

ment he could do so by substituting the word "electors" for "ratepayers." In order that the Committee might dispose of the matter it would be better not to strike out the whole clause but to amend it. An amendment could be made in the proviso giving effect to what the member desired.

Mr. DRAPER moved an amendment—

"That all the words from line 1 of the clause to the word 'accordingly' in line 11 be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:— A poll of the electors on the Assembly roll in any district may from time to time be taken under regulations provided for the purpose, asking that the days appointed for the closing of shops (not being shops mentioned in Schedule 1 of the principal Act) at 1 o'clock and 10 o'clock respectively, may be altered to the days specified on the voting papers recorded by such electors, whereupon on such poll having been counted the days in each week for the closing of such shops in such districts at 1 o'clock and 10 o'clock respectively which have obtained a majority of the votes recorded shall be altered by proclamation."

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.21 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 26th November, 1908.

	PAGE
Election Return, Menzies	410
Urgency Motion, Timber Trouble, Murchison	410
Questions: Mining Lease renewals	430
Camel Tick	431
Bills: Land and Income Tax, 1a.	431
Midland Junction Boundaries, 3a.	431
Vernin Boards, 2a.	431
Early Closing Amendment, Com.	442

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

ELECTION RETURN—MENZIES.

The Clerk announced the return of writ for the election of a member for Menzies, showing that Mr. Henry Gregory (Minister for Mines and Railways) had been duly elected.

The Hon. H. Gregory took the oath and subscribed the roll.

URGENCY MOTION—TIMBER TROUBLE, MURCHISON.

Mr. HEITMANN (Cue): I desire Mr. Speaker to move the adjournment of the House for the reasons that I have given to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received a notice from the hon. member that he desires to move the adjournment of the House on a question of urgency, to call attention to the state of affairs existing at Day Dawn in connection with the woodcutters' strike at Nallan.

Seven members having risen in their places,

Mr. HEITMANN said: I feel sure hon. members will recognise there is no necessity for me to apologise to this House for the step I am taking this afternoon. At the present time I may say the condition of affairs in the Cue district, especially at Day Dawn, is deplorable, and my object in bringing this matter before the House, is, if possible after discussion, to arrive at some solution of the problem which is facing the people of that district. After all, members will find there is not such a great difference between these men who are out on strike and the Company who have refused up to the present time to grant them the concessions that they have asked. At the present time in the district of Cue and particularly at Day Dawn a good deal of poverty is existing as the result of the Great Fingal mine closing down, because they have been unable to obtain fuel. At this mine only eight days ago, there were some 500 or 600 men employed. This number and even more have been employed on this mine during the last six or seven years. Members will understand that a place like Day Dawn contains more of a floating population, but at the same time

there are many married people settled there, and members will understand that those miners who have been working there for a number of years, many of them on the surface, have received a wage of only £3 5s. a week, and on this they have kept a family. It will be recognised that to these people even one week's loss of work will mean a great deal. It is a fact that there are many men in this district who have been receiving the wage of £3 5s. a week for surface work, and there are some who have received this amount for the last four or five years, and I feel certain that being out of work for one week, they will be obliged to ask for credit from their storekeeper. When one comes to consider the cost of living, and the fact that only £3 5s. a week is given to married men, the seriousness of the position will be at once recognised; and when we find that 500 or 600 men have been thrown out of work in a town with a population of 2,000 people, most of whom exist on the wages earned by these men, the disorganisation in the place will be understood. It will be necessary for me to go at some length into the cause of the existing state of affairs. For the past 15 or 16 weeks there has been trouble in the firewood industry at Nallan. The wood from Nallan has been supplied to the Great Fingal mine, which has been practically the only consumer of this firewood. Several small mines are being supplied but these are not affected to any extent inasmuch as they can get wood from around the district. I am not going to blame any party.

Mr. Monger : What about yourself ?

Mr. HEITMANN : The hon. member interjects. "What about myself?" I am sorry he is bringing this element into the debate again. On a previous occasion I told him that I had endeavoured to bring about a settlement of this strike, and I only wish the hon. member instead of making insinuations, would tell me outside the Chamber, what he means, and I would be prepared to deal with him.

Mr. SPEAKER : Order.

Mr. HEITMANN : I have explained already to this Chamber my action as far as the wood strike is concerned, but it will be necessary for me to detail that again.

As I have said, for 15 or 16 weeks past there has been a dislocation of business generally in this district, and we are no nearer settlement to-day, and it is with a desire of bringing about a settlement, or at all events have the question discussed, that I am submitting the matter to this Chamber. The causes of the strike are these : the firewood company operating in this district have paid prices for wood which on evidence submitted to the Arbitration Court, and which can be verified by anyone making an examination, can be seen to be lower than have ever been paid before on the Murchison, a district where the conditions are no better and in many ways are worse than in other districts which have been operated on previously, and which have averaged the woodcutter a better price for his labour. A case was cited before the Arbitration Court, this court being presided over by Warden Troy. I will say here that I am prepared to take my share of the blame in bringing about the arbitration proceedings. I induced the foreigners to allow the case to come before this court, and I would like to say it took a great amount of inducement to get these men to consent. I recognise that when I did induce these men to consent to arbitration, there was a possibility that if they did not get some increase there would be a chance of them refusing to accept any award that might be given. Still I took the chance of bringing the men before the court in the hope that there would be a settlement, and that the men would be satisfied. I venture to say that had it been any other class of workers, there would have been a settlement long before this. Unfortunately, those concerned have not taken into consideration the fact that these men are not reasonable Britishers, but a class of foreigners who cannot see eye to eye with us in the methods and laws of this country. Now, after the arbitration case, the men refused to accept the award, and there the matter rested for a week or two. Later on the manager of the company, *Mr. Sexton*, with the chairman of directors, visited Perth and on their return after consulting the directors, it was stated that they had offered 5s. 3d. a

ton. A good deal of discredit was thrown on the workers for not accepting this, and at a later stage the workers stated that they were prepared to accept the 5s. 3d. When the offer was made to the workers there were present a representative of the Italians and Mr. Barrymore, a solicitor, of Cue. The Italian asked Mr. Sexton for a few hours in which to consult the cutters. This was refused, whereupon he asked for two hours in which to consult some of the leaders. But Mr. Sexton again refused, withdrew all offers and broke off the negotiations. I sincerely believe that had the company treated these unfortunates with some little toleration at that time they would have settled the dispute. Later on an offer was made by the company to pay the men 12s. per day, and I must say that I negotiated on behalf of the men at that time with a representative of the workers' union. On interviewing the men, I found they were prepared to accept 12s. a day, but were not prepared to have an alternative in the agreement to allow of the employment of men at so much per ton. They considered that after fighting against 5s. per ton for 10 or 12 weeks, if they allowed a contingency clause in the agreement it would only be a matter of a short time when the company would weed out the 12s. per day men and employ others at 5s. per ton, thus bringing them back to the old position that had obtained 10 or 12 weeks earlier. About the time the negotiations were being carried on for the 12s. per day and the alternative proposal, a conference was arranged between the cutters and carters and the firewood company. The meeting was fixed for 11 o'clock, and although the men were there at the time and prepared to confer, a telephone message came to say that the company had broken off negotiations and did not intend to make any offer at all. This was the second time a settlement could have been brought about had the company used a little commonsense in their negotiations. The woodcutters have been blamed for not accepting the award of the court, but this was a second occasion where a settlement could have

been brought about had the company so desired. Only a fortnight ago an offer was made to pay 9s. a cord. The men agreed to accept this with a certain method of finding the measurement in tonnage of their wood. The workers had to consult the men in the bush; for they were not in the position of the company with only one head. The men in the bush, and especially these Italians, will not give full power to any individual. They want to know what is taking place. They are generally suspicious and it takes a long time to get them to repose confidence in their leaders. The representatives went out into the bush and consulted the men. They had been given a certain time to bring back a reply, and after a good deal of discussion in the bush they returned, a little later than the time appointed. They told the company they were prepared to accept 9s. a cord, but that there was a slight difference of opinion as to the method of arriving at weights and measurements. It was only a little detail. I should have said that previous to the men going into the bush on the 9s. a cord proposal, they had held a conference, at which the matter of loading was not discussed. When the representatives of the men came back from the bush it was with a message that the workers required this matter to be discussed as well. The company refused to do this, and the men said, "Well, then, we will forego all requests in connection with the loading of the timber." They asked the company to allow them to go back into the bush and tell their fellows what they had done and how matters stood. They explained that they felt sure they would get the cutters to agree to the 9s. per ton, and also to the method of measuring as at first suggested. Just as the men were ready to go back into the bush—and Mr. Watson, the district secretary of the A.W.A., was one of them—a message arrived from the company stating that as the men had not returned at the proper time all offers were withdrawn. Now, although some blame may rest with the cutters for not having accepted the award of the court, still as I have shown,

the company on three occasions have neglected to seize opportunities of settling the dispute. It almost makes one wonder if they have any desire to settle it all. I would like to see this matter discussed in this Chamber with a view to ascertaining if it is possible to bring about a settlement. There is only a matter of 3d. per ton between the company and the woodcutters, and I think it is absolutely the duty of this Chamber to take a hand in this affair, seeing that it has been going on for 16 weeks and that apparently we are no nearer a settlement than when the disagreement arose. In support of my contention, one has only to follow the history of this company from the time tenders were called by the Government for the supply of firewood. The people of Cue and Day Dawn asked several times for a tramway line in order to cheapen the cost of the wood, and Mr. Baxter became the successful tenderer. And one has only to look over the files in the Mines Department to find that Mr. Baxter obtained the concession, not with a view of investing his money, but as a pure speculation. He had no idea from the start of investing his own money. His purpose was to use the concession as a speculation. We find him later on disposing of this property to a company. That was the idea he had in his mind when he first took up this matter. The Government had provided the company with all rails, sleepers, and fastenings, and in fact all material. This is the reason why I consider this House should interfere in this matter; because the people's money has furnished the necessities for the company to carry on its operations. I notice that in the Auditor General's report some reference is made to this. The Auditor General states—

“For the purpose of the agreement the total cost of the material for the line was assessed at £18,904 plus the loading of 5 per cent., making in all £19,849 4s., on which sum rent at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum is payable in quarterly instalments by the person or persons operating the line.” Then the Auditor General goes on to say that although this was the amount of the agreement, £949 8s. 8d. has been paid by

the Government in excess of this amount. This shows that the company has had very fair treatment by the Government, and seeing that the money has been provided by the people themselves I take it that it is the duty of this House to step in and see if something can be done to terminate the present state of affairs.

The Premier: Are you going to penalise the company because the men will not work?

Mr. HEITMANN: If I thought the company could not afford to pay the demands of the workers at the present time I certainly would not expect them to do so; but it is a well known fact that the company took up this concession when it was obtained by Mr. Baxter, knowing full well that the price of cutting in the district was from 5s. 3d. to 5s. 9d. per ton; and it was their duty to find out what they could afford to pay and not to attempt to come in under the ruling price. After all, what has this company to penalise? We hear of vested interests in this matter. Here are the two sides: this company making use of £20,000 of the people's money and putting a small amount of about £1,000 of their own into it, and now there are vested interests to the extent of a little more than £1,000. On the other hand, we have 500 workers thrown out of work through this strike, and a population of 2,000 people at Day Dawn deprived of their livelihood on account of the company not giving the concession. They made the offer, and they did not forget to let the people know that they had made the offer which would satisfy the men. If they were prepared to make the offer of 5s. 3d. per ton at any time during this dispute I take it they had considered the matter fully and had arrived at the conclusion that they could afford to pay it. And it seems to me that if they could afford to pay it then they can afford to pay it now. I consider that the interests of 2,000 people should be put before the interests of a company of about 10 individuals, spending on the whole about £1,000. This is a very serious matter for Day Dawn. During the last week, I am told, some 200 people, who could afford to do so, have left Day Dawn. These are

the single men. The unfortunate part of the affair is that most of the married people are unable to leave the district. There are up there men who have made little homes in the district and now find that they can neither dispose of their property nor can they leave. I think something should be done by this Chamber, and I would suggest that in view of the seriousness of the position; and seeing that we have in the agreement between the company and the Government a clause which provides for the cancellation of this contract, the Government should tell the company that if they are not prepared to repeat the offer they made a few weeks ago and which there can be no doubt they can afford to do, then the Government should cancel their contract. This matter concerns the whole of the people of Day Dawn at the present time, and if it goes on much longer it will have a very serious effect both for the business people and for the workers. The business people, I am told, have refused credit. And what, I may ask, will this mean to those unfortunate people who are not possessed of sufficient capital to pay for their goods as they get them. I move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) : I second the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) : I need hardly say that every member of this Chamber regrets that there should be any occasion to move the adjournment of the House on a matter of this kind. While I recognise that it is a matter requiring the attention of the Government and of this Chamber, still I would have been much better pleased had the hon. member given me notice of his motion. If matters of this kind are brought on every afternoon we do not know what the state of the business paper is going to be in the course of a week or two. If the hon. member had given me notice this afternoon I would have been able to get copies of the agreement, and so have dealt with the matter to which he has referred more intelligently than I shall be able to do now, not having the information at my finger tips. The hon. member has already outlined the case, but I may

say that when the trouble arose it was determined by both parties to submit it to arbitration. Both parties agreed to the arbitrator, Warden Troy, and both parties agreed to abide by his decision. Warden Troy visited the scene of the disturbance in the bush and took exhaustive evidence on the spot. The hon. member who has moved the motion represented the men and put the facts from their side before him. Then Warden Troy made an award which in his opinion was a justifiable one, and all members of this Chamber are satisfied that a decision given by Warden Troy would be an unbiassed one.

Mr. Heitmann : Hear, hear !

The PREMIER : I believe Warden Troy has the confidence of members as being an impartial man and one who would only give judgment after the gravest possible consideration, and with a determination to do justice to both parties. I believe an increase was given to one section, the carters, but Warden Troy decided not to increase the amount to be paid to the cutters, namely, 5s. per ton. Apparently, that award was acceptable to a certain section of the men employed, and those men returned to work and were prepared to work but were intimidated by the action of a section of foreigners in that district. It is my opinion that if these latter had not been there the men would have returned to work and the Great Fingal would have been working now. A request was sent down by a certain section of the public at Day Dawn that I should make an award on the evidence, and it was afterwards suggested that I should cancel the permit of the timber company because the company were not supplying firewood ; but I maintained that was a most unfair request in view of the fact that both parties to the dispute had, prior to the award being made, intimated that they were prepared to abide by it, and I replied that I felt I could not recommend such a procedure in view of the fact that most exhaustive evidence had been taken by Warden Troy on the spot, and that it was not the fault of the company that they were not working. Matters remained in that condition for a certain

time ; and then I believe several conferences took place in order to secure the working of the wood line. Only last week it was thought that the trouble would be ended. In reply to a request from the warden that I should make a suggestion to settle the difficulty I suggested that the company should pay a certain amount for day work, namely, 12s. a day under certain conditions which were, I believe, acceptable to the men, namely that in the event of any men not being able to earn their 12s. they could be discharged. But the company stated there were several men who were willing and anxious to return to work on piece-work at 5s. per ton, and that they did not consider it fair that these men should be forced to work on day-work. So really the settlement of the whole dispute got down to the question of employing seven or eight men on piece-work, or at 12s. a day on day-work. I replied that it seemed terrible that such an important matter should be hung up for such a trivial difference, and I suggested in order to meet the objection of the men whose idea was that if a certain number of men were employed on piece-work the day-work men would be discharged and the whole of the men would then be engaged on piece-work at 5s. per ton, that they should stipulate an agreement that not less than 75 per cent. of the men should be employed on day-work. However, during the last few days I have received several telegrams from Warden Troy in regard to the matter. He is of opinion the matter will not be settled as quickly as we anticipated. I believe a certain amount of timber has been brought in, but it has been intimated that an attempt will be made to stop the removal of any further firewood. As it is absolutely necessary for a certain amount of firewood to be brought in daily to the Great Fingal, something like 60 tons per day, in order to keep the pumps going, some trainloads must be brought in in order to supply the mine with firewood? At the same time it will be necessary to provide a certain amount of police protection in order that the company's men can bring in this firewood without being molested and thus keep the mine's pumps going.

Mr. Holman : To whom does the firewood belong ?

The PREMIER : That is a matter on which Warden Troy is competent to give an opinion, and he has been advised by me that in taking action he is to satisfy himself as to the ownership of the wood. I believe that the method of cutting at Nallan is different from the procedure adopted on the Eastern Goldfields where the wood is paid for stacked on the line. I understand that in this case the wood is paid for when it is delivered in the trucks.

Mr. Heitmann : It is paid for after going to the Great Fingal where it is weighed.

The PREMIER : Their contract is to deliver in the trucks, whereas at Kurrawang and other places the contract is to deliver at the siding. At Kurrawang also the loaders may be different people from the cutters, whereas at Nallan they are the same persons.

Mr. Heitmann : The cutters have been loading there.

The PREMIER : I am satisfied that Warden Troy will look at the matter from a commonsense point of view and that any action he takes will be upheld. The only point about this is that a decision having been arrived at and the award having been accepted, in my opinion a mistake was made by ever entering into any further conference. The suggestion has been made that the wood should be paid for by measurement. The member for the district has outlined that method, but I say it is against the best interests of the forests of that district that the wood should be paid for by measurement, inasmuch as up to some four or five years ago it was the practice to pay for all wood by the cord, with the result that the wood was bought in 5ft. lengths, and very often it meant that some 3ft. or 4ft. of wood was wasted in each tree. I suggested when I was on the Forestry Commission some years ago that the timber should be purchased by weight and in different lengths so that the cutters might get the best out of the bush. The result was that something like 30 per cent. more has been obtained per acre

by the adoption of the practice over the practice of purchasing by measurement, and I think it would be a great mistake to purchase by measurement instead of by weight. In regard to the agreement entered into, the fact that tenders were called on two occasions from persons prepared to deliver this wood at a certain price is an indication that there was not very much in the concession so far as the contract to supply wood was concerned.

Mr. Heitmann: There was sufficient for one man to make £400 or £500 out of it without turning a hair.

The PREMIER: The information I have is that there has been very little indeed made out of it. As a matter of fact it was agreed that the price to be charged should be 13s. 6d. per ton; that, I believe, was the lowest tender. It was stipulated that the wood was to be supplied to mines and other consumers generally, with the proviso that the company was not obliged to supply to any customer who might be in arrears with payments. I mention this to show that there was not very much competition to secure this alleged concession. The fact that tenders were advertised for over three months without any better tenders being sent in, is evidence that from a financial point of view there was not very much in it. I can only say that I regret as much as the hon. member does that this stoppage has occurred. I was afraid that possibly there was not that desire to see the mine working that we should have liked, but I have been assured to-day that provided the firewood supplies can be assured, the stamps of the Great Fingal will be going within a week of the firewood being supplied. I can only say that anything I can do to assist in bringing about a settlement, provided it is fair and square and aboveboard—I do not see why anybody should be penalised through no fault of his own—I am prepared to do, and I am prepared to accept any suggestion the hon. member has to make in this connection and give it every consideration.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): I do not think in a situation such as has been brought about at Nallan there is much to be gained by any recrimination as to what

has taken place in the past from the beginning of the dispute; but since there has been some blame attempted to be thrown on the member for Cue by reason of the failure of the men to accept the award, I can assure members that if they have personal experience of any attempt to deal with the foreign element on the Nallan or any other wood line in this State, they will find that it is an absolute impossibility for one to adopt those methods of reasoning or argument that obtain among the ordinary British class of workers to which we are accustomed. I had one experience on the Lakeside wood line. When it was thought a satisfactory settlement had been effected, I had to make an attempt to get a body of men, mainly consisting of aliens, to go to work; and I was thoroughly convinced then that it is an impossible task for anyone to act either as conciliator or as arbitrator where a body of men like the aliens working on these lines are concerned. It is not that I want to characterise them as being inferior in any way but it is that they have no understanding whatever of the customs and methods that obtain in Western Australia. They fight their battles in their own way, they are impulsive, and even if a settlement were patched up one week their impulsive natures might precipitate a crisis next week. No blame can be attached to members on this side of the House for the fact that these people are in the State at all.

The Premier: Is blame attachable to us?

Mr. BATH: I am not going to put the blame on the Government, but on the right people. Some time ago, there was a considerable influx of men coming here not only for the firewood lines but also for the mines, and very strong objection was taken by members on this side against the incursion of aliens. As a matter of fact, it was because the Italians could make absolutely sure that on reaching Fremantle they would be immediately sent by train to certain mines and other places where work would be given them, while Britishers were hanging about for weeks unable to get work, that the incursion took place. The rea-

son why at that time these men were encouraged to come here was that those who engaged them were of opinion they would be docile and humble and could be treated in a way that probably the British worker would not stand. If there has been an awakening and it is found that the men are not so easily dealt with and docile, any blame there is must be attached to those who encouraged the Italians here. If we were looking for a cause to which to attribute this, we can find it in the granting of concessions throughout Western Australia for the supply of firewood. It is by this means that the difficulties have been created. Anyone who studies the question will be convinced of the insanity shown by the Government in handing over these Crown firewood areas, in providing the lessees with rails, fastenings and all material—in some instances free of interest—and in submitting to be taken down repeatedly, as has been proved.

The Premier: No areas have been handed over. There is power granted to lay a tramway.

Mr. BATH: And you hand over the timber areas.

The Premier: And give a licence to everyone who wants to cut.

Mr. BATH: Let us ask the member for Boulder (*Mr. Collier*) what sort of a chance an outsider was given at Lakeside. That member knows how futile the action of the Government was. The contractors squeezed the men out in a very few months.

Mr. Hopkins: One or two members tried to stop that concession. It was granted by the Labour Ministry.

Mr. BATH: No, it was refused by the Labour Ministry, but was granted immediately they went out of office.

Mr. Hopkins: We will get the papers and see.

Mr. BATH: The position is this. The Crown have areas of timber, there are mines needing the firewood; but before the firewood can be supplied the Government have to give rails, fastenings and terms—most favourable terms.

The Premier: Do you call 10 per cent. favourable terms?

Mr. BATH: The Government have submitted to being taken down, as has been proved by the Auditor General's report, and all the concessions I have referred to have been given by the Government in order that the people's own firewood might be supplied to the mines of the State. As a result of this roundabout way of dealing with the question we have difficulties with the company. I am not going to say the Government should step in and cancel the agreement without the very fullest investigation; but the Government possess rails, sleepers and fastenings, and there is no necessity for them to hand them over to these people when they can utilise them and exploit some other areas themselves with the object of supplying firewood to the Great Fingal and other mines. If the Government want to lay down these lines speedily they can employ the men who are now out of work in the district. If this were done the Government would reap whatever advantage there is in the exploitation of their own firewood resources. As an alternative; I think the facts that so many men are unemployed and that the town is paralysed owing to the trouble, is sufficient to justify the Government in making for the time being a special concession for the carriage of Collie coal to Day Dawn in order to see whether the mines could not be kept going by that means. This of course would not be a permanent concession, but it is worth consideration when we take into account that the men now unemployed in the district are taxpayers and that the revenue will suffer by there being so many unemployed and through the town being paralysed. If there were a loss for the time being on the carriage of coal it would be more than compensated for by the fact of the mine being kept open, the people employed and the town in a normal business state.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison): One cannot but regret at any time the fact that an industrial dispute exists. But it is a fact that wherever concessions have been granted in any centre in the State there is now industrial trouble. For in-

stance there is the Nallan difficulty brought forward by the member for Cue, we have had the trouble at Kurrawang, and there has been trouble in the South-West, where concessions have been granted to a timber company. It is within the bounds of possibility, as the Premier knows, that there may be a very serious question to deal with in the immediate future with regard to the timber workers, unless matters are fixed up. A great deal has been said by the member for York, who criticised the member for Cue (Mr. Heitmann) and myself but I defy anyone to prove that I have ever been the means of causing an industrial trouble.

Mr. Monger: I am very pleased to hear that.

Mr. HOLMAN: I have been connected with a good many industrial difficulties, but I have never gone into one for the purpose of causing trouble. In all probability facts which will come out in the near future will prove that I have done more than any other man in this House to avoid trouble. The sum of nearly £21,000 has been practically given to this firewood syndicate in order to work the concession.

The Premier: How do you make out that it was given? We were given 10 per cent. and have a lien on the property.

Mr. HOLMAN: Let us examine into this 10 per cent. given to the Government. They receive it for five years. They pay four per cent. for the money, so that the difference between that and the 10 per cent. they obtain is 6 per cent. The Premier will find that at the end of, say four years, he will be losing money on the transaction. If the place is cut out or the work stopped the Government will have to take up the rails, and the sleepers and fastenings will be useless. The rails themselves will be then only second hand, and the result will be that instead of the Government making a profit of 10 per cent., they will be really losing as much as 30 per cent. upon the amount originally granted. It is a very bad business deal, but is merely characteristic of some which have been made in the same quarter since the present Government took office.

The quarter to which I refer is the Mines Department, where the deal was made. It is one of the worst deals conceivable. It would have been far better at the outset if the Government had adopted the course which has now been recommended to them to take up. Even now the Premier might save the situation. There are men willing to work the line and pay from 5s. 6d. to 5s. 9d. per load for cutting wood. The Government have full control over the rails and fastenings, and if the persons holding the concession will not work the line the Government should take it over. It has been said—I am not saying this authentically, but I have received information from what should be a reliable source—that Mr. Baxter, who secured the concession, made £500 or £600 without spending one penny or doing anything. If that is so it is a disgrace to the Government, for no man should be allowed to make so large a sum as that on a deal of this character. It is a case of taking away money for nothing. The other syndicate then came in and paid the £500 or £600 and they wanted to bleed the men who had to do the work in order to get a return of that sum. Had the Government taken control at the outset they would have been out of pocket just as much as they are now; but they would have had the additional advantage of getting a fair return for the use of the line. The wood traffic up there is a large and profitable one owing to the scarcity of fuel, and the returns on the railway for the carriage of wood are probably greater than those for the carriage of any other product over the Northern line. The Government should take away the rails, sleepers and fastenings from the company, who hold the concession merely for the purpose of squeezing those men, as was stated and proved when the arbitration took place. When that case was being heard it was proved that the managers absolutely robbed the men of the wood they had cut. I know that men have been robbed in other places than in this particular district, owing to their receiving less weight than they should have done.

The Premier: How could they receive less? Would their timber not go over

the weighing machine at, say, the Fingal mine?

Mr. HOLMAN: It does sometimes. The men are foreigners and do not know exactly how the wood is weighed. They do not understand the way-bills, but all they know is that after working like slaves for three or four weeks they earn at the rate of about 30s. a week. There is something radically wrong in this connection and it is that which has caused the trouble now existing.

The Premier: Do the consumers deal direct with the cutter or with a sub-contractor?

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not know exactly how they deal.

Mr. Heitmann: They deal in both ways. The company have robbed the men.

Mr. HOLMAN: I have received letters from that part of the State in answer to those I have written trying to settle the trouble, and I learn from them that that is the reason why the Italians feel so bitter. The present trouble shows that the arguments I used seven years ago, in the first speech I made on becoming a member of Parliament, on this question of the influx of Italians and other aliens were quite right. I explained then how these men were being brought into the country. Subsequently Mr. Commissioner Roe was appointed to go into the question. I made a sworn statement to him, putting the position exactly as it was, and it has since been proved that all I said was correct. The decisions arrived at by the Commissioner and published in the report have not been borne out by the present position of affairs. On the other hand the position I brought forward has been proved to be right. It is to be regretted that these foreigners have been decoyed here simply because those who brought them thought they had a servile race with whom to deal and whom they could rob. Now, however, the worm has turned, and it is found that a hornet's nest has been brought about the ears of those who introduced the foreigners. I hope if anything serious happens the people responsible for bringing these men here will be the ones to suffer. Unfortunately it is not they who suffer, however, for it is the business people and

workers who have to bear the brunt of it. What brought about the cessation of the trouble at Kurrawang? It was the action of the unionists who banded together and were men enough to carry on.

The Premier: You must give a little credit to the police.

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes, and I hope the Premier will send the police force to compel other employers to keep agreements that have been broken since 1907. If there is trouble caused in Western Australia, it will not be the fault of those men who have suffered during the last 18 months and have not had justice dealt out to them. I would suggest to the Premier that he should take some steps to reduce the freight on firewood along the line from down near Mullewa. There is an ample supply of firewood in those parts, and there is a Government railway there, and I would suggest that the freight should be reduced along that line which would mean that contractors would come forward to supply wood to the Fingal and other mines at reasonable rates. I did ask when Minister of Railways what the cost of carrying this timber would be, but I have not the figures at present; I fancy they are in the Railway Department. What concerns us most at the present time is how best to bring about a settlement of the present difficulty. Great distress is being caused at Day Dawn by the closing down of the Fingal mine, and hundreds more people will be in distress unless the matter is settled very soon. I would suggest in the first place that the agreement and all papers in connection with the granting of this concession at Nallan be placed on the Table of the House. This would give us a greater insight into the condition of affairs, and show us how the concession was granted. I have no desire to say anything that may cause trouble in any direction, but if I knew exactly what the agreement was I would speak as forcibly as I would be able to do. If the Government are lax in not compelling the company to carry out the terms of the agreement, the House should take the matter into their hands and compel the company to do so, or insist on the line reverting to the Government. Something

has been said about the award given by Warden Troy. I have the greatest respect for Warden Troy, and I do not think there is another man in Western Australia who could give a more conscientious verdict than that gentleman; but I think there may be some ground for the stand taken by those men. Even Warden Troy—according to a letter I received to-day, and from which I gathered these facts—admits that having seen the struggle those men have put up, it may have been possible he did them some little injustice by not giving them enough. He at the present time recognises that the contractors could give the increase that is asked for by the men. If that is so, it should strengthen the hands of the Government and be the means of compelling them to see that the agreement as signed by both parties is carried out. Mr. Allen is at the present time willing to pay a fair rental for the line, and he is willing to give increased rates. If he can do that, surely the other parties should be able to do so. I sincerely trust that the matter will be settled in the near future, but the question of bringing this timber in may result in some serious complications. The men who have ceased work have cut a lot of wood for which they have not been paid, and if I saw them endeavouring to secure the wood which was theirs, I would be prepared to stand up and protect them. If the company attempted to remove this wood which belongs to the men, I would justify their action.

The Premier: Did they not get an advance on it?

Mr. Heitmann: Some of them have.

Mr. HOLMAN: I believe that someone has a lien over some of the wood, but if any of those men own it and they have not been paid for it, they are quite justified in claiming it until they receive payment for it. I hope and trust that those men will have justice on their side, and that they will receive the same protection as the people on the other side. I hope the police who may be sent there will not be the means of causing trouble, or will not be the means of intimidating those men, or prevent them from protecting what is their property. We know for-

eigners are inclined to act rather more promptly than Britishers, and perhaps in a different direction. I hope now that the Premier understands the position, that the wood belongs to the men, and not having been paid for it, these men will be protected. I would like to see the trouble ended, and I feel convinced that had this State been better protected when this concession was granted, we would not have been placed in the position we find ourselves in at the present time. There seems to be a tendency to grant every concession that is asked for. If a concession hunter comes along, he receives every consideration. In this case the concession hunter came along; he got the concession from the Mines Department and sold it, without doing a day's work, for £500 or £600. If this is the way business is carried on, it does not reflect credit on those responsible. The trouble is solely due to those who have been granting concessions in the manner that they have been given in the past.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I do not think I can give the Premier any advice as to what attitude the Government should take up on this occasion, but if there be anyone in the House capable of advising the Premier on this point, it should be the Treasurer, who, I believe, advanced this money to this company with the object of enabling them to purchase rails and fastenings. My authority for saying so is the Auditor General's report of this year. In this he questions the legitimacy of the transaction. He points out there was some difficulty in the way, and the Treasurer smoothed it over by desiring that the loan should be treated in a certain way. The Auditor General anyhow questioned the transaction, and he also pointed out in his report, and in a letter to the department that it was a bad speculation. He pointed out that the security the Government held for their money was merely rails and fastenings, and at the end of five years if it were not a paying proposition, they would not have anything excepting these rails and fastenings with depreciation added, and they would be of practically no value. Anyhow, he declared it a bad speculation which did not

meet with his approval. If we had the agreement before us we might be able to form some idea how we should get out of the difficulty. If this line has been laid down at the Government expense as I am led to believe, and if the agreement has been drawn up as it should have been drawn up to safeguard and protect the people of this State, the Government would then be in a position to step in and take charge of the line, and then remove the company. That would then remove the seat of the trouble. That is the position, but I suppose these concession hunters, aptly described as such by the member for Murchison, have safeguarded themselves in the agreement, so that the Government would have no power to step in. The Government should have known full well before this agreement was made, that it was necessary for them to protect the State against this class of people, because they have been for many years causing trouble with their employees, not only trouble which affected themselves and their employees, but trouble which affected the mining industry and the State as a whole. We have had trouble for years with the Kurrawang Company. I remember about nine years ago trouble with that company which practically shut down mines on the Eastern Goldfields. We have repeatedly had trouble with them, and we have had trouble with the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Company, and now we are having trouble with this last company, a trouble which has tied up the whole of the mining industry in that portion of the State represented by the member for Cue. And the excuse given by the Government for putting their hands in the Treasury and handing out the wherewithal to purchase rails and fastenings was that it was desired to carry on the mining industry, and to give that portion of the State that necessary assistance that it desired, in order that it might take its place among the gold-producing belts of Western Australia. But has it done so? We have spent the money, and we find we have placed the industry in a worse position to-day, than it has been for years. I am reminded by the member for Cue that this is the worst time these gold-

fields have seen in that district since their inception; and who have been the cause? Why, these people to whom the Government lent £20,000. I am also informed that they held only £1,000 of their own capital at the time. If that is what we call wise administration; if that is the far-seeing commercial knowledge of the Treasury bench, we can do with less of it. But I have an idea that it is not the far-seeing that is required by the Treasury bench in the interests of the State, but it is far seeing in the interests of other people. We cannot help thinking that when we find that the Government have placed people with the States' money in a position that they can tie up the whole industry in that area. It is appalling to think of; to think that a Government, that hon. gentlemen occupying the Treasury bench, would take the people's money out of the Treasury and give it to a company without sufficiently safeguarding the country, and without seeing to it that this company cannot paralyse the whole of the industries in any portion of the State. And now it seems the Government are helpless to step in and protect the people. We are told by the member for Cue, who has recently been on the spot and who has done a great deal to remove this trouble for weeks and weeks past; we learn from him that there have been hardships imposed on people who are not in any way responsible for the trouble. Women and children are suffering, people are thrown out of employment, business people do not know which way to turn to meet their monthly accounts. And all this through a company which has been born, nursed, suckled, and cradled at the State's expense. I say it is an appalling position. It is time the country woke up to these facts and commenced to question the wisdom of keeping in power a Government who are doing things of this nature. We had a spectacle a few evenings ago when the member for York (Mr. Monger) made a direct attack on members of this (Opposition) side of the House, and especially on the hon. members for Cue and for Murchison, charging them that they had been moving about in this area in a surreptitious manner to get the people to strike. And he accused the member for

Cue (Mr. Heitmann) with being responsible for throwing 500 or 600 workmen out of employment, and for having their wives and families practically starving. He made these statements in this House without the slightest grounds for so doing; and he pointed out that if the utterances of hon. members on this side of the House were listened to they would bring disaster—that nothing but disaster could follow in the train of the utterances of hon. members on this side of the House if people were sufficiently foolish to heed them. I want to compare the advice given by members on this side of the House with the action of the Government in connection with these industrial disputes ever since they have occupied their positions in this House. I want to compare that advice with the attitude of the Government in these disputes, and I want to compare the actions of hon. members on this side of the House with the actions of the Government in using the people's money for the purpose of placing a small section of the community in a position to paralyse the industries of the country. I say the member for York had no justification whatever for making the statements he did. They are not borne out by facts. He cannot bring any argument to justify the statements he made that the Labour party in Parliament or out of Parliament go through the State trying to cause ferment and create trouble and disaster. It is the duty of the leaders of the Labour movement in this State and in the Commonwealth as a whole to keep the rank and file from creating trouble. That is the chief difficulty the leaders of the movement have to meet at every turn. If they put forward conciliatory ideas there is always a chance of their being misinterpreted, and I say it is seldom, if ever, that the leaders of the Labour movement have been the cause of any of these instances of friction which we have had in the past. We find that when the employers and employees are at daggers drawn it is the leaders of the Labour movement in the industrial world who have to come forward not only to offer advice to the employers but accept in return an insult. That is the

point. I know it. I have seen the Labour leaders go to a company to offer advice and receive in return nothing but insult. We had an instance of that in Kalgoorlie only a few weeks ago when the Kurrawang strike was on. How was the member for Leonora (Mr. Gourley) treated by Mr. Hedges? He was absolutely insulted. That is what we receive all along; and then we are insulted as we were by the member for York, who does not know the ABC of industrial disputes. He would no more know how to treat an industrial dispute than he would know how to fly. And yet he will come into this House and abuse hon. members on this side. I only wish he was in his place to hear the few remarks I have made in resentment of his statements. He is a personal friend of mine, but I am not going to allow any hon. member to make such attacks upon the party with which I am connected, especially when those attacks are made without any justification whatever. This matter has been highly creditable to the member for Cue in every particular. If the Government in the agreement had safeguarded the interests of the people as much as the member for Cue has tried to safeguard the interests of the wood-choppers in his electorate I could say a great deal for them. I hope the Treasurer, or whichever member of the Government is responsible for this agreement, will see how it is drawn up, and ascertain if there be in it a clause by which they can wedge themselves in and the company out, and so let the State run the line and get hundreds of men at work on that area which is now lying idle as the result of the action of a small company, who starting stone-broke have been put in a proud position at the expense of the State.

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson): I regret with hon. members opposite that a condition of affairs has arisen which is paralysing the mining industry in the district of Day Dawn at the present time. But I do not believe with them, and the views they have expressed, namely, that the fault lies at the door of the Government. Nor do I blame the member for Cue for having brought about this condition of affairs. Having listened to

his remarks I can honestly congratulate him on one thing, and that is that seemingly he used his best endeavours to get these men to submit their complaints to the decision of Warden Troy. But I could wish he had gone a little further and assured this House that he had taken every opportunity and used his best endeavours when that decision was given to get the men to accept and abide by it. I fail to see what good there is in persuading parties who have a grievance one against another to submit those grievances to arbitration if the award of the arbitrator is not to be loyally abided by. The same thing applies to any court of arbitration; and the complaint I have against these hon. members is that they do not uphold the very courts to which they persuade the men to appeal.

Mr. Walker: That is scarcely correct. You may uphold a court and differ from some of its awards.

The TREASURER: But if you appeal to Cæsar you must abide by Cæsar's decision.

Mr. Walker: Not when it is wrong.

The TREASURER: Who is going to judge? The appellant, because he is dissatisfied with the decision? If that be so where is the end going to be?

Mr. Holman: Give us a case.

The TREASURER: Here is a case; the case we are discussing.

Mr. Holman: We cannot drive 300 men, you know.

The TREASURER: The hon. member, every time he speaks on these industrial matters, throws out some threat of trouble in the near future.

Mr. Holman: If you would do your duty there would not be any.

The TREASURER: Let us discuss what that duty is.

Mr. Holman: What did you say at Nangan Brook?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

The TREASURER: The hon. member says if I would only do my duty. Here we have a case where these men were dissatisfied with the conditions of labour; it may be they were justly dissatisfied. They decided subsequently, I believe on the persuasion of the member for Cue, that they would submit their grievances

to Warden Troy and whatever was his decision they would abide by it. The warden gave his decision. No one disputes that he is unbiassed, unprejudiced. He gave his decision in accordance with his best judgment. He is on the spot and ought to know something about it. The men said, "No, we will not take it, because we are dissatisfied." One side or the other must be dissatisfied. They cannot both win. But is that any reason why the award should not be adhered to? I say "No." Now the hon. member says if I do my duty—I suppose he means the Government—there would not be any occasion for trouble; and according to what he said just now that duty consists in confiscating the interests of the company, whatever those interests may be. The duty he puts on the shoulders of the Government is that they should confiscate those interests.

Mr. Holman: If they will not work they must let somebody else work.

The TREASURER: Have we any right to confiscate anybody's interest? Let the hon. member prove a breach of the agreement.

Mr. Holman: Where is the agreement?

Mr. Heitmann: They have not supplied firewood to the company.

The TREASURER: Has the hon. member asked for the agreement, or has he given us an opportunity of seeing it for ourselves? We cannot remember the contents of an agreement of 18 months or two years ago. It is unreasonable. Now the hon. member says that because they have not supplied firewood to the company they have committed a breach of the agreement. But if I take on a contract to supply goods of any description there will be found in the agreement under which I am working a strike clause. It is in all agreements; you cannot make a man do something that he cannot do owing to circumstances beyond his control. We cannot make a man responsible for non-delivery of firewood which his men refuse to cut for him unless he will pay a higher price than the arbitrator has said is a fair price. The proposition would be preposterous, it would be going too far, it would be doing away with all law and order and equity. I hope members

of this House will not encourage such an idea. The Government are not going to take up that position—to confiscate the property of any man.

Mr. Holman: Yes, starve a few thousand people for the sake of a few "hoodlers."

The TREASURER: The Government are not starving people. Who are these hoodlers?

Mr. Holman: Ask your colleague, the Minister for Mines.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order in applying the term "hoodler" to anyone.

The Minister for Mines: I hope the hon. member will be compelled to withdraw the remark he applied to me.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not make that remark; I hope he will withdraw it.

Mr. Holman: I have nothing to withdraw.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member accused the Minister for Mines of being a "hoodler."

Mr. Holman: No.

The Minister for Mines: At any rate it was an insinuation.

The TREASURER: It appears to me that the hon. member can give any licence he likes to his tongue, yet he will deny me the right to reply in similar terms.

Mr. Scaddan: That is a reflection on the Chair.

The TREASURER: With regard to the urgency of this matter, here is an industrial dispute that has been in existence for the past 15 or 16 weeks. It is true injury is being felt by others outside the immediate circle of those connected with the firewood-cutting industry, but I deny that there is any extreme urgency in connection with it, and I deny that this House can take any action that will effect any settlement in a dispute of this nature.

Mr. Taylor: But the big mine has only just shut down.

The TREASURER: The member for Mount Margaret accuses the Government of having done nothing; I think he spoke in general terms. As a matter of fact, the Premier has done all that lies in his power. I venture to say that there is no man in Western Australia who has done

more than the Premier during his short term of office in order to settle amicably these unfortunate disputes that have become all too numerous during the past month or two.

Mr. Taylor: They only came in with the Government. Remove the Government and the troubles will be removed.

The TREASURER: Objection has been taken that this wood that is being removed does not belong to, and is not the property of, the company. Well, the Premier cannot go into that matter at all, he does not know to whom the wood belongs, but the magistrate on the spot knows, and I presume that if the company are acting illegally the magistrate will very soon grant an injunction to stop their action. The men have recourse to the warden just the same as the employers on the other hand have that recourse to claim that it is their wood if they have paid for it. It is true that money has been advanced against some of the wood; probably we shall find that the whole of the wood has been advanced against. At any rate the wood has been delivered to the company, from the information I have got, and now the company wish to remove it and deliver it to their customers for consumption on the mines. The hon. member pleads that we should not take any steps to permit a legitimate removal of that wood; he says we should not send police protection.

Mr. Holman: What hon. member says it? You are absolutely incorrect.

The TREASURER: What did you say?

Mr. Holman: I did not say that.

The TREASURER: The hon. member said that the police should not be sent along the line.

Mr. Holman: That is incorrect. I said there was a dispute as to the ownership, and I trusted that police would not be sent to intimidate the people whose property was being removed and who had not been paid for it.

The TREASURER: What an absurdity to think that the Government would send a police force to permit one man to rob another of his property! The hon. member must be dreaming to think that the Government would take any action in

that direction. The object of the police will be to see that every man has the freedom and the right to remove what belongs to him and not to take his neighbour's property.

Mr. Holman: As long as they do that it is all right.

The TREASURER: Now we come to Mr. Baxter's profit of which so much has been made. It has been said that the Government or the Minister for Mines have permitted this gentleman to make a profit on some concession he has got. What are the facts of the case? As far as the Minister for Mines is concerned, when the agreement was completed he was away in Pilbara, he was not in Perth at all. It is true that he had called for offers from anyone willing to contract to supply a certain quantity of firewood under certain conditions, but the conditions ultimately fixed up were done in his absence.

Mr. Troy: Is that correct?

The TREASURER: Yes, it is correct. But the Minister went further. When he found that this gentleman, Mr. Baxter, was negotiating to form a company—that is, after he had got the agreement—and he thought it might be with the object of getting some profit out of the matter without doing any legitimate work, he immediately notified all concerned that he was prepared to re-advertise tenders and open up the whole thing again so that they need not negotiate with Mr. Baxter if they so desired. However, I suppose they thought it quite good enough to give something to Mr. Baxter for the work he had done. What that was I cannot say, but they did not think it worth re-advertising, and they concluded the agreement. Is it any crime when a man finds that he has more than he can manage himself to get others to help him in a business venture? I object to it being thought a crime, and I resent the constant imputations that are cast on men, who, while they may have done good for themselves in the State, have also done some good not only to the State but to the men they have employed.

Mr. Holman: Oh! rot.

The TREASURER: Hear the eloquent language of the hon. member, and

he was actually Minister for Railways at one time. I am sorry he was not better trained in that office to hold his tongue. To show how trivial and how unreliable these arguments are, another argument advanced why this octopus of a company that has gathered in the State's assets should be crushed, is that it has only put £1,000 into the venture. Anyone with the slightest experience of works of this description only needs to tot up the cost of laying down 20 miles of rails and fastenings and sleepers, and the purchase of a locomotive and rolling stock, to know that it is absolutely impossible and absurd that they could do it with £1,000. Although the rails and fastenings and sleepers were provided by the Government under certain conditions, I venture to say that the construction of that line cost something double the amount that some hon. members would have us believe was all that was paid.

Mr. Heitmann: What was that extra £1,000 the Government granted?

The Minister for Mines: We added 5 per cent. to the charge before we charged general interest.

The TREASURER: I may say that there is nothing in the Auditor General's report to fasten the responsibility for this transaction on the Treasurer, as the member for Mount Margaret has done.

Mr. Taylor: Read those letters.

The TREASURER: Read them yourself. I suppose the hon. member has, and I hope he understands them. The computed cost was something like £18,964, and the total cost was £19,849; that is the difference, and there is 5 per cent. added.

Mr. Heitmann: Read further down the Auditor General's report.

The TREASURER: Yes, it shows it as £20,708. The Auditor General says it is £940 in excess of the amount mentioned in the agreement, but the amount mentioned in the agreement was a computed amount. The amount ultimately arrived at, namely, £20,708 was the cost of the material delivered to the company plus 5 per cent. for handling. We cannot get out of that. Is it a mere question of giving a few more rails and fastenings that the member for Cue is complaining off?

Mr. Heilmann: It was £945 more.

The TREASURER: Yes; and is that a crime?

Mr. Taylor: It is not in the eyes of the Treasurer, but it is in the eyes of any reasonable man.

The TREASURER: I am sure it is not in the eyes of any reasonable person. Now let us take the hon. member's complaint. He says in his grandiloquent manner that the Labour Government did not take any action of this description, and that the Moore Government is the only Government that has caused all this trouble, and that strife has never taken place before.

Mr. Taylor: Who said that?

The TREASURER: The hon. member said it by his interjection. He said that transactions of this description never took place in his experience or in the experience of the Labour Government; but what about the rails and fastenings supplied at Collie to the Timber Hewers' Corporation?

Mr. Holman: That was done in a straightforward manner, and the Auditor General did not complain.

The TREASURER: We supplied rails and fastenings to get over a want. There was a dearth of firewood, and a big mine was likely to be idle about 18 months or two years ago for want of firewood. We thereupon called tenders openly, accepted the lowest tender, and got the firewood delivered 2s. a ton cheaper than it was ever supplied before. We safeguarded the State's interests and the State got a splendid return for its investment, ten per cent. per annum, while we kept this low-grade mine going and gave employment to all those men that the hon. member is now complaining are thrown out of work; but our friends opposite supplied rails and fastenings to a body of men in order that they and they only might make a profit, in order that the Timber Hewers' Corporation might use the rails and fastenings for their own profit.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: There has been no profit as yet.

The TREASURER: Then there is something wrong in the management of the venture if they are not getting any

profit. But I am not objecting to the transaction. What I am objecting to is the hon. member accusing us of doing something, when what we did was not only in the interests of the mining industry that was in a parlous condition owing to the want of firewood, while members opposite did exactly the same thing in order that a timber company might make a profit out of the transaction.

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

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest): I have no desire to take up much time, but wish to make a few remarks, offer a few suggestions perhaps, and also reply to some of the statements made by the Treasurer. The difficulty which has arisen is not a new one and I am afraid is not likely to be settled in the future. We may catch up with it in the immediate present, but there is a strong likelihood that in a month or two there will be a recurrence owing to the large number of foreigners on the various woodlines. I have had experience and dealings with men controlling the woodlines, and have a recollection of an agreement of the Kalgoorlie Boulder Firewood Company in the Laverton district this year. The company secured the right to construct a tramway into the bush in that district and immediately afterwards let the contract to a subcontractor. It turns out that the latter was a storekeeper in the district and, in addition, had butchers' and bakers' shops and was also the holder of a gallon license. He brought about a reduction almost immediately and the result was a cessation of work. He sent out £70 or £80 worth of stores to the head of the road, but immediately work ceased he took out the police with him, intimidated the men and seized the goods which has been supplied to them by him. In the Kurrawang district here have been most unfortunate experiences during the past few weeks. It is absolutely impossible for any company, for any Labour leader, or for anyone else at the present juncture to deal with the foreign element on these woodlines. At Kurrawang an agreement had been in existence but notwithstanding that, my personal experience

after going among them is that it is extremely difficult to make them see reason in any shape or form or to stick to an agreement. I do not envy the position of the member for Cue (Mr. Heitmann) when he tried to bring reason into the dispute on the Murchison. From the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition we know that he also found it extremely difficult to place the facts of the case before the foreigners on the wood lines. I went among the men with an interpreter a few weeks ago and I ascertained that they referred to the Leader of the Opposition as the President of the Republic, and referred to the Premier as His Excellency the Governor. If the Treasurer went up there I am sure they would refer to him as His Majesty the King. The trouble has arisen chiefly owing to the action of past Governments and the action of the companies in encouraging an influx of aliens. I do not condemn the Government for actions taken by previous Ministers in giving away concessions. They may be to blame, for throughout the State, particularly on the coastal timber areas, we find practically a monopoly of the timber areas along the fringe of the seaboard given to a large company. Every day trouble arises and industrial conflict seems to be in the air. There is a possibility that even in the South-West, where the workers are Britishers, and where reason can be brought to bear on them, trouble is likely to arise. I will not refer tonight to the possible trouble in the timber industry, for that is a matter which will receive attention a little later on, but I hope the House will take into consideration the condition of affairs as it exists now on the Murchison and that the Government will come forward with a suggestion, or that at least a majority of members of the Cabinet will do so, and will take a more serious view of the case than the Treasurer seems to do, as evidenced by the speech he made this afternoon. In the course of his remarks he treated the question as one which was not very urgent. A mistake has been made in the past in giving so much power to the timber companies, but as two wrongs do not make a right, it would be very un-

wise now to make another mistake. I hope the Government will make some good suggestion so that a better state of affairs in the industrial world of the Murchison will be brought about. The Treasurer has referred to the fact that the dispute was submitted to arbitration. At that court Warden Troy presided. Having knowledge of that gentleman on previous occasions I can say there is no man stands higher in public estimation as a fair and just man in Western Australia than he; but we find that, notwithstanding the fact that some of the Britishers affected by the award were willing to go to work, the foreigners caused trouble until the company withdrew from the position they had taken up. The company must have had some motive in withdrawing and I think it is the duty of the Government to find out what it is.

The Treasurer: Are they not prepared to pay the award rate?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Possibly they are. I want to point out that members on the other side of the House when speaking in the Chamber sometimes express the opinion that the Labour party are responsible for the Arbitration Court. They say that such being the case grievances should be taken there, and that notwithstanding the nature of the award made they should loyally abide by it. The Arbitration Court is not the tribunal asked for by the Labour party, but is the best they could obtain. Right through the State there is a feeling existing against the Arbitration Court, and I hope that in the near future the Government will amend the Act and bring into existence a tribunal that will have the confidence of the workers of the State. The worker is blamed as a rule if he accepts the lower rate fixed by the Arbitration Court; he is also blamed if he refuses to accept it. In nearly every instance the breach of the award has been with the employers. Some action should be taken by the Government either towards bringing about a settlement temporarily of the trouble, with the intention of looking into it thoroughly later on, or else they should try and cope with the foreign element. I have given the matter a good deal of consideration, and think that Governments of the past

should have taken control of the timber areas themselves and worked them in the interests of the State. In the Kurrawang district the end of the line is now in sight and the company are encroaching on the Davylhurst district. It is only a matter of time when they will be trying to get supplies from the Southern Cross district. The Government should watch the actions of this company or they will run a railway line parallel to the Government one and beat the State for revenue. Even if we were to adopt the extreme ideas of some and nationalise operations the difficulty would not be overcome. There would still be the foreign element. These foreigners have no respect whatever for an agreement and if the Premier or Mr. Bath were to go among them and fix up an agreement with them, these men would be parties to it for the time being, but their concurrence would only last so long as their impulse lasted. After a few months they would find other grievances, either real or imaginary, and further trouble would result. When I was at Kurrawang I found that the whole industry was paralysed. There were some 700 workers there and I took occasion to make a speech to a number of the men. I am safe in stating that not two-thirds of them knew what I was saying. The only solution is for the secretaries or the leaders of the labour organisations to acquaint themselves with the foreign tongue used by these men. In fact, I understand it is the intention of some of the labour secretaries to do that. Then perhaps in our deliberations concerning the fixing of agreements and matters of that kind we will be able to obtain a satisfactory solution of the troubles. A question has been raised in regard to the Collie co-operative concession, and it has been argued by the Treasurer that there is some analogy between that concession and the one at the Murchison. At the time that the timber hewers at the Collie received the concession from the Government—and I am very pleased they received it—they comprised a body of workers prepared to launch out on their own account and do their best, if they received the assistance of the Government, to make a success of the under-

taking. They managed to secure employment for a large number of workers, they secured industrial peace, and they brought prosperity to the traders in the Collie district. In that respect their efforts were crowned with success, but the venture has not been the profitable one the Treasurer has tried to make out. The member for Collie (Mr. A. A. Wilson) and others have shares in that venture but up to the present have received no reward. The Government rendered assistance to men who were working their own interests. At that time there were 300 men trying to get a profit for their own use. On the Murchison a concession has been given to a company, as in other parts of the State, and all profits made go into the pockets of a few. There is no analogy between the two cases. I hope whatever decision is arrived at the House will try and bring about a satisfactory settlement of the trouble so as to prevent its recurrence. We have heard it said that the Minister for Mines was in the North-West when the agreement was made. I find, however, by looking at the Auditor General's report that the agreement was made on the 2nd September. I have been a keen follower of the Minister for Mines, and have always taken a great interest in his doings and I venture to say that at the time the agreement was signed he was in his place in this House. Be that as it may, I trust that whoever is to blame for the agreement will do the best he can to rectify the grievance. This is a matter of extreme urgency. Police have been sent up there to guard the interests of the company and to protect the property of the people. I am one of those who do not believe too much in providing such police protection. When a body of police is sent to the wood-lines—possibly it is necessary at times as it was in a recent case—there is always the likelihood of their presence having a tendency to inflame the passions of the men. I feel sure that no good would be derived from sending additional police for the protection of the people and goods at Nallan. I certainly hope that members on both sides of the House will take into consideration the question that has been raised by the member for Cue (Mr. Heitmann),

and that they will arrive at some satisfactory solution. This trouble should not exist for another 24 hours if it is possible to avert it. I have received five letters from Nallan, asking me whether I could do any good, but I candidly admit that I would not be able to do any good. Perhaps the Premier might be able to do some good, or perhaps the united wisdom of members on both sides of the House might be of some service in assisting to arrive at some solution. But while the company are there holding the rights and privileges that they do, and while they fail to accede to the claims of the men, this conflict will last. As soon as some action is forthcoming from the Government, either to work the lines or to give facilities to someone else to work the lines in the district, or the districts close to Cue, so soon will the trouble be settled. I trust hon. members will take a little more serious view of the question than the Treasurer has done, and by doing that I am confident we will be able to bring about a satisfactory solution, at least for the present, and that it will be followed up by the establishment of a tribunal in which the workers of the State may have some confidence. There is no analogy whatever between the rights of the timber companies on the goldfields and the position of the Collie co-operative concern. We find that concessions are given to these companies and no safeguards are introduced in the agreements to protect the interests of the people, and we find also that considerable dissatisfaction has been caused owing to the fact that the Government, who were in power before the Moore Administration, gave rails and fastenings to the hewers at Collie. I have some recollection that immediately after the Minister for Mines was returned at the last election he said that in his opinion the action of the previous Government in giving this concession to the Collie workers was illegal, and that there was no precedent for it. Whether there was or not, I venture to say that the result achieved will convince the Minister himself that it was the wisest step ever taken by any Government.

The Minister for Mines: Do not exaggerate.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I will not; I will only deal with facts, and I will tell the Minister that at about next Christmas those 260 workers at that particular centre hope to be free from debt, and further than that, we must recognise that during the last three years those 260 workers have been living there in peace.

The Minister for Mines: They have had a great deal of assistance from me.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: They may, but I am quoting the remarks of the Minister when he stated that there was no precedent for the action that was taken by the Minister for Mines in the previous Government to the effect that the Minister acted in an improper manner. What I want to point out to the Premier and hon. members on the other side of the House is the fact that these workers at Collie have been living there in industrial peace, and are prepared to make a fair wage and contribute largely to the revenue of the State in licenses and royalties. In fact they have done more than any other body holding a similar area. With regard to the Nallan question we have had many opinions expressed, and it must be recognised by reasonable members that the Labour leaders inside and outside of the House have done their utmost to prevent industrial conflicts which are always harmful. In such cases workers may gain an advantage, but in order to put up a good fight in their own interests we find that very often the worker suffers, the trader suffers, the revenue suffers, and the general community suffers, and when we hear members like the member for York (Mr. Monger) telling the member for Cue (Mr. Heitmann) that he was responsible for throwing out of employment 500 men, hon. members will know what reliance they can place on such a statement. Perhaps I know a little more about the vicissitudes of the timber workers than the member for York. If the member for York deals with grain and pumpkins I will respectfully listen to him, because I suppose he knows more about these things than industrial matters. I certainly hope that without continuing the debate the Premier will come forward with an assurance that during the next few days he will

interest himself and try and bring about a settlement so that we may have industrial peace secured once more.

Mr. HEITMANN (in reply): It is not my intention to put this question to a division, and before asking permission to withdraw it, I would like to say a few words in regard to the statements made by the Treasurer. As far as the Premier is concerned I believe he has done all in his power to bring about a settlement of this trouble. When the Treasurer was speaking he seemed to have an idea that I, while endeavouring to bring about a settlement by way of arbitration had neglected, after the award was given, to endeavour to induce the men affected to abide by it. I did my best to get those wood-cutters to abide by the award of Warden Troy.

The Treasurer: It was a just award.

Mr. HEITMANN: Coming from the gentleman who gave the award I would not say for a moment that it was anything but just. Although the Treasurer pins his argument to the one weak spot of the workmen's case, that they refused to abide by arbitration, the fact must impress itself on members that these men have been fighting for 16 weeks, even against the award I will admit. If I were working in that industry to-morrow I would also leave it, for I certainly would not accept the rate that they are offering. The hon. member forgets that in the history of wood-cutting on the Murchison there has never been such a low rate paid as that which was paid by this company, and although the award was given by a conscientious gentleman, the fact remains that he may have made a mistake, and that there may be some justification for the action of these men, when we find them actually living on a crust of bread for 16 weeks, and refusing to go back unless the increase was given. The Treasurer forgets to mention that the company, who made the offer after the award, of 5s. 3d., are now refusing that offer, and it shows that even Warden Troy might have made a mistake in his award. I trust, if it will do nothing else, this discussion will impress itself upon members, and when the time comes when we may have applications for further concessions

of this kind, Ministers will remember the lessons of the last few months. The Treasurer, as a champion of private enterprise, used arguments which almost made one smile. He will tell you the good that this company has done in assisting the low-grade mines on the Murchison. As a matter of fact wood was supplied and better money was paid to the cutters, who carted over 80 and 100 miles further than wood was being carted before this difficulty began. It is all very fine for the hon. member to point to the virtues of this private enterprise crowd. I hope in the future when business such as this is being brought forward, the Government will take into consideration the possibility of the small concern being managed by a board, just the same as the water supply at Cue is being controlled. We have a board there managing the water department, and if they can do that successfully I feel sure they could also conduct a business like that of the cutting of firewood.

The Minister for Works: I can show you one or two things about that board.

Mr. HEITMANN: Perhaps the Minister can, but if they can manage such a department there is no reason why the firewood industry should not be similarly controlled by a board appointed by the Government. The moment there is anything to be made, as in the case of this Cue timber line, the Government are prepared to leave it to private enterprise as being the only party who can carry out the work. If the State can manage water supplies, or appoint boards to control them, similar managements should be able to control a firewood industry. I ask permission to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

QUESTION—MINING LEASE RENEWALS.

Mr. HOPKINS asked the Premier: In view of the increasing expenditure of the Federal Parliament and of the costly national projects already forecasted by that authority, will the Premier give the House his assurance that a renewal or extension of any mining lease or leases will not be approved until such time as

Parliament has had the opportunity of reviewing the various sources of revenue and the incidence of State taxation?

The PREMIER replied: I cannot give the assurance asked for in view of the fact that the Mining Act gives holders of mining leases the right to renew the same for a period of 21 years, subject to the Acts and Regulations relating to mining leases in force at the time of such renewal.

QUESTION—CAMEL TICK.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (for Mr. Troy) asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is the Minister aware that an Afghan, Sher Ali, left Onslow on the 20th inst. with twenty camels, destined for Mt. Magnet, which are alleged to be tick-infested? 2, Will the Minister make inquiries and take immediate steps to prevent the introduction of tick-infested camels into clean country?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, No. 2, The matter is being inquired into.

BILL—FIRST READING.

Land and Income Tax, introduced by the Treasurer.

BILL—MIDLAND JUNCTION BOUNDARIES.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—VERMIN BOARDS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. HUDSON (Dundas): It is with some diffidence that I rise to speak on the second reading of this measure, because we have had very little opportunity of studying its provisions. It has been brought down only recently, has only been in the hands of hon. members for a short time, and I myself have not been able yet to grasp the full meaning of its terms. I admit it is necessary that

something should be done to cope with the vermin affecting the pastoralists and graziers of this State. Wild dogs have become a menace to the small farmer and even to the cattle raiser. There are other pests such as the eaglehawk, which have become troublesome to the graziers, and the Minister for Agriculture will have to take this into consideration in dealing with this Bill. But what strikes me most about this Bill is its appearance of having been hastily conceived, and I think that before it is dealt with in Committee hon. members should have an opportunity of thoroughly examining its contents. I do not want to speak against the Bill but I am afraid that the establishment of these vermin boards will mean a vast deal of administrative expense. It is proposed to establish vermin districts; a road district to coincide with a vermin district for the purposes of the Act. I am afraid they will not coincide. If a vermin board be established in every road district where there are wild dogs and rabbits there will be a number of these boards established and it will mean the appointment of clerks and of members of the board, whose expenses I believe are to be paid. These expenses of the members and of the clerks will involve a large sum of money which to my mind would be better expended in paying for the destruction of these vermin. If for instance the roads boards themselves were appointed vermin boards they would have their machinery all ready for carrying out the administrative work; and if they were able to raise funds for the purpose they could do equally well what the vermin boards are authorised to do under this Bill. There will be a great deal of expense, and I think the Minister ought to reconsider it before pressing this measure through this Chamber. The question of rating is a vital one, because the boards to be appointed are authorised to strike rates to the extent of 2s. per 100 acres. That seems to be an unscientific basis upon which to levy a rate for the purposes of this Bill. A man with rich country even though he held but a small area may be able to carry 1,000 sheep, while a man

with perhaps 5,000 or 10,000 acres may be able to carry only the same number of sheep. Yet the man with the 10,000 acres would have to pay ten times as much as the man who is getting an equal benefit under this measure. This does not seem at all equitable and it has been suggested that it might be overcome in the appointment of the boards themselves. Again, it seems to me that in many places a majority of the electors in the roads districts might be found who living in the town would have no real interest in the matter.

The Honorary Minister: Then they would not have a vote.

Mr. HUDSON: But even a small holder will be entitled to one vote.

The Honorary Minister: He must hold over 100 acres.

Mr. HUDSON: Well, such men might be able to swamp the others altogether. However, I have not been able to follow it, and I would like the Minister to point out to me where it is. I cannot see otherwise why every elector in a roads district would not be entitled to vote for the election of this board.

The Honorary Minister: It is in Clause 12.

Mr. HUDSON: Well, what does that mean? It says every person qualified to vote for the election of members of the board shall have a number of votes according to the scale. However, it does not very much matter. If the Minister will explain to me the position later on I may be better able to understand it. I have suggested that there is a possibility of this being too expensive a procedure. I suggest also that the method of rating is inequitable and I think if there is power given in this Bill to extend its provisions and establish vermin boards in any part of the State a great injustice is likely to arise. For instance, in some parts of the State, outside the rabbit-proof fences, holders of areas have themselves expended large sums of money in erecting rabbit-proof fences round their respective holdings. It seems to me it would be great hardship to inflict a tax upon such men for the benefit of others in that particular district. These men have already

expended their money and gone to considerable expense. They have already paid their quota of taxation into the general revenue to provide the money for the rabbit-proof fences, from which they derive no benefit whatever. Yet in this Bill they will be liable to further taxation. Indeed the whole scheme of the measure, to my mind, requires consideration, and I do urge upon the Minister who has charge of the measure to hold over the Committee stage for a week or two that the various provisions of the Bill may be thoroughly investigated.

Mr. BUTCHER (Gascoyne): Surely it requires very few words from me or from any other member to impress this House with the urgency of this measure. I think the matters which have been brought before the Government and the information which has been received should be sufficient to impress hon. members with the urgent necessity of passing this Bill through as quickly as possible. I quite admit that the Bill does not appear at first glance to be altogether the correct thing. But it is a step in the right direction and I do not know of any instance of a measure passing this House in absolutely correct form and not requiring to be altered at some later date. I do hope that hon. members, realising the urgency of this measure, will not be putting up any unnecessary obstacles that will have the effect of keeping the measure back. I as one of those who are more deeply interested in this matter am quite prepared to accept the Bill as it is for a beginning, feeling sure it will lead to the immediate checking of the advances of the rabbits into our best pastoral areas. I realise that at a later date we will be able to make the necessary alterations if the measure be not found to be altogether workable.

Mr. Hudson: But you may be doing an injustice in the meantime.

Mr. BUTCHER: It is not impossible that an injustice will be done to somebody; but greater injustice by far will be done to a greater number of people. I do not know that one can put one's finger upon any measure which has not

done injustice, or which nobody will claim as having done injustice, to a few. The hon. member who has just spoken mentioned that an injustice, it appeared to him, would be done to the man holding 1,000 acres of good land—that he would have to pay a certain amount in taxation whereas a man with a larger area would pay ten times the amount towards making the fences, although probably only running the same number of sheep or of stock. But it must not be forgotten that he is deriving the same proportionate amount of protection and the same amount of benefit and services, and it is only fair that he should pay his quota towards the protection of his area. I do not see myself that the subject he speaks of is worth considering. The parts of the country where this Bill will most directly operate are in the pastoral areas, and these areas or the larger of them are held by people who are perfectly willing to submit to the taxation under this Bill. The districts which the hon. member speaks of and the cases he refers to are outside the rabbit-proof fences. These people have been forced to protect themselves by the erection of fences and I quite agree that some consideration should now be shown to them. I am quite with the hon. member and am prepared to assist him in framing a clause in this Bill when in the Committee stage which will afford a measure of relief. But do not let us stop the passage of this Bill because of these matters which can be dealt with in Committee. When we take into consideration the figures given us by the Minister for Agriculture last night, and work them out, it is seen that the industry is altogether of too gigantic a nature to be allowed to be overrun by those rabbits and entirely destroyed. The Minister informed us that we have under lease already 161 million acres which I take it is principally within the rabbit-proof fence, or nearly so. Put that area at the lowest possible capacity and it should carry 16 million sheep. We have 450 million acres still to be settled and which we are hoping will be settled later on, but it will not be settled if we allow this

pest to continue without attempting to check it. This 450 million acres should be capable of carrying 23 million sheep. In round figures that would be 40 million sheep which should produce 800,000 bales of wool worth, at £8 a bale, £8,000,000 per annum. If an industry worth £8,000,000 per annum is not worthy of having something done to protect it in its infancy I do not know what industry is worth protecting. I maintain that there never has been any Bill in this House introduced to protect an industry that is capable of producing so much revenue annually for the State than the one now before the House, and if members grasp the figures given and give them the smallest amount of consideration they must agree that there is every need to force this Bill on as soon as possible so as to give the people most directly concerned the power to tax themselves to protect not only their own lands but the vacant lands of the Crown. There is no necessity for me to speak at any length on this matter; I content myself with the few remarks I have made, and only hope that hon. members will do their best to make the Bill as perfect as possible when we arrive at the Committee stage. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE (Katanning): Since the introduction of this measure by the Honorary Minister I have had an opportunity of discussing its provisions with several interested in the protection of their lands from destruction by vermin; and although on the whole they are satisfied that something of this kind should be done, yet there have been expressions that the practice adopted in the Eastern States of collecting the necessary funds—a practice alluded to by the Minister last night in dealing with this measure—should be followed here, namely, that the rate should be collected upon the stock held. There may be difficulty in doing this, but these suggestions I take it may be valuable to members and helpful to the Minister though he is probably aware of the practice in the East. As already suggested by the member for Dundas, full consideration is needed to

be given to the measure. The member for Gascoyne knows more about the country this Bill will serve than any member here to-night and he has pointed out the absolute necessity for provision to be made in the direction followed by this Bill. With him, I would prefer to see the Bill passed as early as possible; at the same time, during the consideration of the measure in Committee all information should be given by those who can give it, and I hope the Honorary Minister will take into consideration any of the suggestions offered. The question of dealing with vermin is one that materially affects the people of this country, particularly those engaged in agriculture, and most particularly those located in the far North, where the encroachment of the rabbit is causing great anxiety and is a menace to one of the most important industries of the State.

Mr. Hudson: We have had them for years in my district.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: I do not know if that is any reason why we should have them here, because it has cost millions sterling in many directions to endeavour to exterminate rabbits, and so far with not very much success. If we can do something to prevent the spread of the pest, and if the people most concerned in the matter are prepared to tax themselves, as I understand is the case, and as it affects those in the North more than it does the people in the South where the holdings are not so great, and if those in the North are willing to accept the provisions of this Bill, we who are here to do our best in the interests of the country should be willing to accept their recommendation. Though the rabbits are making headway in the North the protection afforded by the rabbit-proof fence is very evident. In the first place No. 1 fence extending from the coast towards the North did some good service until it was found that the rabbits were making headway beyond the fence. Then a second fence was constructed, and it has done a great deal to keep back the invasion, more particularly in the Southern and Eastern districts where great damage would have been caused. Though this Bill is one the provisions of which will

be objected to by many, we must do our best to make its operation as equitable as possible, and we must do our best to assist those who are ready to help themselves. I am with the member for Gascoyne in his desire to have the Bill passed as early as possible, and I will do my best in the Committee stage to get what information I may and to make the measure as perfect as it is possible to make it in the circumstances.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I would like to make a few remarks in connection with this Bill. The Minister when introducing the measure said that during the last three years our agricultural land under cultivation had increased by 60 per cent. I was speaking about this a few nights ago, and the Minister for Works accused me of being a brilliant mathematician. Of course, the accusation was unjust, but I must say that the man who can make 60 per cent. out of the figures is certainly better at mathematics than I am. In 1905 there were 327,000 acres under cultivation; there are now 496,000 acres under cultivation; if anybody can make that 60 per cent. he is better than I am at mathematics.

The Honorary Minister: Look at the third column in the statistics.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Of course, if you are denying the statistics I am not arguing.

The Premier: It is over 50 per cent.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I suppose you reckon: by actual increase, 50 per cent.; by imagination of the Moore Government, 10 per cent; total 60 per cent. I hold that the Government have not done their duty to the State in regard to this Bill. It is one of the most intricate subjects it is possible to bring before the House. For over two years we have known that the rabbits were inside the fence; I told the House two years ago that they were inside the fence at Nannine, the very country the member for Gascoyne is so much interested in; yet here we are faced with a Bill that requires, as the member for Katanning says, very serious consideration, and on which a great deal of information should be forthcoming, and we have about 10 minutes in which

to pass it. The Government in bringing down a Bill of this nature in a session like this are certainly not giving the House the slightest possible chance of making the measure a good one. I have looked through the Bill, and in my opinion it cannot by any possible chance be classed as a good one. It may be, as the member for Gascoyne says, something to go on with until we can bring in a better Bill; but there is just this to be said on that point that once we enact a principle, at times it is very hard to change it. In this Bill we may introduce a principle that later on we may not be able to strike out of it, so I think we must give it some consideration, with all due respect for the member for Gascoyne who is so deeply interested. The measure applies to the whole of the State, and I suppose there is scarcely another State in the world that has to deal with such diversity of land. We have the agricultural land of the South-West, an altogether different proposition in the South-East, and we have the West coastal and Central land; the North-West, and again the Kimberleys; and in every one of these places the conditions are different; so that in the few minutes we have before us to attempt to pass a Bill covering the whole of that ground is impossible. The Bill provides for certain boards to be instituted, and they are to have the power of taxing the people within the areas over which they operate, and the system of taxation proposed is on the acreage. Now, there is scarcely another country in the world that has such a diversity of land, yet the tax is to be so much per acre. Agricultural land in the South-West which is sold at 10s. per acre can be taxed under this Bill for just the same amount as land away back in the centre of the State leased by the Government at 2s. 6d. per thousand acres. I am of opinion that the State should be divided for the purposes of this Bill. The conditions in the South do not apply in the North, and there are many other differences between the South and the North.

Mr. Hudson: Inside and outside the rabbit-proof fence would be a good division.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Exactly so. Those already outside the fence can scarcely get any benefit from the fence. They are now paying their share towards the interest on the cost of construction, yet they receive no value from it; and as the member for Dundas has pointed out, many of these people have already fenced their country; yet these boards when inaugurated can fence some other person's country and tax these people for fencing in that other person's country. Notwithstanding the haste advocated by the member for Katanning, these are conditions that are well worth at least two or three minutes' consideration. We should endeavour to make our legislation have some sense and some reason. There is another point, and I see it is provided for in the Queensland Act to an extent not provided for in this Bill; a district is not compelled to tax itself, and the result will be that where rabbits, or dingoes, or kangaroos are somewhat thick there will be a tax, but in a district where there are no rabbits or dingoes there will be no tax, though it is the outside districts that keep the inside districts free from these pests. It is the same position we have had all along. The man who is down near the coast and has the best of the land has the best of the deal right through. He had the best of it before, and he will still have the best of it. Take the Gascoyne district as an instance. The land near Carnarvon is certainly some of the best pastoral land in the State. Practically the whole of the land held there is good land, is land one can rear sheep or cattle on. Yet at Mount Clere there is a mountainous range where there are thousands of acres of country that would not feed an iguana. The only land of any use in that locality is comprised in the flats between the hills. A man who desires to take up pastoral country has also to take up these hills in order to get the benefit of the flats and yet he will have to pay as much for these barren ranges as the man near Carnarvon with really good agricultural land. Further than that, it is in that country the rabbits first come. The dingoes also are in the rough country for they come from

the hills and the man who has country there will have to destroy them as well. By doing so he has, at one and the same time to incur considerable expense and do very much towards protecting the country nearer the coast.

Mr. Butcher: Do not forget that the people on the coast were in the first instance the outside people and had some difficulties to deal with.

Mr. Hudson: There were not the same number of dingoes.

Mr. Butcher: There were.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I agree that the people near the coast had in the first instance all these difficulties and troubles but now all are left to the men who have been forced to go further back. The people on the coast should assist those in the back country who are helping to protect their lands.

Mr. Butcher: That is what this Bill seems to do.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It does nothing of the sort. Take Nullagine and the Port Hedland districts as an example. The dingoes come from Nullagine and the people there will have to destroy them and thus prevent the vermin from getting to Port Hedland. The Nullagine people will have to pay to kill the vermin and the people of Port Hedland will have no vermin to deal with and consequently need strike no rate under the measure.

Mr. Butcher: They would have to.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No, it is not necessary under the Bill. It is specifically provided that if a board have not expended all the money collected one year they need not strike a rate next year. There is no compulsion even to form a board in a district. Those who have the worst of the position now are to be placed in an even worse position when the Bill becomes law. The chief trouble to be dealt with is in connection with the rabbit incursion. In none of the districts I represent are there any rabbits.

Mr. Butcher: They are not far off.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The fence has protected us so far and I think it will be some years before they reach us. If the people in the Ashburton district get thoroughly and quickly to work the rab-

bits may be prevented from getting into the Pilbara districts. I think therefore that the latter districts should pay their share for the destruction of rabbits in the Gascoyne. There is no provision in the Bill for such a case as that.

The Honorary Minister: Look at Clause 6.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There is no compulsion to establish boards in any districts and it is not necessary to strike a rate. I believe this Bill will possibly have some effect in one particular district, namely the Gascoyne. There is no doubt that the rabbits are there now and it is possible, if the residents of the district make an early and vigorous start, they may be able to check the pest considerably. For that alone the Bill is worth being passed, but at the same time it must be freely admitted that the measure is not even an attempt, fairly and squarely to deal with this question. It must be realised by any man knowing anything of the question that the Bill will have to be repealed and a new one introduced at the earliest possible date. The member for Gascoyne (*Mr. Butcher*) would like to see the Bill brought in at once. The various principles set out in the Bill will I think work a hardship for many people, but will work well for him. I am casting no reflection whatever on the hon. member, but it must be recognised that his land is very favourably situated under the Bill.

Mr. Butcher: And you admit that the result will be to protect your district. For that reason I hope you will support the measure.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I protest against the man, say up at Mount Clere, having to pay the same as the man in the Gascoyne district.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: It need not be the same, for the Bill sets out that the rate shall not be more than 2s. That sum is the maximum.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The hon. member does not appear to know this country very well for, if I am not mistaken, the land to which I refer at Mount Clere is in the same roads board district as the land of the hon. member for Gascoyne.

Mr. Butcher: No, it is not.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Well there is very rough country in the Carnarvon district. I feel sure the Queensland system of charging on stock is preferable to the one under this Bill; but that system should only apply to the Northern pastoral areas. In the agricultural country the acreage charge would be preferable, for after all the rabbit is likely to go there and damage the crops as well as stock. In the Southern country therefore the acreage rate would be right, but in the Northern country it would be absolutely unjust and would work hardly on those least able to bear the tax.

Mr. Butcher: What about a man holding large under-stocked areas for speculative purposes?

Mr. Hudson: Surely such a state of things does not obtain under the present Government?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The present Government have stocking clauses which they should enforce. This is not a question members can stand up and settle offhand. There is no subject that has been before the House since I have been a member which could with more advantage be referred to a select committee. Information could be obtained on the question from one end of the State to the other, and it is this information which the House badly needs. I desire to censure the Government for leaving the matter so late and for attempting to force such a Bill through when members are not given time even to read, much less to consider it. Possibly the Premier will say the Government have not had time. That excuse cannot be considered for one moment. The Government have had all this year, and we should have had the elections in May and started this sitting in June. We cannot expect, however, any very great amount of work from the Government, for they seem to rely on their ability simply to say, "Marvellous progress," "leaps and bounds," "Great increase in agriculture," "Great increase in land under cultivation," "Bringing capital to the country," and, in fact, to make optimistic speeches. The question as far as the North is concerned at all

events could be better dealt with by the Government, leaving the boards out altogether. The ideal method of dealing with it would be for a reclassification and by making many divisions of the pastoral lands. The rents should be raised pretty considerably on the good land. Some of the money received from these increased rents should be spent in the destruction of vermin. By that means the work would be done better, the cost of collection would be considerably less and I am sure the result would be good for the whole of Western Australia. This question is one every member of the House should give full consideration to. The lands of the North still belong to the people, for they are unalienated, and whatever the State does to increase the value will benefit the State and not the private individual. I shall not oppose the second reading of the Bill, which however I think is a very poor measure.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): In making a few observations on the second reading of this "poor" Bill, as it has been described by the member who has just resumed his seat, I desire to say that the description of the Bill's poverty does not remove from my mind the necessity for its passage through the Chamber. There is no doubt that the urgency of the measure justifies the House in expediting its passage. That speed need not necessarily interfere with due deliberation and discussion of the Bill when it reaches the Committee stage. I have not had sufficient time to go through the measure thoroughly yet, but I hope that, when the measure is going through Committee, the Minister in charge of it will be able to give the House all information on those clauses which they might think need alteration. Exception has been taken to the mode of raising funds for the administration of the Bill. While the measure sets forth that boards shall be appointed, it still provides that the taxing power shall be limited to a certain extent. In accordance with the measure the taxing power shall not exceed 2s. per 100 acres. We find that the lease-

holders themselves have the right of appointment to the board and that being so one would think that people who have the right to exercise their franchise would know pretty well all about the persons they were going to vote for as members of the board and would not be likely to elect persons who would be in favour of too heavy a tax. All the money required to be raised by the board is sufficient to carry out the necessities of the measure and to deal in a satisfactory manner with the vermin trouble in the district. This Bill will affect the whole of the State. So far as the creation of vermin districts is concerned, the Bill gives power to the Governor-in-Council to declare any district vermin-infected. If there be no necessity for declaring that district infected I do not think that the Government would advise that the district should be proclaimed; consequently districts that my friends on both sides of the House have some fear of being called upon to destroy vermin in, should there not be vermin in them, such a thing would not be likely to occur. I do not know that any Government will be anxious to issue instructions by Order-in-Council and declare something for some purpose when there is no necessity for it. I feel confident that the people themselves in the districts interested, when this Bill is put into operation, will for their own protection at once apply to the Government or the Minister controlling this measure to declare a certain district infected under the Act, and I feel confident if the representations made to the Minister are sufficiently strong to warrant that being done the Minister will have no hesitation in doing so. If he refused to do so he would not be the man to administer such a measure. We also find that there are objections taken to the mode of taxation. Some hon. members believe that the principle adopted in some of the Eastern States, that is the taxation of stock and not the land, would be a better principle of taxation to introduce here. I believe that in Queensland they tax according to the number of stock held. If there be country there which is not

fully stocked I believe they then send assessors who tax the full carrying capacity of the land. If they do that and the land be not stocked, well the hardship, if it be a hardship, will apply to the men in Queensland as it would apply to the people in Western Australia if their land were taxed. We propose to tax a man's land here not more than 2s. per hundred acres; I fail to see that that is going to work a hardship. When we tax the land we avoid the necessity of sending out Government officers to value and arrive at decisions as to the carrying capacity of the land. That is what has to be done in Queensland, and this measure here will avoid that. I hope hon. members will not think because we have in this House representatives of pastoral and agricultural areas, that when they are speaking on this measure, they are doing so from purely personal motives. One naturally feels very strongly in a debate if he is interested in the question. Hon. members will recognise that if a proposition comes before this Chamber dealing with mining areas, that the mining representatives on this side of the House wax warm, while they themselves may not have one penny invested in any of the mining ventures in the State. But they have been mixed up with mining, they know it thoroughly, and they are of necessity speaking with warmth when they find it is necessary to urge their arguments right up to every point.

Mr. Scaddan: The arguments do not always tell until the division bell rings.

Mr. TAYLOR: One finds then that after speaking at great length that he is frozen right out. I hope, however, when this measure is being dealt with in Committee, we will find that hon. members on this side of the House, who perhaps do not and cannot claim to represent agricultural and pastoral interests, will not allow this freezing process to take place, but will recognise the importance of the necessity for passing the measure. We do know we have rabbits in some portions of our State, and we know that there are other parts that are free from rabbits. In the settled and mixed farming areas we know too that they have the native dog pest. It has been told to me re-

peatedly by settlers that they have lost a large number of sheep through the wild dogs; in fact that they have made purchases of high-class stock to improve their flocks and it has been found that hardly has the number been increased by one before the dogs have got at them. This Bill will protect the farmers, and it will above all make everyone do his share towards protecting his neighbour. One person will not be able to profit at the expense of his neighbour as at present. While I recognise from the speeches delivered by members who have had time to more closely peruse this Bill than I have, that the Bill is not all we desire, yet I believe it is a step in the right direction, and that being so I will support the second reading. I do hope that the Minister will not rush it through Committee to-night, and when the Bill comes before Committee he will be here armed with evidence in connection with the vital clauses so as to prove conclusively that the Bill is not going to work hardships on people excepting in the ordinary way. The member for Gascoyne pointed out that very little legislation is ever passed in any country that has not pressed heavily at the outset on someone, and so it would be with this, but there is urgency for the Bill and it is necessary it should be passed this session. I am speaking now in view of the session terminating within a few short days. There is no necessity, even though we are a few weeks from Christmas, that because of this fact business should cease. In my opinion it should only cease during the Christmas holidays and we should be prepared to come back here the first or second week in January to pass these urgent and necessary measures, and pass them in such a way that they will be a credit to Parliament.

Mr. Butcher: Do not forget that bunny will not wait.

Mr. TAYLOR: Bunny has been travelling in this State for a good many years, and I do not think bunny will do much harm between this and February if we have not the time before Christmas to give the measure and others that may come forward that thought and consideration they deserve. I do not think there

is any necessity for dealing with the measure immediately and calling it hasty legislation because we are nearing Christmas. I hope the Bill will pass the second reading, and I again desire to impress on the Minister the necessity for not pressing it through Committee to-night.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley): Representing as I do one of the districts very much interested in this Bill I would like to make a few remarks. I think I was instrumental, through a telegram I sent a few months ago from Broome, in getting this Bill introduced during the present session. The urgent necessity for carrying this Bill through I think is obvious to all. Pastoralists in this House and generally throughout the State have been demanding this Bill from the Government for something like three years, and I believe it was only by the representations of the strong deputation, which waited on the Minister a few weeks ago, that we have this measure brought in during the present session. My district is more particularly interested in this Bill inasmuch as we lie outside the present rabbit-proof fence, whereas most of the other districts lie inside the fence, and by that means are considerably protected. The fence as constructed at the present time, which runs from North to South, has undoubtedly been the means of preventing rabbits getting into the more settled portions of the State as early as they would otherwise have done. But at the same time that fence has also had the effect of sending rabbits into other portions of the State that are unprotected, and has had the effect of driving them there several years before they would otherwise have gone there. Rabbits are within the settled districts of Kimberley already, and it would be absolutely fatal for the Government to delay taking action. It is not a question of waiting until next year, it is a question of acting at once, and although it may appear hasty legislation to bring in a Bill one week and practically, as we hope to do, get it through the House within another week, such a course is, in my opinion, absolutely necessary. There is not the slightest doubt that putting a Bill through in such a

quick manner will have the effect of rendering portions of it not quite as useful and as correct as we should like to see them, but at the same time neglecting to pass this measure immediately would be fatal. Personally I would have delayed the passage of the Bill so that pastoralists might have had an opportunity of perusing it and giving us some of their valuable opinions on it. But at the same time rabbits are encroaching whilst we are idle, and it is necessary that something should be done at once. Although the present rabbit-proof fence has had good effect, at the same time I do not think it would be advisable to continue that policy for the future. In looking through the Bill before the House I find the principal feature contained therein is the power to constitute districts boards throughout the State where they are required. It appears to me that had a Bill similar to this been introduced in the House ten years ago, there would not have been the same necessity for such a measure at the present time. And there would not have been the fault pointed out by the hon. member for Pilbara, arising in the extreme way in which it will arise now; that is to say, the settlers in the outside districts would not have had to erect fences for the protection of those settlers in more favoured parts. But after all it appears to me that the great principle of this Bill is that the Government will provide the ways and means for settlers to assist themselves in fencing in and protecting their properties. It really amounts to this: that where we have rabbits or dingoes or other pests in a district it will be possible for the people in that district to get a board constituted, and they will be able by means of Government grants to fence in their runs.

Mr. Scaddan: It does not say that in the Bill.

Mr. MALE: That is what it practically amounts to.

Mr. Scaddan: No, it says loans, not grants.

Mr. MALE: I mean a loan. It will give an opportunity to those settlers of fencing in their runs, which probably they would not be able otherwise to do. It takes a considerable amount of money

to fence in anything like a large run, but under the conditions of this Bill it will be possible for these district boards to obtain a loan from the Government; and the settlers, instead of having to find the full amount of the money as would be the case without the Bill, will be required to find only the 5 per cent. interest on the money required. It does appear to me that that provision of the Bill—and it is practically the whole Bill—is a good feature. It will enable the settlers to do what they require; to erect the necessary fences to protect themselves from the pests such as dingoes, rabbits, kangaroos, or whatever they may be. As for the details of the Bill, these will be dealt with in Committee, and I regret we have not had more time to consider them. The question of rating has been raised by certain hon. members and there seems to be a general opinion that the system introduced here is not a satisfactory one. I may say that the same thing appeared to me when I first read the Bill, and it occurred to me that it might be possible to have the rating levied on the acreage and on the stock as well, leaving it to the discretion of the board to levy on whichever may be the greater. I do not think there would be any difficulty in introducing the dual system of rating in the Bill. I sincerely trust that this Bill will be accepted by both sides of the House as a non-party measure. There are certainly no party contentions contained in it. The country requires the Bill, and I think it is our duty to do all we can to pass it as quickly as possible, and in the Committee stage to do whatever may be necessary to make of it a workable and a good Bill. I shall give the Bill my support on the second reading, and do all I can to assist it through the Committee stage.

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): When I come across a Bill that introduces the antiquated system of plural voting it makes me look through it very carefully to see whether the intentions of the framers are expressed in the Bill. It appears to me that this Bill does everything except what it is intended to do. In the first place if the hon. member for Gascoyne (*Mr. Butcher*) had a board

formed in his district, and those who are outside that district refused to rate themselves for the express purpose of carrying out the requirements of this Bill, there is no power whatever to enforce them to strike a rate. I am pleased to hear that the small squatters want to assist themselves. Everything in this Bill, I am pleased to say, has to be paid for by the squatter. He has first to pay 5 per cent. on the money for fencing if he wishes to fence; and if his land has a good deal of vermin upon it he is called upon to clear it, and if he does not do so the board will send others to clear it and will charge him with the cost.

The Honorary Minister: That is the law to-day.

Mr. ANGWIN: And the Bill repeats it. Rates are to be struck for the express purpose of administering the Bill. If the Queensland measure had been followed more closely than it has been, steps might have been taken to provide for the enforcement of the rating in any district. This is one of the failures of the Bill, and I trust the Minister will look into it. Cases have been known where, in large areas where roads boards existed, they have had to be exempted from rating. If other boards are formed in the districts they will exempt themselves from this rating, and there is no power to call upon them to strike a rate for the purposes of this Bill. Even the hon. member for Gaseoyne would not wish that they should be made to pay heavy rates to keep an area free when the Minister cannot force the people of the next area to assist them.

The Honorary Minister: Oh, yes, he can. Look at Clause 33.

Mr. ANGWIN: There is no power here under which you can strike that rate as provided in the Queensland Act. I only trust that when the Bill is in Committee some hon. member will bring in a clause under which it will be compulsory to strike a rate for the purposes of this Bill.

The HONORARY MINISTER (in reply): I would like to say a few words in reply to the criticism of hon. members. I have listened to their criticism with a

good deal of interest, the more so when I find that very few have studied the Bill. If the hon. member who has just sat down had read the Bill he would have seen that the Government have all the power necessary to enforce the provisions of this measure. If any board is lax in its duties the Government may suspend that board and take upon themselves the administration of the Act in that particular district. Something has been said in regard to rating. The hon. member for Dundas (Mr. Hudson) objects to the method proposed. He says in fact that the ratepayers to the roads boards who happen to live in the towns could also be rated under this measure. If he will turn to Clause 12 he will find that this is not so at all. A ratepayer under this measure must own more than 100 acres of land. The hon. member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) objects to the method of taxation. I would like to say that in South Australia the tax is against the acre. There they have a tax of 5s. per square mile with an exemption for all lands under a quarter of a mile square. In Queensland the tax is against stock, but it is also provided that the land is taxed up to its full carrying capacity. I believe this Bill will be found to be better than any similar Bill in existence in the Australian States. If hon. members have not had time to read this Bill I have, for I have worked at it for several months and therefore know something about it. If they will work it out for a day or two, they will agree with me that it is a very good Bill. What we seek to do is to give the people who have vermin, power to levy a rate in order that all might contribute as they should do. It is perfectly obvious that it would be useless to appoint a board in a district that happens to be free from vermin to make them collect a tax which they would have no power to spend; because they have to spend it in the manner provided for in the Bill. Everyone will agree that already most of us on the land are sufficiently taxed. We do not want to be taxed unnecessarily, but we are quite ready to be taxed for our mutual protection. The hon. member for Pilbara also referred to the

area of land under cultivation in the South-West portion of the State. I think the hon. member said the other day that we are travelling at a very slow rate. If he will turn to the records he will find that in 1905 we had 408,000 acres under cultivation. But he has not read the whole of the figures. He reads only the first column. He must go to some other column if he would have the full information. Last year we had under cultivation 646,000 acres, as against the 408,000 acres of 1905. If this be not a 60 per cent. increase I am afraid the hon. member is right when he says that our rate of progress is slow. I will be very glad to receive any amendments to this Bill which hon. members may propose. But I think it would be a pity to alter this Bill unless hon. members are going to give every clause very serious consideration indeed. It has been a most difficult measure to draft and it is an excellent measure, well calculated to perform the purposes required of it. We have full power to appoint a board wherever it is necessary. If hon. members will read the Bill, they will see that every good provision contained in the Acts of the Eastern States has been adopted by us, and that we have added a good deal that the framers of these other Acts have overlooked.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—EARLY CLOSING AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day; *Mr. Daglish* in the Chair, *the Attorney General* in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—Memorial for alteration of days—[An amendment had been moved by Mr. Draper providing for a poll of the Assembly electors in any district]:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The object of the amendment was to substitute electors of an electoral district for ratepayers in a municipal district. At present the boundaries of the early closing districts were co-terminus with the

boundaries of municipal districts and certain roads board districts, but the boundaries of electorates were not so. For instance, the Balkatta electoral district extended as far as Wanneroo, but the early closing district was the Leederville municipal district. Similarly the Swan electorate extended to Armadale, whereas portion of the Swan roads district formed the early closing district. If we accepted the amendment we would be placed in an extraordinary position because we would have to prepare special rolls, and would then have to find out who on the electoral rolls resided in the early closing districts. It would be an enormous expense, and probably the result attained would be inaccurate.

Mr. Angwin: Not if you pass the amendment of which I have given notice.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: One could not deal with all the amendments on the Notice Paper. It would not be advisable to have the opinion of the people of Armadale about what it was proposed to do in Perth. The amendment, therefore, could not be accepted. The hon. member claimed that the amendment would widen the area of those to decide the question, but the ratepayers certainly represented in a large sense the opinion of the settled portion of the population. The ratepayers were not owners, they were occupiers, and if the ratepayers decided the question it was not possible to say the jury was not a representative one.

Mr. BATH: The Attorney General was like the boy who put his finger in the beehive and found the result of disturbing a peaceful state of affairs was not very pleasant. The proclamation the Government had issued had disturbed a satisfactory and peaceful condition of affairs, and had stirred up innumerable difficulties in endeavouring to put the matter once more on a satisfactory basis. There was difficulty in saying the metropolitan area was to consist of certain municipalities and then seeking to secure a referendum of the electors within that area when the municipal boundaries were not co-terminus with the electoral boundaries; but it was not an insuperable obstacle, because we could adopt the suggestion em-

bodied in the amendment on the Notice Paper in the name of the member for East Fremantle and constitute a metropolitan district to include all of what might be termed the metropolitan electorates, and then apply the principle of the referendum to the electorates in that district. That amendment should be considered in conjunction with the amendment of the member for West Perth. The latter asked that the electors in a district should vote by referendum; the member for East Fremantle asked that the metropolitan area should be one district consisting of certain electorates. Standing by itself we could not accept the suggestion of the member for West Perth, and make provision for a referendum in say, Perth without involving a large amount of expense in preparing rolls to include the electors within the district contemplated by the member for West Perth. It would be necessary to have someone go through the electoral rolls and pick out the different streets, or to have canvassers or census-takers to prepare rolls of the electors in the particular district specified by the hon. member. Certainly there would be a heavy expense involved in order to secure a verdict on this question unless we accepted the amendment suggested by the member for East Fremantle by which the existing electoral rolls could be utilised, it would merely be an amalgamation of the rolls for the various electoral districts, and the only thing that would be necessary would be to provide machinery by which the electors could express an opinion on the question. This was a matter that concerned the electors and not the ratepayers.

Mr. DRAPER: The object of the amendment was to give the electors the right to decide in any one district what should be the closing day. The electors in any one district were the best people to judge as to the interests of that particular district. At present Claremont was a district, and East Fremantle, Midland Junction, South Perth, Perth, and so on, were districts; but there were many districts in the area which the member for East Fremantle proposed to include in one district whose interests were not necessarily identical with the interests

of the whole area. There was no need to define any boundaries or to go to the expense if the amendment before the House were adopted. Under the Bill there was provision for joining several districts to form one district; and Perth, North Perth, West Perth and East Perth being identical in interests, there could be no difficulty in taking a poll on the electoral rolls of those constituencies. On the other hand it did not follow that the interests of all the districts from Midland Junction to Fremantle were identical. Therefore, until he could hear further argument on the subject, he considered that it would be defeating the whole object of his amendment if we were to make it one big district from Fremantle to Midland Junction.

Mr. BATH: The Perth electorates mentioned by the hon. member were not co-terminus with municipal districts, and if the hon. member's suggestion were adopted we would be in the position of having a shop on one side of a street opening and a shop on the other side of the same street closing.

Mr. DRAPER: There should be no difficulty in joining these electorates. Subiaco might also be included. Fremantle might very well be joined with Claremont and Cottesloe, and perhaps Midland Junction could be joined with North Perth. He had no opinion to express on that matter at this juncture. If the amendment of the member for East Fremantle were carried and there were but the one district in the metropolitan area, where the interests of the various localities were conflicting—it was very seldom that the interests of Perth and Fremantle agreed—the result of the adoption of the principle would be that the interests of all the suburbs would control the interests of Perth, and the interests of the suburban shopkeepers and assistants would control those of the Perth shopkeepers and assistants.

Mr. BOLTON: When supporting the amendment of the member for West Perth on the previous evening he had been of opinion that the intention was to join all the districts from Fremantle to Midland Junction. Evidently, however, there was a little of the lightning change

artist about the hon. member, for he now said he had no idea of combining all these districts into one. The amendment as it stood was unworkable and was certainly not acceptable to him. It would be absurd to allow the Governor-in-Council power to join certain districts. Let there be one metropolitan district. In that event no expense would be caused, as the rolls of the electoral districts between Fremantle and Midland Junction could be used for a referendum. Possibly if the word "any," in referring to "any district" was struck out of the amendment of the member for West Perth and then the amendment of the member for East Fremantle was carried, the position would be met.

Mr. Scaddan: But there are other districts besides Fremantle and Perth, and if the word "any" were struck out the clause could not be made to apply to them.

Mr. BOLTON: Was it the desire of members that the clause should extend outside the metropolitan area? Personally he was of opinion that the Committee were dealing solely with that area.

Mr. Bath: There is no objection to the goldfields people having a referendum if they want it.

Mr. BOLTON: If that were so the word "any" would have to be retained in the amendment of the member for West Perth and then it would be wise for the further amendment of the member for East Fremantle to be carried. It would be absurd in the extreme if the districts in the metropolitan area were separated, for it might be that in East Perth there would be a declaration to open late on Saturday and in North Perth to open late on Friday.

Mr. Bath: The shops one side of the street might be open on Saturday night and those on the other side of the street on Friday night.

Mr. BOLTON: That was so. There should be a division of the districts in the metropolitan area.

Mr. GILL: It would be well to remind the members for West Perth and Perth that they were not the only members to represent the City.

Mr. Brown: You do not represent the City.

Mr. GILL: The district of Balkatta contained a portion of the City, and he had the honour to represent it. He claimed to represent all his electors, whether capitalists or workers. The member for West Perth was evidently not conversant with the boundaries of the electorates he mentioned for he suggested that West Perth, Perth, East Perth and North Perth should form one district. North Perth included portion of the City, portion of the North Perth municipality and portion of the Perth and Bayswater roads boards, while the Balkatta electorate contained portions of the municipalities of Leederville, North Perth, and the City. It would be impossible to combine those electorates and make them one district, for it might happen if that were done that, as the Leader of the Opposition had said, one side of the street would favour closing on one day and the other side of the street the other.

Mr. Brown: There are no shops in the Perth Roads Board district.

Mr. GILL: The proposal of the member for East Fremantle was the only reasonable solution of the difficulty and it would be well for the member for West Perth to accept it. The member for Perth claimed that the people in the City were not in favour of closing on Saturday. If that were so, there was no reason why he should refuse to allow a referendum on the question, for then a decision would be arrived at. What we wanted was to give the people dealing in the shops an opportunity of saying if they preferred Friday or Saturday shopping. If the suggestion on the Notice Paper were carried, the question would be settled.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: After hearing the arguments raised by the various speakers as to the districts which should be included in what was called the metropolitan area, the question naturally arose as to why other electoral districts than those mentioned should not be included. For instance why should the electorate of Swan not be one of those in the metropolitan area? It was very certain that the people of Midland Junc-

tion, for instance, did a great deal of their shopping in Perth, while he was informed on good authority that a large number of people came from the far side of the ranges, even from Beverley, to shop in the City. Why therefore should they not be allowed to have a say in the matter? Why should the electorates mentioned—those lying between Fremantle and Midland Junction—be specially picked out, unless there were some particular purpose to be served by it?

Mr. Bath: That area would be for all practical purposes identical with the area mentioned in the 1904 Act.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No area was constituted under that Act, which simply made a number of municipalities and roads boards districts without proclamation.

Mr. Johnson: The area mentioned includes that which has been already demonstrated to work in harmony; the area which asked for a settlement of the question.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: There was no real reason why the electorates of Swan and Beverley should not be included with those mentioned.

Mr. Gill: You told us last night that the conditions in Kalgoorlie were different.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: There was a great desert between the agricultural districts and the goldfields and this formed a natural boundary. He did not propose that his claim for the inclusion of other electorates should apply to places so far East as the goldfields. He was endeavouring to try and understand how it would be practicable to give effect to the proposals made by members in connection with the combination of certain electorates to form one district, but the more he looked into them the more impracticable they seemed.

Mr. Bath: You built up the difficulties for yourself.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It must appear that the difficulties were created by an attempt to do something not possible in the natural order of events. The proposal to have the decision left in the hands of the ratepayers, who

formed a representative body, although not such a wide jury as the electors, was one easy of accomplishment. It could be done at once and it was advisable for members to turn their attention to what could be accomplished easily, rather than to waste their time and that of the House in discussing propositions impossible to carry out in the future.

MR. DRAPER: It was hard to imagine how the member for North Fremantle had been misled, considering that he was anxious for him (Mr. Draper) to accept an alteration to the amendment proposed the previous evening. It was evident that the hon. member failed to appreciate what that amendment was. It applied to any district that was a district under the Act. At the recent election he advocated that a poll should be taken of the people in the Legislative Assembly districts. The member for North Fremantle said he understood that meant the whole of the district from Fremantle to Midland Junction; but if anything were said the previous evening which served to mislead the hon. member as he had indicated, that should be taken as withdrawn, for it must be distinctly understood that he could not accept the proposed amendment of the member for East Fremantle. There could be no reason why there should not be a metropolitan area, but it was unnecessary to say now what electorates should be included.

Mr. Bolton: It would be better to have that in the Act than to give the power to the Governor-in-Council.

MR. DRAPER: The electoral districts to be included under the Bill could well be left to the Government of the day. Local interests must from time to time differ, but if a district were defined by hard and fast lines in the measure, it would be impossible to alter it as circumstances required. It would be absurd to say that West Perth for instance should be a district for the purpose of the Early Closing Act. But the difficulty could be got over if members passed Clause 4 of the Bill, or a reasonable amendment might be proposed. He must definitely state to the Committee

that if anyone supported the amendment on a misunderstanding, he did not undertake to support the proposed amendment of the member for East Fremantle. He would stick to the wording of his amendment as proposed on the previous night.

The CHAIRMAN: The discussion in regard to districts was somewhat irregular. The matter could be discussed in the next clause. He was not anxious to curtail members' remarks, but would point out that the clause did not relate at all to the question of districts.

Mr. JOHNSON: Members were anticipating a discussion that they would have an opportunity of taking part in when the member for East Fremantle brought forward his amendment. The Committee could now pass with advantage the amendment moved by the member for West Perth. If the Committee did that, members could then argue whether it would be advisable to group all these electorates in the manner outlined by the member for East Fremantle, calling it the metropolitan area. Personally he had strong reasons why that should be done. Members should now proceed to vote on the amendment moved by the member for West Perth and then get on to the discussion of the grouping of these districts.

Mr. SWAN: On the previous evening he understood the Attorney General to say that he was prepared to accept "electors" instead of the "ratepayers" as the people who should determine the half-holiday. He (Mr. Swan) was entirely opposed to the proposal that the matter should be left to the ratepayers. If it was submitted to the ratepayers a large number in his electorate who were deeply interested in the matter would have no voice. He would point out to the member for Perth that he (Mr. Swan) had the honour of representing just as many City electors as the hon. member, notwithstanding that he was the member for Perth, and he strongly opposed the views put forward by that member.

Mr. ANGWIN: If any member of the Ministry had taken the same interest as he had done in times gone by in re-

gard to getting a memorial of ratepayers, the Government would not have introduced the Bill. We knew how ridiculous the licensing law was with regard to the definition of areas. As a rule an area was defined by magistrates, but he had repeatedly been compelled to try and get a majority of ratepayers to deal with the licensing question; and he knew of the difficulty that was experienced. The Bill threw on those who wished to alter the day of opening or closing shops, the onus of going round and getting a majority of the whole of the ratepayers of the district. No matter where persons were, or whether they were dead and buried, some one had to be got to make up for them. The absurdity of putting such a provision in the Bill showed clearly that the Government had no intention of meeting the wishes of those who were interested in the alteration in the metropolitan area. It was merely a clause put in for the purpose of defeating the object which the people desired. It was put through, so that the Government might say, "We are with you; we believe in the Saturday half-holiday, but we will try and bring in a clause to prohibit you from carrying it into effect." The member for West Perth had moved an amendment which would get over the difficulty, and now it appeared that he was sorry he had spoken.

Mr. Bath: The Committee could carry the clause under discussion and then we could get on to the next one.

Mr. ANGWIN: The amendment was something to the credit of the member for West Perth.

Mr. BROWN: It would be better if the Bill were referred to a select committee, or the old Bill might be allowed to stand with the alterations that the shopkeepers be given the power to select the half-holiday and the substitution of "electors" for "ratepayers."

Mr. BATH: Hon. members should understand what a delay would take place if the suggestion to refer the Bill to a select committee were to be carried. It would make it impossible for this Parliament to deal with the question of Early Closing, and either we should

have a merely formal consideration by the select committee without the opportunity of calling evidence, or if evidence were called we would delay it beyond the possibility of carrying it this session, and we would then hand over the position to the minority in Perth who wanted to get back to the Wednesday holiday.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the Bill were dealt with in the simple, clear, and intelligent form in which it was printed there would be small scope for inquiry by a select committee, but if members were going to introduce ideas which were much wider in extent than the amendment, then the Committee would simply be in the position that they must have an inquiry. For that reason it would be better to take a simple and ready remedy rather than look for one which might be more perfect, but which might be more complicated and would put the Bill into the position which would render it necessary to receive further consideration.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. DRAPER moved an amendment—

That in line 14 of Clause 3 the word "memorial" be struck out and "poll" inserted in lieu.

Amendment passed.

Mr. DRAPER moved a further amendment—

That in line 14 of Clause 3 the word "presented" be struck out and "taken" inserted in lieu.

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 4—Power to unite districts:

Mr. ANGWIN moved an amendment

That the following words be added to the clause:— The electoral districts of Perth, North Perth, West Perth, East Perth, Canning, Fremantle, South Fremantle, East Fremantle, North Fremantle, Guildford, Balkatta, Claremont, and Subiaco are hereby united into one district by the name of the Metropolitan District for the purpose of this Act.

The area which was included in the amendment would not add considerably as far as the population of the districts was concerned. It would also save a great expense in the preparation of rolls,

and would carry out what he believed was the intention of the Colonial Secretary, when he first granted the Saturday half-holiday. It was well known to hon. members at that time that he refused to allow the closing of shops in one particular district unless a decision was arrived at by all the traders throughout the metropolitan area from Midland Junction to Fremantle. It showed clearly that as far as the Minister was concerned his intentions would be found to be embodied in the amendment proposed. Not only would the amendment be in accordance with the position the Minister had taken up, but it would give the right to vote to a large body of electors whose interests were identical.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The effect of the clause was that the Governor might from time to time unite any two or more districts whose interests were identical. But the proposal of the hon. member was to make a hard and fast grouping of certain districts whose interests he alleged to be identical. What the Colonial Secretary had done when the original petition was presented to him was to hold over the proclamation in view of the fact that he had been informed that all the several districts were going to bring in similar petitions. That had been the only reason for the delay. Here, however, they had a different set of facts altogether. They were asked to amalgamate all these districts into one whole in order that the two ends might domineer the rest. Up to a certain point it was not desirable to have the opinions of too small an area; but on the other hand they could have an area far too large. The clause as it stood would enable adjustments to be made from time to time as necessary, whereas the hon. member would render necessary to any readjustment an amendment of the Act.

Mr. BATH: There was an extraordinary variety in the facts advanced by the Attorney General in elucidation of the attitude of the Colonial Secretary in regard to this question. The Attorney General had been doing nothing else but explaining the varied and variegated attitudes of the Colonial Secretary. As

a matter of fact those who were most interested in the petition and who in the first instance had presented one with signatures from a circumscribed area had said that the prayer of that petition was refused, and that the Chief Inspector of Factories, Mr. Vincent, had declared that until the petitioners went to the shopkeepers right through the metropolitan area and secured the signatures of a majority they had no chance whatever of having the petition granted. Whatever may have been the circumstances leading up to it, it was practically certain that the Colonial Secretary had on that occasion recognised the unity of interests throughout the metropolitan area. That being so what was there unreasonable, or opposed to the procedure already adopted by the Colonial Secretary, in the request that those districts should now be united in one area, and give an opportunity of deciding this question for a period which would prevent its re-occurrence for some little time to come. The member for West Perth had led other hon. members to believe that in the proposal which he submitted he was in favour of the metropolitan area being polled on this question. In any case if the amendment now before the House were not adopted there would be further divergencies of opinions and of attitudes and actions in the future. Shopkeepers on one side of a street would be found to be in one electorate, while those on the opposite side would be in another; and there would be nothing to prevent the spectacle of one side of the street being open to business while the other was closed.

Mr. HOPKINS: There could be no community of interest at all between, say, Perth and some of its suburbs. He preferred the idea set forth by the member for West Perth. Certain groups of districts should, he thought, control their own actions in the matter. At Guildford were to be found business houses of 40 or 50 years' standing, the bulk of whose trade lay in the country districts, whereas in Perth the trade was restricted largely to the people of Perth. Many of the customers of the Guildford

houses resided probably at Bunbury or at Beverley. Was it fair that outlying districts should be dominated by Perth. It would be very much more reasonable if Perth were allowed to determine its own question, while Fremantle and suburbs did likewise.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	22
Noes	..	..	..	19

Majority for .. 3

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Hudson
Mr. Barnett	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Bath	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Collier	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Davies	Mr. Swan
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gill	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Horan	Mr. Heitmann

(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Male
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Monger
Mr. Draper	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Price
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Layman	

(Teller).

Amendment thus passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 5—Repealing:

Mr. SCADDAN moved an amendment—

"That in line 1 the words 'and three' be inserted after 'two.'"

This was an amendment placed upon the Notice Paper by the member for Subiaco. The object was to repeal the subsection of the principal Act, which made it necessary for shop assistants to work until 6 o'clock on a Saturday or on the day the half-holiday was held should there be a public holiday during the course of the week. It also provided that shops could remain open till 10 o'clock at night on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

There was no reason why shop assistants should be deprived of their weekly half-holiday on account of there being a whole holiday during the week. There could be no gain in business by making the shop assistants work on Saturday afternoon, so that in the circumstances it seemed merely taking it out of the shop assistants.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The amendment being somewhat beyond the intent of the Bill, if we passed it there would be a risk of the measure not passing into law. Further than that there were no complaints about the custom prevailing that when there was a whole holiday in the week the shops should remain open till 6 o'clock on the day on which the half-holiday was usually held. Again, we all knew that on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve purchases were made to a late hour in the night; these nights being the great shopping carnival of the year for many people.

Mr. Scaddan: A nice carnival for the shop assistants.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was impossible for one party to be served and for the other party not to be there to serve them. No amount of sophistry could set aside the fact that Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve were the great occasions of the year when people went shopping. It was a festival that had come down to us from antiquity, and one could not realise that the shop assistants would object to working late on these two occasions. At any rate the hon. member should not endanger the passage of the Bill by overloading it.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	23

Majority against .. 5

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Bath	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gill	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gouley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Holman	Mr. Walker
Mr. Horan	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Heltmann

(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Barnett	Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Brown	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Male
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Davies	Mr. Monger
Mr. Draper	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Nauson
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Layman
Mr. Hopkins	(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

New clause—Dairy produce shops:

Mr. ANGWIN moved, That the following be added to stand as Clause 6—

"Part II. of Schedule One of the Amending Act, 1904, is amended by omitting the words 'dairy produce shops.'"

The idea was to remove dairy produce shops from the schedule of exempt shops. Most people were aware that dairy produce shops and grocers' shops were almost identical. In fact there was not a grocery establishment in the metropolitan area that did not deal in dairy produce, such as eggs, butter, bacon, cheese, etcetera. These were not perishable goods. Some time ago the department decided that shops that sold bacon and eggs were not to be exempt. There was almost a riot at Fremantle on one occasion because a grocer opened his place for the purpose of selling bacon and eggs on a Saturday, and several persons were arrested and fined in connection with the matter. While grocers had to close on certain days set apart for holidays, other persons dealing in dairy produce were allowed to remain open. That state of affairs should not be allowed to continue. The Supreme Court had decided that bacon and eggs were the produce of the dairy, and consequently the decision of the Colonial Secretary that shops dealing in those products should not be exempt was set aside. It was desirable that all shops selling the products should be put on the same footing.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The only object of the measure was to deal with the troublesome question of early closing on Saturday or Wednesday, and

if the House dealt with that question satisfactorily, enough would have been done. It would be a pity to have this good work risked by bringing in matters which would be very suitable to introduce on some other occasion. He hoped the amendment would be withdrawn.

New clause put and negatived.

New clause—Proclamation:

Mr. HUDSON moved, that the following be added to stand as Clause 6—

The proclamation made by the Governor under the Early Closing Act, 1902, on the 28th day of October, 1908, and published in the "Government Gazette" of the 13th October, 1908, is hereby annulled.

In moving the clause he was actuated by a desire to help the Government out of a difficulty. It was clearly stated by the Attorney General on the previous day that it was his opinion and that of the law authorities that it was impossible to annul the proclamation. The Minister added that although the Premier and he were willing to annul it, it could not be done. It became necessary, therefore, almost as a consequential amendment, that the new clause should be carried. The proclamation was published on the memorial of the Perth district, while the original proclamation was published on the memorial of the metropolitan area. An amendment had now been carried providing that the closing day should be declared by the electors of the metropolitan area—not only by those in the Perth district. To give proper effect to that we should allow the present state of affairs to continue, and the only way to do so, in view of the opinion expressed by the Crown Law authorities, was to pass the new clause. The Attorney General could not say it was not within the power of Parliament to override a proclamation, although it might not be within the power of the Colonial Secretary to do so. If the clause were carried matters would be left as they now were, and would remain so until the electors of the metropolitan area had voiced their opinion.

The CHAIRMAN: With regard to the proposed new clause, he felt some degree of doubt as to his right to accept it, be-

cause it introduced a novel procedure into legislation if Parliament passed sections in Acts of Parliament dealing with the executive acts of responsible Ministers. The proper course of procedure was to proceed by motion when the desire was to give directions to Ministers on certain matters. The question was a novel one, and before he distinctly ruled he could not accept it, he was quite willing to afford members an opportunity to enlighten him on the matter. His present opinion was that it was not a clause that in its present shape he could accept and submit to the Committee.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The procedure established in the new clause was an absolutely new one. Not only that, but it was also objectionable to ask the House to pass as a clause of a Bill something which was nothing more than a resolution disallowing an act of a Minister.

Mr. Angwin: You say the Ministry are compelled under the present Act.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Besides that, the new clause had no logical force whatever. What was the position? If the new clause were tacked on to the Bill and the measure became law, then the Act immediately superseded the existing law, or rather that portion of it to which the amending measure referred. Under Clause 2 there was an option as between Friday and Saturday closing given to the shopkeepers. Under Clause 3 the question to be determined, when determined apart from the provision made in Clause 2, was settled by the vote of the electors. There would be no possible use for this clause; it had no advantage whatever. Bills were vehicles for conveying rules and regulations for governing certain duties in our community. It was not a vehicle for conveying the disallowance of a particular act of a particular Minister.

Mr. Hudson: It is a way out of a difficulty.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No way out of the difficulty was required: all we wanted to do was to get rid of suggestions which were, in his opinion, calculated to destroy the measure, and he

hoped the House would debate it no further.

Mr. WALKER: The Chairman, he did not think, had gathered much information from the remarks of the Attorney General. He did not know any functions of Parliament in the course of its existence more decidedly within its province than that of correcting Ministerial acts. The whole of our laws were based on the fact that we had the right to correct Ministries, regulate Governors, and even to regulate Kings in their relationship to the House. He was sure the Attorney General had not studied much constitutional history. What was Magna Charta but an instruction from Parliament in the regulation of Ministries, in the annulment of Ministerial acts, and all the way through, Parliamentary history was based on that principle, that the two Houses were supreme and could annul any act whatever committed as a Ministerial prerogative. Repeatedly Bills had been introduced for the sole purpose of checking some Ministerial arrogance or the usurpation of authority.

The Attorney General: What about the Ministerial act which is authorised by an existing Act of Parliament?

Mr. WALKER: The Attorney General raised two questions which were scarcely appropriate. One was whether the proclamation was in accordance with an Act of Parliament. He (Mr. Walker) pointed out it was not in accordance with an Act of Parliament—

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee had to discuss, not the power of Parliament in relation to the control of Ministries, but purely whether this method of dealing with a proclamation was justified by precedent. He was quite prepared to bear precedents for accepting such a motion, and for that reason he had delayed rejecting it until he had been afforded the opportunity of hearing hon. members.

Mr. WALKER: In his study of constitutional history he had been under the impression all through that one of the provisions of the House of Commons was that it was at liberty to introduce matters that were condemnatory

of Ministerial acts. Authorities went so far back, as he had already stated, to Magna Charta. Every act of Parliament was a correction to the Ministers, and he submitted that this particular amendment was specially appropriate to the situation. It was incidental to the very course of this debate. One argument must weigh, and it was that there was at the present time a proclamation outstanding; that proclamation would come into operation, unless it were annulled, on the 1st December. Now we had passed already in the course of this Bill subject-matter inconsistent with that proclamation that was outstanding, and it was the duty of members to annul whatever had been done that we might be consistent in the work as far as we proceeded. He would submit this argument, that in the course of the passing of this Bill members had repealed Acts of Parliament. Members had taken means of repealing Acts of Parliaments, or portions of Acts, and would it be argued that if this body had the power to annul such a thing, the very highest form of mandatory power, that members had not the power to correct or annul a Ministerial act? Members had that power and they had exercised it in the course of the consideration of the measure. He submitted, having the power to repeal the very Act upon which the proclamation was based, having repealed part of that Act, members had the power to annul the proclamation; and as the proclamation, if it were allowed to continue, would be inconsistent with the work members had done as far as they had proceeded, in order to make their work logical and consistent, we should be obliged to repeal or annul the proclamation.

The CHAIRMAN: It was his intention to accept the proposed new clause, although still having some doubt about the propriety of doing so. He would accept it in order to give the fullest opportunity to the Committee of expressing an opinion. Words of the sort should be embodied in a motion to be submitted to the House as a whole, in the form of a direction to the Administration. If the effect of the proposed clause were

intended to be reached by a clause in the Bill the usual method of wording it should have been adopted. However, he was not prepared to rule the clause out if the hon. member preferred to put it in the form in which it had been submitted.

Mr. HUDSON was prepared to accept the Chairman's suggestion and would amend the clause.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL desired to call attention to Clause 2 which had been passed by the Committee to the effect that until altered in pursuance of the Act the days on which the shops should close at one o'clock and ten o'clock respectively should be Friday and Saturday, according to the choice of the shopkeeper. It would be seen therefore, that the Committee had already made provision in the Bill for a state of affairs which was to exist until altered in pursuance of the Act; the alteration being that provided for in Clause 3, namely, by a poll taken of the electors. He submitted that the clause having been passed could not be amended in the manner suggested. It would make confusion worse confounded, and the Bill was bad enough.

Mr. BATH: The Attorney General it seemed had failed to recognise that the clause the Committee had carried was in conflict with the proclamation. The effect of the clause was to override the proclamation in order to give the Bill an opportunity of coming into force. The very argument advanced by the Attorney General against the proposed new clause applied also to the proclamation which was in conflict with the clauses already carried.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Hon. members appeared to be under an impression that if the Committee accepted the new clause proposed by the member for Dundas it would come into force at once before the Bill became law. It was not so. Furthermore, under Section 2 of the Bill there had been provided a set of circumstances which was to prevail until the poll was taken as provided for in Clause 3. The effect was a nullity. There was no effect at all.

Mr. Bolton: But is the clause not necessary? Supposing the Bill passed another place next week.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In such event Clause 2 would put an end to the proclamation. Further than that, by this very Bill they were repealing Section 5 of the principal Act, the section under which the proclamation had been made. Hon. members would see therefore that there was no necessity whatever for this proposed new clause.

The CHAIRMAN said that he would not put the proposed new clause, for he presumed the hon. member did not intend to proceed with it.

New Clause withdrawn.

Schedule 1—agreed to.

Schedule 2 (consequential) struck out.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 27th November, 1908.

	PAGE
Privilege, Minister's statement at Menzies	452
Paper presented	453
Bills: Land and Income Tax, Message	453
Bunbury Harbour Board, 2s.	455
Limited Partnerships, 2s., point of order	461
Annual Estimates, financial debate resumed	477

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

PRIVILEGE—MINISTER'S STATEMENT AT MENZIES.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison): Mr. Speaker, I wish to crave the indulgence of the House on a point of privilege in regard to some statements made by the Minister for Mines during the Menzies election, statements that were untrue and libellous, in regard to myself. I do not know whether I can do this at a later stage on a direct motion, or whether I should deal with the matter now. I