

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT ACT, 1931, AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [9.2] in moving the second reading said: The Bill proposes to extend a measure of relief to those persons whose salaries are provided under the Constitution Act, namely, the Chief Justice, the Puisne Judges of the Supreme Court and the Private Secretary to the Lieutenant-Governor. The salary of the last mentioned officer is nominally £350 per annum, and his reduction will be £42 instead of 20 per cent. as hitherto. The Bill also provides that the salaries of the Chief Justice and Judges of the Supreme Court shall be reduced by £54 10s.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The basic wage enters into that, too?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. The reduction of £54 10s. is on the first £500 of the salaries they receive, and there will be the deduction of 22½ per cent. on the balance, but in no case will any individual benefit to the extent of more than £58. The Bill evidences the desire of the Government to act equitably as regards all persons affected by the financial emergency legislation. The consideration indicated in the Bill is to be extended to the judges and accords them the same measure of relief as that to be enjoyed by other civil servants who receive more than £1,000 per annum. The Bill does not provide relief for Ministers of the Crown or the Clerk of the Executive Council.

Hon. J. Cornell: But the latter is the secretary to the Premier's Department.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The reason for that is that those persons have already been provided for under the Financial Emergency Act Amendment Bill. The same arguments apply in this instance as in regard to the other Bill that members have been discussing. The Government desire to extend equitable consideration to all sections of public servants, whether the salaries are governed by the Constitution Act or by the Public Service Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—REDUCTION OF RENTS ACT CONTINUANCE.*Third Reading.*

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [9.7]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 20th November, 1934.

	PAGE
Standing Orders suspension	1437
Annual Estimates, report	1441
State Trading Concerns Estimates, report	1441
Bills: Loan, £3,938,000, all stages	1438
Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 4), 1R.	1441
Gold Mining Profits Tax Assessment, returned	1441
Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 3), returned	1441
Mine Workers' Relief Act Amendment, 2A., Com.	1441
Appropriation, all stages	1450
Agricultural Bank, Com.	1451

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

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

THE ACTING PREMIER (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.35]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable an Appropriation Bill and a Loan Bill to be passed through all their stages at this sitting.

Question put and passed.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House and satisfied myself that there is an absolute majority of members present.

BILL—LOAN, £3,938,000.*Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation for the purpose of the Bill.

First Reading.

Bill introduced, and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE ACTING PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: The Bill does not authorise the expenditure of any money, but merely gives authority for the raising of the money in connection with the Loan Estimates. Authorisation for the flotation of part of the loan has already been given by the Loan Council, and we hope it will be raised within a few days. Later in the financial year the remainder of the amount will be floated. The Bill represents merely the usual formality of authorising the raising of a loan to the purposes of which the House has already agreed.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [4.39]: The only objection I have to the Bill is the very small amount provided for development of and assistance to agriculture. I agree that it is extremely difficult for the Government to find all the money required, but the large amount provided on the Loan Estimates for water supply and sewerage makes them seem top-heavy. If our industries are not enabled to carry on—and the amount provided by the Loan Estimates represents very small assistance—it will be useless to do work in the city. I hope the Acting Premier will be able to tell us whether any provision has been made by the Commonwealth Government in this respect. Since the House met last, the Government's representative at the Loan Council—namely the Honorary Minister—has returned from the East; and he will probably have some information as to whether the Federal Government propose to render assistance to the agricultural industry of Australia, and particularly that of this State. The small amount provided on our Loan Estimates is £365,000, out of which a considerable proportion will be applied towards paying interest to the Treasury; and therefore I am

concerned about what will happen. I have not had an opportunity of familiarising myself with what the Honorary Minister has had to say since his return; the hon. gentleman made a statement at Kalgoorlie on his journey back. However, we ought to know as early as possible what are the views of the Federal Government in regard to assisting the agricultural industry. In view of the smallness of the amount provided on our Loan Estimates, I assume that our Government believe that something will be provided by the Federal Government. This affects not only wheat production. The main thing is to adjust liabilities in the industry and give sufficient assistance to enable farmers to carry on. Many of them have not sufficient funds of their own to provide bare necessities, apart from requisites for farming operations next year. I hope that if the Acting Premier has any information regarding the intentions of the Federal Government, he will give it this afternoon.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [4.41]: I trust my fears are not justified, but I notice that the amount provided for electrical extension is not nearly the amount which we understand is required for the purchase of equipment which has been ordered in London. I hope there is an explanation. I trust the explanation is not that the original intention with respect to equipment has been abandoned.

The Acting Premier: The expenditure will extend over three years. Payment is not made until the plant is in working order.

MR. SAMPSON: In that case the original intention stands.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [4.42]: The Leader of the Opposition is entirely wrong in his assumption as to the amount of the vote for agricultural development. I had the particulars here on Thursday, and am sorry I did not use them. They show that the amount proposed for this year is practically similar to that of last year. Last year's expenditure included a loan paid back to the Finance and Development Board, amounting to £75,000. This year there is another refund of £130,000. Hon. members have been misled, because some of the votes do not mean what they seem to mean, the

money being used for other purposes. During the time of the previous Government and of the present Government, the greater part of the Development of Agriculture Vote has been spent on finding labour for the unemployed. The expenditure at Frankland River, £65,000, is a charge against this vote. I am sorry I cannot justify that expenditure, but still it is charged against the vote. Money has been transferred from one vote to another. For example, all the clearing done by the unemployed in the South-West is also a charge against this vote. However, that will not go on indefinitely. Men are employed in that way to make improvements, but they will be transferred to other work. Frequently what is indicated as developmental work is no such thing at all. I repeat, the Vote for Development of Agriculture has been used to give work to the unemployed. However, the system was started by the Government of which the Leader of the Opposition was a member. I was greatly concerned about the matter myself.

THE ACTING PREMIER (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle—in reply) [4.44]: At the conclusion of the debate on the Loan Estimates last Thursday I explained that the Vote for Development of Agriculture included three items which had the effect of inflating it so as to make the position misleading. I explained that in fact there was not the big reduction this year as compared with last year. I mentioned that there was an amount of £53,000 in an old suspense account, which had been cleared up by Loan expenditure. Thus last year's vote was inflated to the extent of £83,000 by that one item. Again, I explained that there was £75,000 paid back last year to the Commonwealth Bank on account of an old accommodation loan. Thirdly, I explained that there was a sum of £133,000 in the Bank's own suspense account available for expenditure this year. So really there will be just the same amount for actual expenditure this year as there was last year. I can quite understand that without this explanation there would be a feeling that the Vote had been substantially reduced. However, that is not so, and the Leader of the Opposition can rest assured that we appreciate to the full what the agri-

cultural industry means to Western Australia. We are advised that the Commonwealth expect to be able to let the States know at the end of this month what the Commonwealth policy will be towards rehabilitating the wheat industry. We are asked to put up proposals.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And that is the better way, because we could not have the assistance general throughout Australia.

The ACTING PREMIER: That is so. It was reported that a declaration had been made that there would be a bonus payment on wheat to bring it to 3s. 1d. per bushel at the principal ports.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Three shillings free on rails.

The ACTING PREMIER: Some figure like that. It made approximately 3s. 1d. at 4d. sidings. Now we are advised there has been no decision and no statement was published by the Commonwealth Government, and that they do not expect to be in a position to pronounce their policy until the end of this month. They have asked us for proposals, which we have submitted. They have also asked us for proposals dealing with works. They announced they were going to provide funds and put in hand big public works to relieve the unemployment position. They passed through their own Parliament, and secured the sanction of the Loan Council for, a Bill to authorise the raising of five millions, and now we are asked to put up proposals. We view the situation from the point that there are in the agricultural districts a large number of works that cannot pay their way for a good many years to come. All members know that the position of State finances is such that for every pound we spend now we have to secure some return, particularly for our loan moneys, with their load of interest, sinking fund and exchange, which now accounts for about half our income. So we have to be very careful to see that we get some return for the money expended. As I say, there are many works throughout the agricultural districts that will help the agriculturist, but we cannot expect returns from them for a considerable period. We are told that a fair percentage of the money the Commonwealth will make available will be in the form of a gift, that we shall not have to pay interest and sinking fund on it, nor repay it. If

that be so, our idea is to use that money for the works that will assist the agriculturists, works for which the people in the country cannot pay. If we get the money it will be used for assisting the development of agriculture under those heads. It is the soundest policy, because at the moment it is impossible to expect agriculturists to meet the charges on the works they are asking the Government to put in hand, and the State with its limited resources finds it impossible to do what we are asked to do, and what we would like to do, without seriously embarrassing the Treasury. So that is what we have in mind, and those are the proposals we are putting up. The department are having them all tabulated now, and we shall lose no time in getting them off to the Commonwealth Government. So no blame will be attachable to us if there is any delay in the making of the money available and the starting of the work. However, we do not expect to have anything final until the end of the month.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; the Acting Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7—agreed to.

First Schedule:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am prepared to accept the statement made by the Acting Premier, but I should like to point out that in the Loan Bill of last year provision was made for the development of agriculture to the amount of £305,000. That was not spent on group settlement.

The Minister for Lands: A great portion of it was paid back to the suspense account and the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: This year there is no provision at all for capital for the Agricultural Bank. It is unwise to anticipate legislation, but it is probable the new commissioners will be expected to raise money by debentures. However, I have grave doubts about it. The fact that certain moneys were set aside for Agricultural Bank capital last year, while none are set aside for the purpose this year, is causing me concern. That the Commonwealth Bank should ask the State to put up proposals is, I think,

very wise, because it would certainly be unwise for Canberra to try to legislate for the whole of Australia, with separate sets of conditions in the several States.

The Acting Premier: It would have been wise to consult us before they pronounced their wheat policy.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am not referring to the wheat subsidy. The only alternative to the plan being followed by the Federal Government would be the setting up of another Commonwealth department. I do not desire that, because I am confident our own officers have a much greater knowledge of our conditions than could any Commonwealth officers have who might be sent over here, and so through our own officers we can lend better assistance to our agriculturists. As to assistance for the wheat growers, it was suggested how the money should be spent; but there was an item of four million pounds, and I understand the Commonwealth Government say they still hope to provide that.

The Acting Premier: There is no limit to it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No; because it would be less if the price of wheat went up, whereas it would be more if that price went down. But whatever assistance is given, it should be given quickly. I know the Federal Government cannot do anything until they see whether they are going to be successful with the flotation of the loan, which begins to-day.

The Acting Premier: But this money will be coming out of revenue.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think most of it will come from loan. The Federal Government, no doubt, are fully aware of the position of the agriculturist. As I say, I am prepared to accept the Acting Treasurer's statement, but I must draw attention to the fact that there is not a penny piece provided for Agricultural Bank capital. No doubt the reason is that in future the commissioners will be expected to raise money by debentures. It is a very dangerous thing, and I do not know how it will be viewed by the Loan Council. The Government must accept responsibility for the contrast between last year's Loan Bill and this Loan Bill in point of provision for the development of agriculture.

The Acting Premier: I have assured you of the position.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And I am prepared to accept the Minister's assurance. I hope it will give heart to the agriculturists to know that the Government will do all they possibly can for them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I repeat that a considerable portion of the amount allocated last year was not used for agriculture at all. No less than £73,000 of the amount voted was paid to the Finance and Development Board and the Commonwealth Bank in repayment of a loan. Also there was £83,000 in the suspense account, which makes £156,000 that did not go to agriculture at all. Then, this year, there is £80,000 less interest charged to the bank than was charged last year, and that, of course, inflates last year's vote by £80,000. No less than £80,000 was paid from the Lands Vote to the Treasury and not charged to it; because the Treasury is not now charging interest against abandoned properties, as it was doing previously. So whilst last year there was £80,000 for payment of interest on abandoned properties, that is not provided this year. Therefore in all there is no less than £256,000 of last year's Vote which was never expended for the Agricultural Bank or the development of agriculture.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And that left them £50,000, even then.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But the Bank has a suspense account with a balance of £133,000.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What was the item for that last year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Nothing at all. The Leader of the Opposition is concerned about the Vote not being equal to that of last year.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That means that the Bank used loan funds instead of revenue.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It means that no comparison can be drawn between the two years, and that no charge can be laid against the Government of not making the same provision this year as was made last year, because the same provision has been made.

Schedule put and passed.

Second and Third Schedules, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 4).

Introduced by Mr. Marshall and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1. Gold Mining Profits Tax Assessment.
With an amendment.
2. Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 3).
Without amendment.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1934-35.

Report of Committee of Ways and Means adopted.

STATE TRADING CONCERNS ESTIMATES, 1934-35.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—MINE WORKERS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 8th November.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [5.6]: This measure is designed to adjust anomalies in the existing Act. The Minister mentioned many difficulties which confront those who are charged with the administration of the Act, and I think if members peruse the Act, they will also recognise those difficulties. When the Bill to consolidate two existing measures was brought before Parliament, it was thought the consolidation would clear up many points that had been the cause of disputes on the goldfields. The Minister said that the clauses were complicated. I am of opinion that no layman could grasp the meaning of some of the provisions; a trained legal mind would be required to understand their purport. A study of the Bill, plus the clear explanation by the Minister of the effect of the amendments, must, I think, impel members to approve of the

Bill. The Minister said that the passing of the measure would not materially add to the benefits received by the miners, but would free them from that requirement of the Mines Regulation Act that before a person could be employed in, on or about a mine, he must possess a certificate from the Government Laboratory. I understand that the Government Laboratory is located at Kalgoolie, and if a man desired to work in a mine at Ravensthorpe, Meekatharra or Wiluna, the mine manager to whom he applied would naturally ask if he held a certificate of fitness and was not suffering from any of the diseases specified in the Workers' Compensation Act. The Minister desires that the existing provision should not operate, because to journey to the laboratory to get a certificate would entail heavy expenditure on a man who could ill-afford it. If the Bill becomes law, it will be competent for a miner applying for work to present a certificate from the local medical officer. Immediately a man is employed in the mines, he becomes liable for contributions to the fund. If, at the end of 12 months, on examination by a laboratory officer, he was found to be suffering from tuberculosis, he would be automatically withdrawn from working in a mine. The Minister desires that the man's contributions to the fund should be returned to him. To return them would be only fair. No mine manager would agree to employ a miner for any period unless he had a certificate or the assurance of a medical officer that the applicant was free from tuberculosis. I do not think there is any doubt that the amendments desired by the Minister are necessary. If a man is withdrawn from a mine for health reasons, his wife is not considered to be a dependant.

Mr. Marshall: She is not considered a dependant under ordinary compensation provisions.

Mr. STUBBS: That seems to be a gross injustice.

Mr. Marshall: It has always been so.

Mr. STUBBS: It is not logical or fair that a wife should not be considered a dependant. I am glad that the Minister is making the provision perfectly clear that "dependant" includes the wife of a person withdrawn from a mine. I have great sympathy for the men engaged in the mining

industry, especially for those who have to work at big depths, breathe the fumes from the explosives, and labour amongst dust in the shafts and drives. Anything that Parliament can do to relieve the sufferings of those men should be done. If a miner is certified as being utterly incapable of following his occupation and is withdrawn from the industry, the full amount of compensation that may be awarded him is £750, and what is that?

Hon. C. G. Latham: If he lives after that amount has been exhausted, he receives more.

Mr. STUBBS: Nine out of ten miners do not live many years after the disease has obtained a hold on them. If members have any doubt of that, they should visit the Wooroloo Sanatorium and see for themselves the effects of this dreadful disease. A large number of the victims are young men who have given the best years of their lives to the industry.

Mr. Marshall: Some of those lying in the cemetery were not 35 years of age.

Mr. STUBBS: Not many of the men withdrawn from the mines live to receive the full amount of £750.

Mr. Wilson: And many of them leave families.

Mr. STUBBS: I support the second reading. The Chamber of Mines, who watch legislation of this kind very closely, have no objection to any of the proposals.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [5.15]: It is not necessary to debate this measure. I understand from the Minister that he has discussed the details of it with all the interested parties, and has received their assent to it, if that be necessary. There is nothing contentious about the Bill. It would not be of any advantage to discuss it in detail if, in fact as is the case, it represents views which have been considered and arrived at by experts, and by those who know all about it. I simply rise to say I support the Bill.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [5.16]: It is true that very little fault can be found, if any, with the clauses of this measure, which contemplates amending a very intricate Act. Members are aware that we have two Acts of Parliament, and a board in operation, covering all the activities of the

legislation which this Bill proposes to amend. This brought about a most complicated state of affairs, especially when the Acts were consolidated, and the situation is difficult to understand. The amendments contained in the Bill, however, are simple enough, and warrant the support of the House. The member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) pictured the ghastly effects of employment in the gold mining industry. Some of us can speak feelingly on the subject of mining diseases that are peculiar to the industry. In the case of my own family, I am doubtful if, with the exception of one of my uncles, any members of it have died other than a miserable death from following the industry. Altogether those who suffered in this way comprised ten members of my family, including my own father. This form of legislation was long overdue then. Now that we have it, it can scarcely be argued that it complies with the idea that originally gave it birth, namely, that the industry that wrecked the lives of those employed in it should be called upon to pay for the human wreckage that it created. For many years we were successful in putting that obligation upon the industry, but I am sorry to say that the Act which this Bill will amend has changed that aspect materially. The first amendment contained in the Bill deals particularly with those who apply for provisional certificates. These are men who, if rejected, will have come within the scope of the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act. If it is found, when the board has examined them, after receiving their provisional certificates, that they are suffering from any of the diseases mentioned in the Third Schedule, plus one or two of those particular disabilities that are set out in the Mines Regulation Act, they can be rejected from their employment and will receive no compensation. Something must be done to prevent men who may suffer from the diseases mentioned in the Third Schedule but may have contracted them in other industries or in other countries, from being a burden upon the local industry. The amendment in this regard will therefore be accepted as a necessary one. If an individual, after receiving his provisional certificate, secures employment in the industry, the law as it stands compels him to contribute towards the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. This fund is administered by a board situated in Kalgoorlie. If after several

months the individual is rejected from the industry by the only doctors authorised to say whether or not he shall continue his employment in it, it is only right, as he can no longer be employed and is not entitled to compensation, that the money contributed by him during his employment should be refunded to him. The law as originally designed, providing as it did that the industry should pay for its wreckages, has been violated. We do not ask the industry to pay in full for the damage it does. We have drifted from the principle of compensation to that of insurance. That is one of the reasons why I opposed the consolidating measure when it was brought down by a previous Government. The principle is wrong, but if it be right the other Acts of Parliament are wrong, for we cannot have it both ways. The individual who is injured by disease, and who is incapacitated, is as much injured as is the individual who suffers an accident, and yet under the law one is entitled to compensation without having paid any contribution, and the other is only entitled to it provided he has subscribed to the fund. The principle is wrong one way or the other; I suggest it is wrong in this Bill. The amendment should not be necessary, for the individual should not have to contribute. The industry itself should cover the cost of this wreckage. The payments that were made would then be looked upon as compensation in its true sense. Quite recently we passed a Bill calling upon the gold mining industry to contribute out of its profits to Consolidated Revenue a sum of approximately £80,000 a year.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: With apologies.

Mr. MARSHALL: To an extent that may be so. The argument advanced for the imposition of this embargo—if it can be called one—upon the industry was that Consolidated Revenue should be relieved by that amount of what it was paying towards the upkeep of the human wreckage brought about by the industry. That principle is good. I fear that we pay too much attention to the curing of these ills, and too little to their prevention. If we compare our Mines Regulation Act with similar legislation in other countries, we find that ours is obsolete, inefficient and inadequate. Even in countries where black labour is employed, the conditions as regards ventilation, sanitation and employment generally are far ahead of ours. It will generally be admitted that

our industry is now in a flourishing condition. It would, therefore, be well to consider the advisability of placing a further embargo upon it to ensure an improvement in the conditions of ventilation and sanitation, with a view to preventing the necessity for legislation of this character. It is idle for Parliament to pretend that we are compensating the individual who has had his health ruined for all time, and who, even if he survives for a few years, can only live in misery. I have already referred to the cases which have occurred in my own family. What do we profit as a Parliament by saying to a man, "We have given you a home and sufficient to eat, and clothe yourself with"? All that the individual can do is to live in physical unfitness, misery and anguish. Our attention should be directed towards the prevention of the trouble, not so much to the cure. We should not think only about compensation for the human wreckage without making a material attempt to prevent that wreckage in the first place. Some members have contended that Mr. de Bernales is an authority on mining. I will show from a statement of his that legislation of this sort may in the distant future become unnecessary. Some years ago he contended that if the industry got £1 more per ounce for its gold, that would suffice for everything necessary to bring about a revival of the industry. He made an offer to the Federal Government that if they would pay a bonus of £1 on every ounce of gold produced, when the price of gold reached £5 5s. per ounce, the Federal Government could retain all that was received over and above that figure. Had the Government of the day embraced that opportunity we would not now be wrangling about what a man should receive who made weekly contributions to a fund: we would know that the Government, taking the lowest possible figure, would have received in 1933 no less than £1,940,922.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: A lot more than that.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am putting it at the very lowest figure. I have taken the price of gold at £4 4s. 11½d. per ounce, and the value of gold now at £8 10s. I have not considered the increase in the production of gold. That is the amount that would have been obtained by the Government.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do you mean the Federal Government?

Mr. MARSHALL: No, I mean the State Government. In addition to that, if true and accurate accounts were kept, many more thousands would have been received. Accepting the dictum of such a very logical authority on mining as Mr. de Bernales, if the mining industry could have contributed towards the funds of the State to that extent, we would not now require to legislate along the lines proposed in the Bill. On the other hand, we should be legislating so as to force the companies to spend money on the more adequate ventilation of the mines and so guarantee to every man working underground so many cubic feet of fresh air. We should also provide that the companies should not permit the use of explosives except at certain periods, and not at any time as they can now. If we were able to do that, we would not require to be so much concerned about passing legislation in the interests of the human derelicts that emerge from the industry daily. We should amend the Mines Regulation Act so as to force the companies to spend what is necessary to protect the health of the workers underground. Under the Bill we are asked to make it almost impossible for any individual to secure employment in the mining industry unless he is physically fit. As soon as the individual gains admission to the industry, we commence to poison him and convert him into a physical wreck. We demand physical fitness before admission so that we can convert the worker into an individual who is not physically fit. It does not seem logical. I appeal to the Minister to take the earliest opportunity to tighten up the Mines Regulation Act in order, so far as is humanly possible and irrespective of what expenditure would be involved, so long as it is within reason, to secure the end I have indicated. We should follow the example set us by other nations, and classify our mines. We should then amend the Mines Regulation Act to secure more healthy conditions underground and thus make quite unnecessary the type of legislation at present under discussion. I opposed the principal Act and I am still opposed to it in principle. On the other hand I must support the Bill because the amendments embodied in it seek to make the parent Act workable and to accord some additional relief to the derelicts of the industry. I have already pointed out that I

am more concerned about preventing the necessity for such legislation than I am to secure compensation for those suffering from diseases that, in my opinion, should have been prevented. No exception can be taken to any of the amendments embodied in the Bill. I notice that one amendment seeks to give legal effect to what the Minister did outside the law. If anyone contributes into a fund on the understanding that he will be entitled to compensation from it and is subsequently denied that compensation, but it is made available to him by the Minister, then justice has been done. As to the provisional certificate, it seems particularly hard that a man should gain admission to the industry on the strength of such a certificate in the belief that there was nothing wrong with him, only to find some time later, when the laboratory officials examined him, that he should never have been admitted to the industry. I have endeavoured, by discussions with others, to ascertain whether there is not a solution to the difficulty other than that which the Minister proposes, and I find there is not. We cannot open the doors of the industry to everyone, and therefore I take no exception to that particular amendment. I hope the solution of the difficulties I refer to will be found during the term of office of the present Minister in whom I have confidence. I would rather that he took these matters in hand than that they should be allowed to stand in abeyance.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans—in reply) [5.40]: I thank members for the manner in which they have received the Bill. They have not placed much before me that requires reply. I think the Leader of the National Party was under the impression that I had consulted the Chamber of Mines regarding the Bill. I did not do so. I did not look upon the measure as of much consequence to the Chamber because it does not affect that body. On the other hand, I consulted the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Board and obtained as much expert evidence as I could to indicate how far I could go with safety respecting the fund. I will refer briefly to two points raised by the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall). To a large extent I agree with what he said. It is a great pity more cannot be done to prevent the

diseases associated with the mining industry, and that we are not introducing legislation to effect that end rather than to amend the Act in relation to compensation payments. The member for Murchison remarked that a few years ago we succeeded in making the mining industry shoulder its responsibilities. I do not know what he had in mind because the mining industry is carrying just as much of its responsibilities to-day as it ever did with regard to compensation. The Mine Workers' Relief Act did not relieve the companies of the responsibility for compensation to the extent of even one penny. It is true that for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, during a period when mining was at a low ebb, relief was granted to the industry, and the general taxpayer provided the money required to pay the premium of £4 10s. per cent. that the mines should have paid out for compensation. Nevertheless, that was always a liability and a responsibility of the mining companies. That money was provided from the Mines Development Vote. To-day the mining companies are paying approximately £8 10s. per cent.—£4 per cent. in respect of accident insurance, and £4 10s. per cent. under the Mine Workers' Relief Act—on their wages sheets, and have never paid more than that.

Mr. Marshall: You did not quite understand me. I will refer further to the matter in Committee.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think the hon. member had in mind the burden carried by the industry under the Miners' Phthisis Act. Even so, the companies did not shoulder a greater burden under that Act than under the Mine Workers' Relief Act.

Mr. Marshall: That is right.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are not altering that position. The member for Murchison also referred to the necessity for legislation to improve the conditions underground. He said the Mines Regulation Act should be amended so as to provide so many cubic feet of air per man underground. I think he must have had in mind the Mines Regulation Act of South Africa. If I consider introducing legislation to amend our Mines Regulation Act, I shall not base the alterations on the South African provisions because, in my opinion, our conditions prior to the cancellation of a number of regula-

tions some 3½ years ago, compared more than favourably with the South African conditions. To-day I am having redrafted the regulations that were cancelled formerly. I admit that the Bill under discussion is fairly complicated but if members require any additional information during the Committee stage, I believe I shall be able to explain the clauses from the legal point of view.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 13:

MR. F. C. L. SMITH: In paragraph (ii.) we find the provision "Unless such person shall have been examined by a medical officer or practitioner appointed under this Act, or by the laboratory, within one year immediately preceding the date when he obtained the provisional certificate aforesaid." Unfortunately I have been on the sick list and have not been able to look up the regulations framed under the Act. We know that the Act has been amended and that the amendments may have a bearing on the provision I have read. But it all has become such a maze of difficulty that one does not know where he is in connection with it. I should like to have an explanation from the Minister of the particular differentiation mentioned.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If a man has not left the mining industry for more than two years and he goes to the laboratory, although he may be suffering then from silicosis advanced, the laboratory has no right to refuse that man a certificate. He has to be out of the industry for more than two years, that is, provided he was employed in the industry for two years when the Act came into force. The first portion of the amendment deals with a man who may have been employed on a recognised laboratory ticket, but who had not worked say for 18 months in a mine and who then went to Wiluna or Ravensthorpe. There would be no laboratory at either of those places. He might apply for a job on a mine and would go to the local doctor who would give him a certificate. This certificate would declare that in the doctor's opinion the man was free from T.B. If the man had T.B., he

could not get a job on the mine, but if he had one of those certificates referred to and had worked in a mine and then went for a provisional certificate 18 months later, he would get it. Then the laboratory might later discover that he was suffering from T.B. advanced at the time that he got the provisional certificate. I do not want to stop that man from getting compensation and that is why the two years provision appears in the clause.

MR. F. C. L. SMITH: You mean silicosis advanced.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. This provision is in the Bill so that the man may get compensation. The 12 months refers to the case of the man found to be suffering from T.B. As the Act is at present, if a man is outside the industry, and even if he got a job on a mine on a provisional certificate, we make the same provision that within 12 months of the date of the issue of the provisional certificate, if the laboratory doctor is of the opinion that the man had T.B. when he got a certificate, there is no desire to deprive him of his compensation. Practically the same provision appears in three places in the Bill because it is dealt with three times in the Act.

MR. F. C. L. SMITH: I am not satisfied with the Minister's explanation. We prohibit the man suffering from T.B., but do not prohibit a man suffering from advanced silicosis. The Minister pointed out too that paragraph (ii.) refers to T.B., but it also provides for silicosis in the advanced stage. To-day a man with silicosis advanced can get back into the industry so long as he has not gone beyond the silicosis stage. Paragraph (ii.) specifically mentions that he must have had a provisional certificate for one year if he has advanced silicosis. This is penalising the man with advanced silicosis as regards his position to-day. I do not think that man would be put out of the industry under existing conditions, whether he was in it on a provisional certificate or not. I move an amendment.

That the words "Silicosis in the advanced stage" be struck out.

MR. MARSHALL: It would be as well to postpone further consideration of the clause until the Minister has had a chance of conferring with the Crown Law Department. Then he could be definitely sure about the position. I agree with the mem-

ber for Brown-Hill Ivanhoe that we are going to penalise men suffering from silicosis in the advanced stage. I have no wish to do anything injurious to those unfortunate enough to be suffering from any of the diseases by adding additional penalties through any legislation we may pass.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Unless I am under a misapprehension with regard to the duration of the certificate entitling a man to work in a mine, the tenure is for 12 months, at the end of which period it is necessary for the man to go back and again be examined. If the duration be for a period of 12 months, the man would not want a provisional certificate if he already had a laboratory certificate that was not 12 months old. There is nothing in the Act to prevent a manager employing a man who has a certificate that is nine months or 11 months old or even 11 months and three weeks old. The certificate entitles a man to work for 12 months and under paragraph (ii.) he would not require a provisional certificate. In my opinion, there is no necessity for this provision. If inserted, it will penalise the man with advanced silicosis.

Mr. MARSHALL: The sub-paragraph reads—

Any person who is employed as a mine worker on the authority of a provisional certificate issued to him by a medical practitioner not appointed for the purposes of this Act under the provisions of the first proviso to Regulation 6 (e) of the regulations made under the Mines Regulation Act, 1906 . . .

That applies only to applicants for employment in the industry who never worked in the industry before. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, I hope, can now see eye to eye with me. Certain things are to be effected as soon as the man is examined by someone authorised under the Act to make an examination. It is necessary to penalise some people in order to prevent abuses.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 16:

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Section 13 of the Act has a proviso that all contributions made to the fund in similar circumstances shall be refunded to men debarred from further working in the industry under the provisional certificate. This clause should

contain a similar proviso. I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the proposed Subsection 3:—Provided that where any person referred to in either paragraph (i) or paragraph (ii) of Subsection 3 of this section is a person to whom Subsection 1 of this section does not apply, then upon such person ceasing to work as a mine worker, or becoming prohibited from being further employed as a mine worker by reason of a notice issued and served by the Minister under and in accordance with the second proviso to Regulation 6 (e) of the regulations made under the Mines Regulation Act, 1906, such person shall be entitled to receive from the board, and the board shall repay to him, the amount of all contributions then paid by such person to the board as a mine worker under this Act.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have discussed this aspect with the Crown Law Department, and am assured that all three cases of this nature involved in the Bill are covered by the measure as drafted. However, I will again discuss the matter with the Crown Law Department and if there is any doubt as to a man under either this clause or the succeeding clause having his contributions refunded, I will see that a proviso to that effect is inserted in another place.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: On the assurance of the Minister, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 48:

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: The clause is complicated. I understand it provides that where the weekly compensation does not amount to £3 10s., the board shall be entitled to make the amount up to the basic wage prevailing in the district at the time. Under the Act as it stands, the board have similar power where the weekly compensation exceeds £3 10s. What will be the position of the man whose assessment under the Workers' Compensation Act is exactly £3 10s. per week?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was represented to me that in many cases considerable hardship occurred when a man entitled to £750 under the Workers' Compensation Act, the maximum weekly payment being £3 10s., had a numerous family. It was pointed out to me that in many cases,

with 7s. 6d. per child under 16 years of age, the weekly amount could be £3 17s. 6d. Members of the board suggested to me that in a case of that kind, involving hardship, the board should have discretion, by regulation, to pay up to the amount of the basic wage ruling in the district in which the man resided. If a man on the Kalgoorlie basic wage, £4 2s. per week, was withdrawn from the mining industry—thus being entitled to a total of £750—he would receive half wages, £2 1s., under the Workers' Compensation Act, and if he had children, he would receive in addition 7s. 6d. per child. However if the 7s. 6d. per child did not take him up to or over £3 10s. per week, he would be under greater hardship than the man receiving over £3 10s., while the board would not be able to grant him anything additional. The clause allows the board to grant £1 per week for the wife as a dependant, but in no case can the total amount granted exceed the basic wage for the district.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I am not satisfied as to the position of the man on £3 10s. per week. The original Act was amended to provide that where the payments exceed in the aggregate the maximum sum of £3 10s. per week, the board could take into consideration cases of extreme hardship and increase the payment up to the basic wage for the district. The Bill provides that the board may take similar action if the weekly payment is less than £3 10s. per week. So we have provided for the man below £3 10s. and also for the man above £3 10s., which leaves the man whose payment is exactly £3 10s. To prevent the possibility of that man being deprived of the intention of the Act. I move—

That in lines 5 and 6 of the proposed further proviso, "less than £3 10s. per week" be struck out, and the words "£3 10s. or less per week" be inserted in lieu.

Amendment (that the words proposed to be struck out be struck out) put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is a possibility of there being something in the suggestion—

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment has been passed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Very well, they will get nothing now.

Amendment (that the words proposed to be inserted be inserted) put and passed.

Mr. MARSHALL: There is here a point that might impose a hardship. We read "his wife continues to live with him." In some cases his wife might not be living with him, and still the law might insist that the husband pay something towards her maintenance. I hope that if further amendments are to be brought down in another place, this will be attended to.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have given this point consideration. This is the fourth or fifth draft I have had of the clause. If the hon. member had seen the first or second draft he might have had some ground for complaint. I hope the Bill will be allowed to pass as it stands.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Clause 6—Amendment of Section 49:

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I move an amendment—

That after "is" in line five the words "less in the aggregate than £3 10s. per week" be deleted, and "in the aggregate is £3 10s. per week or less" be inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 50:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister, when moving the second reading, informed us that a man suffering from silicosis early, and advised by notification to leave the industry, could go elsewhere, but had to report yearly; and if after 10 or 15 years he decided to go back into the industry, and was then found to be suffering from silicosis advanced or silicosis plus tuberculosis, he could get compensation of £750. It seems to me unfair that those engaged in the industry should have to contribute to the fund, while a man outside the industry, yet eligible for compensation, should not have to contribute. The man who has left the industry and secured work elsewhere should have to make a contribution, however small, to the fund. Will the Minister tell us what the facts really are?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: When the original Bill was introduced, this provision was put into it for the purpose of

encouraging men to leave the industry when notified that they had silicosis early. It was laid down that they had to leave the industry and register with the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Board, and so would be entitled to compensation at any later period. The object of the provision was to get them to leave the industry. This amendment deals, not with that, but with the circumstance that when a man does leave he registers with the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Board, and if he returns to the industry, there is no authority for deleting his name from that register. Many men have returned to the industry because they found it impossible to get a living outside the industry.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You said it would stand for 10 or 15 years.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It would stand for 20 years or more. If a man receives a permit to return to the industry, there is no authority for deleting his name from the register. On returning to the mines he is entitled to any compensation that might be payable to him, yet he is still registered as though he were out of the industry. Under this amendment, when he receives a permit to go back to the industry, his name can be deleted from the register. If he were to leave the industry again, I do not know what would happen; but on leaving the industry under notification the first time, if he goes to another industry he pays no further contribution to the fund. That applies to all who leave the industry within two years after notification. This clause will give power to delete the name from the register if the man has permission to return to the industry.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Suppose a man had left the industry within the period of two years, and had been away 10 or 15 years and then developed disease, the Leader of the Opposition suggests that such a man becoming entitled to the benefits under the Act should pay the contribution he would have made had he continued on the register. Otherwise he would be in a better position than the man who remained in the industry and paid his contribution.

Mr. Marshall: The one who left would have taken advantage of the good advice given him.

Mr. Hawke: By leaving the industry he would represent a less risk.

Hon. N. KEENAN: But the man who remained in the industry would have contributed a much larger amount to the fund.

Mr. Hawke: The risk would be greater if he remained in the industry.

Hon. N. KEENAN: But where the risk was greater, the man would have contributed more.

The Minister for Employment: If he was out of work until he returned to the industry, should he pay the contribution?

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is an impossible proposition; we must assume that he would get work outside. The fact remains that the man who left the industry would be in an advantageous position as compared with the man who remained, who paid contributions over all those years, and who received only the same amount of compensation.

Mr. MARSHALL: Quite a number of men make a mere convenience of the mining industry, but nobody outside the industry may contribute to the fund. We want men to leave the industry while they have a chance of retaining their health. If they go prospecting, they have to contribute to the fund.

The Minister for Mines: They are not entitled to compensation unless they contribute.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is so.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Then why should a man who has left the industry get compensation?

The Minister for Mines: As an inducement to leave the industry.

Mr. MARSHALL: If that is not apparent to the Leader of the Opposition, it never will be. If he knew how rapidly miners' disease develops, he would appreciate the need for sympathetic treatment. Instead of compensating derelicts, our aim should be to prevent disease.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is not the point.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is, and so we advise men to leave the industry.

Mr. Hawke: And we tell them that if they leave the industry and later become affected, they will receive compensation.

Mr. MARSHALL: That puts the point in a nutshell.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—Amendment of Section 53:

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I move an amendment—

That "less than three pounds ten shillings per week" be struck out, and the words "three pounds ten shillings per week or less" inserted in lieu.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment is consequential on one already passed.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I do not think it is.

The Minister for Mines: No, the two amendments deal with different sets of circumstances.

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

Clause 9—Amendment of Section 57:

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I am not opposed to the clause, but it illustrates that care is necessary. The clause proposes to bring within the Act those previously engaged in mining for a period of five years. Apparently the Act was not clear on the point because it said "engaged in prospecting for five years." In 1932, when the then Minister for Mines, Mr. Scaddan, introduced his Bill, he said—

Prospecting includes mining in this State. If a man has been working as a mine worker or carrying on operations as a prospector for ten years, and is free from the other diseases up to the point of silicosis early, not if he is suffering from tuberculosis plus silicosis, or from silicosis in the advanced stage, he can register. If he has been employed in the industry for ten years, he can obtain admission to the fund on making his contribution, and can obtain the benefits that are provided for others working in the industry.

Now the Minister tells us that the provisions of the Act are not complete, and that although prospecting includes mining, we must specifically provide for it. This indicates that the House was misled by the previous Minister.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member is not altogether correct. The clause is not altogether intended to define mining as working in a mine for wages and prospecting, but is intended to give relief. It is to encourage a man, if he does not wish to leave the industry altogether, to quit the deep mines and go prospecting. Under the Act he cannot do it. He must have been prospecting for five years. What brought this to light was the case of a man who was certified as suffering from

silicosis early. He was notified to get out of deep mining. He went to the board to register as he wished to be able to contribute to the fund as a prospector. But he could not do that as he had not been prospecting. I want to encourage such men, and this clause will do so. It also includes the man who has been mining in deep mines or the man who has been prospecting. We do not compel prospectors to pay into the fund, but if they do not pay they can receive none of the benefits. Actually the board loses one-third of the contributions in the case of a prospector, because there is no employer to contribute his third share.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purpose of the Bill.

First Reading.

Bill introduced by the Acting Premier and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE ACTING PREMIER (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [8.6] in moving the second reading said: This is purely a formal Bill to provide the money that Parliament has already voted. It is not customary to debate it in this House, but in another place it seems to provide an opportunity for discussion.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is their only opportunity.

The ACTING PREMIER: It is treated as purely a formal matter in this House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK.*In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank of Western Australia:

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am opposed to this clause. It is the Bill. If it is passed it will mean farewell to the Agricultural Bank, as we know it. It will hand over parliamentary control of the agricultural industry to a body of commissioners. I ask members to realise what this means. The industry is the foundation of our stability. We must depend mainly upon it for the development of the State and the increase of our population. The more gold that is extracted from the earth the poorer do the goldfields become; whereas in the case of the agricultural industry, the more the land is developed, the more advantageous it is to the State and to the people it employs. The clients of the Agricultural Bank number 10,000, and these represent approximately 60,000 persons directly associated with it. Most of our agricultural towns depend upon the industry and the activities of the bank. Many firms in country towns and in the city depend to a great extent upon the institution. The industry is one of great importance. Parliament should hesitate before it transfers the destiny of all those associated with the bank from the control of Parliament to that of two nominated persons. It is an extraordinary move to make and I cannot subscribe to it. The condition of the bank has been investigated by a Royal Commission. Do members admit that the three commissioners can have acquired in a limited period so intimate a knowledge of the industry as to justify them in reversing all that they, as members, have stood for and accomplished in respect to the wonderful expansion of our agricultural industry? Liberty is worth preserving, and I am jealous of our rights. If the Agricultural Bank Act requires amendment, and if the administration of that institution has been faulty or incapable of dealing with present-day conditions, let the Government amend the Act and alter the system of administration. They should not attempt to set up a new body altogether to control the institution.

Members of Parliament are not in a position to decide whether they desire this new body set up. We have not sufficient information.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Even so, we have a good deal more knowledge of the position than the members of the Royal Commission.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is so. What is wrong is that Parliament has permitted this matter to progress as far as it has. The men appointed to the Royal Commission were not specially qualified individuals. I do not cast any reflection upon them, although the Minister endeavoured to make it appear that I did so during my second reading speech. I know the Royal Commissioners, and respect them, but they were not the type of men to investigate the industry, understand its difficulties, and direct Parliament on such an important matter. They have ability and qualifications, but they had no special qualifications for the task set them. We have upwards of 30 years' experience of Parliamentary administration of the affairs of the Agricultural Bank. Now we are asked to agree to three men being placed in control. The whole position is to be revolutionised.

Mr. Thorn: Only one of the commissioners was really a farmer.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If Parliament required any guidance, we should go to those who have administered the Agricultural Bank so successfully over a long period. They did not make mistakes without knowing the fact.

Hon. C. G. Latham: People can always be clever after the event.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: They were conscious of losses that were made.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: And losses will be made.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Annually the trustees reported to Parliament regarding the securities of the Bank, and, generally speaking, those officers are far more competent to advise Parliament should reforms be deemed necessary. There was no need for a Royal Commission if the Bill represents the type of legislation that was required. If we are to do something drastic, we should go to those who have successfully administered the Bank under a difficult Act. They have dealt with a huge public utility. I would not take exception to the Minister's desire to tighten up matters in

an endeavour to safeguard the revenue, or if he were to be more exacting regarding the responsibilities and liabilities of those who secure assistance from the Bank.

The Minister for Lands: And those who won't pay interest at any price?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Those who are in arrears with interest payments can be dealt with.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, if they can pay but there are so many who cannot pay.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: But if the Minister desired to be more exacting, we could not take exception to that. There is ample provision for doing that under the existing law, without passing legislation that will hand over the control of the industry to a nominee board for seven years. If we agree to the legislation, the Minister will not be able to amend it for seven years. The Minister may laugh, but he must remember that he intends to set up a board that will have control of the industry under a seven years' contract.

Hon. C. G. Latham: With a special law.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes. The Minister may assume that he can amend the Act at any time, but if he should attempt to do so he will realise how restricted and hampered he will be, because the members of the board will be appointed for a period of seven years. Then again, why should eight men have the power of selecting those who will control such a huge utility?

Hon. C. G. Latham: They want to be more powerful than Parliament.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes.

Mr. Wansbrough: You do not believe in responsible government?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do, but I do not believe in Cabinet government. Merely because the members of the Royal Commission have directed the Minister to do something that is in conflict with the views of those associated with him, we should not sacrifice our principles.

Mr. Coverley: There are many officials in responsible positions to-day who were appointed by Cabinet when you were associated with the Government.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, but I want members to realise the magnitude of what they are being asked to agree to now.

Mr. Coverley: The pity of it is it was not done years ago.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That may be the hon. member's opinion. Recently we spent thousands of pounds during an election because we desired the control of the Commonwealth Bank to be under the direction of Parliament. Taking advantage of the disordered state of the public mind after the Great War, the Federal Government of the day embraced the opportunity for reactionary steps and handed over the control of the people's bank to a board.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. member is in order in discussing the Commonwealth Bank.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am merely providing a parallel that links up with the position of our own Bank. The Federal Government handed over the control of the Commonwealth Bank to a board, and now the State Government propose to hand the Agricultural Bank over to the control of three men. It really means that the control of the whole of the agricultural industry will be placed in the hands of two commissioners. The Labour Party has always opposed board control of the Bank, because it does not result in sympathetic administration of currency and credit.

The Minister for Lands: You want that sympathetic administration that means bankruptcy.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I differ from the Minister. If the Minister is concerned about the finances of the Bank, he should not endeavour to revolutionise the position in the way he suggests. The Agricultural Bank is not the only institution that has suffered in these days. The Associated Banks and the big agricultural firms are in much the same position. Rather than restrict the powers of Parliament, I would favour extending them in many directions. I urge the Minister to effect what reforms he desires by amendments to the existing Act, and not to hand over the control of the agricultural industry to two men for seven years.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I move an amendment—

That in lines two and three of paragraph (c) the words "the Under Treasurer ex officio or his deputy" be struck out.

The subclause provides that the commissioners shall consist of three members, one of such members being the Under Treasurer ex officio or his deputy. I have no reflection to make on any officer of the Public Ser-

vice, much less the officer who holds the post of Under Treasurer. I am well aware of his capabilities, but I am not going to subscribe to the principle of placing a high-salaried officer in a position of the importance referred to in the Bill. I am anxious to see the Bill become an Act and I have no doubt that the Under Treasurer would make an able commissioner, but I also realise that he has quite enough to do in the Treasury without taking on added responsibilities and other onerous duties. The Minister said that the Treasury would be vitally affected. I realise that, but it is no reason why the Under Treasurer should be one of the commissioners. I should like to know whether the Under Treasurer will receive the salary of an ordinary commissioner, and whether it is proposed that he shall devote the whole of his time to the work of the Bank. It has been stated that the three commissioners must give up the whole of their time to the duties of the Bank. If the Under Treasurer is to do that, who will carry out his duties at the Treasury? We know that the Under Secretary for Works was appointed a member of the Transport Board, and later became chairman. The section in the Transport Act was not as definite as the clause in the Bill before us. If I had thought that the Under Secretary for Works was to be made a member of the Transport board, I would not have voted for the clause when the Bill was being considered. I consider Mr. Munt an able officer but he has any amount of work to do in his position as Under Secretary for Works. A member of the Bank Commission should be free to devote the whole of his time to the work of that institution. If the amendment is carried, it will be the duty of the Government to appoint an officer of the Treasury to assist the commissioners.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot agree to the amendment, and I am sure the hon. member will not press it when he understands the position. The clause states definitely that the commissioners shall consist of three members, one of whom shall be the Under Treasurer ex officio or his deputy. The hon. member wants to provide that an officer of the Treasury be appointed. I pointed out on the second reading that it was intended to train a particular officer for this work.

Mr. Patrick: Will he give the whole of his time to it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes; I should say the greater part of his time to it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Then you can accept the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Bill does not provide for any officer of the Treasury; I said a representative of the Treasury, but it was felt that that was too indefinite.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It may be anybody.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member need not get annoyed.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am not a bit annoyed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member is so sour.

Hon. C. G. Latham: If you start that kind of thing, you will get all you want.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: You have a most jaundiced view of the whole position.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You will have a jaundiced view before I have finished with you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am quite capable of looking after myself.

Mr. Marshall: You don't look it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the Minister for Lands please address himself to the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Is it not reasonable and good sense to have a man trained for this job? Nothing could be more pernicious than that some officer who has not had any association with the work of the Bank should be sent along there occasionally. The Under Treasurer assures me that he will train a man for the work, and that that man will be his deputy. That deputy then will have continuous association with the work of the Bank, and every week and every month he will acquire greater knowledge. I hope the hon. member will not press his amendment, because it will not be of advantage to the State. With regard to the comments of the member for Guildford, he said that we were handing over the administration to a board of commissioners and removing the institution from parliamentary control. He further said that Parliament would have no opportunity of amending the Bill. Of course Parliament will have every opportunity of doing so. It can amend it or even abolish it next year.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What would you do with the commissioners then?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Buy them out.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think the commissioners would have any claim on the Government. How much more are the commissioners being removed from the control of Parliament than are the existing trustees removed under the present Act? The Bill gives the Treasury control and the existing Act divorces it from the Treasury. Under the existing Agricultural Bank Act, the trustees are the administrators of the Bank. This clause restores control to the Treasury. The member for Guildford-Midland has been merely playing with words. The present Act gives the trustees power to snap their fingers at Parliament. For two years they can do that. The clause merely restores to the Treasury a supervision which had been removed from it. The hon. member made many assertions as to what would happen to the farming community under the Bill. But this is not a house of children. The Bill gives the commissioners a great work to do, and gives them opportunity and power and tenure and permanence to reconstruct the agricultural industry of Western Australia. It gives them power to write down with the consent of Parliament. It gives them power to suspend debts. Is that a revolution against the interests of our farmers? Is it not what they have been agitating for? Is it not the policy of the Wheatgrowers' Union and of the Primary Producers' Association? Look up the Royal Commission's report and see whether that is not their policy.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What is going to happen to farmers outside the scope of the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Does not the hon. member know that there is a measure before Parliament for the adjustment of farmers' debts?

The CHAIRMAN: That is not a matter for discussion under this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member asks why should eight men have power to appoint the commissioners.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: In a big matter of this kind, I have never known it to be done under such circumstances.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: From the Governor downwards, the Government appoint. That is their power under the Constitution. The hon. member himself has done these things. He should be the last man in the world to object to the proposal in the clause. When Governments want to dismiss a man, they dismiss him. The previous Government dismissed the Engineer-in-Chief. It is the prerogative of Governments to appoint and dismiss.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The previous Government got rid of the Engineer-in-Chief because they could not pay him.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Did Parliament appoint any of the other trustees? The member for Guildford-Midland himself appointed a man.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It must have been a long while ago.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But the hon. member did it. He did not consult Parliament. He did not consult anybody. He did not even consult Cabinet. In that instance the hon. member trusted one man. Now he cannot trust eight. But whether he trusts them or not, it is the prerogative of the Government under the Constitution. The Government can, without consulting Parliament, appoint two new trustees tomorrow if they choose.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Under the existing Act.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Under the existing Act the hon. member has to trust eight men. The hon. member has never previously raised objection to the principle. The clause is important in that it appoints commissioners and gives them a term, and brings back the control of the Treasury over the Bank until the period of rehabilitation shall have been gone through. Compensation perhaps may have to be paid to the present trustees, or perhaps not. The Commonwealth Bank was removed from Parliamentary control and put under Government control by a Labour Government. Sir Denison Miller was completely absolute except so far as the Federal Parliament could amend the legislation that made him absolute. This Bill does not make the commissioners absolute, but brings in the Under Treasurer or his deputy. The hon. member is trying to scare the Committee by making portentous remarks which have no relation to the Bill. What is the purpose of appoint-

ing commissioners and giving them a tenure? Does Parliament want a sound institution soundly administered? Does Parliament want otherwise than that the Bank should be placed on a basis from which it can serve this country under the best conditions? How is the farmer to suffer from that? Has Parliament been able to intervene with the Bank in some way to the farmers' disadvantage? Does the hon. member suggest that the Bank might be interfered with by a member of Parliament in the interests of a constituent?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is a rotten thing to say.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Out of the mouths of the officers of the Bank the Royal Commission condemned the institution. Is that system to be allowed to continue? What is at the back of the minds of hon. members objecting to the clause? Many members of this Chamber have been clients of the Bank, and they have always been given a fair deal. I can perceive no danger of injury to farmers. In what way will the clause destroy the liberty and opportunity of the farmers? The provision cannot be otherwise than to their advantage. The member for Guildford-Midland is trying to stampede members of the Committee by talking of great principles, principles which are not relevant to the argument at all. In reply to the member for Perth I wish to say that it is far better to have one man whose occupancy of the office is continuous, and who will day by day and month by month become more fitted for the work. This is far better than to have one man going from the Treasury to the Bank to-day, and another man going to-morrow, without either of them being able to get completely in touch with the work. In my opinion, the Under Treasurer or his deputy is the man for the position.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister spoke of playing upon words. If ever I heard a play upon words it was from the Minister just now.

Mr. Moloney: You are a champion.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: You shut up.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If I cannot be heard in this House, I will sit down.

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

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: According to the dictionary, the word "deputy" means to appoint a substitute or agent to act for another. The very words the member for Perth has submitted convey a great deal more than the words as they are in the clause. Here the words "or his deputy" mean any officer whom he may send along to a meeting. The Minister says that everything will be all right. It may be, while he remains there, but under the clause the Under Treasurer can send a different officer to every successive meeting.

The Minister for Lands: But he won't.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister cannot answer for the future, and immediately the Bill is passed the Minister will have no control over it. The amendment moved by the member for Perth is of far better wording. It means that there shall be only one officer. In any case, it is not for the Under Treasurer, for he will not have the time to devote to the work. The faults discovered by the Royal Commission will not be rectified by the clause as it stands. I have no objection to a representative of the Under Treasurer, but let us have only one man. The Minister by this legislation is telling the people that Parliament is becoming too cumbersome and cannot look after its work. And he said that I had a jaundiced viewpoint, and that I indulged in carping criticism. Why, the Minister has been subjected to less criticism than any other Minister I have ever known. Always have we helped him with all common-sense legislation. The whole crux of the Bill lies in this clause, and the failure or success of the measure depends on it. The Minister on the second reading said the Government would not accept dictation. I remind him that Parliament is more powerful than any Minister or any Government. If it is not, we ought to abolish it. The Minister must expect Parliament to voice its opinion. If a majority of the House supports him I will fall in with it, but the Minister is not going to dictate to Parliament.

The Minister for Lands: And we are not going to let you dictate.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am here with a certain responsibility, and I will stand up to it. I should like to see paragraph (c) struck out; I would prefer to see a provision acceptable, not only to the farmers, but to the people generally. I am

surprised to find the Government bringing in this class of legislation. They believe in parliamentary control, but this is control by a board of commissioners.

The Minister for Lands: You said on the second reading that the Bill brought back political control.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I said the commissioners will not have a free hand to raise money because they will be dependent on the Treasury. I have seen the trustees of the Bank waiting on the Treasury steps to get release of credit in order to supply the farmers with super. The same thing will happen again under this provision. We are here to look after the people's interests, not to shelve it as this clause does. I take the strongest exception to the Minister's remarks about a jaundiced view and carping criticism. Those remarks are unfair.

The Minister for Lands: I said a jaundiced view expressed by jealous tongues.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Thank the Lord I am not in the Minister's clutches, and not one of his Agricultural Bank clients. I am glad to be free from the Minister. If the Minister wants to get his legislation through, he must adopt a more friendly attitude towards this side of the House. I am prepared to accept the amendment of the member for Perth, which is much more specific than the Minister's proposal. We know that as soon as Bills leave Parliament a different interpretation is put on their provisions. If there is to be but one Treasury officer, why not send the Bill back to the Parliamentary Draftsman and let us know who the man is to be. Under the clause as it stands, if 60 meetings were held in the year, there could be 60 separate officers from the Treasury. I propose to ask the Committee to delete Subclause 3 altogether.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I cannot agree with the member for Guildford-Midland. We wish to place on the statute-book legislation that will be of lasting benefit to the farming community, and I hope the Minister will realise that, in moving amendments, we are endeavouring to do our best for the farmers. I support the amendment. If it be defeated, I shall move another which I think will be acceptable.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is another objection to the amendment. The

Bill proposes to give the commissioners power to write down. The officer appointed to represent the Treasury cannot be removed from the control of the Treasury. If an officer were appointed and were free from such control, he would become a commissioner, and when any matter arose between the commissioners and the Treasury, he would act as a commissioner divorced from the Treasury. That aspect was considered by the Government, and I hope the Committee will appreciate the danger.

Mr. NEEDHAM: My amendment deals not with the powers of the commission, but with the personnel. In moving the amendment, I was influenced by the words of the Minister that the commissioners would be paid an adequate salary and would devote the whole of their time to the business of the Bank. The Minister, in speaking against the amendment, has not been very convincing. The clause provides that the commission shall consist of three members, one of whom shall be the Under Treasurer or his deputy. Therefore it is intended that he shall be a commissioner. Yet the Minister spoke of his becoming a commissioner. It is imperative that the Treasury be represented, and my amendment will not rob the Treasury of representation. The Treasury can be protected by appointing an officer of the Treasury, and that can be specified if the amendment be accepted. Under my proposal, the Governor would have the appointment of this officer.

The Minister for Lands: He would have no power to appoint the Under Treasurer's deputy.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I think the Under Treasurer would have power to appoint any officer in the Treasury, and I want that power left in the hands of the Governor.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I oppose the amendment. The Government decided to give the commissioners very wide powers that will drastically affect the finances of the State. If the authority to control the commissioners is not safeguarded by having the Treasury well represented, the powers proposed to be conferred upon the commissioners may have to be reconsidered. No Government would delegate powers relating to the writing down of debts without having adequate Treasury representation. The Under Treas-

urer or his deputy would necessarily be an officer of the Treasury, and if those words are not retained, we must consider whether the powers to be conferred should be as wide as those proposed. If the amendment is carried it will alter the whole aspect of the clause. If an officer of the Treasury other than the Under Treasurer or his deputy is appointed to the position there is grave danger of that officer ceasing to be a Treasury representative, and becoming one of the commissioners. The whole system would then fall to the ground. It is proposed that the two commissioners shall devote the whole of their time to the work. Naturally the Under Treasurer or his deputy would devote as much time as possible to the deliberations of the commission.

Mr. DONEY: A minute ago the Minister for Lands stated that when the Under Treasurer or his deputy was attending meetings as a member of the commission, he would be divorced from Treasury control. What clause bears out that contention? The Treasury official, upon his return from a meeting of the Bank commissioners, could veto a decision arrived at there by the majority. Will the Minister explain that?

Mr. PIESSE: I hardly think the amendment clarifies the position. The Minister should take members more into his confidence as to the proposed personnel of the commission. A good deal of apprehension exists lest the Government should not appoint the right men. They are not going about the matter in a proper way. They are treating the appointments as if the intention was to fill the positions by subordinate officers.

The Minister for Lands: That comes later.

Mr. PIESSE: We must be very careful to see that the right men are appointed. It is a question of remodelling the policy of the Bank and creating a new management. We should know what the intentions of the Government are. Are these appointments to be left in the hands of the Minister? Surely the proper thing to do is to invite applications for the position. What are the Government prepared to pay? I am sorry the Minister has not been more frank. In lifting the administration of the Bank out of the hands of Parliament, the Government are taking a grave responsibility upon themselves.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Bill, if passed, will be administered by two men,

and of the two commissioners appointed by the Government, one becomes chairman with a casting as well as a deliberative vote. The two will have to devote their whole time to the business of the Bank. The Minister intends that after the appointments have been made, the two commissioners shall administer the measure. The Under Treasurer is the connecting financial link, because Parliament has to approve of the financial administration of the Bank. There is to be an appropriation by Parliament for the administration, and there is to be a guarantee by Parliament in connection with debentures. So there must be a connecting link. I want a more definite connecting link. I do not complain of the Under Treasurer being a commissioner, but I should like to see the Treasurer himself in that position. I do not support the amendment which to me represents tweedledum or tweedledee. Naturally the Government would appoint the Under Treasurer. I would like to see another method of making the connecting link.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I wish to move an amendment in the first line of paragraph (c).

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is too late.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (c) the following words be struck out:—"and shall be persons who in the opinion of the Governor have a sound knowledge of the rural industries of the State and are suited to control the administration of the business of the commissioners."

I ask that the words be deleted because I see no reason whatever for their presence in Section 5 of the existing Agricultural Bank Act merely provides—

This Act shall be administered by three trustees to be appointed from time to time by the Governor.

The Minister for Lands has clearly pointed out that it must always remain the function of the Government in power to make these appointments and to be responsible for the appointment of proper persons. The words I have moved to strike out are wholly unnecessary if the Government do their duty as I assume they will. If these words are to remain, why not insert other words equally appropriate, to the effect that the persons

to be appointed shall be honest and of diligent and sober habits? If the words are inserted, it is not to be assumed for one moment that they qualify the appointments by restricting them to persons who must have those qualifications. The clause does not do that. It merely says that the appointees shall be persons who "in the opinion of the Governor" are possessed of such qualifications. As the word "Governor" simply stands for the Ministry, it merely means that the Ministry in appointing persons as commissioners shall appoint persons who will have regard to the particular objects of the statute. Surely, even without these words, no Government would act in any other way. This is verbiage of a character which it is not at all proper to encourage.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I suggest that the words are more important than the hon. member thinks they are. It is true that the appointment of officers is the prerogative of the Government, but in legislating, Parliament can give directions as to the qualifications to be possessed by the commissioners. The words proposed to be struck out are important.

Hon N. Keenan: Suppose the words were not there; would the Government of the day, if they acted properly, do anything else?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: To use the words of the Leader of the Opposition, the present Government would not, but some other Government might.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Words of this description should not be included in an Act of Parliament. Obviously the Government would be guided by all the qualifications necessary for important positions of the kind, but if qualifications are to be prescribed we must go further. The Government accept the responsibility. The words are mere padding, and will not remain in the clause.

The Minister for Lands: How do you know?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Another place will strike them out, or the Government will wake up and arrange for their deletion. I cannot recall any such words being included in a Bill during my experience. The words are either too many or too few. We must get the best men as commissioners, and we must rely on the Government to make such a selection.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I oppose the amendment because I regard the qualifications set out in the paragraph as essential. I agree with the Minister that they constitute a direction to the Government that they shall appoint only men who have a sound knowledge of the rural industries of the State. If we agree to the amendment, it may be construed that Parliament does not approve of the appointment of men who possess the qualifications set out.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (d) be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—“(d) After the expiration of the period of two years from the date of the appointment of the first members and subject as hereinafter mentioned, members other than the officer appointed from the Treasury shall hold office for a term of seven years from the date of their appointment. The officer appointed from the Treasury shall hold office at the will of the Governor.”

My reason for moving the amendment is that which the Minister advanced as his reason for opposing the principle outlined in it. He asked how suitable men could be obtained who would give up the positions they held to accept an appointment for two years. The men to be appointed must accept the responsibility, just as we must accept it. How do we know that these men will possess the necessary qualifications, temperament, financial knowledge and standing in the community to enable them to carry out their duties effectively? I am not sure that two years is not too generous a probationary period. It has been suggested that we always accept the choice of a Government, and the soundness of such appointments has been stressed. There is a difference between the appointments to be made under this legislation and other appointments. For instance, the choice of judges of the Supreme Court is restricted to a few, and such appointments are usually on the recommendation of the Chief Justice who has an intimate acquaintance of members of the legal fraternity. The Commissioner of Railways controls a large asset of the State with a heavy capitalisation, but the name of a suggested appointee to that position is always submitted to both Houses of Parliament for approval. The appointments to be made under this Bill will be the most important of which I have any

knowledge. The commissioners will control a capital of over £16,000,000, and they will have power to write down the debts of the bank's clients. Any such writing down will not be of assistance to the general public because the principal will still have to be repaid. The security of the industry will be in the hands of the commissioners and upwards of 10,000 individuals engaged in agriculture will be under their control. Their activities will not be confined to the wheat belt but will extend to the South-West. The commissioners will control soldier settlement and advances under the Wire Netting Act. Complaints were made regarding the responsibilities placed upon the shoulders of the present trustees, but the Government propose to impose additional responsibilities on the commissioners who are to be appointed. Those officers are to be appointed for seven years according to the Minister's proposal, but I think a probationary period of two years fair and reasonable. It is not merely the two men to be appointed who are to be considered; the public are of much greater importance. The Minister must know whom he intends to appoint. I will not believe that he has introduced such an important piece of legislation as that under discussion, without knowing who the commissioners are to be. If the Minister were to inform the Committee of his intention, he would facilitate the passage of the Bill.

The Acting Premier: Let me into the secret, too! Who are they?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister is not likely to let anyone into the secret, but if I were to write out the names of those I think he has in mind and place them in a sealed envelope, I think the Acting Premier would find that I was not far wrong.

The Minister for Lands: You do that, and I will bet you a thousand to one you are wrong.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Did the Chairman of Committees hear what the Minister said?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, and the Minister is not in order in trying to make bets in this Chamber.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I wondered if he proposed to turn Parliament into a betting shop.

The CHAIRMAN: Not with me in the Chair.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The success of this legislation will depend upon the qualifications and temperament, knowledge, ability and standing of the commissioners to be appointed, and I trust the Minister will agree to the probationary period I suggest.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot accept the amendment. The Leader of the Opposition proposes that there shall be commissioners appointed for two years and that after that period, new commissioners shall follow them and be appointed for seven years. I cannot possibly agree with that. If we are to fire out any of the commissioners after two years, let them all be fired out. The clause proposes that if any commissioner be found unsuitable, he can be removed after two years. There is an extraordinary fear that these men will not prove satisfactory. But all Governments have to take such risks. The Commonwealth Bank appoint officers for a long period. Could anything be more embarrassing for the commissioners than to be on trial for two years? I can easily conceive that, later on, it will become an election cry that the commissioners must go. We have seen that sort of thing in this State.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I have not heard of its being done.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Well, I can see it being done. I remember an election being fought on the question of deposing a Commissioner of Railways; indeed, that question cropped up at two elections. I do not know any men who would accept these positions for two years, only to be shot at. No man of character would accept such a position. Would the hon. member himself accept it?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Not if you were a Minister.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Let the commissioners be given a definite term, for if they prove unsatisfactory, Parliament can shift them. There is much work to be done, and we require good men to do it. It has been said that Ministers have imposed their will on the trustees of the Bank. Possibly it has been done.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You were the one who did it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Nothing of the sort. If I had wished to impress my will on the commissioners, I could have

nominated them, and I would have seen to it that they had only two years.

Mr. HAWKE: The amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition does not alter the existing paragraph. Actually the proposed amendment ensures a term of seven years to each of the two commissioners to be appointed in the first instance. There is in it nothing to say that if found unsatisfactory at the end of the two-year term the commissioners shall not be appointed for the additional five years. The hon. member's idea is to put the commissioners on a probationary period, and at the end of that term someone shall have power to say that they shall or shall not be appointed. The proposed amendment would not achieve the objective of the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The main point is that emphasised by the Minister. These commissioners are going to administer the Act for seven years. As to what we shall insert in place of the seven years, it has yet to be determined. I support the idea of having a probationary period, for I want a guarantee that the Act will be so administered as to assist in maintaining the development of the industry. If the two-year probationary period prove efficiency in the commissioners, then the appointment can be made for seven years, failing which there would be another probationary period of two years. So we should have an assurance that the administering of the Act would give satisfaction to the people.

Mr. Tonkin: Where is that provided for?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is not provided.

Mr. Tonkin: Then how are you going to do it?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If we strike out paragraph (d), we can provide what we want in lieu thereof. I understood that the Leader of the Opposition desired to have a probationary period of two years at all times.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We can easily alter that.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes. I am supporting the deletion of paragraph (d) in order to get a probationary period until proof is forthcoming that the appointee is efficient. If the appointee does not display the necessary qualifications, we can appoint another commissioner for two years until

we get the type of man required. There is a great danger in appointing for seven years commissioners who will have to undertake such responsibilities, and appointment for such a term is more than the Government should ask.

Amendment (to strike out words) put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	17
Noes	22

Majority against	5
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AYES.

Mr. Brockman	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Seward
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Mann	Mr. Warner
Mr. North	Mr. Doney
Mr. Patrick	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Clothier	Mr. Needham
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Cross	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Troy
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Worsbrough
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Wilcock
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Wise
Mr. Millington	Mr. Withers
Mr. Munale	Mr. Wilson
	(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Latham	Mr. Collier
Mr. J. M. Smith	Miss Holman
Mr. Welsh	Mr. Moloney
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Rodoreda

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. SEWARD: I have an amendment to propose to paragraph (d) after the word "years."

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee have decided to retain the whole of the paragraph and we cannot go back.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to paragraph (d):—"and at the expiration of his or their term of office shall be eligible for re-appointment for a like term."

This provision is to be found in the existing Act, Subsection 2 of Section 7. It is necessary to negative the idea that at the end of the term the appointment is not to continue. The most common example is to be found in companies where provision is made for the election of persons as directors or auditors, supplemented by the words

that they shall be eligible for re-appointment. The amendment would give the Governor power, if the commissioners have proved successful, to renew their appointments without any question. The paragraph as it stands means that the commissioners shall be appointed for seven years and no longer.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member was complaining a little while ago about loading up the clauses of the Bill. His amendment certainly overloads this one. The Government can re-appoint the commissioners if they desire to do so. They will not be rendered more eligible for re-appointment because the clause says so, if the Government do not think they are eligible.

HON. N. KEENAN: The amendment negates the idea that the appointment of these persons is for a term of seven years, and that they cannot be re-appointed at the end of that time.

Amendment put and passed.

HON. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That after the word "the," in line 1 of paragraph (g) of Clause 5, the word "two" be inserted, and after the word "members," in line 1 of paragraph (g) of Clause 5, the words "appointed by the Governor" be inserted.

The provision for remuneration can relate only to the two commissioners who are appointed by the Governor. It is not suggested that the officer of the Treasury would be paid any remuneration other than that which he would ordinarily receive from the Treasury.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot accept the amendment. It would shut out the right of the Treasury official to receive any extra remuneration for the additional work he would be called upon to do. That would be grossly unfair. This officer will have great responsibility.

HON. N. KEENAN: Would the deputy be paid more than the Under Treasurer himself?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Under Treasurer will choose the deputy, who will be trained for the job. That officer should receive a remuneration commensurate with the responsibilities attached to his duties. It would, of course, be unfair to give the deputy the salary of a commissioner

in addition to his own, but some consideration should be given to him for the extra work he will do.

HON. C. G. LATHAM: The Bill provides for the appointment of two commissioners and the payment of their salaries. The other man will be an officer of the Treasury, and as such would be paid by the Treasury. If the Minister proposes to carry out his present intention, it will mean that three commissioners will be appointed, and not two. That ought to be stated definitely, if it is so. If it is the intention of the Minister to pay the Treasury official under this Bill, that officer will be a commissioner within the meaning of the Bill, and will have to be treated as separate and apart from the Treasury. To talk of him as a Treasury official, in such circumstances, would be absurd.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: All the commissioners will be paid from the Treasury, from Consolidated Revenue.

HON. C. G. LATHAM: But one is to be a public servant, and the other two are not.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is always the practice where a public servant is appointed to do special work, to pay him an additional salary. For example, Mr. Munt is paid a special salary as a member of the Transport Board.

HON. N. KEENAN: No provision is made by statute to pay Mr. Munt a special salary for a special service. Such special salary is paid to a public servant if recommended by the Public Service Commissioner. But this case is not to be subject to the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner. Undoubtedly Mr. Munt is entitled to a special salary for his services on the Transport Board. My amendment is reasonable.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The extra remuneration may be recommended by the Public Service Commissioner, but it is directed by the Governor in Council. For example, in connection with the preparation of the Case for Secession, an officer gets special payment; and he gets it not by the direction of the Public Service Commissioner, but by the direction of the Governor in Council. In 90 per cent. of the cases, the special remuneration is given by the Governor in Council, and not by the Public Service Commissioner. The amendment is highly unfair to the Under Treasurer or his deputy.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The amendment is not unfair at all. - It does not limit the remuneration. The Treasury officer will be a public servant, and if he does additional work he will ask the Public Service Commissioner for additional remuneration; and if dissatisfied with the decision of the Public Service Commissioner he can go to the Public Service Appeal Board. The intention is to pay three commissioners, though a subterfuge is put up here that one commissioner will not be a commissioner because he will be a Treasury officer merely looking after the interests of the Treasury. In fact, he will be a commissioner just as much as the other two will be commissioners. I oppose this method of appointing a Treasury officer. I am quite agreeable that he should be a commissioner, but let us know what he is to be.

Mr. TONKIN: A similar argument was not raised in connection with appointments to the Transport Board.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Does the Transport Act say anything about a Treasury officer?

Mr. TONKIN: No, but it is a spurious argument that two commissioners shall be paid such remuneration as the Governor thinks fit, while the third commissioner is to be paid in accordance with the Public Service Act. Unless reclassification takes place at very short notice, it will hardly be possible to give an officer special remuneration for services under the Bill.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Not for special duties?

Mr. TONKIN: Yes. The point raised by the member for Nedlands and the Leader of the Opposition is merely another way of coming back to an argument that has been settled already.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You would be an authority on that.

Mr. TONKIN: That is a very cheap jibe. As we have already laid down in the State Transport Co-ordination Act that the Governor shall fix the salary for any special work a Government official may do, and a Government official was appointed to the Transport Board, it is interesting to note that the Leader of the Opposition did not complain on that occasion. That being so, why does he complain now?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No one had the faintest idea that the Government intended to overload Mr. Munt, who was already

overloaded, by appointment to the Transport Board. Had we known the Government's intention, there would have been a protest.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is a mistake to include this provision and not limit it to two members. I have already pointed out that the commissioners will be confined to two. The Minister has rightly pointed out that the practice adopted has always been for the remuneration to be paid to any officer, who undertakes special duties, to be fixed by the Governor-in-Council. If we agree to the proposal under discussion, it will mean singling out one public official, and, by Act of Parliament, saying how he shall be remunerated.

Mr. Hawke: We said that when we dealt with the State Transport Co-ordination Act.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, because we did not know a public servant was to be appointed to the Transport Board. The Bill means that we will appoint two commissioners.

The Minister for Lands: We have already agreed there shall be three commissioners.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: But in actual fact, two commissioners only will be responsible for administering the Act, and the third man will be the connecting link between the commissioners and the Government.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	17
Noes	..	..	..	..	22
Majority against					5

AYES.	
Mr. Brockman	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Seward
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Mann	Mr. Warner
Mr. North	Mr. Doney
Mr. Patrick	

(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Clothier	Mr. Needham
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Cross	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Wilson
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Wise
Mr. Millington	Mr. Withers
Mr. Munsie	Mr. Raphael

(Teller.)

PAIRES.	
AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Latham	Mr. Collier
Mr. J. M. Smith	Miss Holman
Mr. Welsh	Mr. Moloney
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Rodoreda

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (g) after "remuneration" the following words be inserted:—"not exceeding in the case of the chairman one thousand five hundred pounds, and, in the case of other members, one thousand pounds."

The Minister pointed out that the commissioners and the Treasury officer are to be paid from Consolidated Revenue, and the Committee have agreed to that. As no vote appears for those salaries on the Estimates, the Committee should have some knowledge as to what the Government propose to pay. If the Minister thinks £1,500 and £1,000 insufficient, I would point out that the amendment merely provides the minima.

The Minister for Lands: Under the Standing Orders we have no right to fix the salaries.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But we can limit them.

The Minister for Lands: You cannot do that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We will have a try.

Hon. N. Keenan: It was done in the first Act.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Parliament should know what these officers will be paid. Unless we are to be so many dummies, we should have a say in the matter.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I ask, Mr. Chairman, is it competent for the hon. member to move this amendment, since this is a money Bill introduced by a Minister and on a Message from the Crown?

The CHAIRMAN: I think it is quite competent for the Leader of the Opposition to move the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Committee can well leave to the Government the salaries to be paid. The Government will pay such a salary as they think the responsibilities of the position warrant. The Government should not be tied down to any given sum. The Managing Trustee has a salary of £1,500, subject to the Financial Emergency Act, but the Managing Trustee has no such responsibility as these

commissioners will have. The Government, in fixing the salaries, are bound to consider the financial position of the State.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will accept the Minister's statement that the salary of the chairman will be more than £1,500.

The Minister for Lands: I said **nothing** of the sort.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister said the responsibilities of the Managing Trustee were as nothing in comparison with what the Bill now provides. I will leave it to the Committee to judge whether the Minister does not imply that £1,500 is not sufficient for the chairman of the commission. I have no objection if the Minister thinks fit to fix it at £2,000; indeed, if we paid £3,000 to the right man it would not be too much.

The Minister for Employment: Well, why limit it to £1,500?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Because I knew that was the amount the Government were likely to pay.

The Minister for Employment: You are bound to know that, of course.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Is the Minister for Employment in charge of the Bill? If he looked after his own department he would not have time to learn all about these matters. I will see to it that the Committee divide on the amendment.

The Minister for Employment: Of course.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the Minister for Employment keep order?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the amount I suggest is insufficient, the Minister for Lands can ask to have it increased.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the Leader of the Opposition knows that £1,500 is to be the salary, why cannot he leave it at that? The State is not in a position to pay great salaries, but nevertheless must pay a salary commensurate with the responsibilities of the office.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) be struck out and the following inserted in lieu thereof:—"All members shall devote the whole of their time and attention to the business of the commissioners."

Paragraph (b) is not what the Minister wants, because he has told us the chairman

is to be paid to do all things, including looking after the finances. Therefore let us provide that he devotes the whole of his time to his duties, for certainly he will have a full-time position. If it is proposed, as it will be, to write down accounts, he will have to go very thoroughly into the capital assets of the Bank and make the necessary adjustments. So I hope the Committee will agree to make these positions full-time. Then we shall have some permanency about it all, and shall not have one officer sent along from the Treasury to-day and another to-morrow. Instead of that, one officer will know his duty and will set about training himself for his post.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I should like to see the Minister accept the amendment. Personally, I would prefer to see four commissioners instead of three, but owing to circumstances over which I had no control I was not here to move the amendment of which I had given notice. The Minister has told us the duties of the present trustees are nothing in importance as compared with those of the new commissioners. I agree with that up to a certain point, and that is the reason why I want the Minister to agree to the third commissioner being a full-time officer. If the commissioners are going to have so much more to do, and if their duties are going to be so much more onerous than those of the present trustees, it should be an argument in favour of having the third commissioner a full-time officer. With the times confronting the industry, the task for some years must be very difficult, and will require the best that is in the commissioners if they are going to discharge the duties to the satisfaction of the Government and of the State, and to the reasonable satisfaction of the clients of the Bank.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot accept the amendment. We have agreed that the Treasury representative shall be the Under Treasurer or his deputy.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Or a substitute of any description.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The amendment will mean that the Under Treasurer or his deputy must give the whole of his time to the work. There will be two full-time commissioners, as against two part-time trustees at present, and the two commissioners will give six days a week to the

work, whereas two of the trustees now attend two sittings a week.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Are you suggesting that the chairman is not a full-time man?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, he is the general manager.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: He is not the general manager at all.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The commissioners will have their general manager.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Is not Mr. Grogan the general manager?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The commissioners, in my opinion, will not waste their time in poring over files. They will have proper organisation. Do bank and business directors pore over files? If the commissioners do their job, they will have a general manager. Their time should not be occupied in seeing clients. Their duty will be to go into the country to determine values and securities. The Royal Commission found fault, not that the general manager had not done the job, but that the organisation had not permitted him to do it. When could the general manager gain personal contact, snowed up as he was with files? The commissioners will have their general manager who will do that work, and the big work of the institution will be undertaken by them. I do not attribute all the blame to the man who has been administering the Bank. I feel that he did his best in the circumstances in which he was placed. The Under Treasurer's deputy will not be required all the time. He will attend meetings when the commissioners have to give a determination. At present we have a general manager who is snowed up with files, and who cannot undertake the bigger work of administration.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Is not there a deputy manager?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Under the new administration there will be sub-heads.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You do not know what there will be, because the commissioners will do as they like.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I would not attempt to pass this legislation if I did not have something in mind.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The commissioners will take charge.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They will have power—

Hon. C. G. Latham: You will not have any power.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Royal Commission pointed out that a weakness of the administration was the lack of contact and the impossibility of the trustees to get around the country. On many occasions matters have been brought under my notice in the country. A man in one locality was considered to be a reputable settler, but inquiry indicated otherwise. The general manager could not be expected to know everything.

Mr. Seward: The district inspector should have reported on a matter of that kind.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He should.

Mr. Seward: The trustees have no right to be going around the country.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The same thing can happen again.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It happens with clients of the Associated Banks as well.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I never go into the country without finding that I have to alter my viewpoint. The things impressed upon me in the city are not the things that are impressed upon me by personal contact. This matter has not been lightly considered. It is not desirable that the Under Treasurer's deputy should become a commissioner in the true sense. It is not desirable that he should be detached from the Treasury. If there is one danger, it is that the commissioners, in endeavouring to play safe, may write down extensively, so that with the capitalisation written down, they may be able to show a good position. At first I took the view of the member for Perth, but when the matter was fully considered, I determined that the best course to pursue was that outlined in the Bill.

Mr. THORN: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Under present conditions the Managing Trustee is in control of the Bank. He has with him two part-time trustees and an assistant managing trustee. The Minister says that the task of the proposed three commissioners will be greater than that of the existing four officials, and yet only two of the three new men

will be employed full time. If four men cannot do the work satisfactorily, as the Minister suggests, how are two to do so with the assistance of a part-time deputy?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Treasury official will not be free to travel around the country with the other two commissioners. The legislation will really be administered by the two experts who will travel extensively, and will be engaged in investigating the problems associated with the Bank. They will not need the Treasury officials on those occasions, as he will not have the necessary expert knowledge to assist them. On their return to the city he will, of course, attend meetings. Under this Bill I feel that the services of the district officers will be dispensed with.

Mr. TONKIN: It has been agreed that the commission shall consist of three members, one of whom shall be the Under Treasurer or his deputy. The latter will be engaged only part-time. We cannot provide that the Treasury official shall be both a Treasury official and one of the commissioners.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It may happen that the Under Treasurer himself will sometimes wish to attend meetings with the other commissioners, instead of his deputy, and in that case there would be no continuity of policy. If only one particular Treasury official, who we are told is to be trained for the position, is to attend meetings, the reference to the Under Treasurer himself is superfluous. As Under Treasurer he will be entitled to attend meetings if he wishes to do so.

Mr. Wansbrough: The Under Treasurer will have to keep strict watch over the expenditure.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. When the commissioners want money they will have to go to the Under Treasurer, as such, and not to him as a member of the commission. The whole thing is very obscure and the Bill is full of anomalies. A little while ago the Minister said my objections sprang from my jaundiced views of the measure. If the matter cannot be straightened out here, it will have to be straightened out elsewhere. Evidently the Minister is determined not to accept amendments moved in this Chamber.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	21

Majority against 9

AYES.

Mr. Brockman	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Seward
Mr. McDonald	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Warner
Mr. Mann	Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Clothier	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Coverley	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Cross	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Wilson
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Wise
Mr. Millington	Mr. Withers
Mr. Munro	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Needham	

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Latham	Mr. Collier
Mr. J. M. Smith	Miss Holman
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Welsh	Mr. Moloney

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (j) the following words be struck out:—"or if in the opinion of the Governor any such member becomes incapable of carrying out his office."

There is already provision for suspension on any ground of misbehaviour or incompetence, and also provision for suspension or vacation of office under paragraph (k), which incorporates paragraph (h) and (i). There are also provisions as to bankruptcy, or a commissioner absenting himself for more than two weeks without the approval of the Governor in writing, or becoming insane or incapable of managing his affairs, or having any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in any agreement with the commissioners otherwise than as a member of an incorporated company. Those provisions cover every possible ground for depriving a commissioner of his office. I must refer here to another amendment I have on the Notice Paper, attempting to make more effective any action taken by the Executive in consequence of the Executive forming the opinion that a commissioner is not worthy of his office. The provision in the Bill means that unless both Houses of Par-

liament approve of the action of the Governor, that action falls to the ground. My amendment on the Notice Paper reverses that, and makes the action of the Governor stand unless both Houses disapprove of it. However, I would not move that amendment in a Bill containing a drag-net clause of the character I have detailed. With the presence of such general power vested in the Governor, I doubt whether the support of both Houses of Parliament could be relied upon, and that means these powers cannot be exercised, except in the gravest circumstances. It is because I desire to give the Executive greater power, that I propose to strike out the words.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I oppose the amendment for very good reasons. Men have been known to break down in health these days, and some occupying high positions may not know that they are becoming senile and incapable of carrying out their duties. It will be observed that the Governor has merely power to suspend a man on the ground of misbehaviour or incompetency or if he becomes incapable of carrying out his office. Parliament must confirm the suspension.

Mr. Wansbrough: Both Houses must approve.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. If both Houses do not agree, effect cannot be given to this suspension.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am afraid the Minister misunderstood me. The reason I moved the amendment was that I proposed to submit further amendments to make the Bill accord with the provisions of the present Agricultural Bank Act. That would mean that if the Governor suspended a commissioner, unless both Houses desired to reinstate him, the suspension would stand.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Even so, I propose to show that the further amendments are not desirable. I admit the member for Nedlands is much more qualified than I am to discuss legal matters, but I have received legal advice and I have used common sense as well. I suggest to him that he is wrong.

Hon. N. Keenan: If my amendment be not agreed to, I shall not press my further amendments.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The first amendment would make the clause ungrammatical. At present the manager of the

Agricultural Bank is at the mercy of the Governor in Council and is without the protection of Parliament. The amendment of the member for Nedlands will not safeguard that officer. I know one gentleman who held a high office in the State and he appealed to his friends to tell him if he became incapable of carrying out his duties. There can be no question of persecution, unfairness or injustice because Parliament must endorse the suspension.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in line 7 of paragraph (j) "fourteen" be struck out and "seven" inserted in lieu thereof.

I hope the Minister will accept this amendment. Certainly no action will be taken without full consideration, and so seven days will be ample time in which to report to Parliament. Perhaps this and the next amendment should be taken as consequential, but if you, Mr. Chairman, think they ought to be moved, well and good.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in line 10 of paragraph (j) "fourteen" be struck out and "seven" inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (l) be struck out.

The paragraph provides that a member of the commission may resign his office by notice in writing addressed to the Governor. This is not necessary, because there is nothing binding on a commissioner who wishes to resign.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In various Acts of Parliament such resignations are provided for. It must be prescribed to whom he shall address his resignation.

Hon. C. G. Latham: To the person who appointed him.

Hon. N. Keenan: Does not every public servant who receives his appointment from the Governor send his resignation to the Governor?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The commissioners will not be public servants.

The Minister for Employment: It may be taken that the commissioner has accepted a contract for seven years, and so has no right to resign.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If a commissioner wishes to resign, he must address his resignation to the Governor. There is no reason why the provision should not remain.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That the following paragraph be inserted after paragraph (l):—" (m) In the case of the illness, suspension, inability, or absence of any member, the Governor may appoint some other person to act as deputy of such member during such illness, suspension, inability, or absence; and every such person shall, while he acts as such deputy, have all the powers and perform all the duties of and be subject to the same disabilities as such member."

In all legislation we find this provision. We should not have to refer to an obscure piece of legislation such as the Interpretation Act; rather should we set out clearly in each Act exactly what the position is. We are framing legislation that should be clear to the people. The Minister should add this provision to another Bill he has before the House, for it is a very proper provision. Even if it be redundant, it will put the legislation into such a form as the people can understand.

The Minister for Justice: And someone will say it is bad drafting.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, it is subtlety in drafting that we complain of.

The Minister for Employment: I remember one member denouncing a certain piece of legislation as sloppy drafting.

The Minister for Justice: The Interpretation Act is an enlightened piece of legislation.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Even though the amendment may be redundant, I hope the Minister will accept it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Interpretation Act is an Act for shortening the language used in Acts of Parliament.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That does not make it any better.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: True, a similar provision appears in the Agricultural Bank Act, but that measure was passed previous to the Interpretation Act. The amendment would merely introduce unnecessary verbiage.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: This Parliament has been authorising payments in contravention of an Act of Parliament. I have not referred to it before, but I intend to do so at a suitable time.

The CHAIRMAN: Has that anything to do with the amendment?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I wish to illustrate how difficult it is to ascertain the position when reference is made to another Act. At times the Crown Law officers, with their great knowledge, overlook an Act. We have so many statutes that it is often difficult to ascertain the position. When a Bread Bill was introduced some years ago, an old Act was found to be in existence.

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

Clause 6—Powers of commissioners:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Is it proposed to abolish the board appointed under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then the soldiers will have no representation.

The Minister for Lands: One of the commissioners might be a returned soldier.

[*Mr. Hegney took the Chair.*]

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Is that so?

The Minister for Lands: I do not know; I said he might be.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister is not helpful. At present there is a representative of the soldiers on a board distinct from the Agricultural Bank. Is the Minister going to abolish the provision for returned soldier representation?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is all I want to know.

The Acting Premier: He says there may be a returned soldier on the board.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That would be all the better.

Mr. McDONALD: On behalf of the member for Nedlands, I move an amendment—

That paragraph (g) be struck out and, the following inserted in lieu:—"To inquire into and determine in what districts in the State it is advisable to make advances under this Act on the security of land situated therein."

The paragraph vests in the commissioners considerations of policy which rightly belong to the Government. The commissioners should not be asked to inquire into the suitability of any district or land for rural industrial development.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is splitting straws. There is practically no difference between the paragraph and the proposed amendment. I cannot accept it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Why should the commissioners inquire into the suitability of any land for rural industrial development? It simply means they are going to determine the agricultural policy of the State.

The Minister for Justice: The trustees have determined it, sometimes to the detriment of the settlement. They have condemned districts without looking at them.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The complaint is they have been too generous, and have been led by Ministers. We should not hand over these powers to the commissioners. The position will be that before the Lands Department can throw open any area, it will have to submit the whole thing to the commissioners.

The Minister for Justice: They ought to make a thorough inquiry before they do one or the other. I know that districts have been condemned without inspection.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The commissioners should not have power to say whether one portion of the State or another should be thrown open for settlement. The paragraph as it stands must refer to all lands.

The Minister for Justice: The commissioners will say whether advances should or should not be made on such land.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am agreeable to that, but not to the other portion of the paragraph.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Leader of the Opposition seems to think

the commissioners should have no power to inquire into the suitability of any district for settlement. All that the commissioners will have the right to do in this respect is to inquire. There can be no possible objection to that.

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

Ayes	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	21

Majority against .. 11

AYES.

Mr. Brockman	Mr. Seward
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Warner
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Doney
Mr. Mann	(Teller.)
Mr. Patrick	

NOES.

Mr. Clothier	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Coverley	Mr. F. O. L. Smith
Mr. Cross	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Kennelly	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Wilson
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Wise
Mr. Millington	Mr. Withers
Mr. Munsie	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Needham	(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Latham	Mr. Collier
Mr. J. M. Smith	Miss Holman
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Moloney
Mr. Welsh	Mr. Rodoreda

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (h) the words "the whole or" be struck out.

The commissioners should not have power to write off all indebtedness, including practically everything outside land rents. Such a power is too great. To empower them to write off any portion of the indebtedness of clients is sufficient.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I disagree with the Leader of the Opposition. This paragraph is one of the bright spots of the Bill, and members representing country electorates should support it. What is the use of letting land revert to the Crown merely to be taken up by some poor fellow who will have to carry a hopeless load of debt? The paragraph will give a ray of hope to the people not only of the South-West, but also of the wheat areas.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I do not understand the viewpoint of the member for Nelson. It is absolutely wrong that the commissioners should have the power to write off, even with the approval of the Treasury, the whole of the indebtedness of any client of the Bank, though no one supports more heartily than I do the conditioning of the debts of clients. There must be some asset that originally represented any debt owing to the Agricultural Bank, and there must be some value in the asset. The commissioners should have the power to write down a debt to the actual value of the asset, but not below that value. The amendment should be carried.

Mr. BROCKMAN: I do not think power should be provided to enable the commissioners to write down the whole of the indebtedness of a client because that would depreciate the value of the property. I support the amendment because the indebtedness should be written down merely to what represents the fair value of a property. Under existing conditions valuations are too high, and settlers cannot meet their obligations.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Sussex are unduly alarmed. The writing down that will be allowed is subject to the provisions of the Act, and any writing down has to receive the approval of the Treasurer and the consent of the Governor. Clause 46 dominates the position and the power of writing down must be in conformity with the provisions of that clause. The member of Nelson will be disappointed if he expects the whole of the indebtedness to be written off.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am afraid the Minister has not grasped my point. I can assure the member for Nelson that I want the Governor to have power to write off some of the indebtedness, but the paragraph goes beyond that and provides for the writing off of the whole of the indebtedness.

The Minister for Lands: Subject to the provisions of the Act.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If there is no value in the holding, the land should revert to the Crown. My amendment will accomplish all the member for Nelson desires, and then any value in the security will remain. If the Minister looks into the amendment more closely, he will realise it is reasonable. The Minister is determined

not to allow amendments in this Chamber and is agreeing to amendments being made in another place. Why should the work not be done in this Chamber?

The Minister for Lands: That is a remarkable statement to make.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course, we know what is happening. We were told there were to be no amendments made in this House. I hope the Minister will be reasonable.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: You will be sorry you submitted this amendment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Why?

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Because there may be a balance left.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is all a question of the value of the security. Members must not think only of the relief to be given; they must safeguard the assets of the State. I do not propose to say that this writing down should take place in order that I may gain popularity in the country, more especially if I know that an injury will be worked to the State.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: You need not worry about the powers, but rather in whom the powers are vested.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: This represents an instruction from Parliament, and the commissioners will consider they are expected to exercise the power. I cannot understand why these words should have been put in here.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I must correct the hon. member once more. Under those phrases "subject to this Act" and "with the approval of the Treasurer," there is nothing the commissioners can do without special sanction. One of the commissioners is to be a Treasury officer, yet the hon. member says the commissioners will have power to do just what they like. Every safeguard required is provided, as for instance in Clause 64. Everything done must have the approval of the Treasurer and the consent of the Governor.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister relies on "with the approval of the Treasurer." Do members know what that means? A great deal of business is sent to the Treasury on Monday morning, with Executive Council to sit at mid-day. Consequently the Treasurer leaves it to his officers to advise him as to the signing of documents. Will the Treasurer be able to delve into every one

of these cases in order to determine whether it is wise to authorise a writing down? As to the Governor in Executive Council, he does exactly what the Executive Council tells him to do. He signs papers presented for his signature, and the Executive Council take the responsibility. Of course it is not protection at all.

[Mr. Sleeman resumed the Chair.]

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: What does "subject to this Act" mean? Give us an interpretation of that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The clause is elaborated in Clauses 62 and 66. When the commissioners are satisfied that certain things should be done, they can do them. I am asking the Committee to protect the State. Under those words "the whole or," the commissioners will be able to write down the whole of a man's indebtedness to the bank. However, I will not contend any further with the Minister, for I know how impossible he is.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That after "indebtedness," in line 5 of paragraph (h), the words "in excess of the value of the security" be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is already provided for in Clause 65. There is no necessity at all for the words to be inserted there.

Mr. McDONALD: There is some conflict between this paragraph and Clause 64. The paragraph states positively that in certain conditions the commissioners may release the whole of the indebtedness of the borrower. Those words mean that every penny owed to the Bank might be written off. Either the commissioners should be entitled to write down under both provisions, or it should be laid down as a principle that they may write down to the value of the security, and not further.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is merely one of the powers given to the commissioners, but Clause 64 defines the power.

Mr. McDonald: Why insert "the whole"?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Because there are some holdings that would not carry the arrears owing to the Lands Department.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Let them revert to the Crown.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is no power to write off the indebtedness unless the holding has been abandoned. Some properties are so poor that the Bank inspectors would not recommend the holders for the sustenance grant. The Leader of the Opposition made some extraordinary statements indicating that he as a Minister was not very painstaking.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are the only successful Minister that ever lived!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I can only judge the hon. member out of his own mouth. He said the Treasurer would merely sign his name to writing down proposals. The hon. member has set out on a campaign of bluff. A definite responsibility will be imposed upon the Treasurer. There is no sincerity in the hon. member. He does not want this legislation, but desires to kill it. He referred to what would be done in another place.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I did not. Why not be truthful? You cannot be truthful.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Why does he not say straight out that he does not want this legislation? Why not say that the programme put before the Royal Commission by the Primary Producers' Association was so much eye-wash, in which he does not believe? Representatives of the association swore before the Royal Commission that they wanted a writing down. Now the hon. member is afraid that the whole lot will be given away by the Treasurer. The hon. member has been talking, and mouthing, and indulging in propaganda. In his second reading speech he said the amount of the indebtedness was not large and was covered by the security. If all his statements were tabulated, he would not show up too well. What does he want? Does he want the Bill? Were his party sincere when they asked for a writing down?

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is just the sort of irresponsible statement you are in the habit of making.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The commissioners may have to do a lot of writing down. They will have properties on their hands, some of which are not worth 2d. They must have power to write them down.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister is in the habit of talking balderdash. When the slightest opposition occurs he endeavours

to ridicule the other side. He has such a bad case that it will not stand on its merits. He also gets bad tempered. If he can find any fault in his department that is not common to the experience of all Ministers, let him tell members about it. I could relate some instances of his interference and blunders, which cost the country a lot of money.

The Minister for Lands: What is that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Action was taken against the Crown because the Minister forfeited property he was not entitled to forfeit.

The Minister for Lands: That did not occur.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: He has tried to make out that I told members that the Treasurer had no responsibility. Documents are put before him, and he has to accept the advice that is tendered to him. He cannot investigate all cases himself. Piles of files are submitted to him, and he has to take the advice of those who are qualified to give it.

The Minister for Lands: I know all about that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister is wonderful, he knows everything. I did not suggest that the Treasurer did not take the usual precautions that all Treasurers take. Talk about bluff! If there is any greater bluffer in the world than the Minister for Lands I would like to know him. He has bluffed his way through politics ever since he has been in the House. It is only his bluff that keeps him there. Members will find out exactly what the position is. The Minister told the House not long ago that the Governor had to do what he was told. Why stress the point? The Minister has thrown dust in the eyes of the Committee by saying that I am a bluffer. When I was Minister I gave all the information that was available, and never once regarded my legislation as letter perfect. Of course Parliament is more powerful than any Minister, but the Minister thinks he is the last word in Parliamentary government. He also suggested that I had referred to making use of another place. I said there was one clause which another place would not pass as printed.

Mr. Hawke: You said more than that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Listen to this representative of Labour from Northam! He has never done a day's work in his life.

The Minister for Lands: That is shocking.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Not half as bad as the Minister has thrown across the Chamber.

The Minister for Lands: I hope you will control the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Chairman. He has no business to say that the member for Northam has never done a day's honest work. I ask that he be compelled to withdraw that statement.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the Leader of the Opposition to refrain from making a speech on the member for Northam.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I object to the Minister putting words into my mouth. I did not use the word "honest" in association with the member for Northam. It is like the Minister for Lands to put in his own words. He will not get away with that.

Mr. Hawke: You are only generalising.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member makes all his speeches by way of interjection.

Mr. Hawke: That is more effective than your wanderings.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member get back to the amendment?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister says the land is useless. If so it should revert to the Crown. When these properties have been abandoned the debt on them is suspended.

The Minister for Lands: You do not know anything about it. The Bank still retains its mortgage.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There are many properties on which the Bank does not retain its mortgage.

The Minister for Lands: It does retain its mortgage.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Many blocks that were once improved have now gone back to nature. The Bank does not leave its mortgages on such places. If there is no value in the land the settlers should be told the position, and it is waste of time, money and energy to go on with it. The excuses of the Minister do not impress me. I probably know more about the matter than he does. I have been longer on the land than he has.

The Minister for Lands: You are being perfectly childish now.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I can imagine the Minister farming. I remember when he selected his property.

The CHAIRMAN: That has nothing to do with the amendment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But the Minister pits his knowledge against that of other members. I remember what he said when he went through my district, supporting one of his candidates. He could not be fair even then, although everyone else had been fair.

The Minister for Lands: I was not in your electorate.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister was. He knows what statements were made. They brought me plenty of votes, and lost many to the other side.

The CHAIRMAN: That has nothing to do with the amendment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I know that the Minister does not intend to agree to any of these amendments, no matter how necessary or desirable they may be.

The Minister for Employment: The amendments the Minister has accepted show that he is reasonable.

Mr. McDONALD: In justice to the draftsmanship of the Bill, I wish to say that I thought there was a conflict between this paragraph and a later paragraph, but I now want to withdraw my amendment in view of the explanation that there may be some securities which have no value, so that no money can be recovered in respect of them.

Mr. WARNER: I cannot agree with the Leader of the Opposition as to writing down. In the case of land that has been long abandoned, there must be writing down. The Leader of the Opposition is optimistic if he thinks the commissioners will write off the whole of the indebtedness. The farmers have been fighting for this concession so long that I shall not object to it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The member for Mt. Marshall is mistaken if he thinks that I am not anxious to see writing off. I am. If the clause were left as I propose, there would still be ample provision for writing down. I am trying to make the Bill as intelligible as possible. The debts I had in mind when speaking previously, were debts due to the Agricultural Bank—less than £2,000 per 1,000 acres. I am aware that in addition there are debts totalling about

£2,000,000, and on top of those again debts owing to the merchants.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Power to raise money by debentures subject to protection of all loans raised by Finance and Development Board:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The clause empowers the commissioners to issue debentures without limitation, except as regards obtaining the approval of the Governor. I suggest limiting their borrowing powers to £1,000,000, leaving them to come to Parliament for authority to borrow any additional money they may need. The Governor, that is to say the Treasurer, will control the borrowing powers of the commissioners; but I heard the Minister for Lands say that unless there was some control over the commissioners they might write down properties with a view to making a good showing. Under the clause as it stands, they might borrow more than is necessary. This Chamber should keep control of the purse. I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the clause:—
“not exceeding £1,000,000, or such further sum as Parliament may authorise under the provisions of the next subsection.”

1 o'clock a.m.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not see much objection to the amendment although in the Finance and Development Board Act passed by the hon. member's Government, a similar provision appears without any limitation.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That does not say it was right.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is amazing that the hon. member can now find these objections. I would point out that the clause provides that subject to, and without affecting the priority of any charge created under the Finance and Development Board Act, the commissioners may, with the approval of the Governor, borrow money, whereas the effect of the amendment is that Parliament will lay down what shall be done. I shall not object to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That a new subclause be added as follows:—
“(2) The Commissioners may, when furnishing their annual report to the Minister under the provisions of section seventy of this Act, make application for leave to borrow, under the preceding subsection, a specified sum of money in excess of the sum of one million pounds therein mentioned, and authority may then be given to the Commissioners by Act of Parliament to borrow such specified sum or such other sum as Parliament may think fit.”

The effect of the amendment will be that the commissioners will report to the Minister what amount will be required each year, and Parliament will be asked to grant the necessary authority.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I shall not object to the amendment, although I think it represents so much loading up of the Bill. Of course, the commissioners will make representations to the Minister.

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

Mr. SEWARD: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Clauses 12 to 15—agreed to.

Clause 16—Sinking fund payments:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) be struck out.

The paragraph provides that if, at the maturity of any loan, there is a balance after the loan is liquidated, that balance is to be transferred to the general administration account of the commissioners and be used accordingly. Any such balance should be used for the redemption of debentures. I do not agree that the balance should be placed to the credit of Consolidated Revenue.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If there should be any balance, what should be done with it?

Hon. C. G. Latham: It should be placed to the credit of the commissioners.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That means the amount would be left in the air.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No, in their sinking fund.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Why should it not be credited to the general ad-

ministration account, seeing that the commissioners are entitled to it? I oppose the amendment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It would be all right if this referred to the finalisation of amounts borrowed by the commissioners on the issuing of debentures. A sinking fund should be created and the balance should remain in that fund, and from it losses should be made good.

The Minister for Lands: You intend to move a further amendment that would have the effect of destroying such a fund.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is useless persisting with the amendment if the Minister will not agree to it.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Sinking fund payments continue notwithstanding purchase of debentures:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That after "purchased," in line 4, the following words be inserted:—"The amount payable half yearly by the commissioners into the sinking fund, under the provision of Section 16 of this Act, shall be reduced by."

The clause means that even though debentures have been redeemed, the commissioners shall continue payments into the sinking fund. I cannot understand why that should be proposed. If the amendment be agreed to, there will be no need to continue payments in respect of debentures that have been purchased.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot accept the amendment. It is not desirable, since sound finance demands that the sinking fund shall be built up. Under the amendment, it would be possible for the commissioners to buy debentures before maturity and re-issue them, weakening the sinking fund. The Treasury regards the provision as very satisfactory finance. It is exactly the same as that in the Finance and Development Act.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The fact that the Minister says this provision is in the Finance and Development Act, is not to say that I endorse it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 19, 20—agreed to.

Clause 21—State guarantees borrowings:

Mr. McDONALD: On behalf of the member for Nedlands I move an amendment—

That in line 2, the word "is," be struck out and "shall be" inserted in lieu thereof.

I have not examined the legislation to see what the usual phrase may be, but in the opinion of the member for Nedlands the clause as it now reads might be regarded as applicable to moneys now owing, and perhaps not quite applicable to moneys to be borrowed in the future. His intention, no doubt, is to give the clause an application to future borrowings.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This deals with all moneys borrowed by the commissioners, and I cannot help thinking that "is" is the better word.

Mr. McDONALD: I am not dogmatic on the point.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 22—Debentures may be disposed of beyond State:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That there be added to the clause "The Governor may authorise the sale of debentures or blocks of debentures in such denominations as the commissioners may decide, on any recognised stock exchange."

This will enable people who desire to obtain a block of debentures to secure them at any recognised stock exchange. It is proposed that these debentures may be sold elsewhere than within the State, and all we are asking for is that the Governor may authorise their sale as prescribed in the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I can assure the hon. member that it is quite unnecessary; the power is already contained in the clause. If the sales can be authorised, the method of selling is prescribed in the clause.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 23—Power to create new debentures:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 of paragraph (d) "prejudicially" be struck out.

The idea is that the commissioners have power to create new debentures, take back old ones, and issue fresh ones, and vary the conditions. To retain the word "prejudicially" would be rather extreme.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When conversion takes place there must be an alteration. If we provide that no contract or engagement shall be affected, there can be no conversion.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I was referring to the altering of the conditions.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We desire to ensure that a debenture is not taken for a lesser sum. The amendment would render the paragraph useless if conversion or redemption were intended.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am prepared to accept the Minister's assurance, provided the altering of the conditions only means that a person need not take a debenture at a less value than any held previously.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 24 to 28—agreed to.

Clause 29—Debentures lost or destroyed, etc., new debentures may be issued in lieu:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The proviso stipulates that a person receiving the principal money and interest in respect of lost or destroyed debentures shall give security. Does that mean tangible security in the shape of other bonds and for what period?

The Minister for Lands: He would have to indemnify the commissioners.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If it is merely a matter of indemnifying them against anyone else making a claim, I have no objection.

The Minister for Lands: It is similar to the provision in the Finance and Development Board Act and conveys all that is necessary.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Might not the commissioners demand some form of security such as a cash deposit apart from a note of indemnity?

The Minister for Lands: Generally an indemnity would be accepted.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister has not given a very satisfactory answer.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 30—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 1.27 a.m. (Wednesday).

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 21st November, 1934.

	PAGE
Questions: Unemployment, Frankland River camp...	1475
State battery, Kalgoorlie	1476
Administration Act (Estate and Succession Duties)	
Amendment Bill Select Committee, extension of time	1476
Bills: Gold Mining Profits Tax, 3R., passed ...	1476
Land Tax and Income Tax, 3R., passed ...	1476
Loan, £3,938,000, 2R.	1476
Financial Emergency Act Amendment, 2R. ...	1479
Financial Emergency Tax Assessment Act Amendment, 2R.	1483
Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1931, Amendment, 2R.	1400
Tenants, Purchasers and Mortgagees' Relief Act Amendment, 2R.	1401
Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance, 2R.	1492
Privilege—Evidence in Court, Clerk granted permission	1487

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

QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT, FRANKLAND RIVER CAMP.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many single men were provided with work and sustenance at Frankland River? 2, How many acres of land have been cleared? 3, How many acres have been put under pasture? 4, How many miles of fencing have been erected? 5, How many posts have been cut and stacked in the bush? 6, How much has been paid for