to supply, notwithstanding which 75 per cent. of the chemists applied to had supplied it. It was an indictment which should have been answered seriously and fairly, if it was capable of being so answered. The position did not call for oratorical effect. It would take all the oratory of the world to convince the Committee that the chemists of Perth and Kalgoorlie were not supplying something which it was illegal to supply, and which, shortly stated, amounted practically to murder. The hon. member had attempted to show that in a court of justice an informer was regarded as an accomplice and an accomplice as being responsible for the crime. But the hon. member knew that to be able to formulate charges of this description it was absolutely necessary to have an informer. There was no other way of proving that such things were done. When the hon. member tried to bluff the Committee that a man who went round under instructions from the Medical Department and endeavoured to buy these drugs was nothing more not less than an accomplice the hon. member was on a distinctly bad wicket. The hon. member had proceeded to say that there was no corroborative evidence.

As a matter of fact when the test was made there was no attempt to get corroborative evidence. Possibly later on the Government would try other measures. For a start they were trying this, and endeavouring to show that the chemists were following these nefarious practices, and if subsequently they had reason to believe that the chemists had not ceased the practices no doubt they would take other measures. The hon. member had endeavoured to make capital out of the fact that some chemists refused, and that later on the drug was obtained from the assistant; and the hon. member had put a pathetic case of the assistant who did not know what he was doing. But the hon. member had not shown why the stuff was kept on the premises. The stuff was there, and certainly it was not for the chemist to take. Obviously it was there for sale. If the chemist did not want his assistant to sell it he should not keep it on his premises. The hon. member had asked should Parliament be a police court. It should not, but anything for the advantage of the people should be discussed in Parliament. Members were here to discuss those matters and if there were evils, to provide means for remedying them. This was undoubtedly one question that could be ventilated in Parliament. Then again the hon. member had brought up that miserable gag about the privilege of speaking in Parliament. The *Sunday Times* used that gag and said that he (Mr. Underwood) was not game to say outside Parliament what he said in the House. He was prepared to read from the house tops the report quoted by Mr. Heitmann and he had no doubt that if the member for Bunbury desired a public discussion of this matter the member for Cue would be willing to oblige him. The hon. member had gone on to speak of the department endeavouring to get a female to do this dirty work. The informers were blackguards and the Government were culpable for endeavouring to get females to do this work, said the hon. member. But was the work of bringing a conviction half so dirty as the offence itself?

If it was dirty to get a conviction, it must be much more dirty to commit the offence. Mr. Thomas had said that many of the chemists supplied the true and correct drug which might possibly effect the purpose for which it was bought, and if it effected that purpose would also affect the woman who took it. The hon. member showed, on the other hand that many of them did not supply that drug, but borax, Condy's crystals and other things which could be bought by the cwt. for a few shillings and which the chemists sold by the ounce. If they were not guilty of the actual offence they were guilty in this way of fraudulently selling something for a purpose which it could not fulfil. In taking money for borax they were at least guilty of fraud, because they were taking the people's money for something which was valueless. Whichever way one looked at the matter the hon. member had failed to show that the chemists had come out of the thing with credit. One practice was an offence which might practically be called murder, and the other was fraud, and hon. members were perfectly satisfied that the attempted defence by the member for Bunbury was a positive failure. The hon. member had asked why the Government should attempt to injure the chemists. One could see no reason whatever why the Government should particularly desire to injure the chemists, except the fact that they were convinced that the chemists were breaking the law and injuring the public. In his opinion the Government had taken the correct course in this matter and it was positively absurd to say that they had selected one particular class of citizen for attack. They had attacked certain tradesmen whom they suspected of breaking the law. He would give his hearty support to the member for Cue who had done something which would be for the benefit of the people of Western Australia in bringing this matter forward.

MR. HEITMANN: The hon. member for Bunbury had asked what was the motive for bringing this matter forward and had ridiculed the idea that it was possible for any man to be actuated by

public interest. That was an extraordinary view for an hon. member to take.

Mr. Thomas: I never made that assertion.

Mr. HEITMANN: The hon. member had inferred that. The member for Bunbury seemed to think that this action had been taken simply in order to defeat a measure brought before the House and as a move antagonistic to the hon. member who had introduced that Bill to give certain powers to the pharmacists. He would leave it to the Committee to judge whether the remarks he had made were personal or in the public interest. The hon. member had asked "since when have we made the Legislature of this State a police court?" We appealed to the House just the same as we appealed to the police court for justice. The hon. member in behalf of his profession had a few weeks ago appealed to the House to give his profession extended powers. Since the hon. member had imputed improper motives to those interested, he would advise him next time he appealed to the House to remember that this was a House of justice and that he who had a stain on his soul need not come to the House for justice or extended powers.

Mr. Thomas: Do you infer that I have a stain on my soul?

Mr. HEITMANN: When the hon. member asked for extended powers for his profession he was saying that one immoral crowd should have power to exterminate another immoral crowd. During the course of his remarks the hon. member had admitted that a few disreputable persons carried on this disreputable business. He also stated that he would join with anyone in punishing these individuals, and asked why should 300 or 400 citizens of the State be condemned when only 37 had been examined. If the investigations proved that only a very small proportion were indulging in this business it must be recognised that the disreputable few had increased to a very large proportion of the whole.

Mr. Thomas: Certainly not.

Mr. HEITMANN: This was not a matter in which public officers would engage with the object of misleading the public. It was too serious a matter. There were places which were known to sell these drugs, and the hon. member was aware that there were certain well-known places which were looked upon by even chemists themselves as places simply and purely for the purpose of carrying out abortion.

Mr. Thomas: Your knowledge exceeds mine in that respect.

Mr. HEITMANN: Establishments could be mentioned by him, and the hon. member said he would exterminate them to-morrow for the illegal business they carried on. The disreputable few admitted by the hon. member had increased to a large proportion, and as stated in the report, it must be borne in mind that this inquiry was made when the public mind was on a case of abortion, or at any rate a case involving the death of a woman for which a man was arraigned in the Supreme Court on a charge of murder, and in which the use of these abortifacients was prominent. At such a time the chemists would be extra careful, and he thought under other conditions the percentage would have been increased very considerably. There had been no bias on his part. He had not endeavoured to injure the hon. member or his profession in any way, and the member for Bunbury as a matter of fact said in introducing the Pharmacy Bill that if it could be proved that the chemists were carrying on this business he would assist anyone to wipe it out of existence. He asked the hon. member to assist him. Here was an opportunity, but instead of assisting he put up a defence that it was not murder but simply fraud.

Mr. Thomas: I put up no defence for an individual who does that.

Mr. HEITMANN: The hon. member had defended it right through. The report stated it clearly and the hon. member knew there was no mistake. The officers stated plainly what they wanted, namely something to procure abortion. If the drugs did not procure

this result then they had sold something of no value and had committed fraud.

Mr. Thomas: That does not make them abortionists.

Mr. HEITMANN: No; but according to the analyses they were abortionists.

Mr. Thomas: For supplying borax, etc.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was a question whether that article would not procure abortion under certain conditions.

Mr. Thomas: So will Epsom salts.

Mr. HEITMANN: As a matter of fact there was no direct abortifacient; it was a secondary condition brought on by the weakening of other organs. The hon. member was not to be blamed for defending his profession, but he would be well advised to repudiate the profession, a percentage of which carried on this trade.

The Premier: Not the profession.

Mr. HEITMANN: Well those in the profession.

Mr. Thomas: Certainly I repudiate them.

Mr. HEITMANN: If the report was of any value at all it showed that at least 75 or 80 per cent. of the chemists—

Mr. Thomas: Absolutely untrue.

Mr. HEITMANN: Thirty-seven chemists were visited—

Mr. Thomas: And nearly every sample analysed proved to be harmless.

Mr. HEITMANN: When used in certain ways these articles were not harmless. If a woman in a certain condition went to a medical man and he prescribed these simple means, even Epsom salts sufficient to bring about the result, he would be committing a crime.

Mr. Thomas: You had better suppress drug-selling altogether.

Mr. HEITMANN: There was no necessity for that. The chemist was just as necessary to the community as a medical man. The hon. member stated that the only means of defeating the Pharmacy Bill was by obtaining this report. The hon. member had not proved that the means adopted were wrong, and he had said that if it could be proved any of these people were carrying on this trade they should be prosecuted.

Mr. Thomas: Absolutely.

Mr. HEITMANN: Then we would be prosecuting 80 or 90 per cent. of the chemists.

Mr. Thomas: That is untrue.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was his belief that one of the members of the Board which had the administration of the Pharmacy Act was guilty of this crime.

Mr. Thomas: Prove that statement; it is an assertion.

Mr. HEITMANN: For proof the hon. member desired that the police should go to the chemists' shops presumably with a placard stating that they were out to catch the chemists.

Mr. Thomas: Take him before the Police Court.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was possible that evidence would be looked for—

Mr. Thomas: Mere assumption is no good.

Mr. HEITMANN: That defence would not do. Here were medical officers not one informer but three or four carrying on this investigation.

Mr. Thomas: Not medical officers.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. HEITMANN: If the hon. member would introduce the Bill again—

Mr. Thomas: I will most assuredly.

Mr. HEITMANN: The hon. member was ungenerous because it was at his request the Bill was deferred.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was out of order in anticipating a discussion on a measure which appeared on the Notice Paper before the House.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was the duty of the Government to bring in a Bill not to extend the powers of the Pharmacy Board but to take away from the Board the power they had at present, and for the Government to administer the Act. Whether the fault was due to a laxity of the law or not, the pharmacists themselves were not qualified to administer the Act.

Mr. Thomas: They have no power to administer that portion.

Mr. HEITMANN: Only recently in Melbourne the Pharmacy Board who worked under a similar Act prosecuted people and the same could be done here.

Mr. Thomas: They have not the power.

Mr. HEITMANN: It could be done here.

Mr. Thomas: It might be done in Timbuctoo.

Mr. HEITMANN: Moreover the Pharmacy Board in Western Australia had registered people who were well known to be abortionists, carrying on other business of a similar nature with that of abortion.

Mr. Thomas: That is absolutely untrue.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was known to the public generally, it must be known to the Pharmacy Board that the Red Cross Pharmacy was purely a shop for the sale of—

Mr. Thomas: Convict him and we will strike him off the register.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was for the Pharmacy Board to clear their register of such men.

Mr. Thomas: We have not the power. Give us the power and we will do it.

Mr. HEITMANN: The board had shown they were not worthy of that power, with all due respect to the hon. member and the chemists.

Mr. Thomas: That is unjust.

Mr. HEITMANN: The custom had grown up so that they seemed to think it perfectly right to deal with human life in the free and easy way they had displayed.

Mr. MONGER: To-night we had listened to one of the most indelicate debates that had ever taken place during the many years it had been his privilege to occupy a seat in Parliament. He would deal with one or two of the minor items dealt with by the member for Cue. He would not attempt to reach those high points in medical indelicate questions the hon. member had dealt with so extensively. It would take a long time to get away from the first name mentioned by the hon. member during a lapse. The hon. member referred to Mr. Faiz Mahomet. One was pleased to put the "Mr." before the name. A whiter man never occupied a position in Western Australia than the same Faiz Mahomet.

The CHAIRMAN: I am at a loss to know what this has to do with the vote.

Mr. MONGER: It was desired to make a small reference to the great work Faiz Mahomet had done in the early days of the goldfields.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Cue made a slip of the tongue in alluding to Faiz Mahomet as a business man in Coolgardie in the early days, but there was no need for the hon. member to take advantage of that and discuss Faiz Mahomet.

Mr. MONGER: Faiz Mahomet, though in a coloured skin, was as white a man as any of us. The member for Cue used these words in referring to the Commissioner of Public Health—

The Minister was handicapped in many ways in regard to public health matters. He (Mr. Heitmann) said this with every degree of sympathy for the gentleman in charge of the department, but the time had arrived when we should get a younger and more up-to-date man, one with more energy and initiative and more go in him. One could speak in the very highest terms of the gentleman now in control of the department, even though knowing him very slightly, but while having every sympathy for him, it was necessary to say he was not competent to deal with public health matters.

He could remind the hon. member of the occasion when the Principal Medical Officer submitted his first report, which the hon. member criticised with that strong manner and that peculiar manner he adopted, when he was not a partisan, if he was not in favour of an appointment. According to the hon. member everything in the Principal Medical Officer's report on that occasion was written and repeated and brought down from other authorities. To-night the hon. member was kinder than his usual style about the Principal Medical Officer, but in order to give the hon. member for Cue a proper opportunity for going back to his remarks made two years ago—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must get something nearer this vote

than a speech of the member for Cue two years ago.

Mr. MONGER: According to the member for Cue the Minister was handicapped in many ways, and one was justified in referring back to the remarks the member for Cue had made in reference to the incapacity of the gentleman to whom he had made reference to-day. For the benefit of the member for Cue he would read an extract from the *British Medical Journal*, practically in reply to what the member for Cue had stated on the occasion referred to. The *British Medical Journal*, it would be admitted, was an authority on matters relating to health.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member would have to come to the point, otherwise he would be compelled to resume his seat.

Mr. MONGER: His intention was to refer to the public health of this State.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member would have to come to the point; he had been indulging in irrelevant matters and tedious repetition.

Mr. MONGER: It was merely his desire to quote an extract from the *British Medical Journal* regarding the health of this State, which made some general remarks about the annual report on the public health of Western Australia issued by Dr. Hope. It went on to say that the report was a lengthy one, covering 64 pages, and that it contained a mass of useful information. The report concluded by these few general remarks—

The medical officer concludes this very excellent report by a few general remarks. He states that the general conditions of people's lives in the colony are of the best—good climate, plenty of sunlight, food, and satisfactory employment—so as to prevent anything likely to be a cause of deterioration of the race. In many parts of the State there exists a combination amongst men, apart from benefit societies, which provides for medical treatment and assistance during sickness. The fuller development in the way of preventing invalidity, providing insurance against

accidents and old age, is one which should be undertaken by employers and employees, supplemented by State aid. It will thus be seen that those responsible for the well being of the people are working on much the same lines as we are on this side for providing State medical aid. One seldom peruses a report in which there is so much evidence of good work done in all branches of public health. The medical officer is anxious to see the different Health Acts consolidated in one Bill, which would include a registration board for midwives and nurses, examination of school children, etc. This Bill, it is to be hoped, will be taken up at an early date by the Legislative Assembly.

These were the measures and the report which were condemned by the member for Cue. Were the hon. member in his place in the Chamber he might be referred to the speech he made some time ago when he spoke of the then newly appointed principal medical officer.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): It was not known whether the Commissioner of Public Health gave the hon. member the report which he read. What he wanted to say was that if the Government thought the Commissioner of Health was not doing his duty, he would soon be compelled to make way for someone else. He (the Minister) repeated what he said earlier in the evening, that since he had had the honour of assisting the Colonial Secretary in the administration of the Health Department he had had the opportunity of judging as to the ability of all the officers of the department, and he could do nothing but express confidence in them.

Mr. MONGER: It was satisfactory to hear the last remark which was made by the Honorary Minister. It was the district medical officer for York who some weeks ago informed him of the favourable comments on the Principal Medical Officer, and it was through the officer in York that he (Mr. Monger) had been able to get the report.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member would be required to resume his seat,

for he was indulging in nothing but repetition.

Mr. TAYLOR: The member for Cue (Mr. Heitmann) had declared that the Minister was hampered in the administration of the department through the lack of capacity in those who were directly administering the department from a scientific point of view. As one who had had experience in the administration of that Department he (Mr. Taylor) felt confident that if the Minister desired to have the department administered strictly in accordance with the Act, he had on the staff men perfectly capable of carrying out those wishes. If there was any lack of administration at all it was on the part of the Minister controlling the department. The member for Cue had declared a necessity for the appointment of a younger and more up-to-date man to administer the department. That contention was not soundly based. He (Mr. Taylor) had come into contact with the Commissioner of Public Health on the board of management of the Perth Public hospital, and to the credit of the Commissioner it was to be said that all those on the board for the last five or six years had the utmost confidence in that gentleman. It had been necessary to initiate a system in that hospital which was a particularly difficult task, namely, for the board to make provisions for the treatment of venereal disease. The subject was brought before the board by the Commissioner of Public Health, who proved perfectly capable of dealing with it, with the result that the hospital to-day treated that disease, which previously it was unable to treat. It was a testimony to the ability of that officer. A younger man might well have trembled to institute a system like that in a country where it had never been attempted before. If the Minister desired any reform whatever the Commissioner of Health would be only too ready to assist him. Most certainly there was no necessity for a younger man to fill the office. Years had brought to the present occupant of the position experience which nothing but years would bring. If the Minister desired

an officer to bring the Public Health Department right up to date there was not the slightest doubt the commissioner could do it.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Observatory*, £1,387—agreed to.

Vote—*Police*, £128,753—agreed to.

Vote—*Public Gardens*, £2,266—agreed to.

Vote—*Registry*, £9,561:

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In regard to the boundaries of statistical districts a good deal of dissatisfaction existed over the way these boundaries were arranged. For instance, the practice was simply to take certain bounds without having any regard whatever to the people in the district, and mark them out as statistical districts, irrespective of other conditions. It was disheartening to the settlers to know that many of their number were registered in other districts. It was entirely misleading to the people concerned. For instance, there was a direct railway from Narrogin to Wickepin, yet Wickepin was, for statistical purposes, regarded as being in the Pingelly district. It was to be hoped that this sort of thing would be straightened out.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The remarks of the hon. member were deserving of support. A readjustment of the boundaries for statistical purposes would be in the best interests of everybody concerned. The inclusion of Wickepin in the Pingelly district was wrong in principle. The district rightly belonged to Narrogin.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The system, he understood, was for the magisterial districts to be taken; however, he would bring the matter before the Colonial Secretary.

Vote put and passed.

Votes, *State Steamship Service*, £61,462; *Sale of Government Property Trust Account*, £11,838—agreed to.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 12.2 a.m. (Wednesday).*