

BILL—CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Restraint of marriage:

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: For reasons which had been stated on the second reading the clause should be struck out.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	7
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	4
				—

AYES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. Sir J. W. Hackett
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. F. Connor	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. F. Davis	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. J. M. Drew	(Teller).

NOES.

Hon. J. D. Connolly	Hon. M. L. Moss
Hon. D. G. Gawler	Hon. W. Patrick
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. R. J. Lynn	(Teller).

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 10 to 32—agreed to.

New Clause—Amendment of Section 191:

Hon. D. G. GAWLER moved an amendment—

That the following new clause be added to stand as Clause 2:—"Section 191 of the Code is hereby amended as follows:—By the addition of the following paragraph—"Any person found committing any of the offences defined in this section may be arrested by a police officer without warrant." By striking out the words "two years" in the eighteenth line of such section, and inserting in lieu thereof the words "not less than one and not exceeding two years."

Section 191 dealt with the offence of procuring. In speaking on the second reading, he had said that he proposed to take no action in regard to the white slave traffic which was really an extension of the offence of procuring, but he had been asked to move this amendment in order

to bring the law more into line with the English Act. The 1907 amendment of the criminal law in England went further than the existing section in the Code, for it provided that the offence of procuring should be punishable by flogging, and that a constable should have power to arrest without warrant. Under the Criminal Code the constable was only allowed to arrest without warrant where the offence was a crime or where he was given special powers under the Act. He asked the Committee to agree that procuring was a crime. The second part of the amendment dealt with the punishment, and proposed to strike out two years and make the minimum term of imprisonment one year.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment could be moved as a new clause, but it was unusual for an hon. member to move a new clause which had not appeared on the Notice Paper.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 8.44 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 12th November, 1913.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier:—Return of Cruelty to Animals Cases at Moora Police Court (ordered on motion by Mr. Lander).

By the Honorary Minister (Hon. W. C. Angwin): 1, By-laws of the Harvey Road Board. 2, By-law No. 87 of the Municipality of Fremantle. 3, By-law No. 39 of the Municipality of Geraldton. 4, By-law of Preston Road Board—Valuation on annual value. 5, By-law of Merredin Road Board—Valuation on annual value. 6, By-law of Meekatharra Road Board—Valuation on annual value. 7, By-law of Meekatharra Road Board—Fees for tents and other structures.

QUESTION—WAGIN-DARKAN RAILWAY.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Minister for Works: 1, On what date was any provision made in connection with the proposed Wagin-Darkan Railway in the Loan Estimates? 2, What was the amount allocated—(a) as to surveys; (b) construction of the railway; (c) rails and fastenings? 3, Is the total amount so provided lying dormant or has it been appropriated for other purposes? 4, If dormant, is the interest payable on the borrowing being debited to the Wagin-Darkan railway? 5, If appropriated for other undertakings, is the Wagin-Darkan railway relieved of the incubus of interest on loan? 6, If allocated to other undertakings, upon what authority has this been done? 7, Do the Government propose to proceed with the Wagin-Darkan railway, and when? 8, If not, why not?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works): I ask that this question be postponed until to-morrow.

Mr. GEORGE: Postponed?

The PREMIER: Yes; two departments are involved.

Mr. GEORGE: I do not want to embarrass the Government in their present financial distress, but I particularly wanted the answer to-night.

The PREMIER: In reply to the hon. member's remark, I may say there is no financial distress affecting the Government.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. MALE (Kimberley) leave of absence till the end of the session granted to Mr. Nanson on the ground of ill-health.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Initiative and Referendum (introduced by the Premier).

2, Agricultural Bank Act Amendment (introduced by the Minister for Lands).

PAPERS—GALLOP'S GARDEN, PURCHASE.

Mr. DWYER (Perth) moved—

That all papers in connection with the purchase, resale, and leasing of the property known as Gallop's garden, be laid upon the Table of the House.

He said: In moving this motion I do not intend to give any long dissertation, but simply desire that the papers be laid on the Table. The question in connection with the sale, purchase, and leasing of these lands has been before the public for a considerable time. The lands were originally the property of Mr. Gallop, and he had mortgaged them to a person in Fremantle. When this person died the trustees of the estate realised on the mortgage. The highest price they could get was £11,000, and this price, I understand, was paid by the Government for the time being under the Hon. Frank Wilson. At the time that amount was offered to the trustees, Mr. Gallop could have sold it for £17,000.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why did not he?

Mr. DWYER: But he had no knowledge of what the trustees were doing. It was all done, so I am informed, secretly, with the result that the then Government acquired for £11,000 what Mr. Gallop could have obtained £17,000 for, and thus had some money in his pocket. After it was sold for £11,000, Mr. Gallop received a promise from the Acting Premier, Mr. Gregory, that some concession would be made to him as regarded the purchase of the balance of the estate, after an allowance was made

for the foreshore. This promise was broken subsequently by the Works Department, then under the administration of Mr. Daglish. In view of the short statement I have made it will be apparent to all that this is a matter of considerable public importance, and in case an injustice has been done to Mr. Gallop by a past Administration it is a subject which might well be ventilated. I am moving for the papers with a view to investigating the matter myself, and to give other hon. members an opportunity to see exactly what transpired in connection with the various transactions through which this estate has passed.

Mr. Moore : You have found a mare's nest.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) : I am sorry that the leader of the Opposition is not here because he would know more about this transaction than I do. He would agree with me that if an injustice has been done it should be set right, and it could be set right by the present Government. I believe that no injustice has been done at all. This property was on the market for sale, and it was the desire of the then Government to have a road in the locality and some of the property was needed in order that a road might be made along the foreshore. The Government of the day determined that it would be well to purchase the property for £11,000, which was considered a reasonable price at the time. The property was purchased quite openly and fairly and not secretly and unfairly as the hon. member inferred. The man got all that he could get and more, I suppose, than he could have got from anyone else; otherwise he would have sold to someone else. Even if the land was mortgaged and if the owner had had an offer of £17,000 for it, he could have accepted the offer and paid off the mortgage. It is ridiculous for the hon. member to reflect on the previous Administration. If the Wilson Government had paid £17,000 the hon. member no doubt would have slated them for paying too much for the property. This is the line of action which the hon. member takes up.

Mr. Dwyer : Put the papers on the Table.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I have no objection at all to the papers being put on the Table, but I will not sit here and listen to reflections being cast on a previous Administration in regard to the purchase. What does the hon. member know about the transaction, and what does he want to know? He is moving for these papers believing that the mere action of moving means something. As a matter of fact, the laying of papers on the Table means very little indeed, because, as a rule, the hon. members who ask for them take no further interest in them.

Mr. Dwyer : I intend to.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : It is doubtful if the hon. member will. It was necessary for the State to acquire the property and the State acquired it fairly. If the Administration made a good bargain, they should be congratulated on it. If there was anything unfair in the transaction the hon. member should have made quite clear what he believes the unfairness was. The hon. member said that Mr. Gregory made some promise, but what did Mr. Gregory promise? The statement is vague. The hon. member simply said that Mr. Gregory made a promise and Mr. Daglish failed to carry out the promise. I think I can say that no promise was made. I believe that if a promise had been made by Mr. Gregory it would have been honoured by Mr. Daglish. If the promise had been made Mr. Gregory would have made it quite clear to the Government of the day that the promise had been broken. This is a very old estate, which had been for years in the family, and I can quite understand that Mr. Gallop did not wish to part with it after having held it for so long. He unfortunately mortgaged it heavily and the mortgage was called up. The Government at the time wished to secure the road to which I have referred, and all they did then was to buy the estate in an open and fair way. I have no objection to the papers being produced; I hope they will be produced, but when hon. members come here and ask for papers, they should give a good reason why the

request should be agreed to. The member for Perth has given no reason at all.

Mr. Dwyer : Yes I have. I desire to clear the atmosphere, but if it is murky it will be impossible.

Mr. George : Have you seen the papers ?

Mr. Dwyer : No.

Mr. George : You can see them at the Minister's office at any time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : The question is whether Mr. Gallop should have been paid £11,000 or £17,000 for the property. Of course the hon. member for Perth has a perfect right to discuss the matter without the production of the papers, but apparently he wishes the country to believe that some smart practice was indulged in before he came to the House.

Mr. Dwyer : We will clear that up.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : When the papers are produced it will be seen that the transactions are perfectly fair and clear. I sympathise with Mr. Gallop, who lost the property, probably more than the hon. member does, because I have known him I think for a longer time. I merely rise to protest against the unfairness of the hon. member in the remarks he made when asking for the production of the papers.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) : It is not my intention to oppose the motion, but I would like the House to consider where it will lead us, if in every case where the Government engage in a transaction of this kind, and the seller is dissatisfied, the papers are to be produced and the matter is to be made the subject of a debate in the House? If we were to do that in every instance, Parliament would require to sit for another six months. It is perfectly well known that if, after the production of these papers, the matter is to be made the subject of a further motion by the member for Perth in the direction proposed of paying a further sum of money to Mr. Gallop—for, if that is not the intention of the hon. member, I cannot see for what reason he is asking for the production of the papers—if that be the case, every person whose land has been resumed by the Government during the

past 20 years will come along and get some sympathetic member of Parliament to move for the production of the papers, and then the House will be asked to consider claims which may be real or fictitious.

Mr. Dwyer : Mr. Gallop was not a seller.

Mr. GEORGE : I do not know anything about that. The hon. member has simply used Mr. Gallop's name as a peg, and he has given us no valid reason as to why the papers should be produced. If the hon. member is acting as an advocate for anyone, I do not care who he may be, he can see the papers by calling at the office of the Minister. A request that files may be shown to a member of Parliament at the office of a Minister is seldom or never refused, but the point I want the House to consider is, where is this motion to land us? If people's land has been sold, I do not care whether it has been sold by the mortgagee or by the owner—

Mr. Harper : In this case, by the executors.

Mr. GEORGE : If such a person is dissatisfied with the price realised, is he to endeavour to get a sympathetic allowance from the Government or Parliament? Of course if Parliament admits that this is the proper course to pursue, then it will be open for the thousand and one claimants whose properties have been resumed in Perth for the past 20 years to come along and make a similar appeal. We know that none of these people have ever got the amount of money which they have stated they could have got from other sources, and if this motion is passed, it will be open for any or all of these disappointed people to bring their claims before the House. Unless the member for Perth can show that an absolute injustice has been done, that some cheating has been done by the Government, I do not think the House should pass the motion. The hon. member has given no reason at all; he has simply made a statement that the property was sold for £11,000 whereas it should have been sold for £17,000. This is a mere assertion

which has been made to him by his friends.

Mr. DWYER: Your words are beginning to convince me that there is more in it than I thought.

Mr. GEORGE: I know nothing whatever about it, but I know that if we enter upon this procedure we are going to bring a tremendous lot of trouble on the House. I have known of Mr. Gallop for about 23 years and as far as I am aware he is an honourable and straightforward man who has met with misfortune, but if there has been a complete bona fide sale to the Government for £11,000, why the matter should be re-introduced in this House I fail to see. If there is really a grievance, the question is, is it against the Government or someone else? I assume from the interjections of the hon. member that there was a mortgage on the property and the mortgagee entered into possession and sold it. If that be so, what has it to do with the House or the Government? The Government purchased the land and paid for it, and if the hon. member insists on the course he is following, it will be open for other disappointed claimants whose properties have been resumed, to get some sympathetic member of Parliament to move in their behalf. That kind of thing is reducing these matters to an absolute absurdity.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley): As a matter of principle, I intend to vote against the motion. The plea put up by the member for Perth does not in my opinion justify us in supporting the motion. It appears to me that if Mr. Gallop has any grievance at all, it is against the executors of the person who died and who held the mortgage. If the land was sold for less than its value, then surely that was the fault of the executors; it was not the fault of the Government who purchased it. It is not a crime for the Government to be the highest bidder for a block of land. Unless it can be shown that the Government did something unfair, I fail to see why we should support the motion at all. It appears to me the whole grievance lies between Mr. Gallop and the executors of the estate and has nothing

whatever to do with Parliament, and for that reason I shall certainly vote against the motion.

Mr. DWYER (in reply): I did not think for a moment that an innocent motion like mine would have stirred up the storm waters of the Opposition to such a fearful extent.

Mr. George: There has been no storm.

Mr. DWYER: It seems to me that I might well say, "Methinks they doth protest too much." I did not think when I moved the motion that there was so much in it. Now I am beginning to suspect there must be something that it is desired to conceal with regard to this purchase by the Government of the Gallop estate. If there is nothing to hide, why object to the production of the papers? There is no doubt about this, that the subject of the purchase of the Gallop estate has been discussed on public platforms on several occasions to my knowledge. We shall see on the production of the papers whether there is anything to conceal, and if the atmosphere concerning the purchase is murky it will be a matter for subsequent investigation. I therefore think it is the proper thing that these papers should be laid on the Table of the House so that they may be looked into by all members.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—THOMPSON'S DAIRY, INSPECTOR'S REPORTS.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco) moved—

That there be laid on the Table of the House:—1, The report of Inspector Riley, of the Central Board of Health, dated 17th July, 1911; the reports of Inspector Dow, of the Central Board of Health, dated November 3rd, 1911, and January 12th, 1912, relating to Thompson's Dairy; 2, The comments of ex-Chief Inspector Stevens, of the Central Board of Health, upon the reports of Messrs. Lander, Battye, and Lovekin, re Thompson's Dairy; 3, The report of Dr. Atkinson, the Government Bacteriologist, upon the result of the inoculation of guinea

pigs in July and October, 1911, with milk from Thompson's Dairy.

He said: I wish at the outset to confess that I am moving for these papers to be laid on the Table of the House so that further information may be made public with regard to a matter upon which the member for East Perth (Mr. Lander) moved some few weeks ago. I want to state also that I am at one with hon. members in this Chamber who desire to see that nothing but pure milk is supplied to the public, and especially to the patients who find themselves unfortunate in having to take advantage of the hospitals which are situated in our midst; but I want to say that I greatly deprecate any member of this Chamber making an attack upon a particular inspector unless he has ample proof that that inspector has been responsible for a dereliction of duty and through that dereliction has allowed impure or contaminated milk to go into consumption.

Mr. Lander: Do you not think it went into the Children's Hospital.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I am not discussing that question at the present time, but I want to say that the papers so far placed on the Table of the House do not and cannot convey to the public a proper understanding of the position, and the steps that were taken by the various inspectors in dealing with this matter. The reports I am moving for are in existence and if they are placed upon the Table of the House, together with the reports which have already been Tabled in response to a motion moved by the member for East Perth, an entirely different complexion will be placed upon the matter. The papers will show that on the 17th July, 1911, Inspector Riley, of the Health Department, visited Thompson's dairy and made a report. They will show also that Inspector Dow, of the Central Board of Health, visited this dairy on the 3rd November, 1911, and on the 12th January, 1912, and also made a report. It is true also that the member for East Perth in conjunction with Mr. Lovekin and Mr. Battye visited this dairy on the 12th December, 1911, and made a report. But the chief inspector of the Central Board of

Health at that time wrote a comment on the report of these gentlemen when it was sent in discounting that report. I want those reports made public in justice to the names which were mentioned by the member for East Perth when moving his motion. If there is any blame to be placed on anybody let us place the blame on the right shoulders. If the inspectors of the stock department were wrong then undoubtedly the whole board of health was wrong, because the two inspectors visited the dairy, made a report, and the chief inspector evidently by his comment accepted the report of his inspectors and discounted the report made by the outside gentlemen. There can be nothing wrong and no possible objection from anybody, to my mind, to have the whole of the papers placed on the Table so that they may be made public. Only part of the file has been made public up to date, but I want the rest of the papers made public so that the people may be able to judge whether these particular inspectors which the member for East Perth mentioned, deserved the condemnation he levelled against them. I want to say, further, that when Mr. Weston, one of the inspectors mentioned by the member for East Perth, went to the dairy on two occasions, he secured some of the milk and sent it to Dr. Atkinson, the Government Bacteriologist, to have tests made. That milk was inoculated into guinea pigs and the reports of the inoculations—there were two—are also in existence. I want that also laid on the Table that they may become public property, and so that the public of the metropolitan area may have an idea and an opportunity of judging whether the member for East Perth was quite fair in the language he used when moving his motion in this Chamber a little time ago. I do not think there is any necessity to go further into the matter. I cannot see any possible objection from anybody to having the whole matter made public so that everybody will understand the full text of the question. I want to say it is almost impossible to understand anything from the papers which have been laid on the Table. The matter is in a sense dis-

jointed. One cannot make any sense out of the papers because certain remarks are made relating to other matters which are not on the file. The Minister for Lands points out they were not called for. That is true, but without them we cannot make sense of the file. Therefore I ask that the reports may be placed on the Table. I content myself with moving the motion standing in my name.

Mr. DWYER (Perth): I second the motion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): I move an amendment to the motion as follows:—

That all the words after "that" in the first line down to "dairy" in the last line but one be struck out, and the words "all the papers relating to Thompson's dairy" be inserted in lieu.

Mr. Lander: Give them what you have got up your sleeve.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): While there is a possibility of some of the statements made by the member for East Perth being misleading there is also a possibility of both parties being right. An inspection in July 1911 surely can have nothing to do with an inspection made in November 1911 and to show that, the hon. member in his motion to which I have moved an amendment, has chosen only a few of the reports which are satisfactory. I may say there are other reports which bear out to a large extent the contention of the hon. member during his visit to that dairy.

Mr. Allen: Do you agree with his remarks about murderers and assassins?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): I should like to read a portion of the inspector's report—one of the inspectors who has been mentioned.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: I do not think it would be fair to read the report.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Read the file too.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): I am justified in reading this one report to show that, while the hon. member desires to do justice to one side, his motion, and those who have requested him to act, have no intention to do justice to the other side. There is no reason why

the whole of the papers should not be laid on the Table of the House. I want to take this stand. When we find gentlemen like Messrs. Lander, Lovekin, and Batiye, who have nothing whatever to gain—only for the public good—giving their time very early in the morning for the express purpose of ascertaining whether the milk supply to the Children's Hospital, in which they were closely interested was good, and they go out to a dairy after complaints are made by the doctor of the hospital, to see if any improvement can take place and they find the dairy in a disorderly condition, I maintain there should be a certain amount of respect paid to the report sent in by these gentlemen. It is true the inspectors have repeatedly reported favourably of this dairy, but as I stated just now, both may be right, because an inspector may have gone to the dairy last month and found it in a clean condition and any member might go to the dairy to-morrow and find it in a dirty condition. Inspector Riley, the first inspector mentioned in this motion, in July stated—

There are two small holes in wire gauze of milk room door. Otherwise dairy plant and premises clean and satisfactory.

That is a good report in favour of the dairy and that is one of the reports which the member moved for. In February, 1912, a further report goes on to say—

Milk room is constructed of brick lined with plain galvanised iron, in clean and satisfactory condition. Re the use of this room for cooling and straining the milk, I am of opinion that if I had arrived at this dairy five minutes later the milk would have gone direct from the cows to the consumer. The milk cart was backed up near the milk shed and the large can was being filled with milk ready to be lifted into the delivery carts. The cooler was not ready and in the excitement of trying to fix the water pipe to the cooler some of the milk was spilt on the floor of the milk room.

That is one of the complaints the gentlemen I have named referred to, that the

milk was not being cooled before being sent out. The cooler was not connected. The report goes on—

Milking shed was clean and satisfactory, milking going on under clean conditions. Stables—There was an undue accumulation of manure in and near the stables.

Another complaint of the gentlemen referred to.

Recommendation — That a surprise visit be paid to the dairy at milking time to ascertain if the milk room is used for the purpose for which it was built, viz., the cooling and straining of the milk. That the undue accumulation of horse dung be removed from the stables.

So members will see that to form a fair opinion of the actions of the gentlemen who reported, it is necessary that all the papers should be placed on the Table of the House. That is my reason for moving in the direction I am doing. Members can then see for themselves who is correct, whether the gentlemen who made the report, or the inspectors. I believe both are right. I want to say that it is very strange at the time this discussion took place—I think it is now nearly 12 months ago—the position was this: certain articles had appeared in the public Press, but no dairy was mentioned, no name was mentioned, yet we find some of the inspectors rushed in and thought it was desirable that the department should contradict the statements which appeared in the Press with regard to a certain dairy. How was it possible if everything was found right when the officer went there, that the department should contradict the statements as to a certain dairy which had not been mentioned? I believe there are no complaints now about the dairy; everything is satisfactory. I beg to move the amendment.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin): I desire to support the amendment of the Honorary Minister for the reason that, as a unit in the House I yield to no one in my desire to see the dairies of the whole State, for that matter, especially the dairies supplying milk to the Children's Hospital, or any hospital, in a perfectly clean

and satisfactory condition. I do not think there are many members in the House who will agree with the extravagant language used by one member in this Chamber when bringing the matter before the House some little time ago.

Mr. Allen: Who was that?

The Premier: The member for East Perth.

Mr. Lander: The member for East Perth, you know!

Mr. S. STUBBS: I wish also to say this, that the member for East Perth and the gentlemen who accompanied him were out on a good mission and I give them credit for doing their level best to see that the milk supply to the hospital was pure and good, but the language used—

Mr. Lander: Was not strong enough.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Must be deprecated even by the hon. member himself.

Mr. Lander: No fear.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If not, I am sorry, because peoples' characters should not be taken away.

Mr. Lander: We should protect the children in the hospital.

Mr. S. STUBBS: We should give the gentlemen a chance of clearing their characters which are as dear to them as the character of the member for East Perth is to him.

The Premier: Which deserves the first consideration, character or life?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I will ask the Premier to place himself in the position of the persons who were charged with the serious crime that the member for East Perth laid at their doors without having any chance of defending themselves. When charges of such a grave nature are made, there should be evidence to support those charges, and members should not take away the characters of men who are not in a position to defend themselves. The Premier is quite right when he says that the lives of the people should be protected, and I am not endeavouring to shield those men if they are guilty and blameable for supplying milk of impure quality. I have not spoken to either of those gentlemen who have been mentioned for the last nine months, and I am not holding a brief for them; I have

not had any communication with them directly or indirectly, but my attitude as a member of Parliament is to see that fair play is meted out to those who are not here to defend themselves.

Mr. Lander : And to protect the children's lives.

Mr. S. STUBBS : As I said before, the action of the member for East Perth was a good one, but there is a proper course to adopt in order to sheet grave charges home, instead of accusing people in the House when they have no chance of defending themselves. The Minister is on right lines in moving an amendment, and I am sure the member for Subiaco will not raise any objection to the whole of the papers being placed on the Table. I have pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by the Honorary Minister.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth) : It gives me very great pleasure to support this amendment. The only thing I regret, and I regret it very much, is that the Minister in placing the reports on the Table the other day did not table a copy of the report by Mr. Lovekin, Mr. Battye, and myself when he could not get the original one. A copy would have met my wishes. Some hon. members think that I am too rough in my language. If they understood the dangers that arise from milk being taken from diseased cows and given to children they would not think so; that is, if they are sympathetic fathers, and desire to protect their children. I believe there are some of them here. The member for Northam can grin over this matter, but I say this, that because of the cows he brought into this country the hon. member is answerable for some of those graves in Karrakatta Cemetery.

Mr. SPEAKER : Order ! The hon. member must withdraw that.

Mr. LANDER : I withdraw it, but I cannot help it; it is my view.

Mr. SPEAKER : Order ! The hon. member must withdraw, and not add to his remarks.

Mr. LANDER : Very well, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw. When milk is

taken, as that milk was taken, direct from the cow and placed in a big urn at a temperature of 102 and is allowed to stand there for half an hour or an hour while other milk is being added to it, the microbes eat up all the nourishment in the milk, and it becomes a death agent. Children were dying in great numbers in the Children's Hospital when Mr. Lovekin and Mr. Battye asked that I should go with them to inspect the dairies. When they made that request, I said, "All right, on one condition, and that is that you inspect your own dairy first." We went there in a straightforward manner and told Thompson, the owner of the dairy, what we were there for. We told him that children were dying in great numbers in the hospital, and I say it now without hesitation and without any intention of withdrawing it, that any public officer who stands by and sees milk from the cows that we found in that dairy being sent to a hospital is worse than an assassin and worse than a murderer. I say that now, and without hesitation. The first cow we examined was tuberculous and had been condemned by the inspector. The animal was put into a bail and was being milked. We were told that the milk was to be given to the pigs or the calves, but whilst we were there a man came to the cow shed and asked the owner what he should do with the milk. In connection with the next three or four cows, we saw by the side of the teat on udder little pustules, and every time the teat was squeezed that pus fell into the milk pail. Will hon. members say that it is not murder to supply that milk to the Children's Hospital? Do we not find a difference in the death-rate at that institution since we changed the milk and got a pure supply? If the member for Subiaco wanted to take action, why did he not take it in his own district instead of waiting till now to move for papers, no doubt through officers who have been inspiring him to take action.

Mr. SPEAKER : Order ! The hon. member must not make remarks about a member being inspired by outside persons.

Mr. LANDER: Very well, I withdraw the remark. This question is too serious to be trifled with. We find that inspections were made in July and October, but what have July and October to do with 22nd December? The first time I asked a question in this House in reference to the milk supply, the Honorary Minister said that everything was satisfactory. Since the Minister and his officers have gone to work what a difference we find! What did we find a few years ago at the Perth Public Hospital? The sick and dying were being supplied with milk from tuberculous cows. Is that a fair thing? And there is no doubt that the same thing was going on in connection with the Children's Hospital. It seems strange, as the Minister remarked, that immediately a dairy was referred to in the Press, although no name was mentioned, the officers were anxious to inspect the dairy, but no inspection was made until after January. When I brought up this matter in the City Council on one occasion, the inspectors went out the next morning and afterwards they had an official inspection with the Press. Is that a fair thing? No, it is not. Let us turn up the *Commonwealth Year Book*, and we will find that the death-rate amongst the poor kiddies in 1903, when we first commenced to make a row about the condition of the dairies, was 283, and we have got it down to 76 or 78. Are not these things worth fighting for? If hon. members think I am coming into this House to cave in to any particular member or party they make a mistake. I belong to a party who are fighting for the masses, and not cringing to the few. That is what goes on in Parliament—too much cringing for the sake of popularity. We do not want that sort of thing in the Labour party. I am pleased the amendment has been moved. I have a copy of the report which was furnished by Mr. Battye, Mr. Lovekin and myself on our inspection of Thompson's dairy, and I would like it read or added to the papers which the Minister intends to put on the Table.

The Premier: There is a copy on the file.

Mr. LANDER: If that is so, I do not wish to delay the House by reading the report. I do hope that all the papers will be put on the Table, but I would like the Government to go further and appoint a select committee or even a Royal Commission to inquire into the milk supply of Perth. We know that from about the middle of December till about the end of February there is not sufficient milk coming into Perth to supply the wants of the population, and if we ascertain the number of cows it will be found that there are less cows in the dairying industry in Western Australia to-day than there have been for a number of years. When we know the sort of business to which I have referred is going on, it should be our duty to take some action to protect the sickly women and poor little children who have to live on milk, irrespective of whether we please anybody or hurt anybody.

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth): I regret that the hon. member for East Perth did not see fit to, at any rate, modify the language he used on a previous occasion. With the member for Wagin, I quite agree that all members of Parliament are particularly anxious to see that the food supply of the people is of the best and purest quality.

Mr. Lander: You did not take much action to do it, old party.

Mr. ALLEN: And not only in regard to the milk supply, but also in regard to the meat supply. We had information given in the Chamber the other day that the Government were trying to get rid of cattle which were on the verge of dying from disease.

The Premier: Who stated that?

Mr. ALLEN: It has been stated.

The Premier: It is not correct, at any rate.

Mr. ALLEN: We have the member for East Perth most anxious to see that the best milk supply is sent to the people, and we should be just as anxious about the meat supply. I am glad that the amendment has been moved, because every member, I am sure, is desirous that the whole of the papers should be laid on the Table. The only thing I regret is that any hon. member should so far forget himself as to rise in this Chamber and

refer to gentlemen in public positions in the way that the member for East Perth referred to Inspector Weston and Chief Inspector Weir. When anything is said about us in this Chamber we are most anxious that our reputations should be protected, and by the Standing Orders we are obliged to withdraw, but the member for East Perth can get up in the House and call civil servants all the names he can lay his tongue to. I tell him that if I were these gentlemen I would ask him if he were correctly reported and if I received an affirmative answer I would pull his nose. That is the only way to deal with assertions of that character. I say that no member of the House should use the expressions which the member for East Perth used.

Mr. Lander: You have not the courage to fight anybody.

Mr. ALLEN: I would not trouble to fight the hon. member, because I have met some of his sort before. Some people are firebrands. For the member for East Perth to come into the House and use the language he did about Inspector Weston and Inspector Weir was scandalous. Those gentlemen ought to be protected. It is all very well to call those men assassins and murderers, but this extravagant talk does not do any good.

The Premier: You want to be a murderer yourself and pull his nose.

Mr. ALLEN: He ought to be murdered. I would like to be the executioner, and I would execute him.

Mr. George: Would you put the boot into him?

Mr. ALLEN: Yes, and the heel as well. But to be serious for a moment, I sincerely hope these papers will be laid on the Table, because I am certain that we will have a report which will satisfy the House that both inspectors did all that could be expected of them. The numerous inspections which have been made will show that nothing whatever was neglected. The test which was made in regard to the tubercular trouble, by supplying guinea pigs with milk from the cows, did not prove any disease to be there at all. The hon. member suggested that these inspectors went out and that the dairy people were forewarned that they were coming.

I think it will be shown from the reports that they went at all hours. We are quite in sympathy with the Honorary Minister in the matter of these papers being laid on the Table of the House. I only rise to enter an emphatic protest against the language which the hon. member for East Perth took it upon himself to use.

Mr. Lander: It will not make any difference.

Mr. ALLEN: No, the hon. member has a hide like a rhinoceros. The hon. member talks about the working man, but before he came into this House he was kept by the people he now wants to put the boot into, what he calls the "Terrace push."

Mr. SPEAKER: This has nothing to do with the motion.

Mr. ALLEN: I quite agree with you, Mr. Speaker. I trust these papers will be laid on the Table of the House and I am sure when they are we shall form a very different opinion from that which the hon. member for East Perth would have us form.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): There is some doubt about that.

Mr. ALLEN: The Minister for Lands told us the report he had seen was satisfactory. I am quite satisfied that every member of this House is desirous of having the papers laid on the Table, but whatever may be the result, it is the duty of every member to deprecate the language used by the hon. member for East Perth.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I support the amendment, and want to say a word or two in regard to the privilege and duty of members of this House to criticise the public service if they deem that such criticism is warranted.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Fairly.

Mr. Lander: It is fair criticism.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I just wish to say that the civil servants are entrenched behind an Act and behind all sorts of enactments and privileges. Once they get in to the civil service it is almost impossible except by dynamite to get them out. There is no control over them, but so far as my experience goes they control the Ministry, and if we shut down

on absolutely the last safety valve of the public, Parliament, we might as well hand the country over to the civil service altogether. I have no reason either to endorse or deprecate the language used by the hon. member for East Perth. I take it that he is able to substantiate what he said, or if it is proved that he is wrong, that he is ready to make what reparation he can, but at the same time if he is convinced that Inspector Weir or any other civil servant in this country has not been carrying out his duties as civil servants should, it is not only his privilege, but his duty, to come into this House and point out the matter. The hon. member for West Perth said that we are very jealous of our own reputations, and when we make remarks here that are not warranted we are called upon to withdraw them. My experience, so far as the Opposition are concerned, is that when they withdraw a remark here in accordance with the laws of the House they go down to their own slimy old paper and get it put in there.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The discussion is out of order.

Mr. George: Is the hon. member right in accusing the Opposition of having a "slimy old paper"? How can members of the Opposition have such a paper? The only daily paper is—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, the hon. member is not justified in rising to a point of order, and making a statement. Will the hon. member state his point of order.

Mr. George: I think the hon. member for Pilbara should withdraw the words, "slimy old paper."

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member disagrees with the remark made by the hon. member for Pilbara, he has an opportunity when he speaks of denying the assertion. If he deems it personally offensive I will ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr. George: I deem it to be offensive, and offensive to all the members of the Opposition.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I withdraw, but I consider that such a paper is offensive to anybody. I trust the amendment will be carried. I trust also that the rights

of members of this House to criticise civil servants will never be forgotten.

Mr. Lander: Take it from me, I will never drop it.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): I am very pleased indeed that the hon. member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs) has moved the motion before the House. The amendment made by the Honorary Minister only carries out what the member for Subiaco wants. I am also pleased to see that the hon. member for Subiaco has been able to move a motion of this sort without finding it necessary to indulge in extravagant language, innuendoes, and statements of a personal character. The hon. member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) is quite correct in his statement that this House has the right to criticise civil servants, but I might go a step further than that and say that when a person stands up in this House to criticise a civil servant he should not forget that that fairness which he requires himself is due to them. The hon. member for East Perth accused these inspectors of being murderers, murderers of young children. If they are murderers of young children—and the production of these papers will prove it if they are—they ought to be cited at once before the Criminal Court and hanged. It is an abuse of the privileges of the House for an hon. member to use such a term towards these gentlemen. The hon. member for Pilbara made a statement that the civil servants were bossing the Ministers. It is news to us. I did not know that the trades hall had shifted out of Beaufort-street into the public offices. We knew the trades hall had bossed the Ministry. So far as the slimy paper was concerned, I do not know to what the hon. member referred.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That remark was withdrawn.

Mr. GEORGE: I may say that there is no paper over which the Opposition have any control. The *West Australian* is the only daily paper in this State, and we have no control over that. Another paper is the *Westralian Worker*, but surely the hon. gentleman would not, in his wildest dreams, expect us to have any-

thing to do with that. The debate will have shown that the hon. member for East Perth is absolutely earnest in his desire that we should protect the lives of the children, and it will, I hope, show the country also that every member of this House is equally desirous to do that, although not taking such extravagant means. If the hon. member really believed that these inspectors were murderers—

Mr. Lander: Any man who passes milk as bad as that is as bad as a murderer.

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. member could choose words that would enlist the support of every member of this House, and need not descend to the use of words that are absolutely unmanly and cowardly.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): Whenever we have papers of this kind moved for we have the hon. member for East Perth waxing indignant. If the position is as the hon. member for East Perth states it is, this motion is one of want of confidence in the Government, that they are not doing their duty. If the Act does not go far enough we want to amend it. It is ridiculous that members should time and again come down here and merely ask for papers and claim that the mere asking for papers is sufficient to protect the people of this State, to prevent impure milk being supplied to them. Does the hon. member for East Perth contend that our legislation does not go far enough? Does the hon. member for Subiaco contend that our inspectors are not honest men, and doing their work faithfully and well? If so, let the hon. member say so and give the Minister for Lands an opportunity of bringing in legislation more in line with their ideas. As a matter of fact the inspection of dairies here is very thoroughly and well carried out. The hon. member for East Perth has always been a sensation hunter and has always endeavoured to hold himself up to the public as the one man desirous to protect human life—

Mr. Lander: Turn up your reports.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: As the one man who knows anything about this question, and the hon. member has never hesitated to gain notoriety by unfair criticism of

people who are not here to protect themselves. I agree with the hon. member for Pilbara that civil servants should come under criticism if we desire, but that criticism should be fair and should be directed to the Minister in control and not at the individual so much. If the milk supply to the Children's Hospital was so bad someone should be prosecuted at once. The mere desire of a member of this House to keep himself before the public is not sufficient justification for delaying action. Action should be taken and taken at once.

Mr. Lander: What about publicity, you got it the other day.

Mr. George: Is it not notoriety that you want?

Mr. Lander: You got notoriety all right.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not know to what the hon. member for East Perth is referring, but I would be very sorry to have the reputation of the hon. member and to have the hon. member's mind or inclination.

Mr. Lander: I would not have your reputation.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member could not. At any rate, this question of protecting the lives of children is an important one. We in Parliament should behave decently. The Constitution protects us, but any man who is worthy of the name who attacks someone should be prepared to go outside the House and repeat the words. Will the hon. member for East Perth do that, or for evermore hold his peace, and for the rest of his term in Parliament behave himself? He has no right to abuse the privileges of this House, and every member here has a right to resent his action in so doing. I have no wish to oppose the laying of these papers on the Table of this House. If the Government milk supply is better and purer than the milk supply in the past—

Mr. Lander: You know it is better.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Will the hon. member shut up?

The Premier: I thought you said members should behave themselves.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Then I congratulate the Government upon it. If the

Government can go further and secure for the public a better milk supply than they are getting, if the supply is not satisfactory, then let us take action in that direction, but for goodness' sake let us be fair to other people and make it absolutely clear that we are here to do good and not to keep ourselves before the public from time to time. I believe these dairymen of Perth have done their duty by Perth and that the milk supply of Perth has been fairly good. On the other hand, if the Act is not sufficient it should be amended, but let something be done at any rate to restrain the hon. member for East Perth from bringing disgrace upon the House as he does from time to time.

Mr. Lander: That is the crowd that brought disgrace upon the House.

Mr. TURVEY (Swan): I just wish to say I am pleased that the amendment has received general support on both sides of the House. I agree with some hon. members regarding the necessity for one being guarded in the language he uses in reference to any person outside the House; indeed, I go further and say that no hon. member should make use of a statement in this House regarding any person outside the House, if he is not game to make that statement from the public platform outside. I believe the member for East Perth (Mr. Lander) is just as ready to make use of the same words and make the same statement outside the House at any time regarding the milk supply of Perth.

Mr. Lander: It will be made outside.

Mr. TURVEY: One has only to read the reports of the Medical and Health Department in connection with the dairying industry in Western Australia to recognise what a good effect the strenuous advocacy of the Honorary Minister (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has had upon the milk supply. No one has been more persistent in his efforts to provide a pure milk supply in Western Australia than has the Honorary Minister, and I know that he has been supported by our enthusiastic friend the member for East Perth. It is well known that the member for East Perth, long before he entered this House, was just as ardent an

enthusiast in his desire to see a better milk supply established, and it is true that he then met with even more bitter opposition than he is receiving to-day.

Mr. Lander: And lowered all their flags for them.

Mr. TURVEY: I desire to emphasise the point that there is undoubtedly a marked improvement in the milk supply of the City and of the State generally. No one who studies the various reports can arrive at any other conclusion than that the efforts of the present Government have been conducive to the best results. And I desire to say that the honest dairy farmers, and there are many in the State, are ready and anxious to assist the Government, and to assist men like the member for East Perth to establish a pure milk supply. I do not wish to go into the matter of the efforts of the dairy farmers in this direction as expressed by their formation of a co-operative society, and the establishment of a depot in the City. Reputable dairy farmers have formed a co-operative society and established their depot in Perth, and they have their milk carts doing the rounds of the City. I have yet to learn that there has been a single prosecution against any member of that society. While civil servants may be entrenched behind privileges, I hope hon. members will never forget that we, too, are entrenched behind very special privileges. I notice the member for West Perth nods approval. Let me, in conclusion, repeat a well known line—

East is east and west is west and
never the twain shall meet.

because I am afraid that when, in this instance, east and west do meet, there will be bloodshed.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (in reply): The discussion has really taken on a wider range than was called for by my motion.

Mr. Lander: The subject is important enough.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I recognise that. Everybody will agree with the remarks made complimenting the Honorary Minister upon the great work he has done in endeavouring to provide a pure milk supply for the metropolitan area. No-

body could withhold credit from the member for East Perth and Messrs. Battye and Lovekin, and any other people who in an honorary capacity take on such onerous duties as to go round visiting dairies in the interests of a pure milk supply. But that is not the question which should have been discussed under the motion. The question is as to whether the hon. member was right in using the words he did use, and in accusing inspectors of having written misleading reports to their Ministers. Those were the statements he made, and which I say were not justified. The member for East Perth and the Honorary Minister both asked what had the reports of July and October to do with the report of December. I think the member for East Perth will admit that it is very often difficult to trace a tubercle in a cow. You might test it in July and it might not react; you might test it again in October and it might not react; while when you test it yet again in December it may react. I think the hon. member will admit that what I say is correct. But this is the point: they condemn the inspector and say he put up a misleading report. I say they have no evidence to prove that his report was misleading. When he made the inspection and sent in that report everything in that report may have been exactly as he found it, and because those gentlemen went later and found some tuberculous cows there, it is no proof whatever that those cows were diseased at the time the inspector made the report. That is what I object to in the hon. member's statement.

Mr. Foley: Have you seen the reports which prove otherwise?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: There are reports, I understand, which differ, but there is no evidence to show that any of the reports put up by that inspector were not true.

Mr. Foley: How can you prove that?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I can prove it by the fact that they took samples of the milk and sent them to the Government bacteriologist to have them tested and the tests were entirely satisfactory.

Mr. Lander: They were sent before time.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Those conditions which the hon. member complains of may not have existed when the reports were made, and the hon. member can bring no proof whatever to show that those reports were misleading reports, as he charged them with being.

Mr. Foley: Have you seen the reports which prove otherwise?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I know that other reports are in existence.

Mr. Foley: Have you seen them?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Will the hon. member keep quiet? He is interjecting like a little child. I know that reports are in existence to the effect that examinations were made of these dairies, and that they were in an entirely satisfactory condition.

Mr. Foley: How can you prove that?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must keep order.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It is only right that the hon. member should be called to order.

Mr. Foley: But not by you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Foley: I asked a pertinent question but—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The only thing I object to is the statement that the inspector put up misleading reports. I am not endeavouring to protect the dairies, but what I do object to is that any member should come here and say that a misleading report has been put up by a responsible inspector, a man who holds a good reputation. The position which he has obtained since that time proves that his reputation is a good one, and to say, without any proof whatever, that that inspector put up a misleading report is altogether unwarranted.

The Minister for Lands: He is one of the most capable officers in the Public Service.

Mr. Harper: Then it is a disgrace to vilify him.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: That is what I say.

Mr. Lander: That accounts for the paying of £1,500 for pleuro bullocks.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I know the hon. member is enthusiastic in these matters, but I am satisfied also that very often he allows his enthusiasm to run away with his discretion.

Mr. Lander: You are no judge.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The hon. member probably knows more about cows than I do, but when I read reports I think I am able to say whether or not certain criticism is justified. I am satisfied that the criticism indulged in by the member for East Perth was neither fair nor just. I accept the Honorary Minister's amendment. I have no objection to the whole file being laid on the Table, in fact I think it would be a better plan; then the Press could publish what they thought necessary and we would be able to remove any stigma placed upon these officers.

Amendment put and passed.

Question as amended agreed to.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 10th September.

Mr. GARDINER (Roebourne): I wish to support the second reading of this small measure introduced by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. McDonald). It is not my intention to enter into any long discussion of the Bill, because I think a glance at the measure will show to all hon. members exactly what its purport is. Briefly stated it is to permit licensed kangaroo shooters to shoot without having to obtain the permission of pastoral leaseholders. A similar provision exists in regard to miners' rights and various other licenses issued by the Government, whereas, as far as kangaroo shooters are concerned, although they hold licenses they have to seek permission from the leaseholders and station managers of the North. The position is that many of our desirable shooters, more particularly in the North-West, find themselves unable to follow their avocation. This is often due to personal spleen and

vindictiveness, and it prevents reputable men from earning a livelihood. It must be evident to hon. members on both sides of the House that such an amendment is necessary. The object of the Bill is simply to give permission to licensed kangaroo shooters to shoot kangaroos on leasehold property, and in that particular part of the State kangaroos are a pest and are not conducive to the prosperity of the country. I support the Bill.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore): I hope it is not the intention of the Government to support this small measure. Although it is only a short Bill, it appears to me that a very great principle is involved and we ought to be very careful not to depart from that principle. These leases are granted under certain conditions to lessees for pastoral purposes, and the lessee should have complete control in connection with the lease granted to him. He should have the full right to handle the surface of the land during the term of years, with certain rights reserved to the Crown. The rights reserved to the Crown in no way allow or permit the Crown to grant people the right to go on to such properties to shoot kangaroos or other game without the consent of the owner. The question of miners' rights is entirely different from that of going on to a lease to shoot kangaroos. The Crown reserves to itself the right to all the minerals on the lease and the same applies to land in fee simple and the Crown has certain rights and privileges in regard to the granting of licenses to search for minerals. In view of the fact that these leases are granted for the purpose of depasturing stock, the Government should be very jealous to guard the rights and interests of those persons to whom the leases have been granted. If people are allowed to go on these leases indiscriminately, without any control on the part of the lessees, to shoot kangaroos, not only will the rights of the lessees be interfered with, but their stock and human life will be endangered. If the kangaroos are a menace to the leaseholder, I am quite sure the leaseholder will be only too pleased to allow, under certain conditions of control, per-

sons to go on to his lease to shoot kangaroos. The Government and this Parliament have no right to give people the privilege to go on to leases which have been granted for specific purposes.

Mr. George: Can the lessees themselves kill the kangaroos?

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: That is not the question. The question is whether we should give the right to persons to go on to these leases to shoot kangaroos without first obtaining permission from the lessee. We ought not to do so. If we do, we will be interfering with the terms on which the leases have been granted. Hon. members should realise that it is most dangerous for persons to be allowed to go on to these areas to shoot indiscriminately. The only places where they will camp in order to shoot kangaroo will be at the water-holes, and those are places which the sheep will make for. Bullets will travel over half a mile, and may perforate tanks and allow the water to escape. If people are riding about over large areas looking after their stock, they will not know when they may lose their lives as the result of a bullet from the gun of a kangaroo shooter. I know plenty of people who have had such experiences. There are shooters who will go on to leases, not only in the northern parts of Australia, but even in the southern portions, without permission. Often I have heard of people whose lives have been endangered as the result of such indiscriminate shooting. Only the other day I heard of a settler who was sitting in his house having afternoon tea, or the evening meal, when a bullet dropped on to the roof. Some control should be exercised over such shooters. Where leases are granted to pastoralists there should be power to control those who go on their land to shoot kangaroos. All men are not angels, and there are some people whose characters are not too good, and such people might engage in this work and purposely endeavour to make themselves an annoyance to the leaseholder. If the leaseholder remonstrated with them, and pointed out that they were endangering his stock, they could reply, "What has that to do with you? My

license entitles me to come here, and to shoot. You go somewhere." If this measure is passed, that would be the end of it. There are many decent and respectable people who are desirous of shooting kangaroos, and the squatters and others will be only too glad, where kangaroos are a menace, to allow them to go on to their leases and shoot at certain times, and in certain places where they are not likely to endanger life or property. The Government should seriously consider this question before agreeing to the Bill. A very big principle is involved—the principle of the rights of property, and those rights ought always to be respected. Where people have had certain rights granted to them by the Government, those rights should be protected by the Government. They have the right on these leases to depasture their stock, and they have the full right to the natural surface of the land, with certain rights reserved to the Crown, namely, mineral rights, and the right of the Crown to depasture their own stock when engaged on Government work, but outside of those rights the lessees should be allowed to enjoy the privileges of their leases unmolested, so long as they carry out the terms of their leases as granted by the Crown properly and legitimately. A departure from this principle will have an important bearing, in that it will take away the rights and privileges which are enjoyed by people who have had these leases granted to them.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): I do not think that the hon. member for Moore need be afraid that this Bill will pass, because unless the Government intend to be absolutely inconsistent they must bring to bear all their powers to chuck it out. Some time ago the Minister gazetted fully one-third of Western Australia as a reserve for kangaroos. That area includes the whole of the south-western district, right out to Kellerberrin and to the Australian Bight, taking in the Leeuwin, as a close reserve for kangaroos, and a Government who will pass a regulation like that should at any rate refuse to grant the request contained in this Bill. From the point of

view of danger, I cannot say what the position would be in the North-West, but only a few weeks ago a settler in my district, going over his place with a friend had his hat shot off his head, and a bullet went within three feet of another man, and lodged in a tree. Workmen there dare not go out of their tents on Sunday, owing to the danger resulting from people shooting. Complaint was made to the police, and the complainant was told that if he could find out who the trespassers and shooters were, they would allow him to summons them, and if people were discovered killing kangaroos they would be prosecuted. When the Government allow an area like this to be reserved, and stop even food permits from being exercised, denying kangaroo to a settler who requires it for food, they cannot consistently agree to this Bill. It is about one of the biggest travesties we have in this State, that when a bona fide complaint is made that a man's place is rendered dangerous by these unlicensed individuals going about shooting kangaroos, and while the settler, though the kangaroos are a pest, and interfere with his sheep, dare not kill them because he would be liable under the special regulation framed under the Game Act—

Mr. Underwood : This Bill deals with licensed people.

Mr. GEORGE : But the shooting I am complaining of, and the protection I am desirous of getting for myself and for my friends in the South-West, I have asked from the Minister and the police, and cannot get it. The law will wink at these people shooting on another man's place, but if a settler happened to kill a kangaroo for his own food, and he was informed upon, the law would be put into force and a heavy penalty would be imposed. We are living in a fool's paradise in believing that the law is protecting the individual and that the police are protecting the individual, because this is one of the most nonsensical things that can happen in this state. If the Government are desirous of being consistent, they will not allow the Bill to be pas-

sed, because it is inconsistent with the present state of affairs in the South-West.

Hon. J. Mitchell : Look at the Government benches at present.

Mr. GEORGE : Yes, they do not care two pence halfpenny about the people complaining regarding this particular matter. They do not care whether these people do apply for protection, and whether their stock is injured or not. They would not care if the bullet that knocked off the man's hat had gone through his skull, so long as he was not a Labour supporter and did not belong to the trades hall.

Mr. SPEAKER : Order ! The hon. member must discuss the Bill.

Mr. GEORGE : I am discussing kangaroos and the trouble which arises in the South-West, in order to show that there is no necessity for this Bill.

Mr. Taylor : How do you associate kangaroos with the trades hall ?

Mr. GEORGE : If, without transgressing the rules of the House, I can answer the hon. member—

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must stick to the Bill.

Mr. GEORGE : I was doing that, until the hon. member interrupted in a most unseemly fashion. The hon. member for Moore put forward a very good case, and that case, I have endeavoured to show, has reference to another portion of this State.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath) : I have no objection to the measure which has been submitted by the member for Gascayne, and I have very few words to say in regard to it. But I would like to reply to the few remarks made by the member for Moore. After all, the Land Act only confers on the pastoral lessee the right to the pastures. Under Section 106 of the Land Act a pastoral lease gives no right to the soil or to the timber.

Mr. S. Stubbs : Does it not protect the crops from being injured ?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : Just one moment. Section 106 provides that a pastoral lease shall give no right to the

soil or the timber except to such timber as may be required for domestic purposes, and further on Section 107 reads—

The right is reserved to the Minister to lay out, declare open, and make, either permanently or for temporary use, public roads through any land held under pastoral lease; also to take away any indigenous produce, rock soil, or other material; and to fell, cut, and remove all or any timber, sandalwood, or other woods which may be required for public purposes, from such land

All that a pastoral lessee gets is the right to use the pasture for the term of his lease, and the fact that the provision in the Bill was not inserted in the Act, is probably due to the sufficient reason that at the time it was not considered necessary to make any such provision for such a contingency as is sought to be provided now. In embodying this amendment there will be no question of interference with the rights to the pastures, because after all the taking of kangaroos is not going to affect the right of the pastoralists to the grass. As a matter of fact it will help him in the direction of conserving his grass, and as this provision seeks to preclude any possibility of those licensed to shoot game going on enclosed or unenclosed but otherwise improved land, the lessee is protected against interference with his stock. I might say, however, that when the measure is in Committee it will be necessary to make this provision clearer than it is at the present time. Apart from that, I cannot see that any injustice will be done to a pastoral lessee by the issuing of these licenses to kill game, and allowing the holders to shoot kangaroos on land which is improved, and which is not stocked. There will be no question of any injury, and, therefore, I have no objection to the measure. I want to point out that the matter is not affected by the argument brought forward by the member for Murray-Wellington, because so long as that restriction obtains, the mere passage of this measure will not enable holders of licenses to go on those lands to shoot kangaroos, even though the Bill does become law.

Mr. George: But why are you not consistent?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is no inconsistency about the matter. That is a restriction applying to a portion of the State, and that restriction will still apply after this measure has passed. If the hon. member thinks that the regulation is too drastic the proper thing to do is to seek to amend it or relax it.

Mr. George: I thought I had only to bring the matter under your notice.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member brings forward one side of the argument, and another argument is advanced in favour even of more stringent regulations.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley): I am rather surprised at the utterances of the Minister for Lands. I fully anticipated that as a fellow squatter, he would, like myself, oppose this measure. Apparently he has got up on the spur of the moment without really studying the Bill. I do not think he fully realises the principle that is involved, the principle referred to by the member for Moore. The introducer of this Bill, in moving the second reading, referred to the fact that he wanted to put up a record for brevity. The Bill is brief enough, and the introduction was brief enough, and the hon. member also referred to the fact that provision had been made under the Lands Act for the purpose of granting licenses for wood cutting, mining, and other purposes, but no reference was made to the shooting of game generally. I think the Minister for Lands in referring to the leases under which this land is held, gave the House rather a wrong impression when he said that this matter was omitted from the Act of 1898 for the reason that it was not thought of.

The Minister for Lands: I said that that was probably the reason.

Mr. MALE: I wish to contend that that is not the reason at all. It was omitted knowingly, and for a good reason, too. The reason more particularly is that a person who leases land has stock running there and he rightly should be protected. Under this Bill what will be

the effect? A man will be able to take out a license for shooting game—

Mr. Lander: Shooting horses and bullocks, too.

Mr. George: And asses as well.

Mr. MALE: There may be ewes probably lambing, and the holders of these licenses can camp and settle down near a well and close to the ewes, with their pack of dogs. It is the experience of squatters throughout the State that the dogs which kangaroo hunters use are equally as bad, if not worse, than dingoes, when they are amongst a mob of sheep. Is it reasonable, therefore, to even suggest that the holder of a license, with his dogs, should be allowed to go on a man's run, and camp near one of the water-holes where probably there are a thousand ewes lambing.

The Minister for Lands: It is not proposed to do that.

Mr. MALE: This will give the holders of the licenses power to do that.

The Minister for Lands: I have stated that when the Bill is in Committee I will move an amendment to make that point absolutely clear.

Mr. MALE: There is nothing in the Bill to prevent that being done. A man can camp at a water-hole, and the very fact of that man being there with kangaroo dogs would prevent sheep going anywhere near the water-hole, and the owner of the station will have no protection whatever. Again, another instance. I may bring a mob of fat bullocks, say, a large mob of 500 head, to a water-hole where there will be camped these kangaroo shooters with their dogs. As I approach the well guns are fired. What will happen to my cattle? Simply this: that they will be all over the country, and yet the Minister for Lands would support such a measure. I can only say that I am astonished at him. There is no necessity whatever for this Bill. If I am the owner of country and I have stock on it, is it to my interests to allow kangaroos to accumulate there? Is it not a fact that the squatters in the North have been paying a subsidy for the killing of kangaroos? Is it not a fact that the Government, with the squatters, have

been giving a pound for pound subsidy for the destruction of kangaroos? We have given every encouragement for kangarooers to kill, but it is unreasonable to say that any man should come along and be permitted to camp with his dogs at your water-hole. We know the class of men who sometimes go in for kangaroo shooting, and we know what the result would be. Therefore, we are justified in opposing this measure, every inch of it, and we intend to do so.

Mr. Underwood: You are opposing it on account of the bad character of the kangaroo shooters.

Mr. MALE: Yes. There are men who would not be allowed to camp on the station for the purpose of killing kangaroos, or for any other purposes, but it is also a fact that no decent kangaroo shooter would be refused permission to shoot kangaroos, for not only do we ask them to do so, but we pay them so much a head to encourage them to do so. But the owner of a station must have some control over his stock. He would not even allow the member for Pilbara, if he had a kangaroo shooter's license, to go to a water-hole where ewes might be lambing. It is doubtful even whether an owner would allow the Minister for Lands to camp near a water-hole when he intended to bring in his mob of fat bullocks. I shall most certainly oppose this iniquitous Bill, and I ask all hon. members to assist me in rejecting it.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): I am more than astonished that the Minister is going to agree to this measure at all. I do not think any amendment that can be proposed in Committee will lessen its harmful effect. It has already been pointed out that the Bill, if it becomes law, will affect the tenure of the leaseholder. It not only is to apply to leases that are to be granted after the passing of this measure, but it is to be retrospective, and I think the House wants to be very careful that it does not pass legislation which is going to do an injustice to those who took up leases before the passing of the measure. I contend that we are going altogether the wrong way to amend the Land Act, because

the lease instrument should set up every restriction and every reserved right. And it has been clearly laid down in the existing legislation that certain rights are reserved to the Crown. At that time no mention was made of granting further rights in regard to licenses for the destruction of native game. There is one serious objection to my mind, taking into consideration the fact that these permits will apply to all leases, not only those in the North-West but also in the South-West division.

Mr. Underwood: Oh, no.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There are pastoral leases granted in divisions other than the North-West, and I take it that one of the most serious objections that can be raised to this measure and one which, to my mind, should be fatal, is the fact that after the destruction of these kangaroos, in most instances, the carcass is left lying on the land. Those carcasses breed multitudes of blow-flies and great destruction is now being wrought amongst the sheep flocks in the country by the striking of the fly. I believe that at the present moment the Government in New South Wales are taking steps to fight the ravages of the blow-fly. We have had evidence in my own district during the last winter of very heavy losses caused by these flies, and I consider that some very drastic steps will have to be taken, even to the extent of compelling persons who have dead stock lying on their runs to destroy the carcasses. The Minister by agreeing to this measure is giving to the kangaroo-hunter the same status as the leaseholder or pastoralist. I contend that the man who has put his money into stock, and into improvements by fencing his country and by providing water supplies, is surely entitled to receive first consideration at the hands of the House. If the Minister agrees to the passing of this measure, even with the amendments he proposes, he will not be giving that consideration to the pastoralist or landowner that he should give. The member for Moore (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) has gone further and stated that there is a principle at stake, and it is a very important principle indeed. Even from this point alone I hope that

the House will, with no unmistakable voice, reject this Bill on the second reading. We must consider vested rights and those who have something to lose, and I do not think for one minute it can be argued that we should place kangaroo-hunters on the same footing as the leaseholder. Many of them I know to be very deserving men, but I know there are others who follow that occupation to whom it would be undesirable to give free access to one's holding.

The Minister for Lands: They would be refused licenses.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There is some difficulty attendant on the restriction of licenses, and often it is a very difficult matter for the persons issuing those licenses to be able to successfully object to issuing them. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) has pointed out the danger of allowing these men to go on to the holdings. Very often hunting is followed up by aboriginals and half-castes, and they have a very large party with them. They camp about the water holes for a considerable time and they have their native dogs, which are a menace to the surrounding stock. In my opinion it is altogether wrong to put up a system of dual occupation. Under this Bill the kangaroo-hunter will have just as much right to go on to that land as the squatter himself. I contend that in the first place the principle of allowing that is wrong, and secondly that when all these disabilities are pointed out by hon. members who know the dangers, the Minister should listen to their objections. If only for the objection I have mentioned, that of allowing these carcasses to lie about on the holdings and breed blow-flies which will destroy so many of our stock, the Minister should assure us that he is not going to agree to a measure of this kind and he should vote against the second reading.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly): I was disagreeably surprised at the Minister agreeing to and approving of a Bill of this description. I am sure that he has not realised the seriousness of the position. In this matter I think we ought to have the member for East Perth (Mr. Lander)

with us. He is one who is closely connected with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and this is a matter which should appeal to every member of this House. It would be one of the most iniquitous things that could be perpetrated to allow a gang of kangaroo hunters and shooters to take their dogs and assistants among cattle or sheep at a water hole. If this Bill is passed it will give the kangaroo hunter a prior right to the leaseholder. I think it is a fearful injustice; it is almost confiscation of the rights of the leaseholder.

The Minister for Lands: The leaseholder has no right to the kangaroos.

Mr. HARPER: The Minister enumerated various things that could be removed off pastoral leases, such as stone, gravel, lime, and timber, but the right to hunt kangaroos was not mentioned in the Act. There is another consideration, and that is that stock is increasing rapidly in those parts of the State to which this Bill is to apply. Both sheep and cattle are on the increase, and there is closer settlement, and it would be a more serious thing to allow kangaroo hunting under those conditions than it was in the past when the country was not so well stocked. As I have mentioned, it would give the kangaroo hunter a prior right. As the member for Kimberley has just said, squatters would welcome anyone to shoot kangaroos on their leases, but the owners know to whom they are giving this permission, and they have some control over them. To make it a matter of law, however, would be to harass those who are paying rents for that land. It would be giving those hunters a better right than those who are paying for leases for the purpose of depasturing sheep or cattle. I hope the Minister for Lands will reconsider this matter, and not endeavour to pass the Bill in any shape or form. I hope also we will not only have his support but the support of a large number of members on his side, because I know there is a certain amount of fairness in them at times, and this plea should appeal to them. The Bill would work a fearful injustice. It is taking away a right which has been given to the lease-

holders by Act of Parliament; therefore, I contend it is nothing more or less than confiscation of existing rights. It is rather a mean thing for this Parliament to give a right and then to take it away. It is retrogression and it is an action we would not like in any individual, that is, for him to make a contract, and then on the least excuse break that contract. It would be a violation of justice, and, therefore, I hope the House will not agree to the Bill.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I desire to say a few words in regard to this measure. I fully appreciate the difficulties put forward by the member for Moore (Hon. H. B. Lefroy). I quite realise that the measure as it stands would possibly prove dangerous to some of our pastoralists, and I am sure that there is nobody in the House who desires to pass legislation which would deliberately injure anybody.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I do not know so much about that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I may say, however, that I am not in favour of this clause as it stands. It has been suggested that the second reading be passed to-night and the Committee stage left over for future consideration, and in the meantime an effort can be made to re-draft the clause so as to give a remedy against those evils mentioned by the member for Moore.

Mr. Male: Who suggested all this?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I did.

Mr. Male: I thought it was somebody else's Bill.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That does not matter. The hon. member need not worry himself as to who suggested it; it is a good sound suggestion, anyhow. In my opinion it is absolutely imperative that provision should be made whereby the pastoralist can absolutely debar anybody from shooting kangaroos in his lambing paddocks or in paddocks where he is mustering, and there are other instances where he should have the right to debar shooters, and I believe we can so amend this clause as to give the necessary safeguards to the pastoralist. On the other hand, I want to say that the kangaroos do not belong to the pastoralists.

Mr. Male: They do not want them.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They do not want them, but the member for Kimberley must bear in mind that the North-West is a very big territory, and there are some pastoralists who summon men for shooting on their country at all. If a man has paid for a license to shoot kangaroos, I am of opinion that he should be allowed to shoot over pastoral country, provided he does not inconvenience the pastoralist and takes only the kangaroo. The man who has a license, not being a pastoral lessee, is more entitled to these kangaroos than the pastoral lessee who has no license. We have to realise that point of view. It is a point which I am sure has been missed by members of the Opposition.

Mr. Male: Not at all.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: With regard to bad characters, I am sorry that the hon. member for Kimberley gave the impression that the majority of kangaroo shooters are bad characters.

Mr. Male: I did nothing of the sort. I ask the hon. member to withdraw that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am pleased to withdraw if the hon. member did not mean to give the inference I have taken from his words. Kangaroo shooters as a class are as good men as there are in this country.

Mr. Male: That is so.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They are equally as good as squatters or anyone else. Of course there are bad characters among the squatters just as there are among the kangaroo shooters and they are just about in the same proportion. The hon. member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) made some very sensible remarks with regard to the Game Act but really they had nothing to do with this Bill. Undoubtedly there are regulations under the Game Act which require amending. The Game Act itself requires amending but we haven't it before us just now and the Bill we have before us has nothing to do with the Game Act. It is not usual for kangaroo shooters to use kangaroo dogs, in fact a good kangaroo shooter does not keep dogs at all. It is the amateurs, or sometimes men who do not reach even to the status of being amateur shooters,

who use dogs. As a matter of fact dogs kill the young kangaroos and allow the big ones to escape, besides making kangaroos generally more difficult to get near through being hunted by dogs. My experience of kangaroo shooters is that they depend on the gun.

Mr. Harper: Some of them do.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: With reference to the question of the hon. member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) with regard to the destruction of the carcass to prevent blowflies, that is purely a question to be dealt with under the Game Act. This Bill only provides where men may shoot when holding a license under the Game Act and if we desire that anybody shooting kangaroos or other animals must destroy the carcasses, then the Game Act is certainly the place to put such a provision. It is a question which is well worthy of consideration, no doubt, but there is really nothing in this Bill connected with it, nor would it be wise to put in this Bill provisions bearing on what they should do under their licenses. With reference to the question of shooting in the South-West, also raised by the hon. member for Katanning, I would like to point out that this question also comes under the Game Act. Under that Act the Government have power to declare reserves almost anywhere. As a matter of fact they have the power really to say on what country licenses will be issued to shoot, and if there is any danger of being shot, like the hon. member for Murray-Wellington's friend was, of spoiling hats, or of doing things of that sort, it is certainly the duty of the Government to prevent shooting in that district at all. The Government have power to prevent even the carrying of firearms if they are dangerous to the populace. This Bill would not interfere in the slightest degree with any power the Government have in that matter. I hope the House will pass the second reading and give the hon. member who introduced the Bill—I am sorry to say he is unable to be here to-night owing to his health—the opportunity to remodel it, and if he can remodel it to make it a workable measure, we

ought to have no hesitation in putting it on the statute-book.

Mr. MONGER (York): I am surprised at a few words which have just fallen from the hon. member for Pilbara. He asks us to approve of the second reading of this Bill in order to enable the proposer of it to practically remodel the measure. There is only one clause in it and to pass the second reading of this objectionable clause would be one of the most peculiar incidents that have taken place in this Parliament, to pass a measure which is acknowledged even by the hon. member who has just sat down to be peculiarly worded, badly worded, to pass the second reading so that this one clause may be altered to meet the opposition which has been raised to it. I object to this little Bill, and recall the remarks which fell from the introducer when moving the second reading some weeks back, in which he told us of the plague of rabbits over in the Eastern States, that at one time it was thought whether it would not be desirable for the squatter to abandon his holdings so far as sheep were concerned and use those holdings for the breeding of rabbits, and that the time was evidently not far distant when kangaroos would take the same position in the North-West as rabbits had taken in the Eastern States. I know the North-West pretty well and am confident that if kangaroos were likely to be such a pest as that at a station the manager of that station would only be too pleased to give the necessary permit to any person to go and shoot, but under such restrictions as the management might think necessary. For us to attempt to bring forward a piece of legislation which I can only say has for its object the harassing of the leaseholders of the North is, to my way of thinking, a peculiar proceeding to emanate from an hon. member who represents one of the largest squatting electorates in Western Australia. I am sure at all events that he is not introducing this Bill at the request of the squatters, although one would imagine from his introductory remarks that he was their friend and was doing something in the interests of the squatter, not the

kangaroo shooter. But I venture to say that there is not one squatter in the district represented by the hon. member who is in favour of the measure. Therefore, I hope the second reading will not be approved of, especially on the arguments used by the hon. member for Pilbara. The measure is so badly worded, so one-sided, that it would be a great mistake for this House to pass the second reading and I trust that hon. members will not do so.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): The hon. member for Pilbara rightly said that the killing of kangaroos is a matter which comes under the Game Act. What we are asked to do now is not to deal with the killing of kangaroos at all; that question is apart altogether from the matter we are now considering. I am staggered to find that the Minister for Lands has seen fit to say he will support this Bill. The Minister preaches the leasehold system and says leasehold is quite as good as freehold, that the leaseholder is in perfect enjoyment of his holding, can keep other people off and so on, but now the Minister says leasing does not mean anything of the sort, and having issued a lease to a man he can say to all and sundry, "Go on it and do just as you please," that there is to be no consultation, that a man holding a license under the Game Act should have the right to enter just as he likes on a man's holding. The Minister contends that the squatter has the right to the grass only. Under that condition one would not have the right to put up a stock yard or sink a well. As a matter of fact the lease sets out fully what the rights are. The House has passed a measure giving the leaseholder rights to his property and the leaseholder has accepted the lease under the conditions. The natural surface is leased. I know Ministers are not very concerned about the harm they do; they do not even listen to the discussion put forward by their own members; but we here are bound to protest against this absolute breach of faith. Do members opposite believe that we can treat so lightly this matter of a lease seriously entered into, and in many

cases where considerable money has been spent by the squatter? There are, of course, contentions against the wisdom of allowing hunters to go upon property but there is the matter of principle apart from wisdom in that regard. We know the dangers to life and limb, when shooters are about on a property. The hon. member for Murray-Wellington has described what was almost a serious accident in the South-West.

Mr. Underwood: How many people were killed last year?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Last year they were not allowed to go on a run without permission. When a man is given permission one tells him where he can go, one does not leave him to shoot about indiscriminately. Hon. members opposite want us to give a man with a license under the Game Act just the same right as the squatter, and unless the squatter has a license under the Game Act the kangaroo hunter would have greater power. Is it provided in this Bill that he is not to shoot in any particular portion of the run such as near to wells, or is to be controlled in the slightest degree by the owner of the stock? There is not a word of protection to the lessee. This right will extend not only to the northern portion of the State but to every acre of land leased all over the State. I do not know whether it will extend to the Minister's leasehold town blocks.

Mr. Underwood: It says pastoral leases pretty distinctly.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It will certainly cover the whole State including the South-West.

Mr. Harper: Even the Eucla land.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: And even the Eucla land. Hon. members must look to the seriousness of the proposal and the question of whether this second right to the land can be fairly given or not. We have already leased land under conditions which we must recognise, conditions which we cannot set aside without deliberate unfairness to our tenants, in fact I doubt if any law that can be passed would override the rights of those tenants of ours, therefore, I hope the Bill will not pass the second reading. As the

member for York put it, the member for Pilbara says "Please pass the measure and we will recast the second clause." If we pass the measure with a view to deleting the second clause the mover of the Bill will have left to him nothing but the title. The thing is ridiculous. The Bill has been on the Notice Paper for weeks, and hon. members, if they had any serious intention of modifying the measure, have had ample opportunity for placing any amendment on the Notice Paper, and we should have known about it before now. I hope the measure will not pass the second reading. I hope the House will show the Minister that we, as members of Parliament, have some regard for our responsibilities and obligations, and that we are not willing to sacrifice the people who trust us.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The kangaroos do not belong to the squatters.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That may be true. The squatter does not want them; he lays no claim to them. He is glad to get rid of them. The Honorary Minister can have the whole lot for the asking.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The squatter wants the skins, though.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There is always that suspicion that the squatter is reaching out for something he is not entitled to get.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): It means only £33,000 a year to them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The squatter pays a bonus to get rid of kangaroos. The squatter has a right to protect his property. But there is no lease in the State which the shooter could not get permission to go on at the proper season of the year. The Minister for Lands says he is willing to give the kangaroo hunter the right to go on the land exactly when he pleases.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, you supported the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: I said that amendments were necessary.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Why did you not outline the amendments? The Minister supported the giving away of rights which do not belong to us. Unless we resume these lands and pay for the improvements we have no right over them at all. We have no right to give permission to any person to trespass there. I hope the House will reject the measure, if on principle alone, although there are very strong arguments against the passing of the Bill, quite apart from the rights of the lessee under the lease. It is an absolutely ridiculous thing for any Minister to support a measure of this sort, even when brought down by one of his supporters. Nothing can be more ridiculous than to ask for this power. The House should show the mover of the Bill what they think of it.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin): A Bill of this sort, having for its object the giving of the right to kangaroo shooters to enter upon the property of a leaseholder in the North-West, could not have been properly considered by the mover. I was surprised to hear the Minister for Lands say that he was going to support it, because if any hon. member more than another should remember obligations that have been honourably made it is the Minister controlling the department which this Bill affects. If the Minister for Lands or either of the gentlemen who have spoken in favour of the measure owned or leased considerable tracts of land in the North-West they would be at once on their feet to protest against the provisions of this measure.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): It does not deal with lands owned in the North-West.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I understood from the gentlemen who introduced the Bill that it was to get rid of a pest existing in many parts of the North-West.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: The measure applies to the whole of the State.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I admit that in many parts of the South-West as well as of the North-west, kangaroos are making themselves a nuisance, and therefore I contend that the law could easily be amended regarding the destruction of

kangaroos, and made more elastic than it is at present. But there is a right and a wrong way of doing it. There is not a man in the South-West, or the North-West either, who would refuse to give the necessary permission to any person holding a license to shoot kangaroos to go upon his property and destroy those pests.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The member for Gascoyne said they had been repeatedly refused.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Probably because they desired to go in the lambing season. In such circumstances would not the Honorary Minister be the first man to say no?

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You should give the kangaroo shooter a little bit of discretion too.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Not all squatters have their sheep lambing in the same month. There are widely different opinions concerning the best time of the year for lambing. If I or any other member held a lot of valuable sheep just about to lamb, would he or I give permission to another man to go among these sheep with a gun and perhaps with a lot of dogs? Two or three shooters with or without dogs can do incalculable harm among a flock of sheep in one night. Some would say, "Well, prosecute them if they go on the land and injure the property and live stock." But the damage is done, and it may mean a journey of 100 miles to bring the offender to justice. Perhaps so much damage is done as to entail a great loss for that season. Only recently I have come to know how easy it is to disturb mothers just at lambing time. In fact, it does not require any disturbing at all in some seasons. Recently many persons found out that in a dry season the mothers do not require any disturbing to leave their lambs and go away and let them die. How much more would that occur if the mothers were disturbed by dogs or guns? I feel sure a majority of members of this House will see the injustice that may be caused if the Bill becomes law. I hope it will not pass the second reading.

On motion by Mr. Turvey debate adjourned.

SELECT COMMITTEE, CAPTAIN HARE'S RETIREMENT.

Request for member to give evidence.

Message from the Council received requesting the Assembly to authorise the Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honoray Minister) and Mr. Taylor to give evidence before the select committee on the retirement of Captain Hare.

MOTION—LAND RENTS, RELIEF TO CONDITIONAL PURCHASERS.

Debate resumed from the 3rd September on the following motion moved by Mr. A. E. Piesse:—"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that relief should be given to all persons who are holders of conditional purchase land from the Crown which has been sold at a price in excess of its present value."

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin): The mover of this resolution dealt with the case in a very clear and concise manner, and I am sure the arguments used by him must have had considerable weight with hon. members. I was glad when he declared this was not a party question, because I believe that every hon. member will agree that this should be dealt with on its merits. Quite recently my attention was called to the fact that in my electorate several areas of land have been cut up within the last few years. The quality of the land in those areas is about equal. By that I mean that the soil is as even as it could possibly be. But different Ministers put different prices upon those blocks of land. In each case when the lands were thrown open they were over-applied for, and no questions whatever were raised concerning the prices at the time the applications were sent in. Those applications were dealt with by a board, and the board in their wisdom granted the particular blocks to the most suitable and worthy applicants. It may surprise a great many hon. members to know that one Minister of the Crown who had charge of the department when these particular areas in my electorate were thrown open, put as high a value as 24s., I think 25s., on some of this land.

I believe that that land will be worth 25s. an acre when a railway is built close to it, but it would not have been worth 25s. when the men were sent out there. The distance is 60 miles from an existing line of railway, and I believe the Minister fixed the price higher than the responsible officers of his department said it should be, but I am not in a position to prove that. I am not going to say that the Minister was not actuated by a desire to settle people on good soil because this land is of high quality. My point is that men were sent out to this area, and it was impossible for them within five years to be served by a line of railway. But the rents have to be paid on these holdings, and some of the settlers, good men, were surprised when the next Minister of the Crown cut up the area alongside of their holdings to find that the maximum price charged for similar land was 15s. an acre. I am absolutely conversant with the subject, and I defy anyone to contradict me when I say that the land cut up by the present Minister was as good as that sold by the previous Minister. Am I not right in calling attention to this phase of the question? None of the settlers who took up land at 25s. an acre has complained to me that the price was too high, but they want to know why there should be this difference. My contention is that the land is not worth very much to the Crown if it is not being cultivated, and it is immaterial to the State whether the land is sold for 10s. or 5s. an acre so long as it is put to its best use, and it would pay this country, and pay it handsomely too, if the prices were reduced all round, so that instead of settlers having 100 acres they would have 1,000 under cultivation. This phase of the question must appeal to the House and to the Minister, but the most important point of all is that tracts of land on the west of the Great Southern belt and not within easy distance of a railway have been taken up by settlers from the Old Country, and not one of those settlers knew anything about poison. They were told, and truthfully too, that the poison could be easily eradicated, but few of them realised the importance of getting rid of the poison, and

the trouble and time which would be necessary to do it. In many cases these areas were cut up and charged for as much as £1 an acre, when immediately adjoining them a few years ago land of a similar quality was sold by the Crown for 1s. an acre.

Mr. Lander: A good many years ago.

Mr. S. STUBBS:—Not a great many years ago, and quite recently enough for those settlers to ascertain that the land was sold at that price. These men willingly took up the land under the conditions prevailing, but they found themselves seriously handicapped, and it is for these men that I am appealing to the Minister for redress. They are worthy settlers, men of whom any country might be proud, and they are battling against very hard luck at the present time. The land they hold is not altogether suitable for wheat growing, and they have not enough money to stock the land to keep down the poison. They have grubbed most of the poison out but they have not the stock to eat off the young box shoots and about once in every two years this poison recurs. I have had a fair amount of experience in the locality where these men are located, and sufficient to know that if the poison is once grubbed, especially the York road poison, very little, if any, trouble is experienced, but with the box poison a fire going through cracks the seeds and they spring up for years afterwards. My experience is that if a settler has stock he will not lose one per cent. of them, and they will eat off the young shoots and little trouble is experienced from this source, but few of these men are in a position to buy stock. They have been charged as much as £1 an acre for the land and it is not worth £1 to them. Ten shillings an acre as the maximum would have been an ample price to have charged. If the Minister for Lands can see his way clear to pay a visit to that district, and he has stated that at his earliest convenience he will go down and investigate the conditions, he will be convinced of the justice of the claims these men are making to the department. If only five or even three years' respite from rents is granted to enable them to get on

their feet and secure railway communication close enough to enable them to grow cereals profitably, they will be grateful for that assistance. Now that the attention of the Government and the House has been directed to the facts by the hon. member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) I am satisfied that justice will be done by the Minister and that he will devise some means to relieve these settlers. It is a big and a serious question, but many a big question has been tackled by good men and a solution has been found. Although this is a big question, if an injustice has been done to a section of the people who have been allowed to go on to this country and to believe that they would be able to do well on the land and that all would be milk and honey, it is only British fair play to give them a little redress if only in the shape of postponing or letting them off for three, four or five years' rent for their land. I sincerely trust that the Minister will see his way clear to give redress to them in the near future.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth): I intend to support this motion because I certainly think it is really necessary to try to do something for the outback settlers. There is no doubt that many of these men have been deceived by the case which was put before them. I would not like to see the Minister go in for reducing the price of land. If the Minister went into these districts where the people are waiting for railways and took a vote, he would find that not many of them were in favour of reducing the values placed on the land, but many of them, and I was speaking to some of them on Sunday last, would favour deferring the payment of rent for five years. Another way in which the Government can help them is to get the Minister for Works to cut roads for their benefit. One instance was brought under my notice where settlers in the Emu Hill district have to travel a distance of seven miles whereas they could reach their destination by a cut of three miles. Settlers have offered to cut this road for the paltry sum of 2s. a chain, and yet I am given to understand that the Minister will not entertain the offer. It seems simply

scandalous that a reasonable offer put forward by settlers who are 28 miles from a railway for £25 to be spent on a bit of road should be refused. Such a request should be granted. If these things were done they would be of great help to the settler. We do not want to reduce the price of land, because if we do, it means discounting the district.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: You are speaking of the wheat areas.

Mr. LANDER: Yes, more particularly of the wheat areas. I do not think that settlers desire that the price should be reduced, but they would like the payments of rent deferred. If they had railway facilities and were able to pay their rents, they would not consider that the prices were too high. The difficulty has been due to the lack of railway facilities. If the Minister can see his way clear to defer rents for five years he will be conferring a great boon on these settlers.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath): I think the hon. member for East Perth was really addressing himself to another motion. The one we are discussing is No. 2 on the Notice Paper and I would point out to the hon. member for Kataning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) that the wording is as follows:—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that relief should be given to all persons who are holders of conditional purchase land from the Crown which has been sold at a price in excess of its present value.

How can any hon. member of this House oppose a motion of that kind? If land has been sold in excess of its value, the duty of the Minister is, without a motion of this Chamber, to see that the land is sold at its proper value. As a matter of fact, the motion begs the whole question. It would not get the hon. member any further forward if the motion were carried. It certainly afforded him an opportunity to ventilate what he considers are the grievances of settlers on the poison-infested areas along the Great Southern railway and more particularly to the westward of the line, but after all, if we carried this motion what would be the effect? The department say they are

prepared if they find the price is in excess of its value, to reduce such price, but they say that the land has been classified and that the value of the land is as it has been fixed.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: We want you to take some action.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: And they say that these particular matters do not come under this motion because the values have been fairly fixed.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: I contend they have not been fairly fixed, but are in excess of the value.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have already pointed out to hon. members in connection with the introduction of the Estimates that so far as the areas that are poison-infested and have been taken up with a view to grazing, and are not regarded as being suitable for profitable cultivation are concerned, most explicit instructions have been given that the extent of the poison is to be taken into consideration in fixing the value, and I further assure hon. members that both the Under Secretary and the Surveyor General say the extent of poison is taken into consideration.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: That only applies to future settlement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In regard to the classifications that have recently taken place, I can only speak of my own term and the classification which has taken place in which these instructions applied. With regard to the method of fixing these valuations, it was a matter I intended referring to when the Estimates were under discussion, as I wished to point out that in no classification have I, as Minister, increased the price submitted by the officers. I have not in any instance added to the price fixed by the officers.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You do not fix the final value.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is termed "the price fixed by the Minister," and the hon. member for Northam, I think, did, as Minister, add to prices fixed by the Surveyor General, but I have taken up this stand, that in that particular instance I think the officers are the

proper men to fix the classification and I think it is my duty to accept it. However, the carrying of this resolution is not going to provide the remedy the hon. member for Katanning seeks, because it is merely going to emphasise his opinion against that of the officer who has been engaged in this classification work; and even if a general reclassification of these areas was ordered, and that reclassification carried out on the existing basis, it would probably mean that there would be very little difference in the values fixed. As a matter of fact, we did have reclassification in the Dinninup area, and there was very little difference. Some were increased, but at any rate the decreases were practically immaterial, and in some instances the reduction in price was due to a revaluation of the improvements which had been effected, certain ringbarking work, which had been carried out, and it was considered that the price fixed for this improvement was too high, and the price of the holding was reduced accordingly. I certainly did give an undertaking to the hon. member for Katanning that I would visit some of these areas and meet the settlers and hear their representations on the spot, and although that promise is of somewhat long standing I can give the hon. member an undertaking that it will be redeemed at an early date, and if there is any reason for including these areas in my proposals for reclassification, which more particularly apply to the eastern districts, then I have no objection.

Mr. MONGER (York): I quite agree with the Minister that this motion is rather peculiarly worded. It hardly gives one power to deal with one of the most important questions which could come under discussion, and that is the question of people who took up land on the understanding that they were to be in close or reasonable proximity to a railway—I am referring more particularly to the settlers in the neighbourhood of Kurrenkutten and Kumminin, who were distinctly promised, according to lithos issued by the Lands Department three or four years ago, that they would be within a certain distance of railway communication—and on that understanding they

were charged as high as 27s. 6d. for their land. Now the line has been built in a different direction, instead of following out the Advisory Board's route, and I was glad to learn from a speech of the Premier the other day that it was his intention always to adhere to and give effect to recommendations of the Advisory Board where it suits his party, or those who serve his party. I am referring to his promise to carry out the recommendations of the Advisory Board in connection with the extension of the Crossman-Hotham railway to Narrogin.

The Minister for Lands: We had other reports on that.

The Premier: Does that join up with the Wickopin-Merredin line?

Mr. MONGER: I am coming to that.

The Premier: I thought he was coming to that.

Mr. MONGER: There is no doubt that three or four years ago prices charged for land in certain neighbourhoods. I may mention Kurrenkutten, were charged on the understanding that a railway would go in some cases within five or six miles of the land then being sold.

Mr. O'Loughlen: In some cases.

Mr. MONGER: At all events we find the line now, instead of being within five or six miles is 13 or 14 miles away, and if anyone means to tell me that land 13 or 14 miles away from a railway is as valuable as that within five or six miles, they are telling me something I cannot understand. As the people have been charged the highest price that has yet been charged for agricultural lands sold by the Government, and now find themselves away from railway communication, and are likely, even with the promises of further railways out east, to always find themselves in the unpleasant predicament of being located in the middle of two lines, a distance of 13 or 14 miles away from the nearest siding, in the circumstances a reclassification of that land should be made and these settlers should be fairly and reasonably treated.

The Minister for Lands: I am going to give it to them.

Mr. MONGER: I trust a note will be made of that, and that it will be given

within an early date. I trust that the rents which have been paid on the basis of the high prices charged will be in due course allowed to go towards the payment of future rents.

Mr. Underwood: How do you think they would get on with private enterprise?

Mr. MONGER: I certainly think that in some cases, or in most cases, it would be a very reasonable matter for the Government to allow the rents to remain over for the last two years and for a further two years to come.

Mr. Lander: Hear, hear!

Mr. MONGER: And then charge them on the basis of a fair and reasonable price for the land which is located so far away from railway communication. I am glad to have an assurance from the Minister that a reduction is going to be made.

The Minister for Lands: I did not say a reduction.

Mr. MONGER: Well, a reclassification. When that reclassification is ordered I would like to know what sort of instructions the Minister is going to give?

The Premier: Would you like to issue the instructions?

Mr. MONGER: I would not mind taking part in it, as I would see they were fair and reasonable. I would like to have some sort of idea from the Minister. I know there are some gentlemen connected with the Lands Department who, if told to go out and do certain work, want no instructions, they will do it. But if the Minister is going to say, "I want you to go out and reclassify this land and place a higher value on the land than there was originally" I know there are men in the department who would give effect to his instructions.

The Minister for Lands: I have never given such instructions as that where I have approved of a reclassification.

Mr. MONGER: We are to presume that reasonable instructions will be given to the officer who goes out to make the reclassification.

The Premier: You might rest assured on that, coming from us.

Mr. MONGER: This motion, at all events, has done a certain amount of

good, even if it has only been to draw from the Minister the assurance that consideration will be given to those settlers who so far have been duped into taking up their settlements in the localities to which I have referred.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE (Toodyay): I understood from the Minister for Lands the other evening during the discussion on the Estimates that it was his intention to introduce or initiate some scheme of reclassification. Now, from his remarks, one would conclude that that reclassification was only to extend so far as poison leases are concerned. To the best of my recollection the Minister, while speaking, stated that he had seen fit to increase the price of some conditional purchase land. I hope that is not the intention, and that it will not result in any shape or form. In regard to leases in the back portion of the Toodyay electorate I am sure the burden there from the price of land is altogether too great.

The Premier: What about the front portion?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: The front portion is already freehold, thank goodness. With regard to reclassification, the price of land under the old conditional purchase leases in the back districts is certainly much too high. In some cases it reaches 28s. and I believe that is far too high, and that the price of the land should be reduced at least one-half. This, I quite admit, is some reflection on the judgment of the Minister for Lands in the previous Administration, but it was an excusable error because the valuation was fixed upon what appeared to be the productive value of the country because of four or five very good years. The last three years, even including the present one, have shown conclusively that the land is not worth the price that has been put upon it.

The Premier: Croaking again?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: Some have said that if we reduce the price of the land we, of course, cannot go to the Agricultural Bank for further assistance. That is a wrong idea because all the money expended on that land is certainly a good and safe investment and I would feel

quite safe, if I were the director of a financial institution, in giving assistance, anyhow to the extent that has already been carried out by the Agricultural Bank on lands fixed at a lesser price. The mere fact that the people on the land are improving it as they are doing certainly justifies assistance being given to them. I hope the Minister will make himself quite clear on the matter and that he will not leave us in doubt as to the instructions he will issue when the reclassification scheme is being carried out, and that he will inform us that it is the intention, where occasion demands, to reduce the price of land and not increase it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): I was surprised to hear the remarks of the Minister for Lands when he spoke on this motion. This is an occasion when the Minister might have made a definite statement as to his policy. It was pointed out the other night that similar land in the same localities bears two different prices. I daresay although the statement was made, when the question is inquired into, the prices of the blocks given, and the classification sheets looked up, we will find some slight difference.

Mr. S. Stubbs: None whatever.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It would be an easy matter for the Minister to look into that point. Reclassification is not needed. What is needed is to price the land. The reports are with the Minister, and he would only need to have a second inspection where the settler raised the question as to the quality.

The Premier: That is an admission that your classification is wrong.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Minister wishes to do as he has promised the member for York he will do—adjust the prices of the land between Wickopin and Merredin, which is now very much further from the line than was reasonably expected when the values were fixed, all he will need to do will be to send for the reclassification sheets and adjust the values.

The Minister for Lands: The prices were put up on those different railway routes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Nothing of the sort. They did not hear of the trial surveys which were made. The route there was to be the route recommended by the Advisory Board, and even if the land was priced according to the several surveys made by the previous Ministry, those surveys were near to each other, and the people who have since been disappointed would still be away from the line which has been built. Those people are entitled to have their values reduced at once, because the system is a just and reasonable one to charge the man who is going to have his block of land near the railway a bit more than the man who is five miles out. Will anyone say that that is not the right course to follow? Then again, a man who is five miles from the railway should pay a little more than the man who is ten miles from it. Will anyone say that that should not be the system adopted?

The Premier: I will say so.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We ought to build our railways near the routes recommended by the Advisory Board. We have discussed the question of the locality of this particular line more than once, and Ministers have admitted to-night that men have been left, and although we are going to build a second line from Yilliminning to some point I suppose on the Wickopin-Merredin line, there are many who will not be in the position that we expected they would be in. Common fairness therefore demands that they shall have their values reduced. I am not talking about lands generally, but about these special lands to which the Minister has referred.

The Minister for Lands: I did not refer to them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister, in replying to the member for York, said that he intended to take this question of the prices of the land in that locality into consideration.

The Minister for Lands: In common with the others.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They have nothing to do with the others, and I am not dealing with the others; I am dealing with the settlers who have been denied

something which they paid to get, and something they would have had if the Minister who sold them the land had continued to remain in power. I was endeavouring to explain the system under which we arrived at values, and that is that the distance from a railway should control the price. The Premier will agree with that I am sure.

The Premier: From the point of view of the value of the land, yes. It is just a subterfuge on your part to get out of land taxation.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier can explain his marvellous ideas of values later on, but if he went into a district to buy land he would have to pay more for land which was near a railway than for land which might be some distance away. Everyone is willing to do that. With regard to the question of poison lands, specially referred to by the member for Katanning, it will be remembered that we appointed a commission to deal with that matter. The commission consisted of one of the trustees of the Agricultural Bank, a representative of the Lands Department, and a farmer, and they made certain recommendations which recommendations should be given effect to. This land is situated to the west of the Great Southern and there is no doubt that it is good stock land and fair farming land also. Of course there is no doubt that it can and will be made into good farms. The quality, however, does not justify small holders being put there. What is wanted is that these lands should be reduced in price and that the holdings be increased, either by allowing one farmer to sell to another or allowing those who are there now to select other land. Where there is poison, a settler should not be called upon to pay anything at all during the first ten years, whilst he is eradicating the poison. Not only is there the cost of eradication cast upon him straightaway, but also loss in connection with stock that might eat the poison. The Premier knows that it is not possible to so clear all poison as to guarantee the settler against loss of stock.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did you try to settle the poison areas?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They were settled before my time.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did you not do anything towards settling them?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I endeavoured to make the matter clear by appointing a commission to report.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It was a political commission.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It was not.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Yes, I was there with them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Oh, were you? Then it must have been a political commission. So far as we are concerned the commission was appointed to help the people and it was not a political commission. We were not in the habit of appointing political commissions. This commission made recommendations which went to the Minister after I had gone out of office, and which I think the present Minister for Lands should take into consideration. I believe the commission's report is a reasonable and a sensible one, and a good deal could be done by the Minister if he took the advice contained in that report.

The Premier: I do not think he would. It was not your intention to take notice of it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I tell the Premier that it was my intention to take some notice of it. If I had been in office I should have put into operation the recommendations of the commission. Is the Premier satisfied?

The Premier: Not at all.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Does the Premier know what I intended to do? I might as well tell him that it is his intention to square the finances. If we are to have these people become prosperous the Minister should give consideration to the advice of the member for Katanning, and do something for them. There are many ways in which assistance can be rendered. We could make available the Agricultural Bank assistance which the House agreed should be given. We could reduce the rents. This would be a very easy matter, or we could defer the rents in this locality for ten years. We could of course reduce freights and, best of all

probably, we could have a change of Government. I think the Minister's duty should be to see that the people are treated fairly. If an injustice has been done let it be righted. If something better can be done then let it be done. Too long have we had the present Government saying how wrong it was for us to do things, but they have done all those wrong things themselves. I produced maps the other night showing that land had been thrown open on the extreme edge of settlement under exactly the same system of pricing which obtained in my time. The Minister for Lands said that I altered the prices, but when we introduced a system of valuation of each block, according to its quality, I examined the plan submitted in regard to each block and in some cases I put up the price, and in others I agreed to the price suggested by the officers. Will the Minister deny that quite recently a block which was recommended by a district surveyor as being worth 8s. was charged by the Perth officers at 15s? Of course he cannot deny it. The blocks are not now priced on the advice of the district surveyors. They are priced by the Surveyor General, who has been deputed to do the work that the Minister once did. Of course the question of reducing values is a very simple matter, but if we did that I agree with the member for East Perth that that would not be everything. There are other things that could be done. For instance, if rent is unpaid, under the present law a fine of twopence in the pound is charged in the first month, sixpence in the pound in the second month, and one shilling in the pound in the third month. I think that those fines are altogether too heavy. In the good times that prevailed people did not defer their rents to any great extent, and the matter did not appear to be so urgent as it is now. However, that shilling for three months is too much. I think the member for Perth put through a Bill which precluded a charge of this sort being made and provided that no man could charge more than 12 per cent.

Mr. Dwyer : Unfortunately the Bill was emasculated in the Upper House.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : However, this fine of one shilling for three months is too heavy.

The Minister for Lands : It has been the law since 1898.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I admit it was the law in my time, but I think we should reduce the fine. I think also that longer time might be given in which to pay the rent of land well improved. I know the Ministers' financial troubles do not permit them to do all they would like for the agriculturists or any other class. Unfortunately when we federated we gave away our revenues, and in consequence the country has been hard up ever since, and is deeper in that condition to-day than ever before. We are not justified in asking our settlers to pay a fine equivalent to 20 per cent. I do not blame the present Minister for it, but I am asking him if he will not take into consideration the advisableness of reducing this heavy penalty. I believe our settlers are entitled to the fullest possible consideration, and to sympathetic treatment. Whatever may be said of the other great national industries, the gold mining and the timber industries, there is no doubt the man upon the land is the man who stands behind us all. Life is not easy in the early stages of land settlement, and anything we can do for the settlers should be done cheerfully and quickly. The Minister has made a sort of half promise, which to me would not be satisfactory; he has promised the member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) to go down and have a look for himself. That will not avail very much. We want to know what his policy is. When he gets down there Parliament will be out of session and we will not have an opportunity of discussing it further. During the Minister's absence from the Chamber just now I pointed out that quite recently a block of land was priced at 8s. by the district surveyor and that in the Perth office the price was raised to 15s. I do not question the wisdom of it, but I am not going to be charged by the Minister with having exercised the undoubted

right of any Minister of Lands to say at what price the land shall be sold, and remain silent when I find that he is doing exactly the same. Will the Minister deny that that land was put up in price above that recommended by the district surveyor?

The Minister for Lands: Certainly the price is added to by the Surveyor General because, in some instances, of improvements. A provision is also made for survey fees; but I have never added to the price determined by the Surveyor-General.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Minister deputed to someone else a duty which belongs to him he must not hide himself behind the other man.

The Minister for Lands: What you have done is this: the price was fixed by the district surveyor and added to by the Surveyor General to cover the fees, and you added to that price again.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, and sometimes I took away from it. Will the Premier say he did not go into a district and declare land there was being sold too cheaply?

The Premier: No, I did not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Not to the Donnelly district?

The Premier: No, I did not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Will the Minister for Lands say that land has not been increased in value in his office in Perth?

The Minister for Lands: Certainly the price set by the Surveyor-General is sometimes in excess of the price fixed by the district surveyor because of certain charges which have to be made.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But apart from these certain charges, which are probably added in the district office, and the charge for improvements, which is also probably added in the district office, the land has been increased in value by the Minister's deputy.

The Minister for Lands: I do not think so.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister should know.

The Minister for Lands: Not over and above the survey fee and the value of the improvements.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, if the Minister will inquire he will find that the price is fairly considerably added to. I have quoted one case of the price being increased from 8s. to 15s. However, I merely mention this to show that exactly the same policy which obtained in my time obtains now.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Oh yes. The Minister said the other day he was not selling land out in the eastern districts, but I have since produced maps to show that he sold land—

The Minister for Lands: That land is west of—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The debate is entirely out of order.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The motion is that relief be given to our settlers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, to those who are holding conditional purchase lands from the Crown; but it does not allow the member to discuss the policy of the Government in raising land values now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I thought the whole debate hinged around the question of price.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member stands corrected.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, what is there to discuss? Because I can assert, if I wish to continue the debate, that every acre of land is over-priced.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will read the motion to the hon. member. It is as follows:—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that relief should be given to all persons who are holders of conditional purchase land from the Crown, which has been sold at a price in excess of a present value.

Land that has been sold, not land which is to be sold.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am discussing the land sold.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member was discussing the policy of the Government in settling people on the land in the eastern districts and charging higher prices for land. If the hon. member can bring his remarks to bear on the motion

he will be in order, but he was not in order when I called him to order.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I was referring to land sold by the present Minister. I was endeavouring to point out that this land had been sold subject to a price fixed by the Minister's deputy at the head office which, of course, is perfectly reasonable and right. However, this motion asks for relief for people who have been, in the opinion of my friend the member for Katanning, over-charged. He dealt specially with people on poison blocks, and I have dealt with those people to-night. I have nothing more to add, except to express the hope that the Minister will tell us what his policy is in regard to the request made by the member for Katanning, who asks that these people be afforded relief. The Minister does not say whether or not he is going to give them relief. He says he is going to give them the cold comfort of his presence, and he has said in another place that he is going to deal with one special area.

The Minister for Lands: I have never confined it to one special area.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Oh, he is just fishing now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, I have not succeeded in hooking much. That is what I understood the Minister to say. I entirely approve of it in both cases. The Minister hides so thoroughly his intentions. He is a past master at hiding information which we ought to have. However, I hope the motion will be carried. There is room for inquiry, and if the Minister is wise he will see that the relief asked for is given without any further delay.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly): I am entirely in sympathy with the motion, and I hope the House and the Minister for Lands will do something in response to it. A great many of us know that land settlement and the purchase of land was very popular a few years ago and that many individuals paid more for land than they would pay to-day. This, too, even in districts which are not dry. I have been in many of these dry districts, and have known people out in those parts for a number of years, people who have

had no return whatever. I think that every sympathy should be shown to those people. Of course I know what a difficult position the Minister has to face. The financial position of the State to-day is very harassing to anybody. Even the Treasurer should find it so, notwithstanding which he laughs. It seems to me he is impervious to anything of that description. The difficulties in regard to the State finances, though sufficiently great, are not anything like equal to those of the people on the land. A great many have found fault with the late Minister for Lands on the score of the high prices at which he sold land during his regime. But I and others have made the same mistake ourselves, so it only serves to show that the Minister is no more infallible than is any other person. I know from personal experience that quite a lot of land was sold for 7s. and upwards, land which the purchaser, when he cleared it and improved it and did all that was necessary to eradicate the poison, found he had paid full value for. One with a little experience in farming would have a great deal more sympathy with these people than the Premier appears to have. He seems to take the matter very lightly. Nevertheless it is a serious matter for those people. They have to suffer great hardships, almost intolerable hardships. It seems to me that one clears the land of poison, and in a year or two it grows up again. The same condition applies to clearing the land of ordinary timber; the suckers grow up again and the process has to be repeated almost continuously. A lot of the land in my opinion has been valued at too high a price altogether. However, it is difficult to make these reductions and to grant railway facilities and make roads. The strain on the finances of the State is certainly very great indeed. At the same time everything should be done that can be done for those people upon whom we depend so much. I hope the Minister will see his way clear to make a substantial reduction and a concession to certain settlers. There are also a number of people who took up land eight or ten years ago and who are still in the same predicament in regard to railway

facilities. There are at least three districts in my own electorate that are practically starving for want of railways and they are almost brought to despair and to a standstill. They can go no further; it is the last straw that breaks the camel's back, and they are so discouraged and despondent that they almost feel that they would like to give up their holdings which they have been working for eight or ten years. These people should receive consideration as well as those in the drier areas. The districts I refer to are Coranning, Aldinga, and Jilliminning, and those places are at least 20 miles away from a railway. We are all of opinion that it is almost impossible to farm at that distance from railway facilities. Those people are deserving of every consideration and they should be exempt from the payment of rents until they have facilities to enable them to get their produce to market. There is nothing I regard more seriously, and I hope the House will do the same, and that the Minister will do all that is possible in that direction.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): The discussion has at least shown that so far as the treatment of agriculturists in this State is concerned, the House holds one opinion, and that is that they should be given every opportunity of following their avocation of farmers and settlers on much the same basis as anybody else in the community, so as to enable them to live in reasonable comfort and carve out homes for themselves and their families. But members must not forget the fact that the present condition of affairs has been brought about, not by the action of the present Government, but by our predecessors in office, and I can see, when hon. members opposite are speaking on this question, just at the back of them the ghost of the Farmers and Settlers' Association and party. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper), for instance, is just trying to shake off the yoke of the Liberals and to take on that of the Farmers and Settlers' Association, and the best proof of that is his statement that the actions of the Liberal Government during their last two or three years of office had

caused the present condition of affairs in the farming districts. His statement that this has had anything to do with the present condition of the finances of the State only shows a want of knowledge on the part of the hon. member. Representing a farming constituency he ought to know that the yearly instalments on the land in the districts he referred to have not yet been paid, except in very few instances. They were deferred and the settlers have been paying on the old basis of 10s. per acre, as they have done for a number of years, so that it has no effect on the financial position of the State, nor is it likely to have any such effect. I may further say that the Minister for Lands on two previous occasions stated distinctly that he proposed to review the whole position. I do not know what would satisfy our friends opposite. He made that statement at the beginning of the session, and he also repeated it on the Estimates. I want to point out that I am not altogether in agreement with some of the utterances of members opposite, particularly the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell). Contrary to the general opinion held by the people in the farming districts, some four or five years ago, that on questions affecting the farmers the member for Northam was infallible, I hold the opinion that he as Minister for Lands assumed a great deal that he could have much better left to the officers who were more experienced, who were in close contact with the conditions then prevailing, and who were also able to make a more thorough investigation of the various portions of the State and report on them better than he, sitting in his office in Perth, was able to do. Contrary to that practice, the present Minister for Lands has never attempted to assume that he knew more about these matters than the persons specially deputed by the Government to make inspections and reports, and he has invariably accepted the reports and recommendations they made. May I point out, too, that contrary to such procedure the member for Northam when Minister for Lands deliberately issued a dictum that certain lands were to be sold at 21s. an acre. He was not going to consider the question of varying

distances from railways and all that sort of thing; he said all this land was worth 21s. per acre, and at that price the land was to be sold. He would not hear of reclassification; in his opinion reclassification was unnecessary under the present system of survey before selection, and what must hon. members assume from that? That once the department had made a survey of the land, classified it, and fixed the price, there was no need for further consideration in regard to reclassification.

Mr. S. Stubbs: But did he say that?

The PREMIER: Absolutely. His minute reads as follows:—

The land is worth 21s. per acre, and must be sold at that price. Reclassification is unnecessary under our present system of survey before selection.

That is a pretty general statement.

Unless applicants can show that the classification is wrong in detail, we should refuse to accept their fees.

Mr. Harper: There was plenty of selection even at that price.

The PREMIER: Of course there was, and the hon. member himself made a most serious indictment against the member for Northam when he said that land was popular at that time and people went along and selected it at prices higher than its true value. We must assume from that statement that he is charging the member for Northam with placing values on the land which were not true values but were fixed from the point of view of wanting to sell the land just as a land jobber would do in the open market.

The Minister for Lands: We get applications to-day for land at a higher classification.

Mr. Harper: But you gain by experience?

The PREMIER: The hon. member has gained by his experience. I am only pointing out that the complaint has been made that the Minister for Lands will not make a definite statement. I am trying to show that he has on two previous occasions made a definite statement in regard to this matter. The member for Katanning who moved this motion

had in his mind more specifically the poison lands west of the Great Southern.

Mr. S. Stubbs: That is so.

The PREMIER: And the member for Wagin also had such land in his mind when he spoke on the question.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: And I say the system is still wrong to-day.

The PREMIER: And the member for York (Mr. Monger) had in mind land that he knew alongside the Great Southern, whilst the member for Toodyay (Mr. A. N. Piesse) also spoke of certain land which he held had been classified at too high a price. This is evidence that the system in the past was wrong somewhere, and I claim most emphatically that the member for Northam when Minister for Lands was wholly responsible for that condition of affairs arising.

Mr. George: We admit that.

The PREMIER: Well, I do not know of any more serious indictment, especially coming from the hon. member's own party.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: We want to put you right.

The PREMIER: The hon. member need not worry about putting me right. It does not require this motion to put us right. The Minister for Lands when speaking on the Address-in-reply this year, said—

I wish to say that I have refused to reclassify on the result of a bad season, but I am certainly not going to say that on an average result these people should not be entitled to have their requests for reclassification considered, and I think it only reasonable that there should be a general review after this season, if it proves as good as I hope it will be, in the light of this and previous ones, with experienced men having knowledge of the district to go there and see if we are charging too much, and if we are, we as the Government, ought to be prepared to reduce it to a fair thing.

That was a definite statement made by the Minister for Lands on the Address-in-reply long before this motion was thought of, or, at any rate, long before it was submitted to this Chamber. The

Minister repeated that statement on the Estimates and he has repeated it again to-night.

Mr. Harper: There is no harm in having a repetition of it.

The Minister for Lands: No, but it is not fair to say that I have not made a definite statement.

The PREMIER: The Minister again repeated his statement this evening, and two other members followed and once more asked the Minister to make a definite statement. Evidently there is no desire for a definite statement, but rather a desire to misrepresent the attitude of the Government.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Oh, no.

The PREMIER: It may not be so with the member for Wagin: but the fact that the Minister on two previous occasions made this statement, that he repeated it to-night, and gave a further assurance by way of interjection, and even then was again asked for a definite explanation, shows that members opposite do not want a definite statement, but are only trying to cover up the position as far as possible in order to have something to complain about. And that complaint comes from the worst possible quarter in coming from the member for Northam, who was personally responsible when Minister for Lands for having brought about this condition of affairs. The member for Northam says that the land should be charged for on the basis of its distance from a railway. He then assumes that the Minister for Lands should take upon himself the power to say where railway construction should take place. I assert that the Minister has no right to do anything of the kind, that the Minister for Lands when opening up land should dispose of it at prices based on the value of that land from a productive point of view and no other. Second or third class land cannot be made first class because we put a railway near it, and first class land cannot be made third class because it is some miles distant from a railway. Neither has the Minister any right to issue lithos showing where railways are to be constructed until

such time as his Government have considered the matter and Parliament has approved of those railways, and it was actions of that kind which brought about this condition of affairs. The proper method and the method we have been advocating for years is to settle the land on the basis of the value of the land to the owner from a productive point of view. That is a proper basis and we should return to the State by way of land tax some of the unearned increment brought about by the expenditure of public money in constructing railways and bringing the owner nearer to his market. Only a percentage is taken in that case but under the conditions imposed by the ex-Minister for Lands he was going to take the whole of it and then go about the country saying "We do not propose to introduce a land tax." That is the form of land tax that the ex-Minister for Lands introduced, and a much heavier one and a more unjust one than that proposed by the present Government. He was charging up to 27s. an acre for land alongside of a proposed railway and he did not know whether Parliament would approve of that railway or not, and on the other hand was only charging 10s. for other land. There is a great deal of difference in the land and all we ask is that we should settle people on the land and give them railways after such railways have received the approval of Parliament in a constitutional way. The credit of the whole of the State is given for the purpose of finding the money with which to build railways and we ask that the settler shall pay under the fairest and most equitable system known by recouping the State with some of the unearned increment given to him by the public generally. We give him a railway for all time and not for a period of five, ten, or twenty years, during which he is occupied in purchasing his land. In regard to the proposal of the ex-Minister for Lands in fixing the prices as he did on the basis of whether land was likely to be near a railway, and taxing a man for a period of 10 years and letting him off afterwards, could there be a more unfair system?

The Minister for Lands: Land which is now 20 miles from a railway might be within one mile of a railway later on.

The PREMIER: Yes; no one can say where railways will be run eventually. I am not prepared to say that the State will stop at building railways when it has brought settlers within 15 miles of a line, but the first expenditure is so great, and our State is so large, that it cannot be expected that we should build lines all at once and we must fix a definite distance for the time being. Eventually these men will get their land at a much less rate than the men who to-day are near a railway and will be living under the same conditions. The system is wrong. There is only one way of settling the land under existing conditions. If we did as they do in Canada, built railways ahead of settlement, we would know exactly what we were doing, and would be justified in introducing this system of the ex-Minister for Lands, but under the existing conditions we can only price the land on its productive value, and if we want to get anything else because of railway facilities later on, it will be through the land tax, and it will be through the land tax that we will call upon the settlers who are served by railways to help to pay for the public requirements. I rose only for the purpose of saying that the statement made by the Minister has the absolute concurrence of the whole of the Government. We have discussed the matter and have determined that we will not unduly press the settlers. As a matter of fact, it must be admitted that if we intended to-morrow to enforce the payment of the increased prices imposed by our predecessors, it would be impossible to get the money and many settlers would have to leave their holdings. We are not going to adopt such an attitude, notwithstanding the frightful condition of the finances, according to the hon. member for Pingelly. We are determined to deal fairly with those who are, or who will be suffering through having to pay high prices for their land under the conditions imposed upon them on a wrong basis. That is the reason I rose to assure hon.

members that the statements made on two previous occasions and repeated to-night will be kept faith with.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (in reply): I am sorry that the Premier should have got so heated over this motion.

The Premier: I am perfectly cool.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: And should have attributed some ulterior motives to myself and other hon. members on this side of the House who have supported me. The Premier has even gone so far as to say that the bogey of the Farmers and Settlers' Association, as he terms it, is somewhat responsible for this motion having been brought forward.

The Premier: No, I did not say that. I said the attitude adopted towards it by some hon. members opposite.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I can assure the Premier and the Minister for Lands that I had one object in view in introducing this motion and it was that, notwithstanding the fact that perhaps a past Administration had to some extent been responsible for the prices which have been charged, I maintained that, although the present Administration may in some instances have made some modification of the prices, while the system of classification of lands was a good one, the basis of prices was altogether wrong, and I still maintain that this is so. I purposely made the scope of my motion as wide as possible in order to obtain from the Minister some declaration of the policy of the present Government in regard to those prices which have been charged, and to my way of thinking are being charged at present and which will act injuriously to the successful settlement of this country. In moving the motion I mentioned that I had no desire to embarrass the Government or to make this a party question; I had one idea in my mind and that was what we all wish to see, namely that our settlers are not unjustly treated and if an injustice has been done that the injustice should be remedied at the earliest possible moment. I remind hon. members that I should have the unanimous support of the House considering the fact that at the last general elections the matter of the high prices of land was

made a burning question and I am somewhat surprised to find that the election pledges made by some hon. members, and very freely made, have during the short space of two years been almost forgotten.

Mr. Lander: About stealing their little farms from them?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I know the hon. member for Northam was vilified throughout the length and breadth of the country on this very question of the price of land and it is somewhat inconsistent on the part of some hon. members opposite that they have not been in their places to-night to support those pledges which they gave during the election campaign in the country districts.

The Minister for Lands: The prices have been considerably lowered.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Does the Minister allude to the recent classification of lands which have been sold?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am prepared to admit that in many instances the basis of the classification is the same and the basis of the prices may to some extent have been altered, but I still contend that this basis is not a correct one. I have come to this conclusion, after having given the matter some consideration, and I would ask the Minister to go more closely into this question with a view to finding out whether he is not wrong. Under the present Act minimum prices have been fixed, 3s. 9d. for third class land, 6s. 3d. for second class land, and 10s. for first class land, and I want to know who gave any Minister or any department authority to fix the prices at what they are fixed to-day. After all, it is a matter of opinion as to the prices and that is the crux of the whole question.

The Minister for Lands: I agree that is the difference of opinion, but you are not fixing the prices.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I want to assist the Minister and the Government, and future Governments, to arrive at a more satisfactory basis for fixing the prices.

The Minister for Lands: The officers say your ideas are wrong.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I consider that the officers have to a great extent been wrong all along in regard to this question and surely, from the debate, the Minister, putting aside all conditions of party, must realise, if he considers the arguments advanced and the references made, and the various objections raised, and, in fact, he must know from having lived in an agricultural district, and from owning land, that there is a great deal of discontent in regard to the prices of land and is it not right that upon such an important question as this, which is the governing and the main factor in regard to the successful settlement of our lands, that this House should take into consideration and review the whole question, and determine the proper method and means of fixing the price? I suggested to the Minister that a board, the personnel of which should consist of some members outside of officers of the department, should have been appointed not only to go into the question of reclassification but at the same time to enable the Minister to have such data as would assist him to fix a satisfactory price for the various qualities of our agricultural lands. The Minister has said that every member of this House could vote for the motion. I have not the slightest doubt of that; when I introduced it I never expected that a division would be taken upon it, but I did expect that the Government, through the Minister, would have seized the opportunity besides giving us the assurance which I appreciate and which I believe the Minister does intend to act upon, and besides considering the question of the reclassification of lands in the wheat areas, and the fact that certain instructions have been issued to the responsible officers, would have seized the opportunity, I say, to deal with the question of poison lands. I think the Minister should have been able on this motion to-night to give me some definite information regarding the action which the Government are determined to take to meet the complaints and grievances of those people who are already settled on the poison lands.

The Minister for Lands: The officers of the department say their prices are fair, and that they have taken the poison into consideration. What do you want me to do, sack them?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I say that is the crux of the whole question.

The Minister for Lands: Do you want me to discharge them?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I do not. The Minister knows that very well. As I have said before, I know that we have very estimable officers in that department, gentlemen whom we are proud of, but are we going to allow that question of prices which is after all only the opinion of one or two responsible officers of the Lands Department, who do not come so closely into touch with the varying conditions of these lands as we do—

Mr. S. Stubbs: They have not had the practical experience.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Is it not reasonable to ask the Minister to obtain the opinion of a practical man in each of the districts where these lands are situated?

Mr. Dwyer: Why was it never done before?

Mr. S. Stubbs: Two wrongs do not make a right.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I have been endeavouring ever since I have been in this House to have this done. The position certainly was not so acute a few years back as it is to-day. As a matter of fact, as I pointed out upon the introduction of this motion, I was responsible for getting the late Minister for Lands to visit that particular portion of the district, that portion wherein I complained that the poison lands had been particularly over-valued. I was able, some two and a half years ago, to get the then Minister for Lands to visit the district, and I think the hon. member for Northam admitted then, and will admit to-day, that so far as these poison lands were concerned, and the special difficulties under which these people were labouring, that he was not fully seized prior to that visit, of their special difficulties.

Mr. Turvey: Did he take action?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Yes. The hon. member appointed that commission which has been already referred to to-night, and also earlier in this debate—a commission composed of two men outside the department, practical men, and a responsible departmental officer. That commission was appointed some two and a half years ago. They reported, and made certain recommendations which have already been referred to earlier in this debate. Those recommendations in my opinion would, if acted upon, have given considerable relief and satisfaction to the people concerned. However, the recommendations were allowed to remain dormant. Practically nothing has been done. Two years have gone past, and these people now are upon the verge of desperation.

Mr. S. Stubbs: That is quite true.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I have endeavoured during the time I have been in this House upon every occasion that has offered, to point out that these people in the poison areas—most of them not men with large holdings, mostly with small holdings, too small in my opinion to be successful—have very great difficulties to contend with. I pointed out before that unless something was done and done immediately, these men would probably have to leave the land. My prediction has to a great extent come true. Quite a number of these men have left their holdings. They have battled along there against great disadvantages. Some of them brought out a few hundred pounds, a good many of them were married men and took their families out there, and they have been hoping ever since the late Minister visited that district that some good would result from the commission that had been appointed. It is all very well for some hon. members to smile in regard to this matter. I am afraid some of them are apt to look upon the party aspect, because the hon. member for Northam went there and because this commission was appointed perhaps six months before a general election took place. These poor unfortunate people have been struggling there for years. A good many of them

have left—some probably gone into the Bankruptcy Court, others have left the district and gone back to the old country much poorer than when they came, broken down in body, spirit, and in some cases almost in mind. I do not want to paint this picture in such a way as to discourage people from taking up land; these men, as I have already pointed out, were inexperienced in regard to that country. Had they been practical men and had they known the special difficulties of poison, they would, with the capital they had, no doubt have made a success of their holdings. Unfortunately they did not have that experience and they realise to-day—those who are left—that they have spent the few pounds they had. They borrowed probably a good deal from the Agricultural Bank, and the position is that unless something is done immediately the whole of these people in that particular locality I have referred to—the Coben Soak settlement—will, within the next twelve months, be driven off their holdings. They have certainly gained from the point of view of experience since they have been there. They have spent what little money they brought and in some cases have broken their hearts, never wishing to see land again, and in other cases it can easily be imagined what self-sacrifices the wives of these men have had to put up with.

Mr. S. Stubbs: I will show that to the Minister when he comes down.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am sure that when the Minister goes down and sees for himself the true position, he will admit that I have not endeavoured to paint this picture any worse than it exists.

Mr. S. Stubbs: That is true.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am sure that the Minister will feel he has been neglecting a duty in not going to that particular district earlier to see the position for himself. So far as this reclassification is concerned, these people have very little indeed to hope for if they have to appeal again to the departmental officers for a reclassification. That is already borne out by the evidence given to-night by the Premier himself when he said the

reclassification in the Dinninup area had already been increased—

Mr. S. Stubbs: It was absolutely wrong.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: And in very few instances have been reduced. If they are going to be increased and it is going to be the general policy of the Government to allow that to be done, and the system of the department to go on doing that, as soon as these men get off the land the better. They had better try and get away with some little they have left than be driven off the land altogether. I can assure the Minister that unless more sympathy is shown by the department in this direction—and I do not say it is done wilfully, but that I have every confidence in the officers of the department who are trying to do their best—but I say they are not fully seized of the special difficulties that surround that particular land. Might I here suggest that, considering our Lands Department have to deal with so many clients spread over so many hundreds of thousands, or millions, of acres of lands, with so many different conditions existing in different localities, that the Minister might take into consideration the suggestion to allow his assistant under-secretaries to spend a certain amount of their time, which could be done with great profit, in various districts of the State. It would be absurd for any commercial undertaking or commercial institution to endeavour to dispose of a large tract of country such as we have in Western Australia without being more thoroughly cognisant with the nature of that country. Even if it meant appointing another officer or two, it would be a very profitable proposal if the department allowed their secretaries to go out into these districts, spend a certain amount of time there, so that they could understand the particular class of country they are dealing with, and the various difficulties under which these settlers labour. Then they would be able to deal more accurately with these values. I was very pleased to hear the Minister state that he was going to pay a visit to the Dinninup and Coben Soak districts at an early date. I suggest

that he should take the officers responsible for fixing the prices of that land with him on this occasion, and then they will be able to see what are the chances of these men making a success of their holdings. I am sure that, given some reasonable consideration, it is not too late yet for them to become successful settlers. After all, they are very loth to leave these places although they have had in many cases nothing but disaster there. There is a certain amount of sentiment attached very often to that bit of fencing which they put up, or the small home they erected, especially when they come to realise how much it has cost, both of their strength and what little capital they had. Therefore, they are loth to leave these holdings, and are pluckily hanging on so long as it is possible for them to hang on, hoping against hope that something will be done for them. I have already said I am somewhat disappointed that some more definite action is not going to be taken in regard to these poison lands. I appreciate what the Minister has said in regard to the wheat areas. I hope that when it does happen that the board do go into the prices in the wheat areas, that redress will be given in those cases in which an overcharge has been made. There is nothing further that I wish to say, except that the Minister must realise that there can be no further delay in this matter. If delay does take place we are going to lose a certain number of settlers.

Mr. S. Stubbs : Good men too.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : Not only that, but we will be declaring these lands to be impossible of being successfully worked. I am quite sure, as I have already mentioned, that the lands can be worked with profit, provided that they are taken in the proper way, and in many cases it would be better to actually give the land away, provided that certain conditions of improvement and cultivation are carried out. It would be cheaper to the country, and we would be providing something that would be an asset to the country, which to-day is only a menace. It is a menace to have such

large areas of poison country lying waste, not safe to depasture a head of stock upon, when that land could be improved and cultivated or brought into some use and made revenue-producing, even if we had to give it away and charge no rent at all. There is one other matter which I would touch upon and that is the prices of the poorer lands alongside existing railways. The Government must realise that if we are going to bring these lands into successful use and make them revenue-producing to our railways, to assist the railways already built, they must go into the question more closely of the fixing of the prices and the alteration of conditions, by way of making them more liberal, that is, in regard to the selection of these lands. I am pleased to know that the Minister will go to that district, and I can only hope when this motion is passed, although it will not convey very much that is good to the Minister in charge of the Lands Department, that the discussion which has taken place will, to some extent, cause the Government to realise that they have grave responsibilities, and notwithstanding the fact that many of these people were settled on the land by the previous Administration the present Government owe a duty to those men who have done their part, and it is now up to the Government, and it is expected of them, to do theirs.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.18 p.m.