

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 7th February, 1917.

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

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—THE REQUEST FOR A DISSOLUTION.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [4.33]: On the assembling of the House yesterday I informed members that consequent upon the amendments made on Thursday evening last to the Trading Concerns Bill—such amendments being contrary to the policy of the Government—I had waited upon His Excellency and asked him to dissolve the Legislative Assembly, and that His Excellency the Governor had expressed a desire to consider the matter before giving his decision. I am now at liberty to state that His Excellency, whilst admitting the justice of my request, expressed great reluctance to complying therewith, his reason for such reluctance being that there was important business awaiting the attention of Parliament and the Government—particularly in the matter of preparing for the reception of returned soldiers—and that the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly and the consequent general election would mean delays that might have serious consequences—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Did the Governor say that?

The PREMIER: I ask the hon. member to accept my statement. This is a responsible statement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I will do so; I will not interrupt any more.

The PREMIER: His Excellency has been good enough to furnish me with the following memorandum setting out his view on this aspect of the question—

The Governor feels that at the present juncture, during this time of war, it is of vital importance in the interests of the Empire, the State, and our soldiers, to avoid the turmoil and expense of a general election—

Mr. Munsie: He did not think that when there were 24 members behind the Treasury bench.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Premier must be allowed to make his statement without interruption.

The PREMIER: His Excellency's memorandum continues—

and with that end in view he would be glad if the Premier and the leader of the Country party would confer, and endeavour to come to some understanding whereby the business of the session may be proceeded with, more especially taking into consideration the fact that a general election is due in October next. (Signed.) Harry Barron, Governor. 6th February, 1917.

The Government cordially endorse His Excellency's opinion and have no other desire than to proceed diligently with the work already in hand for the making of provision for the returned soldier. The Government recognise that this work will demand their best and most constant efforts, combined with the hearty co-operation of all parties in Parliament and of the public of this State. At the same time the Government were not prepared to set aside well established constitutional precedents, or to continue to administer the affairs of the State unless supported by a majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly. In view of His Excellency's reluctance to grant a dissolution before all the possibilities of the position had been exhausted, the Government invited all those members sitting on the right of the Speaker to meet and discuss the situation. As a result of that meeting the Government received abundant assurances of continued and solid support, and we were also satisfied that the carrying of the adverse votes on Thursday evening was in no way due to waning loyalty on the part of those

sitting behind the Government, but to the temporary absence of members who had not expected that such absence would be taken advantage of to embarrass the Government. With the concurrence of my colleagues I consequently waited upon His Excellency in company with Mr. Willmott, leader of the Country party, and informed him that in view of his expressed reluctance to dissolving Parliament at the present juncture, I had consulted the supporters of the Government and was able to assure him of the ability and willingness of the Government to continue to administer the affairs of the State. It will be remembered that the present Government did not come into power until after the time usually appointed for the assembling of Parliament. The necessary Ministerial elections further delayed public business, and on the re-assembling of Parliament after those elections it was deemed desirable by all sections of the House to further adjourn so as to permit members to take part in the referendum campaign on the question of compulsory military service. A few weeks later a further lengthy adjournment was rendered necessary by the Premiers' Conference in Melbourne, and the intervention of the Christmas holidays. The result has been that the time available has been inadequate for the discharge of the business the Government desired Parliament to transact, and we are now faced with the exceptional, and I venture to say, altogether unwelcome, experience of a summer session.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: On a point of order. Whilst the House is prepared to listen to the Premier's statement in regard to His Excellency's reply to his request, it is absolutely unfair for the Premier to introduce controversial matters in connection with that statement.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member say it is controversial to enumerate the adjournments of the House? I claim the privilege of making a statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Consequent on what occurred yesterday, it is but natural for the House to expect some statement from the Premier. As to what the Premier introduces in that statement, as to whether it is or is not controversial, I am not the judge. I can only say that no discussion can be allowed

on a statement of this character. I am not the judge of whether the Premier is within his rights or beyond them in elaborating his remarks.

The PREMIER: The desire of the Government—and I venture to think the desire of hon. members—is that the session should not be unduly prolonged, and that Ministers should be afforded the opportunity they have not previously enjoyed of a few months diligent work in their departments, uninterrupted by the heavy claims of Parliamentary business. Second only in importance to the making of adequate provision for the returned soldier, is the need for placing the finances of the State on a sound basis. The Government aim at achieving this end in three ways, namely:—1. Economy in administration; 2. Increased taxation; 3. Encouragement of additional population and increased wealth production. So far as economy in administration is concerned, the Government are not prepared to embark upon any hysterical scheme of retrenchment that would ignore either the proper requirements of the public or the doing of justice to the servants of the State.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: On a point of order. I maintain that the Premier is going far beyond what should be allowed under privilege, and is now getting into questions of policy. Apparently he has no sense of justice.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I can only reiterate what I have already said, namely, that the Premier is entitled to make a statement, and that I am not the judge as to the character of his observations, which may or may not be controversial.

Mr. Hudson: It is a matter of taste.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is a matter for the Premier himself.

The PREMIER: The effecting of economies has already occupied much of the attention of Ministers, and steps have been taken in several directions. The effect of these economies cannot be immediately felt, and the further advancement of the work demands more time than Ministers have yet been able to give to it. In this connection it is important to remember that the chief increase in public ex-

penditure has been in the interest and sinking fund bill, which has grown by nearly three-quarters of a million sterling during the past six years, with practically no increased profits from the undertakings in which the borrowed money has been spent. The Government recognise that care must be exercised in the imposition of new taxation. Our people are already burdened by special Commonwealth taxation necessitated by the war, and such new taxation as is imposed for State purposes must be so adjusted as not to deter the development of our industries or to press harshly on any section of the community. The need for some measure of new taxation arises partly from the large discrepancy at present revealed between current revenue and expenditure, partly from the need to provide £100,000 per annum for the elimination of the existing deficit during the next 30 years, and partly by our obligation to bear our share of the cost of repatriation. In view of the fact that any measure of new taxation that might now be passed would operate to only a limited extent during the current year, the Government have determined to withdraw the taxation proposals already tabled, to ask Parliament to re-enact the existing land and income tax, and to defer the introduction of new taxation until the next session of Parliament, to meet about the close of the present financial year, in the meantime giving careful consideration to the question of the necessary extent and incidence of such taxation. In rehabilitating the finances of the State, the Government feel that reliance must be placed chiefly upon the expansion of population and the increase of wealth production, and the Government's energies will be bent in that direction. The Government therefore propose to confine the business of the present session to such measures as are necessary to remedy patent and admitted defects in certain existing legislation, to reasonably facilitate desired public economies, and to aid in the development of the resources of the country. I have only to add that the first act of the Government, so far as this Chamber is concerned, will be to recommit the State Trading Concerns (No. 2) Bill with a view to restoring it to a condition in accordance with the policy of the Government.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Works: Audit of accounts of the State brickworks for the year ended 30th June, 1916.

By the Minister for Industries: Return of premiums paid to fire insurance companies on 1915-16 wheat harvest (asked for by Mr. Smith).

## FORM OF QUESTION.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [4.50]: I observe, Mr. Speaker, that the question relative to return steamer passages between Western Australia and the Eastern States, of which question I gave notice, has been altered. In the fourth paragraph of the question I referred to the action of the shipping companies as "the predatory methods" of "modern pirates." That expression has been struck out of the form of notice which I gave, and other words have been substituted. I feel that, in point of fact, the shipping companies are acting as modern pirates, and that, in the circumstances, the term I used was very applicable. I should like to know why my words were altered?

Mr. SPEAKER [4.51]: The form of question was altered because, under the rules governing questions, the words referred to were not necessary for the purposes of the question. A question must not contain any argument, inference, epithet, or irrelevant matter; and any such matter contained in questions must be struck out.

## QUESTION — INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BOARD, INSURANCE OF CROPS.

Mr. SMITH asked the Minister for Industries: 1, What are the names of the fire insurance companies to whom £22,216 16s. 8d. was paid for insurance of the 1915-16 harvest, with the amount of premium to each company? 2, The names of the companies who paid the £2,475 losses, with amount paid by each company?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, All the premiums were paid, for distribution to the companies, direct to the Underwriters' Association. So far as the In-

dustries Assistance Board's records show, the distribution is as shown in the paper to be laid upon the table of the House. 2, The board have no record of the distribution of the amount paid to the Fire Underwriters' Association under arrangement for the completion of the insurance by it.

## QUESTIONS (2) — RAILWAY EXPRESS, KALGOORLIE.

### *Overcrowding.*

Mr. GREEN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that on some days during the last Christmas holidays the Kalgoorlie-Perth express was so overcrowded that some of the second-class passengers had to stand both in the corridors and on the platforms of the cars for the 15 hours occupied by the journey? 2, If the facts are as stated, will he take steps to see that provision on the *ex* Kalgoorlie express for second-class passengers will be made in future, so that all passengers booked may secure comfortable seating accommodation?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, I am advised that, on one occasion, there was a great rush of passengers at the last moment, in consequence of which the train had to be run in two divisions. A number of second-class passengers were not satisfied to wait for the second division, but rushed the first train, thus overcrowding it. I understand that there was plenty of room in the coaches of the second division. 2, This is always the aim of the department, and the overcrowding on the date mentioned was really caused by the passengers themselves.

### *Compartment Carriages.*

Mr. GREEN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that in the express leaving Kalgoorlie last Sunday evening, a compartment carriage was provided for a number of first-class passengers? 2, Is he further aware that this class of carriage prevents many of the passengers (ladies particularly) from having reasonable access to the dining car or to the drinking water on the corridor carriages? 3, Will he see that only corridor carriages are provided on this lengthy and fatiguing railway journey in future?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, The passengers travelling in side door coaches do not, of course, have the same degree of access to the dining car as is afforded to those travelling in corridor cars, but drinking water is provided in each compartment. 3, Whenever possible this is done, but on the date in question the train was exceptionally heavy, and had a corridor coach been substituted the load would have been increased to such an extent as to necessitate two engines being employed from Kalgoorlie to Northam, whereas by attaching a side door coach one engine only was required.

## QUESTION—RAILWAY EXPRESS, ALBANY.

Mr. NAIRN asked the Minister for Railways: What was the number of first and second class passengers carried by Albany express (mixed train to Katanning) on Thursday, the 25th January last, and what was the accommodation provided?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Passengers *ex* Albany, 18 first and 33 second class, which was reduced from Mount Barker onward to 10 first and 22 second class. The accommodation provided was, seating accommodation, first class, 25; second class, 90.

## QUESTION—INTERSTATE SHIPPING COMBINE, RETURN PASSAGES.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, Are the Government aware that the Interstate shipping combine now refuse to issue return passages by the Australian ships trading between Western Australia and the Eastern States? 2, Are the Government aware that the ostensible reason for this action was the coal strike, which was amicably settled several weeks ago? 3, Are the Government aware that the cost of a first class return passage from Fremantle has been thereby increased, as follows: to Adelaide, from £10 5s. to £13 10s., increase £3 5s.; to Melbourne, from £13 10s. to £18, increase £4 10s.; to Sydney, from £16 10s. to £22, increase £5 10s.; with corresponding

increases in second class fares? 4, Will the Government bring this matter under the notice of the Prime Minister, with a request that the Federal Price Fixing Tribunal be asked to prevent, at least during the continuance of the great war, the further exploitation of the people of Australia by the firms who have introduced these methods into their control of interstate shipping?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes, but it is claimed by the steamship companies that the settlement involved them in very largely increased expenditure through the advance in the price of coal. 3, The increase in first class fares is as stated, and the increase in second class fares is £2 10s. in each case, whether to Adelaide, Melbourne, or Sydney. Third class fares have not been altered, as it was never the practice to issue third class return tickets. 4, The Government will ask the Prime Minister to have the matter investigated. The shipping companies contend that, whilst all their costs have increased enormously since the war, and they have been subjected to very costly delays through the action of wharf lumpers in holding up ships at different ports, there has been no increase in passenger fares—other than that now imposed—since the war, and no increase in the general cargo freight rates around the Australian coast.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, NYABING-PINGRUP.

Mr. THOMSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, When does he propose to start the Nyabing to Pingrup railway extension? 2, Does he propose to call public tenders for this railway, or will the work be proceeded with at once by day labour, as in the case of Kondinin to Merredin railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, It depends upon the delivery of rails from the Broken Hill Proprietary Co., which may be this month, or may be delayed through lack of available shipping. 2, If rails are available within the next three months it may be possible to utilise the men and plant from the Kondinin northward railway and construct the work by day labour. As the work on this railway is very light, and as the

sleepers will be supplied by the department from sawmill stock on hand, it is thought that the line would not offer sufficient inducement to contractors to put in tenders.

#### QUESTION—PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, POLICE GUARD.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Premier: 1, When were police officers and special constables first placed on guard over Parliament buildings? 2, Was this action taken through fear of a possible attack on the lives of members, or for the safety of the buildings? 3, Are the lives and property of private citizens not equally deserving of this special protection? 4, Is it intended to continue this unnecessary expenditure? 5, What has been the cost to the present date?

The PREMIER replied: 1, October 30th, 1916. 2, Action taken to protect life and property. 3, Protection is afforded to the life and property of all citizens. 4, The services of the special constables employed at the outset have been dispensed with, and it is intended to continue for the time being the employment of the regular members of the force at present detailed for duty at Parliament House. 5, Cost: special constables' wages, £59 11s. 7d.; out-of-pocket expenses of regular police to 31st January, 1917, £2 6s. Total, £61 17s. 7d.

#### SELECT COMMITTEE TRUST FUNDS, EXTENSION OF TIME.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [5.0]: I regret I have to ask a further extension of time for the select committee in which to bring up their report. We have been awaiting the return of a certain witness and unfortunately he has not yet arrived. I move—

*That the time for bringing up the report be extended until next Tuesday.*

Question put and passed.

#### BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

# BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS (No. 2.)

## Recommittal.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray) [5.3]: I beg to move—

*That the Bill be re-committed so as to permit the moving of the following amendments:—1, That a clause be inserted, to stand as Clause 4, in the terms of Clause 4 as printed in the Bill as introduced. 2, That a clause be inserted, to stand as Clause 25 as follows—Power to sell or lease trading concerns—"25. Subject as hereinafter provided, the Minister may sell or lease any trading concern for such amount, and upon such terms and conditions as may be approved by the Governor in Council: Provided that any contract for the sale or lease of a trading concern shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament within fourteen days after the making thereof if Parliament is then sitting, and if not, within fourteen days after the commencement of the next session of Parliament; and if either House of Parliament passes a resolution objecting thereto, such contract or lease shall be void." 3. That a Clause be inserted, to stand as Clause 26 in the terms of Clause 26 as printed in the Bill as introduced. 4, That a Schedule be inserted in the terms of the Schedule as printed in the Bill as introduced.*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.5]: If this motion is carried, would it be necessary for the Minister to discuss the Bill in detail? On the Notice Paper there were notices of amendments for the purpose of considering several other clauses than those specified in the motion.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [5.6]: I propose to object to the re-committal of this Bill in the form suggested. If the Government desire to re-commit the measure, they should re-commit it for the consideration of the Bill in detail. The Minister knows very well that when the Bill was previously before the Committee certain amendments had been placed on the Notice Paper by the member for Guildford affecting certain other clauses. When those

clauses were struck out the member did not proceed with his amendments. If the Government propose to reintroduce the Bill for the purpose of re-inserting the struck out clauses, it is reasonable to ask the Government to agree to the re-consideration of the Bill in detail so that the Committee may have an opportunity of dealing with the amendments which would have been moved by the member for Guildford. The procedure adopted to-day appears to me to be something in the nature of a farce. Surely the Government are in charge of the business of the House. They arrange the Notice Paper, and they ought to know, if any one does, the position of their members when the House meets.

The Premier: That has nothing to do with the question.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It has everything to do with it? If every time the Government loses a Bill or certain clauses of a Bill, we are to have the Bill recommitted it will mean delaying the important business of the country for the purpose of enabling the Government to carry its point.

The Premier: That is what you are doing now, delaying business.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Nothing of the kind. In my opinion this method of conducting the business of the country is something worse than a farce. We have had a statement from the Premier arising out of what happened on Thursday last. He made the assertion that he had received the decision of the Governor and a meeting of the two parties in caucus was held.

Mr. SPEAKER: What has that to do with the motion?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It has everything to do with it.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have no right to discuss the statement made by the Premier on this motion for the recommittal of the Bill.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I am discussing the Premier's statement so far as it affects the recommittal of the Bill. The Bill is proposed to be recommitted because we had a statement from the Premier that the two parties met in conference immediately the House rose on Thursday and that they came to an agreement on that question.

The Minister for Works: There was no meeting on Thursday last.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Will the Minister for Works permit me to address the House. The meeting I refer to was held last night after the House rose. Immediately preceding the meeting of the two parties the Premier told the House that he had submitted a request to His Excellency the Governor for a dissolution but had not received any reply. Now we learn that the two parties met in conference immediately after the House rose and decided on a certain course of action insofar as the Trading Concerns Bill is concerned, and then the Premier immediately took a private member of the House to His Excellency the Governor and advised him that they had come to an arrangement under which they would be able to work together in the future. It is a most extraordinary position.

The Premier: I must take exception to the statement. Is the hon. member in order?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: May I be permitted to respectfully point out that the Premier has made a statement with regard to the business of the House and in the course of that statement we are informed that the two parties met immediately after the House rose and that after conferring together they had decided on a certain line of action regarding this Bill.

Mr. Taylor: And the taxation proposals.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Yes, but I am confining myself to the Trading Concerns Bill. He told us he was able to make a statement to His Excellency the Governor ensuring that the business of the House might be proceeded with.

Mr. SPEAKER: In order to make the matter clear before this discussion proceeds further, I wish to say the motion before the House is that the Bill be recommitted so far as to permit the moving of certain amendments. The question before the House is that motion and nothing else. What may or may not be responsible for the moving of the motion is not the subject for discussion now. I think the leader of the Opposition will have to reserve his remarks for some other occasion. The point has been taken and I have to rule in accordance with the Standing Orders. The question now before the House

is that already read and not some other matters which may be responsible for the motion.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The question before the House is that the Bill be recommitted for certain purposes and I am pointing out that it is being recommitted because of an arrangement made between the two parties.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot discuss that.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Will you tell me what I may speak on?

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to help the leader of the Opposition, but cannot help him if by doing so I am allowing him to abuse the rules of the House. I have no desire to interrupt the hon. member; but the matter appears to me thus, that the only motion to be discussed is that moved by the Minister for Works.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The motion moved by the Minister for Works is that the Bill be recommitted, and I want to show reasons why it should not be recommitted. One reason I am endeavouring to point out is because the practice may grow up in this House whenever the Government finds itself for the time being in a minority on a clause or a Bill to move for the recommitment of the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would point out to the leader of the Opposition that his object would be achieved by moving that a certain Standing Order be rescinded.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The constitution of our Standing Orders provides many things we do not attempt to do, and they provide also against many things which our friends opposite are now doing. I am not discussing the Standing Orders, but merely giving reasons why the Bill should not be recommitted.

The Premier: You are defying the Speaker's ruling.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I repeat I can see no reason why the important business of the country—and we have been told by the *West Australian* that there is important business requiring attention and that has been re-echoed this afternoon by the Premier—should be neglected for the purpose of recommitting a Bill with the object of inserting what we are told is a matter of policy of the past. All other things must be neglected and we must sit down and recommit

the Bill until such time as the Government can bring along a majority in order to force their policy on to the country. I object to that. If the Government desire to be fair—

The Premier: You were very fair last Thursday.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I do not wish to discuss what happened last Thursday. We undoubtedly exercised our right, as His Majesty's Opposition, and having the numbers behind us in amending a Bill that we objected to, in the manner that we desired.

Mr. Foley: The only trouble was we did not go far enough.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) had certain amendments on the Notice Paper, but those were not discussed, owing to other amendments having been made, and all I desire is that the Government in recommitting the Bill might agree to have the whole Bill reconsidered in detail so as to allow the amendments of the member for Guildford to be brought up. That is only a reasonable and fair request. If the Premier agrees to adopt that course I shall raise no further objection to the recommitment of the Bill. Surely he will not take up the position of saying that as we gained our point on Thursday evening by deleting certain clauses which we considered objectionable, he will refuse to allow the Committee to discuss others.

The Premier: You would not allow us to report progress.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Why was there occasion to report progress? The Premier is always telling us that we should do some work.

The Minister for Works: Why did you interfere with Clause 25?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Just to save the Minister for Works from further disgrace. In any case, he could not have passed that clause because he has since had to meet his supporters in conference and come down with an amendment which is more in accord with their wishes. Now he asks why we deleted Clause 25.

The Minister for Works: I think the disgrace rests with you.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: We struck out certain things in the Bill, and now we are giving the Government an opportunity of reintroducing the measure so as to conform with the desire expressed by their own sup-

porters. We struck out Clause 25 because the supporters of the Government would have helped to strike it out. The Government should agree to recommit the Bill in order that it may be considered in detail, and so that the amendments which the member for Guildford had on the Notice Paper might be placed before the Committee. I move an amendment—

*That the words "Clauses 4, 25, 26 and the Schedule as introduced" be struck out and the words "for the purpose of considering the Bill in detail" be inserted.*

Mr. Hudson: The motion itself is not in order according to Standing Order 295.

Mr. SPEAKER: The leader of the Opposition will achieve the object he desires if he moves to strike out all the words after "recommitted." The Bill which is now the subject of discussion is the amended Bill.

Mr. Taylor: We have not seen a copy of it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House at present knows no other Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Can the discussion be limited to the clauses which are mentioned?

Mr. SPEAKER: Once the Bill has been recommitment any amendment may be considered.

#### *Point of Order.*

Mr. Hudson: On a point of order, I would draw attention to Standing Order 295, which says, "On the motion for the adoption of the report the whole Bill may, on motion be recommitted." We want the whole Bill. The motion moved by the Minister for Works refers to Clause 4, 25, 26, and the Schedule as introduced. Are they now in the Bill before the House? Can we recommit the Bill in respect to what is not in the Bill itself? How can we recommit the whole of the Bill when certain clauses are not there?

Mr. Speaker: The Standing Orders provide that a Bill may on motion be recommitted and further amendments made. What the Minister for Works proposes is that the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of moving certain amendments. If his motion is carried he will be able to move those amendments. The leader of the Opposition desires



that the whole Bill shall be recommitted. When the Bill is recommitted the leader of the Opposition will be able to move any amendments he desires provided that the amendment is relevant to the Bill.

Hon. J. Seaddan: The member for Yilgarn (Mr. Hudson) has asked whether it is permissible to move for the recommitment of a Bill and confine that recommitment to certain clauses. The Standing Order which has been quoted reads, "On the motion for the adoption of the report the whole Bill may, on motion, be recommitted and further amendments made." The Minister for Works is only permitting the Bill to be recommitment for the purpose of certain amendments only being made to portion of the Bill. At any rate, we can get over the whole of the difficulty if the Government will agree to the suggestion I have made.

Mr. Speaker: The Minister for Works did not move the motion in the terms set out in the Notice Paper. He moved in the direction of recommitting the Bill so far as to permit the moving of certain amendments. That was perfectly in order.

Mr. Hudson: That is limiting the scope.

Mr. Speaker: That may limit the scope, but that is the intention of the Minister for Works. The leader of the Opposition has now the right to move that all the words after "recommit" be struck out. That will permit the moving of any amendment desired by any member of the House.

Mr. Hudson: If the amendment that is proposed is carried, then the amendments which were on the Notice Paper in the name of the member for Guildford may be proposed.

Mr. Speaker: That is so.

Mr. Hudson: If, on the other hand, the Minister for Works with the following he has arranged for, defeats the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition, then the motion will stand and only certain clauses will be considered. I contend that is not in accordance with the Standing Orders, and it is on that that I would like a ruling.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): You are confusing Standing Order 295 with the motion moved by the Minister for Works.

Mr. Speaker: With respect to the point taken by the member for Yilgarn, I rule

that the motion moved by the Minister for Works is in order. The House has power to order as he desires by his motion.

Mr. Hudson: As Clause 4 has been deleted from the Bill, it is not being recommitted, and yet it is referred to in the motion as we have it. What is Clause 4?

The Minister for Works: The same as in the old Bill.

Mr. Hudson: It is nothing of the kind.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member is reading from the Notice Paper. The motion moved by the Minister for Works is not the motion set out on the Notice Paper. He has altered the terms of his motion, which does not include Clause 4.

Mr. Hudson: The Minister for Works has given the House notice of a motion, but has moved another, which is not fair to the House.

Mr. Speaker: What the Minister for Works has done is quite in keeping with the Standing Orders of the House.

Hon. P. Collier: The motion as moved by the Minister for Works is not in the same terms as it appears in the addendum to the Notice Paper.

Mr. Speaker: That is quite correct. It is quite possible that the Minister for Works may see occasion to alter the terms of his motion.

Hon. P. Collier: He might have explained it at the time.

Mr. Speaker: And there is no objection to that course being taken.

Mr. Taylor: You have accepted the amendment of the leader of the Opposition to the motion as it appears on the addendum to the Notice Paper.

Mr. Speaker: I have.

Mr. Taylor: But the hon. gentleman never moved it. The words that the leader of the Opposition proposed to strike out are not contained in the motion as we now have it.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is under a misconception. The Minister for Works did not move the motion as it appeared on the addendum but moved that which I have read out to the House. That is the motion to which the leader of the Opposition proposes to move an amendment.

Mr. Mullany: Should the motion, as now moved by the Minister for Works, be carried without alteration, will it then be possible

for another member of the Committee to move further amendments, or discuss other clauses in the Bill, apart from those mentioned by the Minister for Works?

Mr. Speaker: No, it will not. If the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition is carried, such a course will be possible.

Mr. Hudson: I understand the motion of the Minister for Works to be that the Bill be recommitted, with a view to certain amendments being proposed after that recommitment takes place. The actual and substantial motion is that the Bill be recommitted, namely the whole Bill as it left the House, but he adds to that "with a view to the insertion of further amendments." That is only an expression of opinion and is not a substantial part of his motion. I submit it is mere surplusage and should be deleted and ruled out as not in order in the motion. The only motion that can be moved is that the Bill be recommitted. I submit that all the words after "recommitment" need not be moved to be struck out by way of amendment, but that they should be ruled by you as being out of order under the Standing Orders.

Mr. Speaker: Were I to rule as desired by the hon. member, I would be ruling contrary to the well known practice of the House. I can only rule as I have ruled, and do not intend to rule in any other way.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is directly contrary to Standing Order 295.

#### *Debate Resumed.*

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [5.45]: I now move an amendment—

*That all the words after "recommitment" be struck out and the words "to enable the Bill to be reconsidered in detail" inserted in lieu.*

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [5.41]: I second the amendment.

Mr. HUDSON (Yilgarn) [5.42]: The leader of the Opposition has moved an amendment that certain words be struck out, so that the rest of the resolution would not be included in the motion. I contend that the original motion should be put as you have put the amendment now. The motion

that should go to the House should be that the Bill be recommitted, and stop there.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already decided that point. It cannot be raised again.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [5.43]: In the event of the amendment being defeated, would I be permitted to move that certain other clauses be considered in addition to those already mentioned by the Minister for Works?

Mr. SPEAKER: If the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition is carried it will throw the Bill open for any amendment. If it is defeated the discussion must be confined to the proposals of the Minister for Works.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [5.44]: If my amendment is defeated, could the member for Guildford then move an amendment adding other clauses to the motion, so that they, too, could be discussed?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can effect that purpose.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [5.45]: In support of the amendment, I think the Minister for Works will realise that there is some necessity for dealing with the whole of the Bill if necessary. While he is desirous of placing the Bill before the Committee, with the object of inserting clauses which it is desired by the Government as part of their policy to put in, he ought to be just as anxious to place the Bill before the Committee in its original condition. The Minister desires to put back in the Bill something which was removed from it in Committee last week.

The Minister for Works: You passed the other things.

Mr. TAYLOR: We passed them consequent upon the objectionable portions being removed. We desire to be able to—

The Minister for Works: Hinder the Bill becoming law.

Mr. TAYLOR: To prevent objectionable principles being embodied in the Bill. The Minister should accept the amendment. There are very few clauses in the Bill which would be affected by the amendments desired to be made by the member for Guildford. If we carry the motion it will preclude the member for Guildford and this side of the House from dealing with the amendments which were on the Notice Paper last Thursday

night. Why is the Minister afraid that we shall debate these clauses to-day? The reason why they were not debated on Thursday was because the objectionable provisions had been removed from the Bill and there was no necessity. Why should not the Government allow these clauses to be debated if necessary now?

The Minister for Works: Because we want to get on with the business of the country.

Mr. TAYLOR: I think the Government should accept the amendment to allow members to deal with the whole of the Bill. It is not fair to place a portion only of the Bill before the House. This is no new Bill. It is the same Bill that we had before us on Thursday and we desire to discuss the whole Bill and the Government should enable that to be done.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [5.46]: The member for Guildford tabled a number of amendments which he was quite within his rights in doing. So would any other member have been within his rights in tabling amendments. I asked for amendments so that they might be considered. The amendments which were tabled, but which were not discussed, related to the machinery clauses of the Bill and I claim that I am quite right and justified in taking as a reason why the hon. member did not discuss these amendments was because he found they were unnecessary. It is true that Clause 4 had been struck out.

Mr. Munsie: Which had a direct bearing on these amendments.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is true Clause 4 had been deleted. If the abolition of Clause 4 carried out the full desires of the Opposition why did they proceed with any further portion of the Bill and having got through 20 clauses take Clauses 25 and 26 as matters to be debated? I have a right to take this assumption: if they had the right to debate Clauses 25 and 26 they had a right to debate those clauses preceding.

Mr. Hudson: Are you going to agree to the amendment?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, we are not.

Mr. Munsie: You want to gag us.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Anyone who could gag the hon. member should have a statute erected to his memory.

Mr. Munsie: But you would gag anyone.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government do not propose to accept the amendment because they consider it unnecessary. If there had been discussion necessary members would have discussed these clauses on a previous evening. They had a right to discuss the clauses then and they did discuss Clause 25 and 26 but not the others. There is no reason why these clauses should be placed before members again.

Mr. Munsie: You did not go to a division on Clause 25.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What we did or did not do are matters of history.

Mr. Foley: And the criticism which you levelled on two members of the Country party who are now in the Chamber is also matter of history.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know to what the hon. member refers.

Mr. Foley: But you have a pretty good idea.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government do not propose to accept the amendment for the reasons I have stated.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.49]: There is no doubt in my mind that on Thursday night several clauses of the Bill had received fair discussion. Members will have noted that there appeared amendments on the Notice Paper in the name of the member for Guildford. During the discussion on the second reading members on the Opposition side of the House as well as on the Ministerial side strongly objected to certain clauses of the measure. As a matter of fact, the member for Irwin spoke very strongly in regard to the financial obligations of the trading concerns, saying that they should be fairly dealt with. The member for Swan spoke strongly on the Bill in regard to depreciation, and other members spoke very strongly on the action of the Treasurer in taking the surplus revenue from the trading concerns and putting it into Consolidated Revenue. When we saw that the Premier and his col-

leagues folded their arms and sat down helpless and would not say aye or nay to any clause, we assumed that it would be advisable at the time to pass the machinery clauses and strike out the objectionable ones. The Government were helpless to do anything. They would not attempt to do anything to bring the Bill into a workable shape. That being so we are justified under present conditions in asking that an opportunity should be given for considering the Bill clause by clause as it was first introduced. The Government took no action at all when the clauses were put they would not vote; the life was knocked entirely out of them. During the last 24 hours they have become a little lively again but in a few hours longer it will be different. Members who have looked through the Bill carefully must realise that many of the financial provisions are going to press hard on the trading concerns. They will have the effect of placing the trading concerns in a worse light before the public than they actually are. Take one of the proposed amendments in regard to interest. The Government to show our trading concerns in a worse light than they actually are have placed a large amount of interest on the capital on each of the concerns. When the Liberal Government were in office previously not only did they not pay interest on the working capital but they did not keep an account of the cost of the works that were carried out—the work done for the various departments under their own schedules. No interest was charged for work done at the Fremantle Harbour workshops. There was no intention, but now the Minister, because he wants to show the public the concerns in a wrong light, says interest should be charged on the works, whereas it was never charged before. On the 30th of June last year there was £40,000 owing to the Implement Works at North Fremantle by various Government departments. Why should not interest be charged on the amount of work which was done?

Mr. SPEAKER: This no doubt is very interesting, but it has no bearing on the question before the House.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am giving reasons for the recommittal of the whole of the clauses. I want to show to the public

the honest position of the trading concerns. No Government should have an opportunity, as has been attempted in the past, of placing the trading concerns before the public in a worse light than they are.

The Premier: Oh, no; we could not put them in a worse light than you did last February. I never heard such condemnation before.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I told the truth about them and started to put them in order. As an actual proof of what I have been saying according to the Government's own estimates the trading concerns are to benefit the country this year by £106,000.

The Minister for Works: Only expected.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: God help the deficit, if it was not for the trading concerns.

The Minister for Works: I hope it will be realised.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I use these arguments for the express purpose of trying to show members the necessity for reconsidering the whole Bill. I claim the vote of the member for Swan in this direction.

Mr. Hickmott: Have these clauses not been considered previously?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. The Premier and Ministers folded their arms and remained silent as if to say "go to the devil." I think we on this side can claim the vote of the member for Swan (Mr. Nairn), who strongly opposed the proposal that the Treasurer should fix the amount of depreciation, declaring that it required experts.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow this discussion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not discussing, I am merely showing reasons.

Mr. SPEAKER: Unfortunately, the reasons have no point.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It would be a good point if I could get the vote of the member for Swan. In the interests of the trading concerns, we should recommit the whole Bill and try to put it into proper shape. It is not the first Bill over which the Government have blundered. Several of their measures have been abandoned altogether. The carrying of the amendment would give us an opportunity of exchanging ideas. On a Bill like this it is essential that the question should be freely discussed.

Last Thursday the Government refused to take any part whatever in the discussion. It is the duty of hon. members opposite to help us get workable schemes for the trading concerns.

The Minister for Works: The schemes are all right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have said so time after time, but this is the first occasion on which it has been admitted on that side. Still, the Bill aims at improving those schemes, and therefore it should be fully discussed. On Thursday night the Government refused to help us put these concerns on a sound footing. The member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. JOHNSON) proposes to move amendments in respect of the auditing of accounts and of the disposal of any surplus. I am sure we can make of the Bill a good working measure.

The Premier: You are inviting the application of the gag.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not stonewalling. I could not do it. This is a most important Bill. It means the livelihood of hundreds of men employed in the trading concerns, and it means the material assistance of the farmers and of the State at large. I hope the Government will allow the whole Bill to be recommitted so that it may be put into better shape in order to help them to wipe out the deficit which, as a matter of fact, would have been much larger than it is but for the trading concerns.

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

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [7.30]: I support the amendment. If the whole Bill is not recommitted the position in respect to it will be most unsatisfactory. If the amendment is carried we can move those amendments which we on this side of the House desire. If it is defeated it will be necessary for us to move for the consideration of the clauses of which amendments were given notice previous to the debate on Thursday last. Clause 25 proposes to give the Government power to sell, and Clause 26 details where the money shall go in the event of such sale. This last clause is one of the most important in the Bill, if not the most important. If, therefore, Clause 25 is going

to be reinserted surely Clause 26 must also be considered. We are going to give the Government power to sell these concerns, involving a million and a quarter of money, so that they can use the money for the purpose of relieving revenue.

The Minister for Works: Prove it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Is the Minister prepared to extend to us the opportunity of dealing with this most important clause? If the motion is carried the House will be precluded from doing this.

The Minister for Works: The motion provides that this shall be dealt with.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It will be a public scandal if discussion on the clause is not allowed. That emphasises the other amendments which were proposed to the original Bill. The withdrawal of Subclause 2 of Clause 4 removed the necessity for a considerable number of amendments, with the result that they were not moved at all.

The Minister for Works: You recognise that you wrecked the Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We have not done so. The Minister said he particularly wanted the machinery clauses of the Bill and we allowed them to go through. If Clause 4 is put back the Bill will be in its original shape, and the Committee should have the privilege of discussing the amendments of which notice has been given.

The Minister for Works: Clause 4 does not affect them.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It has a direct effect upon them. We on the Opposition side of the House are not getting an opportunity of discussing the Bill as we should do. Seeing that it is a machinery Bill, it is essentially one that should be reviewed in Committee. I do not suppose the discussion will be reported at any length in the Government Press, because it is the Government Press, but it will appear in *Hansard* and it will thus be shown that the Bill has been carefully reviewed. That being the case, members on the Government side will have to take the responsibility of what was done. To-day the public do not know the exact provisions of the Bill. The public gather their information from the columns of *Hansard* out of the criticisms which have been made concerning the Bill. If there is nothing in *Hansard* and nothing

in the papers, because the matter has not been discussed, how are the contents of the Bill to be conveyed to the public? We are prepared to accept the decision of the Chamber in regard to the Bill, but we want the public and members of the House to realise what they are voting on, so that they will take the responsibility of voting with their eyes open and not blindfolded as many of them are to-day. The measure has not been considered to any great extent by members supporting the Government. It completely reverses the policy of the late Government, as endorsed by the people when they last appealed to them at a general election. The present Government are reversing that policy without any mandate from the people to do so. This is a Bill of far reaching effect and vast importance. If the Government had gone to the country and received a mandate from the people to carry out these new proposals we would have had to abide by the decision.

Mr. HUDSON: The Governor had to dissuade them from their intention of doing so.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not know that they were very sincere. I am of opinion that one of the reasons why the Government did not press for a dissolution is that they were not prepared to go to the people on the question of this Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is out of order.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It does not alter the fact that the people have not been consulted and have not given their decision. By doing what the Minister for Works proposes, we shall prevent discussion of many of the main clauses. I admit that several of the clauses most objectionable to the Opposition have been deleted. But the whole Bill would not be before the Committee if the motion were carried, and the Opposition would be out of order in drawing attention to objectionable features of other clauses.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is repeating himself, and talking all round the subject.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I have no desire to discuss the matter further. I have tried to make the House realise the importance of the question. The amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition gives scope for dis-

cussion of the entire Bill in Committee. I would be quite satisfied if the Government would afford the Committee an opportunity of discussing those clauses in respect of which notices of amendment had been given. It is essential that the Committee should have an opportunity of considering amendments which members had taken the trouble to place on the Notice Paper. If there were any prospect of amendments being sprung, one could understand the objection on the part of the Government. But there can be no doubt of the genuineness of the amendments of which notice was given.

The Minister for Works: The amendments are not on the Notice Paper.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: They were on the Notice Paper yesterday.

Mr. HUDSON: And they had been on the Notice Paper for a month.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I appeal for a review of the whole Bill in detail, as suggested by the leader of the Opposition; but, if the House cannot go that length, let us be reasonable and accord to the country what is its right, namely, a review of the Bill as I have suggested.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	22

Majority against .. 4

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Collier	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Underwood.
Mr. Holman	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Lambert	(Teller.)
Mr. Mullany	

#### NOES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Smith
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. George	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Verryard
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Willmott
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller.)
Mr. Nairn	

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I move an amendment—

*That the following be added to the motion:—Clause 4, Subclause 2, line 3—Strike out "Parliament" and insert "Legislative Assembly." Clause 7, Subclause 2,—Strike out all words after "trading concern" in line three. Clause 8, par. (a).—Add after "undertaking," in the last line, "such interest and sinking fund shall not be greater than the actual interest and sinking fund applying to such loan funds." Par. (b).—Add after "Governor," "Before imposing further contribution to the sinking fund the Minister shall take into consideration the depreciation provided for from the Revenue of the trading concern." Clause 9, Subclause 2.—Add after "Treasurer," in second line, "but shall not be greater than the average rate then being paid on General Loan Funds." Clause 10.—Strike out in lines two and three the words "in the opinion of the Colonial Treasurer." Clause 13.—Add the following words: "If such credit is used for other than the purposes of the trading concern the current rate of interest shall be paid into the trading concern account." Clause 15.—Add the following words: "In fixing such depreciation due regard shall be given to the sinking fund provision." Clause 18.—Add the following words "current rate of interest shall be paid into the trading concerns account on the amount so transferred." Clause 23, Subclause 3.—Add the following words: "but shall not exceed the average current rates being paid on General Loan Funds." Clause 27.—Strike out the words "Colonial Treasurer," in line 3, and insert "Auditor General."*

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [8.0]: I trust the Minister for Works will agree to this amendment. I can understand the objection raised by the Minister to the previous amendment, which sought the recommittal of the whole Bill, but I cannot understand that the Minister can have objection to this amendment, particularly in view of the reasons given by him for objecting to the previous one. When introducing the Bill the Minister said it contained three principles. Two of

those principles are contained in the two clauses deleted from the Bill on Thursday last. The other principle, bookkeeping and putting the State trading concerns on a sound footing, is contained in the amendments proposed by the Minister. During the second reading I stated I was prepared to give the Minister every assistance to put the management and bookkeeping arrangements of the trading concerns on a sound basis. That I am still prepared to do. The amendment asks that the Committee shall have an opportunity of considering the machinery clauses. The Minister gave as a reason for refusing to accept the amendment by the leader of the Opposition that members on this side of the House had had an opportunity of discussing the amendments now moved when they were on the Notice Paper previously. But the whole of these amendments are consequential upon the two main clauses which were deleted from the Bill. Therefore, when the clauses had been deleted there was no necessity for members to discuss the amendments. I would draw the Minister's attention to the last of the amendments proposed by the member for Guildford, and ask him what would be the good of this House debating that proposed amendment after Clause 25 had been struck out of the Bill.

The Minister for Works: It is not consequential on Clause 25; it is something entirely different.

Mr. MUNSIE: I would like the Minister to explain how it is different.

Hon. P. Collier: If it is not consequential on the clause, it is incidental thereto.

The Minister for Works: I agree with you there.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Minister has stressed his desire that members should give fair consideration to this Bill and put forward their best efforts to give the country the best possible Bill for the control of the trading concerns. I am merely asking the Minister to be reasonable. I realise that the Government will succeed in reinstating the two clauses previously struck out, and therefore I desire the Committee shall have an opportunity of discussing the management clauses. Had the Committee not struck out those clauses, I should have fought as bitterly to have the

amendments included in the Bill, as I did to have the clauses deleted. I think the leader of the Opposition will be prepared to give an undertaking that the amendments will be discussed without undue delay and that we, on this side of the House, are prepared to pass all the other clauses than those in respect of which amendments have been moved by the Minister and the member for Guildford. The Minister must admit that if the amendments suggested by the member for Guildford be carried, it would make a considerable difference to the management portion of the Bill. I therefore trust the Minister will afford us an opportunity of discussing those clauses in the interests of the Bill itself and in the interests of the country.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	..	22

Majority against .. 4

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Green	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Holman	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Walker
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Lambert	Mr. O'Loughlen

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Roblison
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Hardwick

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [S.18]: I intend to oppose the motion, because I consider that the House is engaged in a ridiculous waste of time. We have heard it said often that this House should only be engaged upon business which is really of vital im-

portance to the national welfare. Can this Bill, by any stretch of imagination, be characterised as a win-the-war Bill? We have on the Notice Paper two pages of items of considerable importance, matters affecting the financial welfare of the State. These should receive immediate consideration, especially as the State is drifting to leeward at the rate of millions a year. Yet Ministers cannot find time to bring these questions forward; they prefer to waste time in discussing a tiddlywinking Bill which cannot possibly have any effect on the financial position of the State. If the House is occupied in wasting time in the pursuit of party warfare the responsibility for that waste of time rests upon the shoulders of those who bring the Bills down.

The Premier: What has that to do with the motion?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It has everything to do with the motion. The House should not be engaged on matters of this description which are of no importance to the State.

The Minister for Works: This is of importance to the State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know as much about it as the Minister for Works, and I say it is not.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You could never know as much as the Minister for Works if you lived 200 years.

Hon. P. COLLIER: From what the Premier said this afternoon, we gather that it is proposed to jettison quite a number of Bills. Why? I suppose it is to allow Ministers to get back to their offices to give time and attention to affairs of State.

Hon. J. Scaddan: It is because the Country party submarined them without giving them notice.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If it is so desirable that the session should be closed at the earliest moment, why put forward a Bill of this character, except that it be for the purpose of spiking the guns of the Labour party if they should succeed in being returned at the next election.

The Minister for Works: Which Labour party?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The one that kept the Government merry on Thursday night.



This Bill is an evidence of the fact that Ministers themselves do not expect to be returned to the Treasury bench after the next election, and they want to make sure that the Labour party, if they come back, will not have the opportunity of dealing with the trading concerns.

The Minister for Works: Again I ask you, which Labour party?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Whichever party it is, the hon. member and his party are not game to engage them in a contest.

The Minister for Works: Which party do you represent?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister for Works will not sidetrack me by asking questions of that kind. The responsibility is on the Government and on the Country party as well, the naughty boys who were away rabbit-catching last week, when, according to the Press, they should have been attending to their Parliamentary duties. There have now been several days wasted in the consideration of this measure, and this is the way in which the business of the House is being conducted. What can anyone expect other than a hopeless drift month by month towards bankruptcy? We should be engaged in the consideration of measures dealing with financial matters, instead of frittering away our time on a Bill of this kind which cannot possibly have any effect for the next twelve months so far as the welfare of the State is concerned. I am going to oppose the recommittal of the Bill, and members will do their duty likewise if they follow my example. Who is responsible for this motion being submitted? Is it the Ministry urged on by the Country party, or is it the Country party that is being dragged on the heels of the Ministry? Will the Minister for Works say that this is a win-the-war Bill? All kinds of questions are being dragged in at the present time as being of national importance. But in the wildest flights of imagination could anyone characterise this as being of the win-the-war nature? Therefore why waste time in the consideration of it, except that it be to give Ministers power to say that for all time whatever Government may be in charge of the affairs of the State, and irrespective of whatever decision the people may give at

the polls, no new trading concerns may be introduced. In Clause 25 we have evidence of the fact of the slipsbod manner in which Bills are drafted and thrown on the Table of the House.

Mr. Mullany: The accountants drafted this Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why did not the Minister stick to his original Clause 25?

Mr. Munsie: The naughty boys told him he had to drop it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is further evidence of the kind of responsible Government we have to-day. We find that the eight members of the Country party are dictating the policy of the Government. The Government come down with a Bill containing a clause to give them absolute power to dispose of these concerns without consulting anyone, but, having ascertained that certain members of the Country party were not prepared to support it—as well as some members of the Liberal party—they now come down with an amended proposal.

The Minister for Works: What an imagination you have.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no imagination about it. The new clause proves what I have said. Either the Bill as it was originally presented to the House was ill-considered, or else the Government are now taking their instructions from the eight members of the Country party who are keeping them in office.

The Minister for Works: Let it go at that; go on with your argument.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is argument, and very pertinent too. The deputation which waited on the Governor last evening—I cannot call it anything but a deputation—in order to present to His Excellency the new aspect of the solidarity arrived at—

Mr. O'Loughlen: And to get a drink and a couple of cigars.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What I would like to know is whether the deputation informed the Governor that the matter had been patched up subject to this amendment.

The Minister for Works: I am surprised at you asking a question like that; you ought to know that what passes between the Governor and Ministers is never disclosed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is because I know the position that I ask why a private member like the member for Nelson, who is not an adviser to the Governor, should be called in to give advice on a matter like this.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not discuss the Governor.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will not pursue the matter any further, except to say that it was a highly improper proceeding. Having said that, I will leave it there for the present.

The Minister for Works: That is a reflection on the Governor.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not care if it is.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not pursue the matter any further.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Very well. We may perhaps have an opportunity of pursuing it on some other occasion and in some other way.

The Minister for Works: Leave him out.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not after the message he sent here to-day.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I would ask the leader of the party who took such a prominent part in the events of the last day or two, the leader of the naughty boys, whether he proposes to support the recommitment of this Bill? We would be better engaged discussing taxation measures than in wasting time on a Bill of this character. I will oppose the recommitment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	22
Noes	..	..	..	..	18

Majority against .. 4

# AYES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Smith
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. George	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Willmott
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Le-froy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller.)
Mr. Naira	

# NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Collier	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Holman	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Lambert	(Teller.)
Mr. Mullany	

Question thus passed.

# In Committee.

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

New Clause:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

*That the following be added as Clause 4:—Application of Act.—(1) This Act shall apply to—(a) The trading concerns mentioned in the schedule hereto; (b) Such other trading concerns as Parliament may hereafter authorise the establishment of and declare to be subject to this Act. (2.) No trading concerns, other than those to which this Act applies or shall apply shall, unless expressly authorised by Parliament, be hereafter established or carried on by the Government of the State or by any person acting on behalf of such Government or under its authority. (3) The expression "trading concern" means any concern carried on with a view to making profits or producing revenue, or of competing with any trade or industry now or to be hereafter established, or of entering into any business beyond the usual functions of State Government.*

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I hope the clause will not be inserted in its entirety. On Thursday last the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) moved an amendment to strike out "Parliament" in Subclause 2, and insert "Legislative Assembly" in lieu thereof. I then objected to the amendment on the score that it was attempting to place in one House alone the power of passing legislation, and I pointed out in any case that it was contrary to the Constitution. At the same time I made it clear that the un-amended clause also would have the effect of placing all the power in the hands of an-

other place. In 1911 the people returned our party with an overwhelming majority, yet when we attempted to put our policy into operation, the Legislative Council prevented us from so doing. The clauses as printed will serve to perpetuate the possibility of that sort of thing. The Liberal party have not received a mandate from the people to close any of the trading concerns or even to prevent the establishment of others. Yet in the clause they are asking Parliament to make it impossible for the people at any future time to give expression to their will that the system of State trading concerns should be further developed. The clause can have no effect upon the operations of the trading concerns already established nor on those of trading concerns which may be established in the future. Moreover, seeing that the Government have declared themselves against the establishment of additional concerns, they will not require the provision contained in the clause. Consequently it can have no effect except in restricting the actions of future Governments. The policy of the present Government is to exercise their power—which they have received, not from the people, but from certain members who were elected by the people as a mark of their dissatisfaction with the Liberal party—with a view to preventing the public from giving effect to their will. Liberalism in Australia is doomed, and the Government can see the writing on the wall. This policy of preventing the free expression of the will of the people must give place to a democratic expression of opinion. They want to take every opportunity of preventing that and here is one of those opportunities. And it is an effective one. The tendency on the one hand of capitalism is to combine for their own benefit, and their own benefit means the detriment of the general community. The general community is waking up to this to-day, and saying that if these things are necessary for their existence they ought to be controlled in their interests, and not in the interests of a few persons only. The Government are taking advantage of the few fleeting months which they may have at their disposal for the purpose of preventing the people in the

future from giving effect to their will. They are deliberately using powers that they are not entitled to use, and which they were not authorised to use, which is having the effect of driving the people to unification, which is the very thing that it is desired to prevent. We have heard a lot of talk about caucus rule in the Labour party, but it is not to be compared with what exists amongst our friends opposite. Here we have the spectacle of the Premier of the State dropping a bomb shell, according to the papers, in the Assembly for the purpose of fighting his own supporters. We then find him bringing them along to a party meeting, a Caucus meeting. We have so often heard in relation to Caucus meetings that this is a policy of hush and should no longer continue; and yet we find to-day that the Premier, or someone else, when approached refuses to make any reference to the subject of their meetings and to the arrangements made thereat. This Bill would not be pressed except for one purpose, and that is the attempt on the part of the Government to restore their prestige as a Ministry, and nothing else. They have dropped a number of important proposals appearing on the Notice Paper merely for the purpose of obtaining from a third party in the House sufficient support to enable them to restore their lost prestige on this particular measure. What is there in this particular clause which will help the State in any of its existing difficulties, or in any one direction? Is it going to help us to stop the awful drift in our finances, now under the control of the men possessed of "business acumen."

Mr. Nairn: If we had been there five years ago it would not have existed.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: There are too many people who live either in the past or in the future, and who take a gloomy outlook upon the future by looking back at the things which have transpired. There are too many persons who do not look at the present. How is this going to help us to stop the drift in our finances, or help us to provide a better system for the repatriation of our soldiers? How is it going to effect any economies in our State departments or the general business of the community?

Hon. P. Collier: Or stop the deficit.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Will not the Minister admit that this clause has no immediate effect, unless the Government propose to establish other trading concerns?

The Minister for Works: You do not know.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: What object can the Government have in insisting upon proceeding with a measure of this kind, when at the same time they are prepared to drop those Bills which they contend would save the country from bankruptcy? We have on the Notice Paper a list of the financial proposals of the Government which were brought down, according to the Treasurer himself, as the policy of the Liberals to straighten our finances and save us from bankruptcy. All their magnificent financial proposals are going to be cast overboard.

The Minister for Works: That is your opinion.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I know that these financial proposals which the Liberals said meant so much to the State are being thrown overboard, because the Country party insist upon this being done, and because the Government had to throw them over in order to get their support to pass this clause, which means nothing to the country.

The Minister for Works: Why do you not discuss the Bill?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Here we have a Liberal Government absolutely disregarding the welfare of the State, which we are told requires such close attention, in order merely to retain possession of the Treasury benches and the support of this party.

The Minister for Works: That is not correct.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It is absolutely correct. They went through the Notice Paper and decided at this Caucus meeting that, subject to the Country party agreeing to rehabilitate them in the eyes of the public, owing to the offence committed by the Committee last week in not agreeing to their absurd proposals in the State Trading Concerns Bill, and to their recommitting the Bill and putting in this clause, which means nothing to the credit of the State, they would drop a number of the Bills appearing on the Notice Paper.

The Minister for Works: What has this to do with the Bill?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I want to know why this matter is being forced upon the Chamber to-night?

The Minister for Works: You are only wasting time.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister for Works is not in order in stating that we are wasting time. I ask him to withdraw the remark.

The Minister for Works: I withdraw the words "wasting time."

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The Liberal Government paid this price—and they have paid previous prices for the support of the Country party—to get them out of their bungling, and to prevent any other Labour Government establishing State trading concerns. The price they paid was that they would drop the following matters from the Notice Paper. There is firstly, the Enemy Subjects Disability Bill. Is the Attorney General proceeding with that measure? This was the first leaf in his book.

Mr. Piesse: There was no such arrangement.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: They will drop the Betting Suppressing Bill. I know one individual who would be delighted at this, and he is not a bookmaker. They will drop the Entertainments and Retail Sales Taxation Bill, the Land and Income Tax Bill, the Dividend Duties Act Amendment Bill, the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment Bill, the Totalisator Duty Act Amendment Bill, the Permanent Reserves Act Amendment Bill, the Permanent Reserves Bill (No. 3), the Permanent Reserves Bill (No. 2), and the Special Lease Enabling Bill. All these measures are to be thrown overboard and all that we have left are the Fire Brigades Bill, which is of a non-contentious nature, the Special Lease (Stirling Estate) Bill, and the Land Act Amendment Bill. It has also been agreed with the Country party to throw overboard the Electoral Districts Bill. The credit of the State is nothing in comparison with the absolute necessity for remaining on the Treasury benches for another month or two if possible. Why do not the Government

take the responsibility of the position they hold and say to their friends on the cross benches, "Here is our policy, we are going to put it into operation or ask the country to endorse it, or otherwise?" The Country party have had the strength, and one must compliment them upon it notwithstanding that they only number eight, to say to the Government, "We want certain things, give them to us or you will go out."

Mr. Piesse: No fear.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The Government found that this was a bomb which was loaded. It was not an observation balloon which could be pulled down at their own convenience. The Liberal Government talk about their responsibilities as a Government, and about the necessity at the present juncture of restoring confidence, but there never was a time in the history of the State when there was less confidence than exists at the present moment in the Government of the country. I am not speaking from the standpoint of the wage earner, but of the men who frequent St. George's terrace. If the men on the Terrace would only give utterance to their convictions openly—but they will not for party purposes—it would be found that they are heartily sick of the chaotic state into which the country has been thrown through the muddling of our friends on the Government benches. The Government propose to get out of this muddle by jettisoning all these important measures. Now, for the purpose of obtaining the support of the cross benches, and in order to retain office for a few months longer, the Liberal Government have abandoned all their financial proposals.

The Premier: I rise to a point of order. I want to say, first of all, that this is an absolute breach of confidence on the part of the leader of the Opposition.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

The Premier: That the leader of the Opposition is not discussing the question before the Committee. He is retailing a private communication which I gave to his Whip to lay before him. That is a most dishonourable action. The Whip comes to me, and—

The CHAIRMAN: The leader of the Opposition is opposing the inclusion of this clause, and he is giving his reasons.

The Premier: He is disclosing a private communication which I gave to his Whip, and which had just been handed to him. It is most dishonourable.

The CHAIRMAN: The Premier has his remedy by speaking after the leader of the Opposition. The Premier should withdraw his statement that the leader of the Opposition is doing something dishonourable.

The Premier: To disclose a private communication of that sort! I never heard of such a thing.

The CHAIRMAN: The Premier must withdraw.

The Premier: I withdraw, Sir. I take the point of order that the leader of the Opposition is not addressing himself to the question before the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: The leader of the Opposition is perfectly in order. He is opposing the inclusion of this clause, and is stating that there are more important matters to be dealt with than this clause.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I had almost overlooked the fact that we have before us a huge Bill file, which cost much public money to print; and many measures on that file are to be simply jettisoned. I object to going on, in such circumstances, with a Bill like this, which is of no importance except for the purpose of restoring the prestige of the Government.

The Premier: What has this to do with the clause?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The Premier himself, in this very Chamber, has repeatedly mentioned these other measures as embodying the policy of the Liberal party.

The Premier: I rise to a point of order. We are not now discussing the policy of the Liberals or the policy of the Labour party. We are discussing this clause. I appeal again, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. member is out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: When the leader of the Opposition is out of order, I shall draw his attention to the fact. I am keeping an eye on the debate.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I am dealing with the necessity for reinserting this clause in the Bill. This clause appears to be the only

policy the Government have left now. Everything else that formed their policy has been remitted for future consideration.

The Premier: Discuss the clause.

[*Mr. Carpenter took the Chair.*]

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Of what benefit can this clause be in the near future? How will it help the Government in their financial difficulties? How is anyone to benefit from the clause? Why should there be all this party wrangling at the present juncture? Yet we hear the Premier time and again urging the dropping of party politics and the adoption of a win-the-war policy. This clause represents the Government's idea of a national policy. They proceed in the knowledge that there is a privileged Chamber which will prevent this Chamber from giving effect to the will of the people.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am opposed to Clause 4, because it delegates the powers of this Chamber to another place. If the Government would reasonably meet the Opposition, there would be no strong objection to the Bill. Surely the Government, unless they have some motive which they cannot avow, would bear with us in seeking to maintain the responsibility of the Assembly for Bills of this nature. It is the duty of members of the Assembly, as Ministers well know, jealously to guard the privileges of this Chamber. The Government, instead of performing that honourable function, seek to delegate the Assembly's powers to another place. The Minister for Works might well expect criticism of the Bill from this side since he knows that it is the set policy of the Labour party to establish State trading concerns. No one would be more ready than myself to assist the Minister in putting those trading concerns on a sound business basis. Some of them should be under absolutely independent control. Ultimately the Labour party will again occupy the Treasury bench, and then we shall expect the support of members on the cross benches in putting certain principles of our platform into effect. The establishment of State trading concerns offers the only means of materially assisting those who are engaged in opening up the country. Are not those honourable members who specially claim to represent the pioneer putting themselves in an invidious position

by opposing the policy of State trading concerns? We know that several members sitting on the cross benches are opposed to two or three clauses of the Bill. Those clauses were deleted in the absence of those members, but, at the sound of the party whip, the hon. members return and, after three or four caucus meetings, arrive at an understanding with the Government. With that understanding in their pockets, they approach the Governor.

The Attorney General: Is the hon. member in order in referring to that matter, which has nothing to do with the clause?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is wandering from the point somewhat.

Mr. LAMBERT: I desire to show that there are many important matters which should be engaging the attention of this country. His Excellency the Governor, when issuing his instruction that he would not grant the dissolution, said he had come to that decision because there are certain important matters requiring attention; but instead of proceeding along the lines which His Excellency asked them to do, the Government, immediately they get rid of the possibility of a dissolution, come here and throw on the Table this most debatable of all Bills, and continue along those party lines they have followed ever since they have been in occupation of the Treasury bench. If only the Government will proceed in the express terms of the instructions given by His Excellency, there will be little fault to find so far as this side of the House is concerned. If they show a genuine desire to provide for the repatriation of soldiers, as instructed by His Excellency, and to provide for stopping the financial drift which is now going on, as they have also been instructed by His Excellency, to prevent a financial crisis and possibly an industrial crisis also, speaking for myself personally I will be prepared to sit silently by and assist them in getting their measures through. But I care not how long I have to stay here, whether it be until the Parliament eventually dies in October next, if I can prevent measures of this description passing through this Chamber, I shall willingly stay here. The Minister for Works has said that his desire is to obtain a measure which will put the trading concerns on a sound foundation.

If he were to strike out the highly contentious elements contained in Subclause 2, he would have the whole-hearted support of members on this side. That subclause looks very much like a deliberately designed attempt to slap this party in the face, and to expect that we as a party shall quietly accept that insult is too much, however much we may desire to facilitate the business of the House. The Minister must realise that so long as his party, assisted by other parties, occupy the Ministerial benches, there is no likelihood of any new trading concerns being established. If the Labour party come back again after going to the country, there is not the slightest doubt but that we shall proceed to carry our platform into effect, irrespective of anything which may be contained, however vaguely or indefinitely expressed, in this Trading Concerns Bill. I ask the Minister to give serious consideration to this phase. What is the use of the Premier, when dealing with a message from His Excellency, making a pre-sessional speech on the subjects of repatriation of soldiers and the restoring of the financial equilibrium, when he at the same time goes on with contentious measures of this description? When we came back after the Christmas recess we found 42 matters on the Notice Paper, but as had been pointed out by the leader of the Opposition, owing to the Country party having subordinated the remnants of the Liberal party, all those Bills are to be jettisoned, and probably within the next few days. The Government should give an assurance that before they proceed with measures of this description, the country will be consulted. The country was not consulted in the matter of the Government's occupancy of their present positions, and the leader of the Opposition has already pointed out how the Government are seeking to take advantage of their fleeting majority to shackle this branch of the Legislature. I ask the Minister to accept my statement that most of the members on this side of the House are genuinely desirous of assisting every individual Minister, but for the Government to express a desire of getting into recess so as to proceed with the work of carrying out a scheme for the repatriation of soldiers and the restoring of the equilibrium is all nonsense, when

we know that nothing whatever to that end is being done.

[*Mr. Holman resumed the Chair.*]

Mr. THOMAS: The clause before the Committee and the objects it seeks to attain remind me of our old friend Titus Lander, who, were he here to-night, would have characterised the action of the Ministry generally and of the Minister of Works in particular as actively "putting the boot in." The Minister has tried to put the boot into the Labour party. The course adopted by the Government is the greatest sign of weakness they have yet displayed, and the greatest evidence of their own lack of faith in the support of their party. If the Government did not believe their occupancy of the Treasury bench is only temporary, there would be no occasion whatever for inserting such a clause in the Bill. Because it is not by the will of the people as expressed at the poll, but because of a side wind in politics they are now on the Treasury bench, they realise how fleeting is their occupancy of the position, and realising this, they are endeavouring to shackle for all time the activities of this Parliament. In no Bill that has ever come before this Parliament has there been a clause so vital to the liberties of the people of Western Australia as that we are debating to-night. There has never been an attempt made previously in this legislative hall by a subterfuge to so seriously interfere with the liberties of the people. I issued the warning the other evening that if this clause be carried it will indirectly destroy the principle of adult suffrage, the most valuable principle of the democracy of Western Australia or of Australia. In other parts of the world people are offering their lives to achieve that liberty which has hitherto been given in this Chamber. But if the clause which the ingenuity of the Minister for Works or his advisers has evolved be carried, and the Constitution does not prevent it from being effective, the power of the Labour party in the future to carry their policy into effect will have been completely destroyed. I used the illustration the other night that if this Parliament went to the country and the Labour party returned to the Chamber with 45 out of 50

members, we should be powerless to undo what the Government are doing to-day. When the people come to realise the blow which is being struck at the heart of democracy the Government will be discredited by the people for all time. Whether I was sent here as a party politician or not, I can sink party politics in the interest of my country. Any member who gives away one privilege of this Chamber is a traitor to the people who sent him here. I have heard it said that this Bill is to assert the undoubted rights and privileges of the Assembly, and yet we find the Premier to-day flagrantly abusing that statement. Are we to sit here calmly and peacefully and allow those rights to be filched from us? If the present Ministry believe in themselves, what reason have they to fear the opinions of the people? If the Government do not fear the people why are they trying to hide behind another Chamber? What is the object of the proposal except to defeat the voting power of the people? I have been given to understand that even if this be passed it can have no legislative effect, because it will really mean an alteration of the Constitution. It seems to me common-sense that an undisputed right cannot be taken from this Chamber, and ultimately from the people, without an alteration of the Constitution. Therein lies our only hope of protecting the people of the State from a temporary Government realising that their doom is approaching. But while in a temporary position they are attempting to do something which will stem the tide of democracy for 20 years.

The Minister for Works: Is the hon. member in order?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is giving his reasons for opposing the reinsertion of this clause.

Mr. THOMAS: I am trying to show that the underlying meaning of this clause spreads into a wider field than the hon. member ever thought we would realise. Hon. members have made too great a use of their temporary power thinking the people would submit. but there comes a time when the power used by princes and parliaments is taken from them, and if the hon. member carries out his vile purpose and if another Chamber stands by him, as I have no doubt they will, I warn

him that there will come a day when he and his party will find that the power of the people will rise superior to the obstacles placed in their way and they will say that the party guilty of such conduct is not fitted to govern Western Australia because the liberty of the country is not safe in their hands.

Hon. T. WALKER: There can be no question in my mind that this clause is directly aimed at the Labour party as a party. That there was some necessity for putting a measure forward to regulate the business management of the trading concerns may be granted. We can all improve upon the methods in vogue, and as work proceeds discover defects and make amendments. If the Bill had confined itself to that it would have received my approval and the approval of all members on this side of the House, but the hon. member who introduced the Bill, and others with him, could not resist the opportunity of expressing their antipathy to the principle which stands for the Labour party, that of co-operation and doing all for the people by the people, than can be done through the instrumentality of government. The party opposite desire private enterprise in all things, private right to exploitation, private right to the management of the businesses of individuals, and to make money out of the people. That is the line of guidance for those sitting opposite. This side declares: "Protect the people, do for the people as a body what cannot be done by themselves for themselves." The time must come when sides will be changed, and what is proposed is a barrier put in the way of their acknowledged successors. The desire is to strangle a growing movement, a movement which embraces the hopes and aspirations of the people in order that members opposite may retain their monopoly, their right to individual exploitation for themselves and throw to the dogs, as it were, even the Constitution that they were sworn honourably to protect. It is a violation of all the principles of Government. It means that henceforth no Government's honour shall be trusted, that before anything for the benefit of the community is done the Government must come first to this Chamber and then to another. The British Constitution has wisely provided that the Government shall have an



executive function as well as a legislative; but the present Government of Western Australia say that there shall be no executive responsibility to Parliament for their actions, that this Chamber and the other Chamber shall be both legislative and executive. It is confounding the two important branches of a legislature. In future no Minister will be able to act for the benefit of the community however urgent the occasion may be. In such circumstances what would have been the position of Lord Beaconsfield when he purchased the Suez Canal shares, thereby taking an action which was immediately necessary and beneficial to his country? If we are to have this kind of legislation, what is to become of State assistance to farmers? Have the Government ever come to Parliament and asked permission to buy bags for the farmers? No, it has been Ministerial action in every instance.

The Minister for Railways: It is the law of the land.

Hon. T. WALKER: And it is the law of the land that the Government of the day can establish a trading concern, if in their judgment it is for the benefit of the people, and afterwards ask Parliament to ratify it. What I am complaining of is, not the carrying out of the law, but the annulment of the law, which the Government are seeking to-day. They are introducing a new state of affairs inimical to a growing community like ours, where emergencies are always arising and where the Ministry are not worth their salt if they cannot face the emergency, but prefer to wait for Parliamentary authority. It is tearing up the Constitution which we are sworn to protect, and it is done out of a contemptible party spirit which brings forth under the guise of a machinery Bill a measure aimed directly at the root of the Labour party. And this is being done at the very time when hypocrites, both inside and outside the Chamber, are urging that party differences shall cease and bickerings be laid aside, that we shall in unison, with warm hearts and extended hands welcome from over seas our fighting brothers who have shed their blood in order to protect us who have stayed at home. It is amazing to think that at such a time measures of a strong party character should be selected to be fought at all costs,

that the Liberals and the Country party should now come together for the purpose of introducing the bitterest party bone of contention in the guise or form of a purely machinery Bill. Were it not for the corruption of the minds of the people by a servile, contemptible Press we should have a howl of indignation and an exposure of the selfishness and hypocrisy of those enjoying a temporary ill-bought term of office at the expense of every principle that honourable men should hold dear.

Mr. CARPENTER: I would call attention to the effect the clause will have on those represented by members on the Government cross benches. If the clause be passed and put into operation the blame will lie, not so much on those who framed it as on those who rendered possible its passing, namely the members of the Country party, who were sent here in opposition to the party they are now supporting. In connection with the wheat pool the Government paid £22,216 of the farmers' money in insurance on the wheat crop.

The Minister for Railways: Your Government did that, not the present Government.

Mr. CARPENTER: The only amount received in return was £2,475. The balance, representing the farmers' money, has gone into the pockets of private insurance companies. Is it the desire of the Country party that that sort of thing should continue next year and the year after? If they want to prevent this occurring again, and to be consistent, they cannot support this clause. The Government will have to pay huge sums to the insurance companies probably out of the pockets of the farmers, who are continually being exploited. Under the system introduced by the Labour Government, the insurance of Government employees under the Workers' Compensation Act was made a State trading concern. In two years the sum of £18,000 was brought back into the Treasury instead of going into these insurance companies, and at the same time the insurance rate reduced to one-third. That cannot be gone on with if this clause is passed. The exploitation on the part of the Government to which I have referred is going on in many directions deplored by our friends on the cross benches at electioneering meetings.

This cannot be interfered with if they put this on the statute-book and so block the interests of those whom they represent. Is it worth while preserving their seats in the House for a few months longer by selling the interests of the farmers who sent them here?

The Minister for Works: That is an unwarrantable insinuation and you have no right to make it.

Mr. Munsie: It is true, and you know it.

Mr. CARPENTER: And the Minister knows who the guilty parties are. He and his colleagues have taken advantage of the innocence of these new members, manipulated them, got them into a joint caucus meeting, and slobbered over them. The compact is an evil one, and will be boomeranged not only upon the farmers but upon those who have been the chief engineers.

The Minister for Works: That is an objectionable phrase and against the Standing Orders.

Mr. CARPENTER: As a rule, what the Minister says to me is more objectionable still.

The Minister for Works: On a point of order. According to the rules of the House, any member about whom remarks which are objectionable are made has a right to their withdrawal. I object to these remarks, such as "evil compacts" and the like.

Mr. CARPENTER: If the Minister thinks the remark objectionable I will withdraw it with pleasure. I have very much sympathy for our friends on the cross benches because I believe they will find themselves in a position that will not long be tolerated. Once the people who sent them here realise what has been done, and how their interests are being sacrificed for party politics, they will say to them, "You have sold your bodies and souls for the purpose of preserving your seats, and had better get out." Because I want to preserve the representation of the honest farmer in this House I am opposing this clause, even though those who should be opposing it are perpetrating this act upon the House.

Mr. GREEN: I oppose the clause and particularly subclause (b). There is only one way for the people to combat the combines which have sprung up, and protect themselves. The only competition for the

people, desired by the Minister, is that which exists amongst the workers by reason of their anxiety to seek a job, and the only capital product he desires him to have is the arms with which they labour. What the common people have to see to now is that they are to some extent protected against the rise in prices by initiating Government enterprises when certain rings, or combines, have control of particular commodities. The object of the Labour party is to assist them in this direction. This party is in the position of not being interlocked with certain trading interests, whose one desire is to get all they can out of the people, and give the least they can in return. The working class party have said that their only hope of being able to live in the future is to see that the State itself takes up certain functions where monopolies are threatened. I regret that, in their anxiety to remove these State trading concerns, and prevent any others from being established, the Government have handed over their functions to another Chamber, and have said in effect that it is impossible for the people, although they have no mandate from them to say so, to establish any other concern in order to protect themselves. I defy the Minister to prove to this Chamber how he is going to combat the trust problem, in order to protect the people of Western Australia, which it is his duty to do. The interests of the people cannot be protected in this way except by the inauguration of State enterprises. The Minister is even prepared to block the people in their desires by saying that he does not care what trusts there are amongst them, he is still going to say that another Chamber, which probably only represents 30,000 people, shall be in a position to turn down the wishes of the people. He knows full well that another place will never consent to the establishment of a single State trading concern, no matter what interests are threatened, because that Chamber represents property interests only, on account of the Constitution under which it is elected. That being so, the proposal, whether the Minister intends it or not, is not only unfair to the Labour party but a thrust at the wishes of the people of Western Australia; and that sentiment will, before long, be heard from many platforms. No man of years of discretion could believe that this

clause is designed as a safeguard against the establishment of undesirable State trading concerns. It really represents the last ditch of Conservatism. It is the last blow of a defeated party, a party rapidly drifting to doom here as in every other country where manhood suffrage exists. The young liberal teaching is altogether different from that of the older school of Liberalism so fully represented on the Treasury bench at the present time. The Country party—in the manner related by the old nursery rhyme about “Will you walk into my parlour?”—have innocently walked into the web spun for them by the crafty politicians with whom they are at present allied. The farming industry has asked for State assistance in many forms, for State wheat, State water, State food—

The Minister for Works: Did not the farmer pay for the assistance?

Hon. P. Collier: No.

Mr. GREEN: The farmer also asked for State money through the Agricultural Bank. He obtained all these things, all against the principles of Liberal Ministers. Now the farmer is asking for State bags and for State sale of wheat. The last item represents a project very specially opposed to the principles of the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), but in this respect even that hon. member is driven to adopt the fullest State socialism. The farmer has even had State medical attendance for his wife, in the shape of the baby bonus. Indeed, I have known farmers come to Perth for State medical aid when suffering from a sore finger. Some farmers grovel for State aid at every turn. Their attitude is very different from that of the people who ask for State aid intending to repay the cost. The leading article in the last issue of the *Sunday Times* is the finest food for thought that the Liberal party could desire. The article says—

The Government's humiliation was due to one of its many blunders in tactics.

Mr. Smith: Read what the article says about your party, too.

Mr. GREEN: The leader continues—

It knew very well that five of the Country party members could not be present; knew, too, that the measure was obnoxious to the Labour party, and yet per-

sisted in bringing the thing on, to the exclusion of matters vastly more important.

The quotation is from a newspaper which on all occasions frames its policy to suit the Liberal party. If State railways and State spur lines are needed by the farmers, then State steamers are justified for the squatters and other people of the North-West. I have never heard it argued that the State Implement Works are otherwise than right. When the member for Coolgardie suggested that there were millions in phosphates for the cocky if the industry were nationalised, the cry was, “Hear, hear; one of the most masterly speeches delivered since the member for Bunbury suggested that the South-West should be cleared free of cost to settlers.” If there is a glimmering of fair play in the Country party, who at present are being led by the nose, let them recognise that, just as the farmers need State help, so other sections of this community need State help, in the form of State enterprises, to keep commodities at reasonable prices. There is a new State enterprise in the air already—bulk handling of wheat. That, possibly, is the only thing in the shape of State enterprise which would pass the Upper Chamber; though I believe that even for it there will be no chance if this Bill passes. State enterprises formed the great question upon which, absolutely, the elections of 1911 were fought; and they will form the question upon which the elections of 1917 will be fought; and the question will then prove just as disastrous to the Liberal party as did their gerrymandering Bill in 1911. I want to tell those members responsible for the bringing forward of a measure which has for its aim the destruction of State enterprises, now existing and to prevent the establishment of others in the future, that when the people of this State realise how the price of food has increased because of the existence here of certain monopolies, and realise that the only way of combating this is by State enterprises, and that the only party which endorses that policy is the Labour party, those members will meet with that defeat which they deserve. Members opposite seem to imagine that the people are of a low order of intelligence, while they themselves are a people of remarkable business acumen. Their business acumen is such

that the deficit has gone back woefully since they have been in office, and they are now trying to get rid of the State enterprises, recognising that they are too much for them to take on. In taking this course they are looking for a fall and will certainly meet with it.

Mr. FOLEY: I was not surprised at the desire of the Minister for Works to recommend this Bill, but in doing so he has shown a desire to have this clause dealt with in a most unfair manner. This proves that when it comes to a question of strength against strength, side against side, or brains against brains, the Minister is always prepared to adopt any means, sometimes not quite constitutional, to attain his end.

The Minister for Works: Where do the unconstitutional means come in?

Mr. FOLEY: When the Minister went to the Governor they took an unconstitutional course.

The Minister for Works: Talk about something that you know something of.

Mr. FOLEY: Perhaps I may not pit my constitutional knowledge against the Minister's, but I am prepared to put my common sense against his or that of any other Minister. The Government have shown want of business ability to carry on the affairs of the country. They have been in office for months, after having continuously criticised from this side of the House, and to-day the deficit is almost touching the two millions mark, and will shortly touch that mark. Realising this and the claim of the Government to business acumen, when we find them introducing tiddly-winking Bills of this description, can they expect this side of the House to take the matter lying down? We had the opportunity the other evening, and personally I am sorry we did not take it, of sending them to the country, which they have professed such a longing for.

The Minister for Works: You were afraid to go to the country.

Mr. FOLEY: Ministers went to the Governor and asked for a dissolution well knowing that the Governor would not grant a dissolution. They knew that under exactly similar circumstances the present leader of the Opposition asked His Excellency for a dissolution, which the Governor

refused. Was it likely, then, that His Excellency would change his mind? The Premier took an unfair advantage of the House by making what was practically a Budget statement when advising the House of the reply he had received from the Governor. When the Government was beaten the other evening on this clause, Ministers cried like school children, "I have lost my job." We had the spectacle of the Whip running round and one member seeking the hair of the Whip and another his hide—merely because this clause of the Bill was defeated. So far as this measure is concerned, the Government were beaten fairly and squarely the other evening.

The Minister for Works: We were not.

Mr. FOLEY: Will the Minister tell me the name of one member who was refused a pair by this side of the House before any division was taken?

Mr. Hardwick: Yes, Mr. Griffiths.

Mr. FOLEY: That is absolutely and undeniably untrue.

Mr. Hardwick: It is absolutely true.

Mr. FOLEY: When the leader of the Country party—or rather the member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott), for I will not call him the leader, he is a blind follower—came to this side of the House before any division was taken, he said the member for York was ill. I asked him, "Do you want a pair for him?" and he did not ask for a pair. Like lots of other people, the Government, when beaten fairly and squarely complain that the umpire was "crook," or make some similar complaint. I defy any member of the Government or the member for Nelson to disprove my statement. Regarding the clause, I contend that its wording is wrong, because it gives into the hands of the Government the power that no seven men in the State should possess. We all know that after a matter is settled, if it was merely a question of regulation, we could discuss it, but what chance has the Legislative Assembly of getting the Legislative Council to father any proposition we may bring forward regarding the trading concerns. Whilst one section of the community has the opportunity of vetoing what the whole of the community require we will fight the matter to the bitter end. Every member should

now voice his opinion against not only the re-submission of the clause, but against the clause itself. The Minister for Works said that the system of State enterprises was all right, but that it was not well carried out. How much better have the present Government carried on the State enterprises or indeed the affairs of the State since they have been in office? Not only have they gone back, but they have put off a great number of men who were working in this State. In spite of the fact, too, that at the beginning of the session they declared that they did not wish to introduce contentious matters we find them now submitting one of the most contentious ever presented to Parliament. Is that not a travesty on fairness? I trust that the clause will not be carried.

*Personal Explanation.*

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest): I would like to make a personal explanation at this stage. I understand that while I was absent from the Chamber the Premier, replying to the leader of the Opposition said that his conduct was bordering on the dishonourable in producing information he had received. I was not guilty of any dishonourable conduct with regard to the matter. I consulted the Honorary Minister about the duration of the session and he intimated to me that a number of measures would be abandoned, but so that my information should be accurate he asked me to interview the Premier, and the Premier struck off a list a number of measures which he said would not in all probability be proceeded with, and as the Whip of this party he asked me to put the matter before the party.

The Premier: You told me that the information was for the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I never brought the leader of the Opposition into it at all.

The Premier: You did.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am certain of what transpired. I came into the Chamber to put the matter before members of this party. I was not responsible for the leader of the Opposition getting the information. The member for Guildford evidently supplied it to the leader of the Opposition. Therefore I have nothing to apologise for. I make this explanation because the Government's pro-

posals were mostly public property before the House met to-day. It was obvious that many of the measures were to be abandoned. I came away from the Premier's office with the distinct understanding that I was to place the information I had obtained before members of this party.

*Committee Resumed.*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I regret that the Government should insist on bringing in extreme party measures. Since the outbreak of war we have had nothing so contentious as the present Bill, of which the clause under discussion is the culminating point. Quite recently the Government purchased a large number of wheat bags on behalf of the farmers. No exception has been taken to that. In 1912 the farmers were materially assisted by the then Government without any legal authority. No complaint was made in Parliament. Again, in 1914, the Government, without legislative authority, took the farmers on their backs, and later asked for and secured Parliamentary approval. If the Government had misused or abused their powers in this regard, the Assembly would have removed them from office. One way and another, thousands of pounds of public money in the shape of bonuses has been given by Liberal Governments to individuals as an inducement to open up private enterprises. If it is necessary to prevent the Labour party from establishing State enterprises, it is necessary also to prevent the Government and the Liberal party from using State funds for the assistance of private enterprise. I move an amendment—

*That the following be added to stand as Subclause 3:—"No private corporation, company, firm, person, or persons, carrying on, or intending to carry on, any trading concern, shall be granted or offered any bounty, subsidy, or financial or other assistance in any way whatsoever by any Minister or by the Government without the consent and authority of Parliament."*

I want to tie the hands of the present Government in exactly the same way as they propose to tie the hands of future Governments.

[Mr. S. Stubbs took the Chair.]

Mr. CHESSON: I second the amendment.  
Amendment put and negatived.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	..	17

Majority for .. 3

# AYES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Smith
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Thomson
Mr. George	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. E. O. Johnston	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Lefroy	(Teller.)
Mr. Mitchell	

# NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munie
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Collier	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Lambert	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Mullany	(Teller.)

*That the words "the Governor-in-Council" be struck out, and "Parliament" inserted in lieu.*

The object is to get Parliamentary approval before any contract is made for the sale of any State trading concern. As things now are members of the Country party are being hoodwinked into believing that they are getting what they desire. Under the clause as it stands the Government can dispose of trading concerns without the authority of Parliament, and then if any member of the House is able to secure a majority of members to undo this the contract is rendered void. The position is an impossible one, for if the Government have sold a concern it is no good going to Parliament. I believe the Country party were honest in their desire to protect the public against this sort of injustice. This clause does not protect them, and I appeal to members of that party to get what they want inserted in the Bill.

[Mr. S. Stubbs took the Chair.]

Amendment put and division taken with  
the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	19

Majority against .. 1

New clause thus agreed to.

New Clause:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : I  
move—

*That the following be added to stand as Clause 25:—"Subject as hereinafter provided, the Minister may sell or lease any trading concern for such amount, and upon such terms and conditions as may be approved by the Governor-in-Council: Provided that any contract for the sale or lease of a trading concern shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament within fourteen days after the making thereof, if Parliament is then sitting, and, if not, within fourteen days after the commencement of the next session of Parliament; and, if either House of Parliament passes a resolution objecting thereto, such contract or lease shall be void."*

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I move an  
amendment—

# AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Munie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Green	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Troy
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. E. O. Johnston	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Lambert	Mr. O'Loughlin
	(Teller.)

# NOES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Smith
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Thomson
Mr. George	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The proviso to this clause does not contain the usual time limit in respect of the raising of objection upon submission to Parliament of contracts for sale or lease. The Interpretation Act does not apply where special provision of this kind is made in a measure.

The Minister for Works: The clause is perfectly clear.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The clause is neither clear nor fair.

The Premier: Parliament has control of the situation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I may be dull, but I am too smart to be taken in by the Premier, as members on the other side are. A time limit is undoubtedly necessary in the interests of a member desiring to object to a contract, and also in the interests of a purchaser or a lessee. Every other measure containing such a proviso as this, also fixes a time limit. A private person taking over a State trading concern and making it profitable, may, under this proviso, find Parliament stepping in to declare his contract void. It is only fair to protect even those who purchase State trading concerns from the present Government.

The Premier: What is your amendment?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This Bill, like other measures introduced by the Government, has evidently not received from them even five minutes' consideration.

The Premier: Move to insert 30 days.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not intend to move anything. I am opposed to the selling of the trading concerns; I want to keep them.

The Minister for Railways: You should have made them pay.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We would have made them pay if we had remained in office. The hon. member would never make anything pay.

Mr. Nairn: Why did you not stay in office?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Because the hon. member's party bluffed the Country party as they did last night. I think it is my duty to draw attention to the way in which this clause has been drafted, and so long as I draw attention to the incapacity of the Government, I think I have done my duty

and I have gone to the extent that I need go.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Now that we have approved that the Governor-in-Council may sell or lease any of the trading concerns, we might strike out the proviso in the amendment and insert the proviso submitted by the member for Williams-Narrogin, which reads, "Provided that no trading concern shall be sold or leased until the approval of Parliament is first obtained." The Government then will be able to make terms and conditions for the sale or lease, but they will not be able to give possession until the approval of Parliament has been obtained. With that I would be perfectly satisfied. This will not prevent the Governor-in-Council taking the necessary action.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The proviso is quite clear. It sets out that any contract for the sale or lease of a trading concern must be laid before both Houses of Parliament within 14 days after the making thereof if Parliament is sitting, and if not, within 14 days after the commencement of the next session, and then if either House passes a resolution objecting to the contract it shall be declared void. I will not object to 30 days being added, which will in all give 44 days in which members will have the opportunity of bringing the matter before Parliament. In the interval, of course, we would not give possession.

[Mr. Holman resumed the Chair.]

Hon. J. SCADDAN: My proposal will get the Government out of the whole difficulty. It is that Parliamentary approval should be obtained before the contract for the sale or lease is finalised. If the Government are not prepared to do this I will move it as an amendment.

The PREMIER: The clause moved by the Minister for Works, with the proviso he proposes to insert, safeguards the position absolutely. It is all very well for the leader of the Opposition to talk about securing the approval of Parliament to a big contract, but we know that such a course would, on occasion, involve considerable loss of time. Under the proposals of the Minister for

Works, if a sale be made the contract will be laid on the Table, and members will have 30 days in which to take exception to it and move a motion accordingly. In the meantime the Government would never think of giving possession of a big undertaking, nor would the purchaser be so foolish as to take possession until the expiry of the time limitation. I ask the Committee to accept the Minister's amendment, which protects the situation to the full.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I move an amendment—

*That the proviso be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"Provided that possession shall not be given to an intended purchaser or lessee under a contract of sale or agreement for lease until the approval of Parliament has been obtained."*

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am sorry the Government cannot see their way to accept this proviso. In view of the decision of the Committee that a trading concern shall not be started without the approval of Parliament, it is only consistent to provide that no trading concern shall be sold without the approval of Parliament. Having regard to the tremendous amount of capital invested in these concerns, and of their undoubted utility in at least some respects, I feel very strongly on this point. I am also of opinion that possession of these huge enterprises should not be handed over until Parliamentary approval has been obtained.

The Minister for Works: The Premier has told you that he would not give possession.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Then why should not that be stated in the Bill?

Mr. MUNSIE: I will support the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition. Even if that is defeated I will oppose the amendment moved by the Minister for Works, because I feel we should be in a better position under the clause itself than under the Minister's proviso. The Premier has said there is no intention of handing over possession until Parliamentary approval is obtained. Then why not put that in the Bill? The Premier has also said that no intending purchaser would be prepared

to take possession until Parliament approved. To my mind that is an idle contention. The Premier knows that immediately the consent of the Governor in Council is obtained this is binding upon the Government, and that if such consent has been given to any company a few days after Parliament had risen such company would, if the deal was not subsequently ratified by Parliament and the concern turned out unprofitable, jump at the chance of getting damages out of the Government for taking it away again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: With a slight alteration the Government are prepared to accept the proviso suggested instead of that appearing on the Notice Paper. I therefore move an amendment—

*That the following proviso be inserted: "Providing that possession shall not be given to any intending purchaser or lessee under a contract of sale or agreement for lease until the approval of Parliament has been obtained."*

Hon. J. Scaddan: That is all right.

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

New Clause:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

*That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 26:—"The proceeds of the sale of any assets of a trading concern shall be applied in reduction of the capital of such concern, and in the books of the Treasury the proceeds shall be placed to the credit of the Government Property Sales Fund."*

Question put and passed; the new clause agreed to.

Schedule:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

*That a Schedule be inserted in the terms of the Schedule as printed in the Bill as introduced.*

Question put and passed: the Schedule agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported with amendments.



**BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.***Order Discharged.*

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate on the second reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [11.46]: I move—

*That the Order of the Day be discharged.*

Question put and passed; the order discharged.

*House adjourned at 11.47 p.m.*

**Legislative Council,**

*Thursday, 8th February, 1917.*

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Prior to the running of the trains the Department agreed with the Committee to allow them £5 for expenses. The Commissioner was advised some six months later that the total expenses were £35, and offered if it were shown that the allowance of £5 was not reasonable, to deal fairly with the committee in the matter. Since then nothing further has been heard, and no response to the offer.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE.**

On motion by Hon. C. SOMMERS, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to the Hon. A. G. Jenkins (Metropolitan) on the ground of ill-health.

**BILL—EARLY CLOSING ACT AMENDMENT.**

Introduced by the Colonial Secretary and read a first time.

**BILL—AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: This is a short Bill which has become necessary on account of different circumstances which have arisen in regard to land settlement. The original Agricultural Lands Purchase Act of 1896 set out that the reason for its enactment was that it was desirable to encourage the cultivation of lands near the railways, and to settle people on such land. That has been the general purpose of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act. The 1909 Act provides that land, when thrown open for selection, shall be dealt with under the provisions and conditions of Sections 55 or 56 of the Land Act of 1898. These sections deal, in the first instance, with conditional purchase land with residence, and in the second instance with conditional purchase leases without residence. They go on to state that the selling price of these repurchased estates shall be ascertained by adding to the price actually paid in cash or debentures for the land £5 per centum of such

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

**QUESTION—RAILWAY DEPARTMENT AND ALBANY FARMERS' DAY.**

Hon. C. McKENZIE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What was the total revenue received by the Railway Department in connection with the Albany Farmers' Day last year? 2, What was the actual profit? 3, Is the Minister aware that the printing of tickets, advertising, etc., cost the local associations and Albany people £30, and that only £5 was allowed by the department to defray all expenses?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, £268 15s. 9d. 2, It is impossible to say, but as two trains were run there, very little profit, if any, could have been made. 3,