

was to fill the place of any Minister who might go abroad. Somebody suggested that it was going to be an annual affair, that one of the Ministers would go away every year. I should like to know from the Chief Secretary whether that is really so, and if so, which of the Ministers is to be the next to take a trip abroad.

The PRESIDENT: The proper place to ask for information regarding details of the Bill is in Committee.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: My idea was merely to save time by asking the direct question here and now. It is quite unimportant to me whether we get the information on the second reading or in Committee.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [12.32 a.m.]: In answer to the hon. member, all I can say is that Mr. McCallum while away attended to a great deal of the business of the State.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I want to know whether we got value for the money, and whether it is to be an annual affair.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member can determine that for himself just as well as I can.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

Read a third time and *passed*.

*House adjourned at 12.37 a.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 18th December, 1928.

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

### QUESTION—CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, RETIREMENT

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Justice: Is it his intention to lay on the Table of the House copies of all papers relating to the retirement of the State Chief Electoral Officer.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: It is not the practice to place papers dealing with the retirement of officers of the Public Service on the Table of the House. If the honourable member will move for the papers in the ordinary way I will be pleased to agree to the motion.

### QUESTIONS (2)—AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES.

*East Yorkkrakine, Kodj Kodjin.*

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: 1, Has he decided to do anything in regard to providing a water supply scheme for the East Yorkkrakine, the Kodj Kodjin, and near-by areas? 2, Have not surveys already been made and plans prepared?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, A scheme providing for reticulation from the Gold-

fields Water Supply main, and which necessitated a charge of 1s. per acre, was submitted to the settlers who would be served, but the required majority in favour was not forthcoming. In any event it is considered that the cost per thousand acres is probably too heavy a charge for the settlers to meet. 2, Surveys have been made. Plans have not been prepared.

#### *Norpa Area.*

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: 1, At what cost can settlers procure a boring plant to enable them to locate water supplies in the Norpa area? 2, Can the department supply men capable of directing the operations for boring, and, if so, at what cost? 3, Seeing that the conditions offered for the Belka extension were altogether too expensive, will he see what can be done in regard to the proposals indicated in my previous question of 4th December, 1928?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, Hand boring plants are hired out upon receipt of £5. The minimum charge for a period of three months is £3 and £2 is held as a deposit for the proper observation of the regulations under which hand boring plants are loaned. 2, The department can recommend to the borrower of any plant a suitable man who could direct operations. 3, I have already promised to give consideration to the proposals referred to.

#### **QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAYS.**

##### *Survey of 4ft. 8½in. Gauge.*

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Works: 1, What section has been surveyed between Kalgoorlie and Perth of the proposed 4ft. 8½in. gauge railway line. 2, What routes do these surveys follow? 3, Where can members inspect the survey plans? 4, Do any of these surveys follow the surveyed proposed route of the Yarramonv Eastward railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1 to 4, No further information is available to the answers that were given to similar questions that were asked by the hon. member on 22nd November last.

#### *Trucking Yards, Boddalin.*

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Railways: Will he bear in mind the necessity for trucking yards at Bodallin when allocating the available funds for such purposes?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Yes.

#### **HOUSE COMMITTEE.**

##### *Appointment of New Member.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.34]: I move—

That the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) be appointed to serve on the House Committee in place of the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) discharged from service on that Committee.

Question put and passed.

#### **MOTION—STATE FOREST REVOCATION.**

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.35]: I move—

That the proposals for the partial revocation of State Forest No. 4, Collie, laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly, by command of His Excellency the Governor, on the 12th day of December, 1928, be carried out.

These proposals involve a small area in the Collie district known as the No. 4 State forest. It comprises 47,220 acres of that forest. The area that is involved in the revocation is 80 acres and it affects three different sites. In the first place there is a small area of 1 rood 27 perches in Collie on which has been erected the Collie Road Board office. This office was on the site when the forest was dedicated, but was overlooked. It is desired to excise this small area on which the office stands from this portion of the State Forest. The second proposal embraces about 47 acres, near the new Stockton coal mine. There was a mine known as the Premier, which was closed down, and a new one called the Stockton has now been opened. It is desirable that there should be a townsite near this new mine, so that those who are engaged in mining operations may have an opportunity to build their homes adjacent to the mine.

Hon. G. Taylor: How far is the Stockton mine from Collie?

Mr. Wilson: It is six or seven miles away.

The PREMIER: There is no land upon which those who are working the mine can erect homes. It is desired to excise the 47 acres from the forest reserve. It will then revert to the Crown, and will be disposed of by the Lands Department as Crown land in the ordinary way.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It will revert to the control of the Lands Department?

The PREMIER: Yes, and will be disposed of in the ordinary way. The third area consists of 33 acres. This will enable the Lands Department to extend the boundaries of the Collie town site, and will also cover land upon which a power station may be erected. The Collie Municipal Council desires to extend its townsite, and it is for this purpose that portion of the area will be excised.

Hon. G. Taylor: How many acres altogether?

The PREMIER: There will be about 18 acres for the extension of the town site and about 15 acres for the area on which it is proposed to erect a power station.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Erected by the Government?

The PREMIER: Erected by someone else. It will make the land available if a power station is erected. I do not know that this will be done. Such a proposal is mooted, and if it should be decided to go on with the erection of a power station by anyone else, this area of 15 acres will be available.

Hon. G. Taylor: That will join on to the present town site.

The PREMIER: Yes, to the new area of the town site, and next to that will be the 15 acres. The whole area is only 80 acres out of approximately 47,000 acres.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is the first time we have had a motion of this kind.

The PREMIER: Yes, but there is provision in the Act for it. It is probable we shall have a motion of this kind every year. As new areas are dedicated from year to year it is bound to be discovered that there is need for the excision of some portions for some particular reason. This is therefore likely to be an annual event. Everything is not foreseen when the whole area comprising a State forest is dedicated.

Hon. G. Taylor: This is in the timber area?

The PREMIER: It is dedicated for forest purposes under the Act. It was foreseen that it might be necessary to revoke some small area because there is provision for doing so in the Act, though it can only be done by a motion of this kind.

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL** (Northam) [4.42]: I am sorry the Premier did not bring down a map showing the land to be excised from the State forest.

The Premier: I thought there was one.

Mr. Wilson: I have a map here.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The area is a small one, and no doubt it is necessary we should agree to this proposal. We have to reserve large areas of land for forests, and within those areas there will occasionally be land that is needed for settlement. We shall have to excise some portion of these reserves from time to time.

The Premier: Probably for agricultural purposes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. Preserving as we are doing millions of acres of timber land, it is not likely that we shall not include some that is wanted for other purposes, and possibly some that is not carrying much timber. I hope in future that plans will be supplied so that members may know exactly where the land is. It is necessary to extend the Collie town site, and to give the road board the right to the land on which the office stands. When a new mine is discovered people must be allowed to live somewhere close by and must have land that is convenient to their work. There is not much objection to the excision of 80 acres from the millions of acres that are held for timber purposes. I have no objection to the motion.

Question put and passed.

On motion by the Premier, resolution transmitted by message to the Legislative Council for its concurrence.

## **BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.** (No. 2).

*Second Reading.*

**MR. MANN** (Perth) [4.45] in moving the second reading said: From time to time as circumstances have required amendments have been made to the Licensing Act. In 1922

an amending Bill was introduced, the effect of which was to tighten up the liquor laws and to provide for the better control of the trade. A Licenses Reduction Board was constituted with power to deal with the reduction of licenses and to do the work of the licensing bench. A special police department was set up to administer and control the licensing laws. Both the Licenses Reduction Board and the liquor inspection branch of the Police Department have done excellent work. As the result of the operations of the board, the licensed houses have been reduced in number by 117. The police have done splendid work in tightening up the liquor laws and in securing better control of licensed premises. Inspector O'Halloran and his staff have done excellently. Twenty-five years ago when our population totalled 226,000, there were 467 hotels and 96 wayside licenses. There was little change in the number of licenses up to 1925. At that time there were 457 hotels, a reduction of 10 in 17 years, and there were 91 wayside houses. The licenses granted for the latter type of premises are practically the same as those granted to ordinary hotels, except that there is a smaller licensing fee. The number of hotels has been reduced, and while there are probably sufficient licensed premises to supply the liquor portion of the trade, there is no suggestion that there are enough hotels to meet the convenience of the travelling public. As a matter of fact, there is not sufficient accommodation for the public and so acute did the licensing bench find the position a few years ago, that they issued instructions to licensees that they were not to keep any permanent boarders so that there would be adequate accommodation for the travelling public. That has not proved effective because although licensees have refused to take in permanent boarders, there is not sufficient accommodation for the travelling public either in the city or in the country districts. In view of that position, the licensing bench have wisely started out on a re-building and additional accommodation campaign. They have instructed the owners of many hotels both in the city and in the country, that they will have to re-build their properties. I will cite the Imperial Hotel in Perth, which is apparently well conducted, the owner of which has been notified that he must re-build the premises at once. Tenders have been called for a seven-storey

building to cost over £65,000. The position is that while some owners are financially able to carry out the instructions of the bench, others are not in a position to do so. They are not financially sound enough themselves to undertake the work, and they cannot secure reasonable finance to enable them to do so because of the short tenure between the dates of referenda. I do not suggest that the referenda should be postponed for all time, but the object of the Bill is to have the next referendum deferred for five years in order that the re-building campaign of the licensing bench may be given effect to. The object also is to give the owners an opportunity to secure reasonable financial assistance that will enable them to carry out the instructions of the bench. They cannot get it at present, either to re-build their premises or to provide the additions that the licensing bench have ordered.

Mr. Marshall: The security upon which a licensee can raise money is the tenure of the lease.

Mr. MANN: Of course it is. Even though the licensee may have a five years' lease or the owner of the premises may have leased it for that period, the financial institutions say that they will not advance £30,000 or £40,000 to enable hotel premises to be re-built because the period between referenda does not afford sufficient security regarding tenures. That is the position to-day. The public require additional accommodation both in the city and in the country: the licensing bench have ordered it to be provided; the owners are not in a position to comply with those orders. For those reasons I have brought forward the Bill with the object of having the referendum postponed from 1930 to 1935 so that the programme of the licensing bench may be carried out, subsequent to which the referenda will be carried on in the ordinary course.

Mr. Sleeman: Where did this proposal originate?

Mr. MANN: I do not know exactly what the hon. member means.

Mr. Sleeman: Where did the proposal to defer the referendum come from?

Mr. MANN: From the owners of the hotels.

Hon. G. Taylor: Perhaps the temperance people had something to do with it!

Mr. MANN: There is no outstanding evidence that there should be any objection to the proposal, because at the latest referendum taken in Western Australia in 1925, those voting for prohibition totalled 41,000, while those who voted against prohibition numbered 77,000. A recent poll in New South Wales showed that those in favour of prohibition numbered 356,000, while those against totalled 884,000. Another recent poll was taken in Canberra where it was found that those who favoured prohibition numbered 229; those against prohibition, 3,000; and those in favour of the continuance of the present law, 141. In 1925 a prohibition poll was taken in New Zealand and that showed a majority against prohibition of 36,000, while another taken more recently there showed a majority against prohibition of 132,000. Those results demonstrate that the feelings of the people are not in favour of prohibition, but against it. The figures I have quoted are undeniable. It is considered, in view of those results and of the necessity to provide more adequate accommodation for the travelling public, there can be no reasonable opposition to the Bill. When the amended Act came into force, it was said that if the hotels were closed, there would be a sufficient number of boarding houses and coffee palaces built to take the places of the hotels that went out of business. That has not been the result. Since those hotels were closed, no hostels or coffee palaces have been built to take their places. So it is that there is a demand for increased accommodation for the travelling public. It cannot be suggested, should the Bill be agreed to, that there will be any increase in the consumption of liquor or that it will make for any greater sale of liquor. On the other hand, it will make for better houses and better conduct of those houses. The revenue from the liquor trade in 1923 amounted to £54,000, whereas in 1923-24, subsequent to the passing of the amended Act, it rose to £68,000. From that date until the present day there has not been an increased revenue from liquor in proportion to our increased population. This has been due to the excellent control that the police have exercised over the liquor trade. I say emphatically that the liquor laws are better conducted in this State than in any other part of the Commonwealth. Not only are the hotels better conducted, but we have a

better class of hotel than is to be found in any of the other States. It is our desire that our hotels shall be still further improved and that is the object of the Bill. If there was any evidence at all that prohibition was desired by the people, or if the latest referendum had been carried by a narrow majority or even if recent prohibition polls in the Eastern States had indicated, merely by narrow majorities, the people's desire to retain liquor, it might be urged that the people of Australia were in favour of prohibition now. On the other hand, all the available evidence goes to show that the people of Australia are not in favour of prohibition. Coming down to more recent experiences in Western Australia, we have it on record that the licensing bench have ordered petitions to be prepared from time to time showing the majority of electors in a given area in respect of which there has been an application for a new license. Every such petition ordered by the licensing bench has contained the signatures of between 80 and 90 per cent. of the people within the given areas, and they have signified their views in favour of hotel accommodation being made available. In not one instance has the applicant failed to secure the required number of signatures to such a petition. In view of those circumstances, I suggest it is reasonable to ask for a postponement of the next referendum from 1930 to 1935 for the legitimate purposes I have indicated. Such a postponement will enable the trade to be further harnessed and tightened up, better catering arrangements to be made, and more adequate accommodation made available to the travelling public. It will not tend towards further consumption of liquor, but, on the other hand, in all probability will make for a lessened sale of liquor because the people will use hotels more for the purpose of accommodation. The Bill is a non-party one, and is introduced by me as in my private capacity. I have not committed any members sitting on the Opposition side of the House to it, and I put the measure forward as reasonable and one that is required. I want to give some further figures showing how the Act has operated since it was amended in 1922. Since that time there have been closed 97 general licenses, 20 wayside licenses, nine Australian wine and beer licenses, three Australian wine licenses,

one Australian bottle license, two refreshment rooms, four spirit licenses, and 21 gallon licenses. At the end of this month there will be closed a further instalment of 10 general licenses, one wine and beer license, and one Australian wine license. Whilst we agree with the closing of a large number of these places which were not really hotels and did not provide accommodation—many of them were just drinking houses, and therefore it was quite right that they should be closed—yet it is now necessary to provide greater accommodation, and for that reason I have introduced the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**MR. LATHAM** (York) [5.2]: The word "astonishment" scarcely describes the feeling I have at the legislation introduced by the hon. member. Only a little while ago that hon. member presented to the Chamber a petition carrying 14,000 names asking that we should give effect to the early closing of licensed houses. For the hon. member now to bring down legislation asking us to amend Section 98 of the principal Act, and at this late stage of the session, is to spring rather a surprise on the Chamber.

**Mr. Sleeman**: Well, that is fifty-fifty.

**Mr. Mann**: Did you object to the petition?

**Mr. LATHAM**: No. I do not know that any objection at all was raised to it. Still, one would have thought that after the presentation of that petition the legislation, if any, introduced by the hon. member would have been in accordance with the desires of the petitioners. Instead of that, this proposed legislation will have no material effect on the petition, but it will take away what the law has provided for those people, namely the privilege of a referendum.

**Mr. Mann**: Not take it away, but merely defer it.

**Mr. LATHAM**: Yes, that is so. It may be advantageous to the organisations anxious to have a referendum, for it will afford them time in which to strengthen their finances, which appears to be essential in the interests of this work. The hon. member has given certain reasons for bringing down the Bill. He says it is in order that the legitimate purpose of the trade, namely accommodation for the pub-

lic, shall be carried out and improved. Also he says that the Bill will have the result of tightening up the system. Having lived for many years in Western Australia, one might feel inclined to believe that the question of accommodation was entirely bound up with the licensing laws of the State. But when one travels abroad, especially in Canada, one realises that that is of very little significance. I suggest, in fact I am certain, that as good accommodation is provided in hotels in Canada and probably also in America, as is to be found in any part of Australia, including Western Australia. To my knowledge none of those houses in America nor even in Canada has any bars to speak of. So I do not think we need worry about the effect the Bill will have on hotel accommodation. If we had no liquor licenses in this State, we would still find accommodation suitable for the travelling public. And if we had it not, this House could make laws compelling hotels to provide proper accommodation. They could still be licensed, just as we license boarding houses to-day. So I do not know that the argument advanced by the hon. member has any great strength. As for tightening up the system, the referendum will not make any difference. This House appointed the Licensing Board to deal with these questions, and that board can take every credit for having tightened up the system and brought about a better class of hotel.

**Mr. Mann**: This House passed that measure.

**Mr. LATHAM**: And I think it would be very unwise to tamper with that measure. The hon. member has made out a very good case for the spending of a lot of public money for the purpose of getting an expression of opinion from the people of the State. I have never been able to understand why we should have selected the liquor question, and that only, for submission to a referendum of the people. If it is desirable that we should have a referendum, in my view the people demanding it should pay the cost. I do not care who they may be. Alternatively we could say that if there is not a given number of votes passed in favour of the proposals submitted at the referendum, the people demanding the referendum should then pay for it. It seems to me wholly unfair that the taxpayer should be

put to the expense of a costly referendum when the facts are so overwhelmingly against the proposals to be submitted to the electors. I should like to say a word upon the rebuilding of the hotels. If it is the intention of the Licensing Board to force the rebuilding of so many hotels, either there must be a tremendous revenue received by the licensees or else the policy of the board will force them into the hands of the breweries, which is not desirable, or into the hands of the money-lenders, which equally is not desirable. To say the very least of it, the board ought to go steadily when forcing people to rebuild such premises as those mentioned by the hon. member—I refer particularly to the Imperial Hotel. It seems to me an utter waste of money to insist upon the pulling down of that building and ask the owners to spend an additional £60,000. Either the trade must be very remunerative or alternatively that policy will force the owners into the hands of the money-lenders or of the breweries. I agree that much can be said for and against the proposal contained in the Bill. My reason for rising was to express my astonishment that the form of legislation brought down by the hon. member should have been on the lines he has presented to the House to-night; particularly in view of the fact that a short while ago he presented to the House a petition, an action that led one to believe he was about to introduce legislation calculated to give effect to that petition. I do not know that we have any right at this stage to go into the pros and cons of prohibition. When I was travelling through America I found it was nearly as easy to get whisky—

Hon. G. Taylor: What they call whisky.

Mr. LATHAM: No, whisky of good brands.

Mr. Sleeman: As it was to get afternoon tea.

Mr. LATHAM: I should point out to the hon. member that usually the people there drink coffee and iced water instead of afternoon tea; so he is just about quite right when he suggests it was as easy to get good whisky there as it was to get afternoon tea. Only the other day I read in the newspaper that some member of the Senate in America had induced the House to vote \$50,000,000 to enforce prohibition. It shows how costly it is to maintain pro-

hibition even when you have it. When I was there, the presidential election was occupying everybody's thoughts. I was amused to find that two sections of the community, the prohibitionists and the bootleggers, were both supporting the President-elect. Both were agreed as to who should be the man to be elected.

The Premier: In this State we have had instances of opposing sections of the community entering into just such an unholy alliance.

Mr. LATHAM: In America the bootleggers and the prohibitionists were joined together to get the man who seemed to me to be totally averse to the one section and warmly in favour of the other. I am sorry the hon. member should have introduced this legislation so late in the session, for it is a matter to which very grave consideration should be given. The hon. member said that when the Bill was before the House two years ago we passed the best legislation on the subject in Australia. In that I agree with him. Our licensed houses are just as well conducted as are licensed houses in any other part of Australia.

Mr. Mann: You must realise that there is not sufficient accommodation.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not going to say that. I am not in a position to express an opinion on that. For my part, I have always succeeded in getting accommodation, and I have never yet heard any serious complaints against the extent of the accommodation available at present. The hon. member made a very serious statement when he said the Licensing Board were compelling people to put up houses of a value that, to my mind, is unwarranted. If in the future this State decides to try the experiment of prohibition, it will take a very great deal to maintain those buildings erected at so great a cost. I propose to listen attentively to what other members may have to say, but at present I do not think the hon. member is justified in bringing down this measure at so late an hour in the session. He has not persuaded me that there is any necessity for it, and I do not know that I have heard the public express any desire for it. The hon. member might ask us to take into consideration the drain on the finances of the State. For I suppose the cost of running a referendum

would be nothing less than £12,000 or £15,000. Certainly it is a fairly costly process. I am speaking now from the State point of view. Then if we take the two directly interested parties, namely the Prohibition League and the Licensed Victuallers' Association, all will agree that there must be a tremendous lot of money spent by those two bodies, money that probably could be used to considerable advantage in helping the development of the State. When we passed the principal Act, fixing the time for a referendum, it was a distinct pledge to the people that in five years' time they would have another opportunity to express their opinions. As I have said, I have never yet been able to understand why we should pick out the liquor question alone for submission to a referendum of the people. But Parliament has decided that it is the right thing to do, and so we should honour that pledge. I should like to hear other members on the subject of the Bill, because I am not convinced that it would be a wise thing to pass this legislation. It would be a breach of faith and, in any case, we ought not to be considering it at this late hour of the session. It should have been introduced, if at all, at a much earlier date. I regard it as a very serious matter, and I think the people asking that the law should be given effect to have a right to demand that we should honour our pledges.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.15]: No doubt the member for Perth will reply to some of the points made by the member for York, but whatever our views on the merits of the Bill may be, there is certainly no inconsistency on the part of the member for Perth. It is the duty of every member of this House to present a petition desired by his constituents, and that does not in any way bind him to support it.

Mr. Latham: I agree with that.

The PREMIER: On two occasions the member for York expressed astonishment that the member for Perth should present a petition in favour of 6 o'clock closing and then bring in a Bill to extend the period for taking the poll. There is no inconsistency in such action. One is not in any way committed to support the proposals contained in any petition presented

to the House. The member for York said he was not able to understand why this particular question had been singled out for a referendum of the people as against other important questions. It has been the result of long years of organisation and agitation by the temperance bodies of Australia. It is contended, and I think rightly, that this question, which has such far-reaching effects upon the whole social and economic life of the people, is one that should not be decided by Parliament but should be left to the people to decide. That is the main point advanced in support of the poll, and it has gained almost unanimous approval in all the States of the Commonwealth. I thoroughly endorse that view. It is a people's question. It goes right down to the root of great principles, and if there is any question on which the people should have a direct vote or veto, it is the question of the continuance or otherwise of the liquor trade. When the measure was going through Parliament six years ago, it will be remembered, it occupied many weeks and every possible phase of the temperance and trade points of view—

Mr. Mann: And the public point of view.

The PREMIER: Yes—and after all the public are the great bulk of the people that come between—every point of view, I say, was represented. I believe that on the whole an excellent measure was passed. I should like to support the view that the Licenses Reduction Board have done good work.

Mr. Mann: And also the police.

Mr. Latham: They always do.

The PREMIER: It has been contended in some quarters that the hotels closed by the board would have closed themselves automatically. To some limited extent that is a fact, but not entirely. Many of those hotels would have lingered on for years longer. Those of us who have had experience of districts where the population is declining know that, when trade is declining, the worst evils become associated with the liquor trade because of the desperate straits in which licensees are placed in order to make a living. There is no need to resort to questionable methods of carrying on while trade is flourishing and licensees are doing well, but as has been the case on the goldfields, when trade is declining, it is most difficult, if not impossible, even with the most rigid police inspection, to make the



licensees conform to the Licensing Act. The board have done good work in closing a large number of those hotels many years earlier than would otherwise have been the case. The point made by the hon. member regarding accommodation is an important one. There is no doubt whatever that whilst most of the country districts of any size have excellent houses of accommodation to cater for them, in the city the population has altogether out-grown the accommodation. At the time of the Royal Show, during the Christmas holidays, and whenever there is a slight influx of people from the country to the city, they have not only to go to the outer suburbs but often they cannot get accommodation in a licensed house of any description. In order to get accommodation they have to go into some meaner lodging house where rooms are let.

Mr. Angelo: We are not singular in that respect. All the capitals are the same.

Mr. Latham: It is the same in London and Canada. In fact, it is the same the world over.

The PREMIER: I do not know whether it is. Because there is ample accommodation in Canada apart from licensed houses, that does not meet the situation in this State. Our experience is that there is a lack of accommodation where there are no licensed houses. I do not know whether it is because non-licensed premises do not yield a sufficient return to induce people to invest capital in them, but the fact remains that without a license people seem disinclined to invest any considerable amount of money in the erection of coffee palaces, hostels or other houses of accommodation. That is unquestionably the experience in this State and particularly in Perth. I cannot understand what the hon. member had in mind when he said that, even if there were no licenses, we could compel people to provide accommodation. Whom could we compel to provide accommodation? No one. We cannot compel people to invest money in the erection of buildings to provide accommodation for other people. The only compulsion we can bring to bear is when we say to an individual, "If you get a license to sell liquor, we shall insist as a condition of that license on your providing a certain amount of accommodation." Take away the license and what power have we to compel anyone to provide accommodation?

Hon. G. Taylor: None at all.

Mr. Latham: In other parts of the world they do.

Mr. North: And you have to pay through the nose for such accommodation.

Mr. Latham: In Toronto there is a hostel of a thousand rooms and no bar trade.

The Minister for Works: The people would provide that on their own, not under the law.

The PREMIER: That has not been the experience in Australia. We cannot compel anybody to erect a building. The only inducement to expend money in the erection of buildings would be a belief on the part of the builders that the business would give them a sufficient return on the capital outlay.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There is a large temperance hotel in Adelaide.

The PREMIER: Nearly every city has some, but not sufficient.

Mr. Latham: The accommodation would be much dearer as compared with accommodation in licensed houses.

The PREMIER: Probably it would be. I do not know that it is any dearer in the coffee palaces of Perth than in hotels. I think the tariff is about the same.

Mr. Latham: It is lower in the coffee palaces.

Mr. Mann: But would you like to stay at a coffee palace?

The PREMIER: I have not had much experience of either. It is important that the people should be permitted to have a voice on this question. When the Act was passed in 1922 Parliament considered that a five-year period was a fair one. Previous to that we had had no experience of a State-wide poll though we had had some experience of local option polls. Hence it was thought that the poll should be taken every five years. We had experience in 1925 when the first State-wide poll was taken, and the result was overwhelmingly against prohibition. Having in view the result of the poll in 1925, are we justified in postponing the consideration of this question for another five years? The majority against prohibition in 1925 was 35,000. Is there any ground to suppose that that result would be materially altered? Personally I do not think there is. Our experience in the last three years and our every-day judgment do not justify us in assuming that the result is likely to

differ very much, if at all, from that of three years ago. If that is the case, as I believe it is, I think we are justified in postponing the poll for another five years.

Mr. Ferguson: What is the cost of taking the poll?

The PREMIER: A fairly considerable sum. If the result were likely to be changed, or even very much altered, the question of cost should not be an important consideration. The people would be entitled to be consulted even though it cost a lot of money. But when it is going to cost a lot of money and we feel confident there is not likely to be any different result, we are justified in postponing the poll. I know that temperance people are keen on having the poll, and having it perhaps oftener, but I am not intimately acquainted with their point of view. It seems to me that the temperance people, or those who desire prohibition, will not bring their goal nearer by frequent polls at which they suffer overwhelming defeats. Even in the political arena, if a party get a very severe defeat at an election, it takes them years to recover from it. If the defeat is not so severe, they may recover quickly.

Mr. Latham: We shall have to see to that.

The PREMIER: I am speaking from experience. We suffered a severe defeat on two occasions and as a result were in opposition for long years. It seems to me that if the poll is taken again in another two years or less and the result is somewhat similar, it will increase the difficulties of the people who desire prohibition rather than assist those people. I venture to say that those who fought on the prohibition side three years ago have not, even yet, recovered from the result of that poll. Certainly for a year or two they were knocked clean out, so to speak. They had not recovered sufficiently to get their organisation going again.

Hon. G. Taylor: It was a smashing defeat.

The PREMIER: The question of prohibition or otherwise is not so much one of a poll as one of education. It may be said that the poll itself is a means of educating the people, but I do not think that is so. Prohibition will be achieved, if we ever achieve it, only by long, persistent and continuous education of the people. Personally I was going to express the view that prohibition will never be achieved, but that

might be going too far in the direction of prophecy. I am expressing no hope. I do not know the position in America: there prohibition may be a success, or a partial success. However, I can only imagine that until there is a great change in the outlook of the British people it will not be possible to carry and enforce prohibition amongst them. My belief is that if the world as a whole ever goes dry, British countries will be the last to reach that possibly desirable goal. For those reasons I think the member for Perth has made out a good case, and I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.32]: I do not propose to cast a silent vote on this question. I piloted the parent Act through the House, and I know the trouble I had then. I got no help from anybody. I was reforming the liquor traffic and coming down with a heavy hand on it, but I received no help whatever from the temperance people, who presumably did not want reform. I got no help either from the other people, who naturally did not want reform. Hon. members know the time I had day after day for a long period piloting the Bill through. I want to be perfectly clear on this question. I am not a prohibitionist. I am not influenced by either the liquor people or the prohibition people. I want to do what is right by the country. An hon. member said this House had made a bargain with some persons unknown that prohibition polls should be taken from time to time. The hon. member said something that is not correct. Parliament said that we should take a State-wide poll. We already had local option. In 1911 a measure was brought down by the Government of which I was a member. That measure provided for local option. The temperance people then said that there should be no money voted for compensation, but that the trade might go on for ten years longer rather than that any compensation should be paid for houses closed. The trade did go on for 10 years longer, and then a poll was taken. Nothing happened. Where hotels should have been closed, not being required, they were not closed. Where it did not matter much, they were closed. The temperance people then asked for a State-wide poll, and I was always in favour of that if there was a poll at all. Accordingly I introduced the State-wide poll into the

measure. The question of prohibition was submitted to the people, with the result that the Premier has mentioned. I believe it is right for the House to see that if liquor be sold, it is sold under the best possible conditions. The Act as it stands does provide that no one under the age of 21 years shall be served in hotels. It is the duty of the police to enforce that. The Act says that the city of Perth shall be kept dry from 9 o'clock on Saturday night until 9 o'clock on Monday morning. That provision was opposed by the temperance people when the Bill was being discussed. However, the provision has done a power of good. Since 1923 the liquor trade has been effectively controlled. I do not say that the control is perfect. In some places there is a little laxity, and that ought to be rectified. However, except in a few places the control is very good indeed. Something has been said about accommodation. Under our law, if a license is granted, accommodation must be provided. I do not know whether the accommodation would or would not be provided without a license. On the other hand, if all licenses were abolished, accommodation would, I suppose, be provided. I know that in Adelaide there is a temperance hotel, a magnificent building. I do not know how that establishment succeeds. South Australians interested in the temperance question erected it. That seems to me a job the temperance people might do. If they would provide accommodation, probably hotels would not be patronised. I have known temperance people—men who have never taken drink—to sign a petition in favour of opening a hotel simply because there was no accommodation in the place and no one would provide it. If anyone had provided even a decent boarding-house, these men would have opposed the granting of a license. But because no one did it, although many people talked about temperance, the license had to be granted. The member for York (Mr. Latham) said something about the cost of the poll. It is important that money should not be wasted, but I do not think the cost should in this instance be the deciding factor. We ought to consider all the circumstances connected with the taking of a poll—I repeat, all the circumstances. Parliament has said that periodically the people shall have the right to vote on this question. I have no objection at all to the people having the right periodically

to vote on the question, but I do not see that there is anything to be gained by taking polls frequently, particularly in view of their heavy cost. Apart from that aspect, a great deal of rotten feeling is engendered whenever this question comes up. It is made a political question. As I said, I had to work very hard indeed to secure reform of the liquor law. I had a very unpleasant time with all the people, temperance and otherwise, and with the House too. After I had reformed the law, after I had done my best to straighten the thing up and make people obey the law and see that licenses were reduced, the next thing that happened was that a special delegation was sent to Northam to oppose me because I had dared to amend the law and dared to work a reform. I am not a prohibitionist, but I am a reformer, and if the Licensing Act is not properly administered I shall have no hesitation at all in amending it so as to make it more stringent. Because I am not a prohibitionist I do not say that no one should be a prohibitionist, or that a poll should not be taken on the question periodically: but I do say that whenever the question does crop up we have extreme unpleasantness, absolute unfairness, and a deal of positive lying by some people about the work of others; and this lying is sometimes in letters to the Press. I have always made my attitude on the question perfectly clear and perfectly understood. I think I have deserved neither the hostility of the people who want the liquor trade controlled nor the hostility of the people who want it wiped out. I have not had hostility from the sensible, decent rank and file, but I have had a lot of it from the intemperate temperance people. This is a question on which we ought to be perfectly frank. I believe the liquor trade will continue for all time. I do not believe the people will have their freedom taken away from them. I do not believe that people will want anyone to say to them, "You shall not have a glass of beer if you want it." The freedom of the people is dear to me; and since the liquor law is likely to be what it is for a long time to come, I think all those who are rightminded should agree that strict administration of the law is necessary. The Premier has spoken in support of the Bill and made his position quite clear. I

entirely agree with him that if we took a poll to-morrow, the result would not be any different from that of the poll taken in 1925. I doubt if the result would be different in 10 years' time. It would be, no doubt, if the hotels were not properly run. The only advantage I see in taking the poll lies in the fact that it holds a threat over those who run hotels that if their establishments are not properly conducted the people may wipe them out. But so long as hotels are properly conducted, so long as the law is obeyed and there is no drunkenness, I doubt if the people will ever carry prohibition. I do not know that there is need for me to reply to the member for York, but that hon. member got a little off the track on one or two things. If he wants to introduce a Bill that will give effect to 6 o'clock closing, there is nothing to prevent him from doing so.

Mr. Latham: I did not suggest I was going to do that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is nothing to prevent the hon. member doing that.

Mr. Latham: As a matter of fact, I disagree with 6 o'clock closing.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I thought the hon. member wanted the opportunity to support 6 o'clock closing. But, in any event, there is nothing to prevent any member from introducing a Bill to bring about 6 o'clock closing. If any hon. member believes 6 o'clock closing to be right, he will of course introduce a Bill to that effect. There is every reason why he should.

Mr. Latham: I do not advocate it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) brought a petition here, and I hope he will bring any other petition signed by an important number of the electors of this State. If I thought, with the hon. member, that an agreement had been made with anybody that anything would be done at a stated period, I would keep the agreement.

The Premier: No agreement has been made.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There was no one to make an agreement with. I do not believe in a referendum. In fact, I think the House ought to take the full responsibility of doing what is right in this matter and in all matters. If we believe that liquor is bad, then we ought not to

hesitate to act accordingly. But we can make no bargain with anybody, simply because there is no one to make a bargain with. The prohibitionist of to-day may be the man who wants a glass of beer to-morrow, and so how can we make a bargain with him? The poll is taken every five years and will be taken periodically at stated times, not necessarily five years. I hope it will continue to be taken, because if the Government should become inactive in the administration of the law, the people would then have a say, and that in itself would have a steadying effect on the holders of license. I am proud of the fact that so many licensed premises have been closed, not only hotels, but also wine saloons. In a matter such as this, everybody is perfectly free to act as he thinks proper. When I brought in my Bill, I was the only member of the party actually pledged to support it. My Ministers were perfectly free to vote as they liked.

Mr. Latham: It was not submitted to Cabinet?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course it was, but Ministers were perfectly free to vote as they thought proper.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [5.47]: The argument advanced by the member for Perth that the holders of licenses should be allowed more time, should not worry the licensees very much: for the reason that the polls that have been taken have been so astonishingly against prohibition and particularly so in Western Australia, and therefore we need have no fear of its coming into force in our time. But I object to what the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition stated. Though they declared no promise had been made, we cannot get away from the fact that the law provides that in the year 1925, and in every fifth year thereafter, on a date to be fixed by proclamation, a poll of the electors shall be taken. Having been passed by Parliament, we cannot now say that an implied promise was not made to the prohibitionists.

Hon. G. Taylor: No.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Undoubtedly a promise was made that in every fifth year a poll would be taken. I do not believe in prohibition, but at the same time having

passed a law to provide for a poll in every fifth year, we should carry out that law. I intend to vote against the Bill.

**MR. DONEY** (Williams-Narrogin) [5.49]: I admit there is a great deal of wisdom in what the member for Perth has said in support of the Bill. I am not concerned, however, with the merits or demerits of his proposal, but I do complain of the hurry that surrounds the introduction of the Bill. I think a little piece of rush legislation like this should have no chance of successfully appealing to members. A definite undertaking has been given to the public. The member for Avon has made that plain. The 1922 Act sets out quite clearly that in every five years the matter shall be referred to the people. Why not stick to that? It seems to me quite a proper thing that an appeal should be so made to the people on such an important social question, so that their views may be periodically ascertained. I do not see that anything has happened recently to justify so radical a change as that outlined in the Bill. In any case, there is no reason for the suddenness of the attempt to rush the Bill through at the end of the session. It seems to me to be altogether unfair to the public with whom we have made a contract. The Act stands as a sort of moral policeman to keep the trade within legal limits and I regard it as a necessary piece of corrective machinery. It has been the habit to refer such questions to the people and I see no reason now to depart from the practice. It is quite probably the case as many members have suggested, that if the question is again referred to the people we shall have practically the same result as we had a few years ago. Still, in fairness to those who are opposed to the liquor traffic, the promise that the poll should be taken every five years should be kept. It is far better that the people should decide instead of the matter being determined by us in Parliament. My principal complaint, as I said at the outset, is the great haste that seems to be surrounding this business.

**MR. J. MACCALLUM SMITH** (North Perth) [5.53]: I intend to oppose the Bill and I regret very much having to be in opposition to the hon. member on this occasion,

but I really think he is acting on wrong lines altogether. The questions of prohibition and the evil of drink do not enter into the discussion at all. What we have to consider is, whether we shall not be committing a breach of faith with a great section of the community if we pass the Bill. My first objection to the Bill is the lateness in bringing it before the House. As is well known, Parliament is about to adjourn, and consequently, there is very little time to discuss the proposal or give it the attention it should receive. Furthermore, the public have had very little opportunity to discuss the merits of the Bill. It has been the practice, not only in this State, but throughout Australia, for the liquor question to be left to the people to determine. On this occasion the member for Perth apparently thinks that the Bill should be passed in the closing hours of the session and that the public should not have an opportunity to deal with it.

**Hon. G. Taylor**: We have had some letters, and strong ones too.

**Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH**: Some of us have not even had time to open those letters, let alone discuss them with the electors so as to hear their views.

**Hon. G. Taylor**: I have had mine three or four days and have had time to digest them.

**Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH**: There may be a few more in the hon. member's box, and if he read those he might change his views. At any rate, an important alteration such as is suggested should not be submitted to Parliament in its closing hours. There is no need for it; we shall have plenty of time to discuss it next session. The hon. member would be well advised to withdraw the Bill and submit it again next session. In the meantime it would be possible for us to obtain the opinions of various organisations in the State. It is quite true that the general opinion is against prohibition. I myself am not in favour of it and I think the general opinion throughout Australia is against it. At the last poll the people showed in no uncertain manner how they stood, inasmuch as 75,000 voted against prohibition and 41,000 in favour of it. I am quite certain that when the next referendum is taken in 1930—and I hope it will be taken in that year—the vote will again be emphatically against prohibition.

Mr. Mann: You are convinced on that point.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I am and the hon. member has not advanced any argument to induce me to alter my views. New South Wales recently took a vote on prohibition and voted strongly against it. We know also that Canberra has gone wet and New Zealand is doing likewise. It is a foregone conclusion what our 1930 vote will be. One of the hon. member's arguments against taking the vote in 1930 is that the State will save a considerable sum of money. I do not think he mentioned the amount, but I have heard it said that the cost of the poll is something like £15,000. That is a large sum of money, and if possible it should be the duty of this House to try to prevent that expenditure. I would point out that we could save even larger sums of money by making alterations in our laws and we would not run into such conflict with a large section of the community. We could extend the life of Parliament from three to five years. It is costing the country a good deal of money to hold elections every three years. The last election showed that the people were quite satisfied with the members who had been serving them in the previous Parliament since all, with one or two exceptions only, were returned by substantial majorities. Thus we have a sufficient argument for extending the life of Parliament to five years and saving the State a considerable sum of money. The member for Perth argued that the risk of prohibition being carried is interfering with the financing of hotels, and the carrying out of alterations suggested by the licensing bench. I have made some inquiries and I have not been able to ascertain that such is actually the case.

Mr. Mann: Do you know that the landlord of the Australia Hotel lost that property when the building was finished?

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I defy the hon. member to quote a single instance of a licensee having had trouble in arranging finance merely because of the risk of prohibition coming into force. Everyone knows there is no such risk. Suppose the hon. member carries his Bill and that there is not a referendum held for another ten years. Then in eight or nine years' time the hon. member will again rise in his seat and advance the same argument in favour of a further postponement of the poll.

Mr. Panton: You are an optimist.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: The hon. member's argument will not hold water. My main reason for opposing the Bill is that it is a definite breach of contract. The section dealing with the referendum was put into the present Act at the instigation of a large section of the community. I see members shaking their heads in disapproval. They know that a great many votes in the House were influenced by the promise that the temperance party and the churches would have a referendum in five years.

Hon. G. Taylor: And for five years for all time, according to you.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I did not say that.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is what the Act says, for all time, like any other legislation until it is repealed.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I suggest that the hon. member should introduce a Bill to provide that when the referendum is taken the question should be submitted to the electors, "Do you wish to referendum extended from five years to ten years?" The people would then decide whether or not it should be extended.

Hon. G. Taylor: They may say, "No more." That is what they would say according to the voting in the past.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Suppose they did, they would be right in the eyes of the hon. member. This section was put into the Act after many years of strenuous fighting. It was a sort of compromise. We sealed that compromise by an Act of Parliament, which should be a binding contract. If the hon. member wishes to get the referendum extended for another five years, the people should be asked to decide that question. That is the proper method to adopt. I am strongly opposed at this late hour to a Bill being introduced to amend an Act of Parliament which should be absolutely binding upon us. Suppose we extended the referendum for another five years, we should be giving to the trade a very fine concession, one which might be expressed in pounds, shillings and pence. This House is not justified in giving such a concession to the liquor trade. I shall, therefore, oppose the second reading of the Bill.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [6.3]: In the course of his remarks, the Premier reminded us that when the Bill was passed in 1922,

weeks were spent in its deliberation. All view points were taken, and members who opposed the Bill went thoroughly into the matter. They were the view points of all sections of the community. After a long deliberation, we passed a measure to provide for a poll to be taken every five years. I cannot agree that that is not a definite promise to the people who want prohibition. I am not a prohibitionist, and would not vote for it if a Bill came down to-morrow, but I do believe in honouring even a scrap of paper.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is a fallacious argument.

Mr. ANGELO: The hon. member is entitled to this opinion. Mine is that we made a promise to the people who desired prohibition. For that reason I intend to oppose the second reading of this Bill. I would welcome a similar Bill next year when we might have an opportunity to discuss it at greater length, and perhaps hear further arguments in favour of it. This afternoon the question of the vote in New South Wales was referred to. I do not take any notice of that. It was an impossible vote. If the poll for prohibition had been agreed to, the Government would not have been able to finance it. They would have required to ask Parliament by legislation to do away with it, and it would have cost nearly £40,000,000 to bring into force. It allowed compensation not only to publicans but to everyone connected with the trade, down to the yardman. Ours is a totally different measure. I am pleased to see a poll taken now and again. Statements have been made about the improved condition of our hotels. The fact that a poll is taken every five years has had a great deal to do with these improvements. So long as it is understood that a poll will be taken every five years, our hotels will be better conducted. This will make the publicans and others more careful to see that they manage the hotels more in conformity with the desire of the people. They get practically a monopoly in the sale of liquor, and it is their duty to provide the accommodation that the Act insists upon in return for this privilege. It is said that the taking of a poll will have an effect upon the finances of some of the hotelkeepers. There does not seem to be much trouble over those who have to effect certain improvements to their establishments, although it has

been known that a poll would be taken in 1930. There is no need to take that point into consideration. The hardship in the case of some of the city hotels has been referred to. It is stated that one hotel proprietor has to spend about £60,000 to fulfill the requirements of the Licensing Act. If one man cannot afford to do this, why does he not follow the example set in the bigger cities where large residential hotels are required, and float his concern into a company? Nearly all the big hotels in Melbourne and Sydney are in the hands of companies. The money comes in and the accommodation is provided. If the expenditure does not come within the range of a single individual, it does come within the range of a corporation.

Mr. Mann: Would you compare the tariffs in the Eastern States with the tariffs here? Are they not 100 per cent. higher?

Mr. ANGELO: No.

The Minister for Mines: It is 24s. a day for bed and breakfast in the Eastern States.

Mr. ANGELO: There is one thing the visitor can get in the Eastern States that he cannot get here; he can pay for his bedroom and have his meals where he likes. I should like to see that introduced here.

Mr. Maley: You can do it here.

Mr. ANGELO: When in Sydney, I stay at an hotel that is patronised by country people. I have stayed there off and on for seven years and have had no complaints to make. I refer to the Metropole. It has nearly 500 rooms, and one can get a room there for 7s. a day, meals being extra.

Mr. Stubbs: So you can here.

Mr. ANGELO: I was not aware of that. It seems hard to have to pay a big tariff and not be able to take advantage of it. Many visitors to Perth go about the town and see their friends, and no matter if they are absent from the hotel, they pay the full tariff. I do think we have made a definite promise.

Hon. G. Taylor: You are wrong. —

Mr. ANGELO: The hon. member has told us that 17 times already. If he said it 71 times, it would not alter my opinion.

Hon. G. Taylor: I could not help that.

Mr. ANGELO: The hon. member cannot help that. I wonder what the public would say if he were to bring down an amend-

ment to the Electoral Act as suggested by the member for North Perth. That states definitely that we must go to the poll every three years. This promise is on somewhat similar lines. If we break one, we can break the other.

Hon. G. Taylor: Oh!

Mr. ANGELO: The member for Perth has been ill-advised to introduce this Bill now. It is bad tactics. If the vote against prohibition is to be carried in 1930, what does it matter if it costs a few thousand pounds? The money will all revert to the pockets of those who earn a few day's wages in printing, etc. It does not go out of the State.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is a statesmanlike attitude!

Mr. ANGELO: We shall not lose very much by it. I think we should stand by the Act, and I cannot, therefore, vote for the Bill.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [6.12]: I had intended merely to vote in favour of the Bill, but I cannot allow the statements of the last two members who have spoken, to go unchallenged. I gather that the member for North Perth candidly admits there is no chance of prohibition being carried at the poll in 1930. What we have to consider, therefore, is whether there is some good reason for holding the poll then, which must fail in the object entertained by the people who are responsible for the opposition. A poll, apart from its financial aspect, and the waste of time, is not a good thing for the community. It causes a great deal of heat and conflict between persons holding opposite views. It wastes a lot of human effort which could well be directed into other channels.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: So it is at elections.

Mr. DAVY: Of course. No one, least of all a member of Parliament, regards an election as an unmixed blessing.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Why have elections?

Mr. DAVY: I am sure if we could decently do so we would find some means of being elected to Parliament in another way. Neither a poll nor an election is good for the community as a whole. It is disturbing and unsettling, and bad for business, apart from the large expenditure involved.

Now we are told that even though this poll must result in one direction, we are bound to hold it because a definite promise has been made. It is a very improper thing to pass laws to please any organisation, or to refuse to pass laws because they may displease an organisation. Theoretically laws are designed to please the whole of the people. There cannot be any question of an obligation in the way of a promise to any particular organisation.

Mr. Latham: It is a section of the people of the State.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: It is an organisation.

Mr. DAVY: It was clearly shown by the member for North Perth that he was referring to this as a promise between a certain organisation which believed in prohibition, and the liquor trade.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is right.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: It is not right.

Mr. DAVY: It is not my duty to take into consideration either the opinion of the liquor trade or that of any other organisation. It is my duty and that of every member to consider what is best in the interests of the people, and nothing else.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Is not this Bill in the interests of the liquor trade?

Hon. G. Taylor: No.

Mr. DAVY: Suppose it is, cannot one take an impartial view and consider the interests of the people, even though a certain action can indirectly benefit a certain section of the community?

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: That is where I differ from you.

Mr. DAVY: I am endeavouring to point out the fallacy of the hon. member's argument, and that of the member for Gascoyne, when they say a promise was made, and that we cannot alter it. Let us assume it was a promise. What was it?

The Premier: It is a childish argument.

Mr. DAVY: The promise was that in 1925 and in every fifth year thereafter, that is even though it be 1,000 or 10,000 years after, even though prohibition be carried, a poll shall be held. That is the promise. If it be a breach of the promise to postpone the poll in 1930, it will be equally a breach of the promise if we postpone it a thousand years hence.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: One swallow does not make a summer. You ought to be reasonable.



Mr. DAVY: I do not see the sense of the argument. There is a promise, and the hon. member has told us that what we propose to do is a breach of that promise. It would equally be a breach if this poll were stopped a thousand years hence.

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

Mr. DAVY: It is said that the Bill has been brought in too late to receive proper consideration. It is the shortest piece of legislation that I remember being placed before Parliament since I have had the honour to be a member, and moreover it deals with a subject that is in the highest degree familiar to every hon. member.

Mr. Marshall: But it is, none the less, very important.

Mr. DAVY: It is most important. But what conclusion could hon. members come to if they had a month or six months to think about it? The point is an extremely simple one, and is merely whether we shall hold a poll in 1930, or whether we shall not. I venture to say that every hon. member has considered the advisability or otherwise of holding a poll in that year, and has discussed the question with his friends. What harm, injustice or disadvantage will be done to those who are opposed to the Bill if we agree to its becoming law? It seems to me that the result of any debate upon the Bill would be the same, even if the measure had been the first introduced during the present session. Then again it has been argued that the proper method of amending the legislation was only after a poll of the people had been taken. We did not take any such poll before we placed this scheme of holding referenda on the statute-book. It was not then suggested that we should ask the opinion of the people, by way of a referendum, whether they would agree to a poll being taken every five years. On the other hand, it was done by Parliament in their wisdom or otherwise. How, then, can it be argued that before we undo something we ourselves have done, we should first take a poll of the people? I venture to say, if the result of the latest referendum were to be taken as an indication, if we were to ask the people in 1930 whether they were in favour of continuing the five-yearly referendum for ever, or were they in favour of delaying the referendum until such time as we might reasonably ex-

pect an alteration in the opinion of the people, the citizens of this State would vote overwhelmingly in favour of the postponement, if not of the abolition altogether, of the referendum.

Mr. Latham: But let us give them the opportunity.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: We should give them a reasonable trial.

Mr. DAVY: I cannot understand this reference to a reasonable trial. Surely the trial of the referendum begins, continues and finishes on the one day!

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: But we have taken one referendum only.

Mr. DAVY: I know that, but what was the object of that referendum? It was to ascertain the views of the people at that particular time. We secured their views, and that part of the business is finished.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: But the law says we are to have another referendum.

Mr. DAVY: But not only another, but further referenda every five years for ever.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: No.

Mr. DAVY: It is no use the hon. member saying no. The Act says that there shall be a poll and that it shall be held every five years thereafter. I venture to say that if the result of the last poll had been the reverse of what it was, the people who are busying themselves opposing the measure—and they are perfectly entitled to do so—would have not asked for the referendum to be held in 1930.

Mr. Latham: I certainly should have.

Mr. DAVY: I am not talking about the hon. member, but about the organisations that have, perfectly properly—I am not complaining about that—circularised members of the House. I assert that the particular bodies that now claim that a breach of contract is being made, would not have adopted the same attitude had the result of the poll four years ago been in favour of prohibition.

Mr. Latham: No, the clamour would have come from the other side.

Mr. DAVY: Had the result of the last poll been in favour of prohibition, the very people who are now designating the Bill as a breach of contract, would have run to the Government the next day, and asked them to repeal the provision regarding the five-yearly poll. I have no doubt about that at all.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Does the hon. member not know that if prohibition had been carried, there would have been no more referenda?

Mr. DAVY: I know the reverse.

The Premier: What a nice sort of law that would be!

Mr. DAVY: I will inform the hon. member on the point. Section 98 provides that in 1925, and in every fifth year thereafter, there shall be taken a poll of the electors on the proposal that prohibition shall come into force in Western Australia, and there is a proviso reading as follows:—

Provided that where on the taking of a poll, prohibition has been previously carried and is in force, the proposal shall be that licenses for the sale of intoxicating liquor shall be restored, and the voting paper shall be in the form in the 17th schedule.

Mr. Panton: Then the hon. member was right! The referendum would not be on the question of prohibition, but on that of the restoration of the sale of intoxicating liquor!

Mr. DAVY: But the interjection was that if the prohibition were carried there would be no more referenda. We ought to be fair about this business. I am not complaining of hon. members or of citizens who take an opposite view outside the House. But it is not necessary for one moment to suggest that because an hon. member supports the Bill, he does so because he wants to make a present to the liquor trade. I say quite candidly that I make a small portion of my income by being employed by persons in the liquor trade. Nevertheless, I do not care what happens to the trade. My care is for the interests of the citizens as a whole.

The Premier: You would act for the Prohibition League.

Mr. DAVY: I will do my best for the Prohibition League at any time they may honour me with their patronage.

Mr. Latham: And you would put up just as good a case for them?

Mr. DAVY: I would do my very best for them in my professional capacity to put their point of view before the public, just as I may do my best for the other side when they employ me.

Mr. Marshall: I do not think you will be able to vote on this question!

Mr. DAVY: As a matter of fact, the legal gentleman who represents the prohibitionists on most occasions, has acted on behalf of a number of publicans and others engaged in the trade. One's professional vocation in life has nothing whatever to do with his actions in this House. I am not concerned with the trade, and I would not advocate the measure because of any injustice to that trade. I view it simply from the standpoint of the interests of the citizens.

Mr. Latham: I think members have forgotten the trade or any other organisation interested.

Mr. DAVY: I am glad to hear that.

Hon. G. Taylor: Then it has only been since the tea adjournment!

Mr. DAVY: That argument was brought forward—

Mr. Angelo: Regarding a section of the trade.

Mr. DAVY: I refer to the methods adopted by one or two organisations that are the mouthpieces of those who desire prohibition.

Hon. G. Taylor: They do their work pretty well.

Mr. DAVY: Certainly, I am not complaining of that. Every citizen is entitled to express his views and to use every legitimate effort to give effect to those views in our legislation. The particular problem we are faced with is a very simple one. I have already stated, and I will repeat, that we were told candidly by the member for North Perth (Mr. J. MacCallum Smith) that the poll in 1930 has no hope of succeeding.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: That is my opinion.

Mr. Mann: The hon. member is convinced of that.

Mr. DAVY: I venture to assert that that opinion is shared by every hon. member in this House.

Mr. Marshall: Without any doubt.

Mr. DAVY: There is no possible chance of the prohibition poll being successful.

Mr. Angelo: That view is not held by the whole of the community. There are some who think differently.

Mr. DAVY: Whatever defects we may have, I think we can regard ourselves as a representative band of citizens. Our sys-

tem of electing members to this House is designed to pick average, typical men who will truly represent the general, mental, intellectual, and moral make-up of the community. I think we succeed in that direction very well. If that is a fact, and I believe it is, and the 50 members of this House consider that the prohibition poll must fail in 1930 from the point of view of the prohibitionists, then we can take it that that opinion is pretty near the truth and is representative of the view of the vast majority of people throughout Western Australia. We are also told that the cost of the referendum is admittedly a large one to the Government themselves, quite apart from the cost to the people who will range themselves as contending factions in connection with the poll. I venture to say that the last referendum must have cost in money to the State Government and to the contending parties, something in the neighbourhood of £50,000.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: It cost £15,000.

Mr. DAVY: That was the actual departmental cost to the Government.

The Premier: You were referring to the cost to all concerned.

Mr. DAVY: Yes. Are we now lightheartedly to hold another poll in 1930, and spend another £50,000?

Hon. G. Taylor: And perhaps more.

Mr. DAVY: Yes, because the cost of such movements keeps on growing. A lot could be done with that £50,000. That is the problem that would be involved if we were, with obvious stupidity, to hold a poll that must fail of the objective of the people who mainly desire it. We are told that our action will represent a breach of contract. I cannot subscribe to that view, and I must conscientiously vote in favour of the measure. It is not as though we are asking for the poll to be abolished altogether. It is merely proposed to defer it for five years. Surely in view of the very clear expression of opinion in 1925, and of equally clear expressions of opinion at polls held in other States and dominions containing similar populations to our own during recent years, it is fair, reasonable, and wise to adopt the course suggested. I hope that Parliament will agree to defer the poll for five years as suggested in the Bill.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [7.43]: I support the Bill. I believe that the temperance people themselves realise that there is no possibility of prohibition being agreed to by the people of Western Australia or of any other State in the Commonwealth. To my mind it would be a waste of public money to take the poll. As to the proposal to defer the poll from 1930 to 1935, I am not quite sure that I appreciate what the mover intends. I take it, however, that if we agreed to the Bill, the prohibition poll will be held over for five years and will not be taken until after 1935. I do not know that that gets us very far. I have always been an anti-prohibitionist in all things. I believe it is unwise to interfere with the freedom of the subject. When on the previous occasion a debate was taking place in this House I said there were existing in Western Australia greater evils than drink. One of those, on that occasion, I claimed to be the temptation to young girls in vast emporiums in this State selling draperies and fineries, the temptation to steal. While our prohibition friends supplied us with lists of drunkenness and crimes that were committed, they were afraid to tell us of the convictions obtained and young lives ruined through temptation in the direction I have mentioned. I do not believe it would be serving any good purpose to hold a poll in 1930. Even the temperance people realise that under the present Act, providing for a three-fifths majority, they are fighting a forlorn hope. If prohibition were carried we would have to educate the people from one end of the country to the other. If drink really is an evil, it is much wiser to begin with the young minds and educate them against that evil. Then when they come to mature years they will vote against the liquor traffic. It is casting a reflection on the people to say that drink is a curse and leads to crime, for if so then there is a weakness existing in Australia. If it is not possible to resist this temptation we must be retrogressing, and if so we are not fit to sit in Parliament. Still the electors have their opportunity. If they elect us as members of this Assembly and we pass legislation that offends them, they have their chance at the following elections. It is not unusual to have amendments to an Act. Almost every week we have amend-

ments designed to considerably alter some existing Act. To my mind this Bill is a wise amendment because, as I say, nothing can be gained by holding a poll in 1930. I will support the Bill.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [7.48]: I propose to support the Bill.

**Mr. Angelo**: The member for Swan would.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: I have given a good deal of consideration to the matter, and to my mind prohibition would not be in the best interests of the people. We shall be a better and stronger people if reliance is placed more on education, and if a gradual change is brought about by influence in teaching, rather than by an endeavour to secure reform by the carrying of a law. However, I realise that the question before the House is not whether or not prohibition shall be imposed, but whether the 1930 poll shall be held. Since the amending Bill was brought down by the Mitchell Government in 1922 there has been an immense improvement in respect of liquor reform. The hotels have been immeasurably improved and everything appertaining to them has been improved, with the exception, perhaps, of a diminution in the size of the glasses used. That, of course, may have been in deference to that section of the people who believe in absolute prohibition, but I doubt it. I was in Canada a few months ago. The hotels in that dominion are wonderfully fine buildings. Canada has a good deal to thank prohibition for. Members may have noticed late in September a report in the local newspapers stating that the Dominion of Canada was able to reduce its war debt by some £17,000,000 or £18,000,000. That was brought about by the visits of United States citizens who went to Canada to enjoy a holiday. I do not know that it is in the interests of the people that they should indulge in what are colloquially known as birthdays. It would be better if the people proceeded along more quietly. If we sip the pleasures of life we receive benefit.

**Mr. Panton**: Not always.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: The hon. member may enlighten the House from the other aspect. I would appreciate hearing the other view, and I know the hon. member could give us

some information that would be well worth hearing.

**Mr. Lambert**: I think you take your pleasures too furiously.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: To-night, perhaps for the first time in his political life, the member for Coolgardie has sat tongue-tied, and now for the first time to-night a modest interjection has broken his silence. Moreover, I doubt whether we shall hear from him. For the first time there is no responding interjection from him, and any member referring to the member for Coolgardie to-night might justifiably consider himself immune from any retort of a disturbing nature. Such a silence in the hon. member is certainly remarkable. I claim to be strictly temperate. As a matter of fact my dear old dad signed the pledge for me when I was three years of age.

**The Premier**: He was afraid of what you had in view.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: The Premier has really provided a key, but by no means the correct one. The best thing to ensure a temperate life is to have a father who has a disinclination to exceed what is reasonable.

**Hon. G. Taylor**: But what is reasonable? That is the point.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: The member for Mt. Margaret in his later days is attaining a name and fame for being reasonable, and I daresay he can tell us something on the subject. My dad signed the pledge for my good. He felt it was a good thing for me. But in my opinion the only efforts that can do any good are education, influence and environment, supported of course by heredity. The influence about me evidently has been a good one. For the last seven years I have been associating with members of Parliament, and without exception I have found that influence has promoted temperance in all things. Some time ago, in answer to an invitation from a friend connected with one of the churches, I gave an address on prison reform. I hesitated to accept the invitation, because it requires far more pluck to stand up in a church and give an address than it does to stand up in this House.

**Mr. Panton**: And still more to stand up and get married.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: Let the hon. member try giving an address in a church. One distinct disadvantage is that in a church one cannot look for interjections. I received

this invitation to give an address on prison reform, a subject in which I have always been interested, and so I went and did the best I could. Judge of my amazement when, following on this quite disinterested act, I found myself pilloried in a certain temperance newspaper, which stated or implied that I had been putting up an electioneering stunt.

Mr. Panton: Hear, hear!

Mr. SAMPSON: It was suggested that I had accepted this invitation and gone along to the church—which by the way was not in my own electorate—and given this address for the purpose of influencing voters. Can anything more unworthy be insinuated or implied against any member? How would you, Sir, feel if after acting with a desire to interest those concerned in church work, and giving an address you found your honesty or honour impugned?

Mr. Lambert: Which clause of the Bill are you on now?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am nearer the clauses of the Bill than the hon. member has yet been, and I am waiting to hear what he has to say about them.

The Minister for Works: Do you think he could get a hearing in a church in his own electorate?

Mr. SAMPSON: As for prohibition, I am a strong believer in those lines—

I made him just and right

Sufficient to have stood, yet free to fall.

If we are to be prevented from doing wrong, if we are to be shut away from evil, if we are to be denied a drink now and then, what virtue is there in remaining sober?

Mr. Panton: We might just as well be dead!

Mr. SAMPSON: I will not say that, but if there is no opportunity to do wrong, there is no quality in remaining virtuous.

The Premier: The chance to do ill deeds off make ill deeds done.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am with the Premier in support of the Bill. I was in Sydney on the 1st September when the prohibition poll was taken, and I discussed the matter with a young friend of mine, a leader in one of the churches there. He told me he knew there was not the faintest hope of securing a win.

Mr. Lambert: Do not you think you are committing a breach of confidence in disclosing the conversation?

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not think there is the slightest hope of prohibition being carried here.

Mr. Corboy: Say possibility.

Mr. SAMPSON: It has frequently been urged that every possible virtue has followed the bringing in of prohibition in the United States. Perhaps it has, but if so, I should like an explanation of the remarkable increase of crime and the remarkable increase of convictions in California. In California there are two prisons, one at San Quentin and one at Folsom. The biennial report states that the population of those two prisons increased in two years from 4,074 to 5,065, an increase of 991. That fact certainly places California in not too favourable a light. The increase of crime is remarkable.

Mr. Lambert: Where did you get those figures?

Mr. SAMPSON: They were issued by the Governor of the San Quentin prison.

The Minister for Works: How is the population at Fremantle gaol?

Mr. SAMPSON: It has steadily decreased during the past few years.

Hon. G. Taylor: Since the hotel hours have been nine to nine.

Mr. Sleeman: Since the "Newsletter" has been published.

Mr. SAMPSON: The "Newsletter" has given a ray of hope and introduced something of interest to the prisoners. There are certain elements at Fremantle that have a retarding effect, but the "Newsletter" has had quite a good effect. Western Australia has improved under the present licensing law. That cannot be disputed by anyone. Wonderful progress has been made and we are indebted to the then Leader of the Government, Sir James Mitchell, for the Bill which he brought down and which is now on the statute book. That measure, by the appointment of the Licenses Reduction Board, has done an immense amount of good. Wherever we go through the country we find that the accommodation has improved greatly. In most of the hotel bedrooms running water is provided; some of the hotels have both hot and cold water. There is ample bathroom accommodation; cleanliness is the order of the day and a better quality of food is provided. In fact, the whole standard of hotels has been improved. Cannot we trust the Licenses Reduction Board to continue their

work of improving the hotels? I would be second to no one if I thought that by taking a different stand on this question I could do something to improve the lot of the people generally. I do not believe in prohibition and, if the poll were taken, I do not think it would do more than create a lot of bitterness. We have a perfect right to amend the Act. It has been said by some members that if we do so, we shall be violating a pledge. That, of course, is entirely wrong. If it were so, neither the Premier, nor any Minister nor any member would have a right to bring down a Bill to amend any Act. It could be argued, "No, we have a statute and it would be violating a pledge to amend it."

Mr. Latham: This is the only question that is referred to the people.

Mr. SAMPSON: The representatives of the people have the responsibility of dealing with the laws in such a manner as to them seems right. To me it appears that the submission of this vote would be of no use whatever. I like the suggestion of the member for North Perth (Mr. J. MacCallum Smith) that, if the poll were taken there should be submitted another question seeking to ascertain whether it is the wish of the people that the prohibition issue should again be put to them. If the proposal of the member for Perth be defeated, I hope it will be possible for the second question to be added, because I am strongly of opinion that a large majority of the people are opposed to prohibition. I shall support the Bill.

MR. MANN (Perth—in reply) [86]: In replying to the faint opposition offered by some members I wish first to deal with the member for York. He put up a good case in support of the Bill. He began by telling us he had been through America and that prohibition there was a failure. He also said the prohibitionists were conspiring with the bootleggers to carry into effect certain proposals.

Mr. Latham: I did not make such a statement as that. I said they were co-operating.

Hon. G. Taylor: Putting their heads together.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member admits that they were co-operating.

Mr. Latham: In the election of a president.

Mr. MANN: Well, the bootleggers and prohibitionists were co-operating. He reminded me of the occasion when the Government of Victoria were endeavouring to pass the Totalisator Bill. On that occasion the bookmakers and churches combined to oppose the measure and succeeded in defeating it.

Mr. Latham: They did so on different grounds.

Mr. MANN: Of course, just as the bootleggers and prohibitionists in the United States were on different grounds. The hon. member proceeded to say he was opposed to prohibition, and he was confident that if the poll were taken it would be a failure. Yet he is opposed to deferring the poll.

Mr. Latham: Because I said we have left it to the people and we should leave it to them.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member further said he was opposed to the Licensing Bench insisting on the improvement of hotel buildings.

Mr. Latham: Out of proportion to the income.

Mr. MANN: Whether out of proportion to the income or not, I support the action of the Licensing Bench.

Mr. Latham: Forcing the hotels into the hands of the breweries.

Mr. MANN: I am supporting the Licensing Bench in their endeavour to improve the hotels and control the trade. There is not a member who will not admit that during the last five years the trade has been improved out of all knowledge, due to the excellent supervision of the police and the excellent administration of the Act by the Licensing Bench.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: The Licensing Bench have not expressed an opinion about the referendum.

Mr. MANN: Of course not.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith interjected.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member has made his speech and I did not interrupt him. I hope he will not interrupt me. The Licensing Bench having given instructions that hotels shall be re-built to provide greater accommodation for the public, I am asking for the deferment of the poll for one term in order that owners may carry out the instructions. After that the Act can operate as before. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) said he knew nothing of the merits of the case.

Mr. Doney: I said I would not refer to the merits of the case.

Mr. MANN: I am sorry if I misunderstood the hon. member, but if he knew something of the merits of the case and did not refer to them he was failing in his duty.

Mr. Doney: It was a matter of time.

Mr. MANN: I was letting the hon. member down lightly when I said I understood him to say he knew nothing of the merits.

Mr. Doney: I did not say that.

Hon. G. Taylor: He could have spoken more eloquently had there been time.

Mr. MANN: He said that because the Act was on the statute-book, it should stand. I cannot see the force of that argument. If any Act is inoperative or detrimental to the interests of the people, must it stand? According to the hon. member, no Minister or member must bring down a Bill to amend an Act simply because it is on the statute-book.

Hon. G. Taylor: That would not have been the argument of the ex-member for Williams-Narrogin. Shades of Bertie!

The Premier: It sounds strange coming from the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. MANN: The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) waxed eloquent by referring to a scrap of paper. It ill becomes the hon. member to talk in that strain. There are persons who accused the hon. member of destroying a scrap of paper during the war.

Mr. Angelo: What is that?

Mr. MANN: We will let it go at that.

Mr. Angelo: I want that explained.

Mr. MANN: I was at Carnarvon during the last election campaign, and some people were base enough to accuse the hon. member of breaking an agreement he had made. The hon. member will recollect that.

Mr. Angelo: That is foreign to anything I know. I do not like those insinuations.

Mr. MANN: It is not an insinuation. The hon. member referred to a scrap of paper and I reminded him that he had been accused of a similar act.

Mr. Angelo: I would like to know why. You are welcome to state the reason.

Hon. G. Taylor: I think we shall leave it at that.

Mr. Angelo: No fear.

Hon. G. Taylor: I would not press it.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member compared our hotels and charges with those in the Eastern States and said there was very little

difference between them. I shall leave to the judgment of members the question whether hotel tariffs in the eastern capitals are not 50 per cent. higher than for the same class of hotels in this State.

Mr. Corboy: They are more than 50 per cent. higher.

Mr. MANN: I know that one cannot get reasonable accommodation in Eastern States hotels unless he pays very much more than he has to pay here.

The Minister for Works: We in Western Australia have the cheapest hotels in the world.

Mr. MANN: Quite so. The Minister and I stayed at the same hotel in Melbourne. He knows what we paid and I think he will agree that we could get equally good accommodation here for half the cost.

The Premier: The charges at a first-class hotel here are no higher than the charges for a third-class hotel in the eastern capitals.

Mr. MANN: That is so. The member for North Perth was not consistent because he said he was convinced prohibition would not be carried if the poll were taken. If the hon. member is convinced that it would not be carried, and if he is opposed to prohibition, on what ground can he urge that the poll should be taken, seeing it is proposed to defer the poll for only one term in order that the trade may be improved as desired?

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Other people have different opinions. At the last poll 40,000 people voted for prohibition.

Mr. MANN: And 80,000 against, near enough. No sound argument has been put up why the Bill should not be carried and the poll deferred for one term in order that the licensing bench may carry into effect the desired improvements in the trade.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: If prohibition were carried, would you be in favour of extending the term for ten years?

Mr. MANN: The member for North Perth asked me to give him one case. It would be unfair to mention names of people or hotels, but I can give him one case. It is the case of a hotel at Guildford, where the bench has ordered additions to the building and the people concerned were unable to carry them out.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: How long ago was that?

Mr. MANN: The hotel was closed.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: That was years ago.

Mr. MANN: I do not care whether it was last year or yesterday; it is since the Act came into operation. It was done under the Act. The people were unable to make the additions, and the hotel was closed.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: They could not have made them if they had had 20 years. You know that.

Mr. MANN: I do not know it.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Well, it is true.

Mr. MANN: I think I have replied to all arguments used against the Bill. I merely repeat that the object of the measure is to enable people who are having demands made upon them by the licensing bench to carry out those demands. The rebuilding required by the bench will take a year or two. After that the poll can be taken as required by the Act.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee, etc.*

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

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

#### **BILLS (7)—RETURNED.**

- 1, Licensing Act Amendment (No. 1).
- 2, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 1).
- 3, Reserves.
- 4, Road Closure (No. 2).
- 5, Texas Company (Australasia) Limited (Private).
- 6, Kojonup Cemetery.
- 7, Agricultural Bank Act Amendment.

#### **BILL—HARBOURS AND JETTIES.**

Received from the Council, and read a first time.

#### **BILL—LAND AGENTS.**

##### *In Committee.*

Resumed from the 12th December; Mr. Lutey in the Chair, the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clause 35—Contracts relating to subdivided land voidable in certain cases (partly considered):

The CHAIRMAN: An amendment has been moved to strike out Subclause 3.

Mr. SAMPSON: The subclause is unworkable. It is quite impracticable to set up a law as expressed in it. In my opinion, the effect of the subclause will be to reduce the value of the Bill materially. An agent is certainly justified in putting up reasonable statements. This special restrictive legislation should not be introduced for land agents, seeing that agents who are selling shares, for instance, are subject to no such restrictions. At the same time I recognise that the one thing does not make the other right. Still, any suggestion that a block offered for sale will increase in value to such an extent that in six months a profit can be expected would render the sale illegal. I agree with what the member for Toodyay has said on this subclause.

Mr. LATHAM: The Bill was referred to a select committee, and I have no doubt it was carefully studied by them. I do not know what the member for Swan has read into the subclause.

Mr. Davy: The select committee were unanimously against the subclause. It got in by mistake.

Mr. LATHAM: The only independent evidence is that of Mr. J. P. Dwyer, the solicitor, who seems to think that something of the kind ought to be done. I want to see some tightening up of legislation relating to land sales. The select committee were giving the agents a nice close preserve. A man with a block of land would have to register himself as a land agent, or else sell through a registered agent. The subclause is intended to protect, not the keen business man, but unsophisticated persons who are who are beneficiaries in estates. I know of cases where such widows have been successfully tempted to invest money in land right in the middle of sand hills on the plea, "We will get someone to buy it from you next



year, and you will have a profit." I sincerely hope some protection will be given to those people.

Mr. DAVY: The select committee were unanimously of the opinion that this subclause should go out. It got in by mistake. It is quite possible that an innocent man might commit an offence. He might make those promises and might subsequently fulfil them, but under the subclause he would commit an offence. The select committee felt that it would be absurd to pick out just two of the ten thousand lies that could be told by a dishonest man and make them offences and leave the remainder out. For three reasons—the possibility of an innocent man committing an offence, the absurdity of picking out only two kinds of lies and making them punishable, and the advisability of having the matter dealt with under the Criminal Code—the select committee decided that the subclause should not remain in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: When we last discussed this clause, I gave various reasons why it should be retained, though perhaps not in its existing form, and I urged that it should remain there to safeguard people who had misrepresentations made to them when urged to purchase land. Land salesmen resort to fraudulent practices on numerous occasions and by the use of specious arguments induce people to buy land. The two paragraphs in question appear in the South Australian Act. I should like to have the opportunity of amending the clause.

The CHAIRMAN: If the amendment before the Committee, that the words proposed to be struck out form part of the question, be carried, the hon. member will not be able to move an amendment.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Perhaps the amendment can be withdrawn temporarily.

Mr. Davy: If I am in order I will take the responsibility of withdrawing the amendment because the member for Toodyay really moved it on my behalf in my absence.

The CHAIRMAN: If there is no objection on the part of the Committee, the amendment can be withdrawn. Then it will be open to the Minister to move his amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Instead of making it an offence, my desire is that when misrepresentations have been made, the contract shall become null and void within six months. A transaction somewhat of this nature took place a few months ago. A reputable firm of land agents were involved and it having been put to them that there had been misrepresentation, they satisfied themselves that that was so and immediately refunded the money to the purchaser. They did that voluntarily because they regarded it as unfair dealing and that the buyer had legitimate cause for complaint. I move an amendment—

That the last three lines of the clause be struck out, and the following inserted:—"A contract may be deemed to have been induced by undue influence, and in such case may be set aside by any proceedings commenced within six months thereafter."

Mr. Davy: You are not going to put "undue influence" back again?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If an agent makes misrepresentations and a person ascertains that he has been taken down, that there is no possibility of what he has been told being realised, surely he should be given the opportunity to get out of the deal.

Mr. Davy: If an agent makes such a promise, the buyer would have his remedy in any case.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This kind of thing is peculiar to people who deal in land.

Mr. Latham: And shares, too.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No, we can leave shares out. What I propose to insert is contained in the South Australian Act. This is a common method of misrepresentation and we are entitled to legislate against it. We do not want people to say, "I think you will be able to get a profit out of this land within the next few months and if I cannot buy it back, I will get you a buyer."

Mr. Davy: Everybody who buys a block of land expects to make a profit out of it.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Some people buy it to make use of it. The agent is supposed to know something about the land and the possibilities of the future, and often induces people to buy on promises held out. All that is suggested in the amendment is that if someone has been induced to buy land in certain circumstances

and the salesman is not in a position to carry out the promise he made, action can be taken before a magistrate to set aside the contract.

Mr. Davy: Surely you are not going to give a magistrate jurisdiction of this type?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There is nothing very harmful in that. The action has to be commenced within six months. If misrepresentation can be proved before a magistrate, he should have power to set aside the contract. These cases have frequently occurred, but if this provision is embodied in the Bill it will have a preventive effect.

Mr. Davy: The Minister will have to insert the word "if" at the beginning of the subclause.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I should like to withdraw my amendment in the meantime.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move an amendment—

That at the commencement of Subclause 3 the words "if after the commencement of this Act" be inserted, and that the word "who," in line 1, be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move a further amendment—

That the last three lines in the subclause be struck out, and the words "a contract may be deemed to have been induced by undue influence, and in such case may be set aside in proceedings at the suit of the purchaser commenced within six months thereafter."

Mr. DAVY: In effect the Minister says that a contract shall be deemed to have been induced by undue influence. The expression "undue influence" has a definite meaning in English law. It refers chiefly to the relationship between a father and his child or a guardian and his ward, but not to the relationship between two ordinary persons. We have already shifted to the agent the onus of showing that a statement which led up to a certain kind of sale being effected was made innocently by him. Surely that gives the protection that the Minister seeks with his amendment to Subclause 3.

The Minister for Justice: What happens then?

Mr. DAVY: He will get a rescission of the contract or damages, and it will shift the onus of proof of misrepresentation. It would be unwise to insert the amendment where the Minister suggests. I think it was hurriedly drafted.

The Minister for Justice: The Parliamentary draftsman dealt with it, and had it for three or four days.

Mr. DAVY: If the Minister reads it in its present form he will see it is rather rubbishy. I suggest that the matter be postponed.

The CHAIRMAN: The clause has been amended and cannot be postponed. It can be dealt with further upon recommittal.

Mr. DAVY: Then I move an amendment—

That Subclause 3 be struck out.

We can consider, in the meantime, what should be done.

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

Clauses 36 to 44—agreed to.

Clause 45—Renewal of registration:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Apparently the select committee embodied the regulations in the clause, to become part of the Act. They embodied them without noticing that in Subclause 9 references are made to "these regulations." I move an amendment—

That in lines 4 and 5 "these regulations" be struck out, and the words "this Act" be inserted, and that in line 6 "these regulations" be struck out, and the words "this Act" be inserted in lieu.

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

Clauses 46 to 59—agreed to.

Clause 60—Audit of land agents' trust account:

Mr. DAVY: Since the select committee included the clause in the Bill, it has been represented to me that it may result in a serious added cost to land agents, who may have to pay a fee of 30 guineas to a public accountant to undertake the audit. If that is so, it may adversely affect land agents who are not carrying on in a big way of business. I invited the gentleman

who drew my attention to it to get quotations from some public accountants for the auditing of his books, and should his assertion prove correct, I presume the matter can be dealt with in another place and a way out of the difficulty found.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 61—Regulations:

Mr. DAVY: Under this clause the fees payable in respect of the registration of land salesmen will take place. I suggest that the fee to be charged shall be a nominal one of, say, 5s. per year. One firm may employ a large number of salesmen at the commencement of the year, but a different lot during the middle of the year. If a heavy fee were charged, it might prove to be a serious matter.

Clause put and passed.

Schedules 1 to 7—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

## **BILL—GROUP SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Council's Amendment.*

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

### *In Committee.*

Mr. Angelo in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Amendment: Clause 2.—Delete the words "and the decision of the Board shall be final," and insert in lieu thereof the following—"With power to the Board, at its discretion, to fix the amount chargeable, and to be apportioned to each parcel of land within the group settlement area at such sum below the actual expenditure as the Board may think fit, so far as such expenditure shall be found by the Board to be in excess of the capitalisation which each group settler's area can reasonably bear, having regard to the prospective income derivable therefrom. The Board shall report its decisions to the Governor."

The PREMIER: I propose to accept the amendment. I regard it as one of those amendments that make no difference. It does not affect the meaning of the clause. Still, another place thinks it clarifies the clause.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It does affect the meaning of the clause. It alters the position altogether.

The PREMIER: No, it is just what was intended. At all events, it will do no harm. I have come to see that if we can get peace by agreeing to something that will do no harm, we should accept it. Actually I can see no difference between the Council's amendment and the clause in the Bill.

Hon. G. Taylor: I think the amendment makes the clause a little more definite.

The PREMIER: I do not think it alters the meaning or the principle or the intention of the clause. I move—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Some amendment of the clause is necessary, but whether this be the right thing, I am not prepared to say.

The Premier: You started this. They never would have moved an amendment had you not attempted to amend the clause here.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I never would have moved an amendment in this confused form. What the clause meant was that the amount of the expenditure chargeable to group settlers should be assessed and apportioned to each parcel of land. When first the agreement was made, it was thought the money spent on the group would be divided amongst the members of the group and be apportioned by the manager of the Agricultural Bank. That is to say, if the amount spent on one block was more than that spent on another, the one block would be charged more than the other. That was continued in Mr. Angwin's Act of 1925. In that, Act we referred to expenditure by the Government on the groups. This clause means that the expenditure would be debited to somebody. I have no objection to the Council's amendment, save that it is rather confused and will be difficult for the board to work under. Fancy fixing the amount chargeable against a block having regard to the prospective revenue to be derived from that block! However, this will give the board power to fix the amount chargeable to each parcel of land at such sum below the actual expenditure as the board may think fit. My amendment, the one I wanted the Premier to accept, was that the amount

charged to the group settler should be the value of the improvements handed to him.

The Premier: But that might exceed the value of the whole of the property.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This gives the board power to write down the capitalisation, and I hope the Minister will see to it that the board gets to work at once. The sooner the board straightens up some of the existing anomalies, the better for the settler and for the State. The pastures are now doing well and the settlers are producing increased supplies for the butter factories. If the board are to fix the price of the blocks, it ought to be done speedily in order that people may select the land. There are a good number of people wanting South-West land and willing to take those blocks. On land of the Peel Estate recently condemned are some wonderful pastures.

The Premier: Do not talk to me about Peel Estate.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am going to talk to the country about it.

The Premier: This talk of wonderful pastures on the Peel Estate!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know whether the Premier has been there, but Mr. Edwin Rose has been there and he is capable of judging.

The Premier: I would like Mr. Edwin Rose to talk to his nephew and see what he thinks about it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The land is there to speak for itself.

The Premier: No, it is not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not referring to the whole of the Peel Estate. We cannot afford to neglect the Peel Estate or any other land.

The Premier: Certainly not. The great problem is draining.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think the great problem is the neglect of draining.

The Premier: No, it is the difficulty of draining.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I did not cut the drains.

The Premier: Neither did I. We were in the hands of the engineers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is of no use throwing up the sponge when trouble comes, sitting down and doing nothing. I hope Ministers will work hard to solve this problem.

The Premier: If I were adopting that attitude, it would have been chucked up long ago and tens of thousands of pounds would have been saved on the drainage.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: All I want to ensure is that we get the proper value and do the proper thing. I believe that £3,600 is recorded as having been spent on a single block of the Peel Estate. That, of course, is utterly impossible. Anything that is to be done should be done promptly in order that we may save the outgoing and put the settlers on a proper basis so that they may become producers. Before long the South-West land will be in demand by people from the Eastern States.

The Premier: There are a great many soldier settlement blocks abandoned down there and we cannot get rid of them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Four men came to me the other day desirous of getting one of the 3,500 farms, and I advised them to take up land in the South-West. They were willing to do so, but they found the land was held up for some reason or other.

The Premier: The abandoned blocks are not held up.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I had a letter to-day from a man who wants land.

The Premier: I will find scores of blocks to-morrow if those men will come along.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Details of the blocks should be available at the counter of the Lands Department so that people could walk in and get them. The four men I mentioned were splendid men. They were told to keep in touch with the department so that when land was available they could get it.

The Premier: If we get men from the dairying country in the East it is all right.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They desired to go into the wheat belt, but said they would be quite willing to go to the South-West. All the abandoned blocks should be thrown open at once subject to a valuation being placed on them.

The Premier: I think they should be, and at a low price too.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Under this system the valuing of the blocks will take a long time. A farmer at Mundijong offered 30s. an acre for a couple of hundred acres on the Peel Estate for which the Government paid 8s. 6d., but his offer was re-

fused. The longer we hold the land the greater will be the debt against it.

The Premier: If I can get applicants for Peel Estate land, they can have it tomorrow.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Mundijong farmer applied and was refused. I agree with the Premier that we had better accept the amendment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

### **BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.**

#### *Council's Amendment.*

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Panton in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2.—Insert after the word "line," in the thirteenth line, the words "of the interpretation of the word 'worker.'"

The PREMIER: This was a slip in the drafting of the Bill. The amendment was moved by the Minister in another place and will make the position clear. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

### **RESOLUTION—PUBLIC SERVICES, LATE HON. J. E. DODD.**

Resolution from the Council now considered—

(1) That this House requests the Government to afford Parliament an opportunity of giving effect to some form of recognition of the great services rendered to this State by the late Hon. Jabez Dodd.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret)  
[9.42]: I move—

That this House concurs in the resolution transmitted by the Legislative Council, subject to the following amendment:—"Omit all

the words of the proposed resolution down to and including 'effect to,' and insert the following in lieu:—"That in the opinion of this House there should be made,"

As the resolution stands it is a direct request to the Government to introduce a Bill. In a technical sense Parliament can speak only by passing an Act and there has to be a recommendation from the Governor for the expenditure of public funds. The resolution as amended would be in accordance with parliamentary practice as laid down in "May" 10th edition, page 539, or 11th edition, page 572, where it is stated that motions entailing expenditure may be entertained if framed in sufficiently vague and abstract terms. We know from the records of this House that a motion by a private member for placing a sum on the Estimates has been disallowed. I did not want to move concurrence with the resolution in the form in which it came from the other Chamber. The terms of the original resolution, "That this House request the Government," are neither vague nor abstract. I feel sure my amendment will be welcomed by another place, which is particularly concerned in maintaining the Constitution. The effect of the amended resolution would be precisely the same as that of the original. It would show the Government that they would have the sympathy of both Houses if they proposed any expenditure. It would be for the Government to take whatever action they thought fit. The late Mr. Dodd rendered great services to Western Australia. Perhaps some members may not view those services as being of such great importance to the State as in my opinion they are; but Mr. Dodd was for many years before entering Parliament secretary of the one of the largest industrial organisation on the goldfields—the Miners' Union, which controlled the great bulk of the workers on the goldfields. If we can judge by the way in which the gold-mining industry was carried on during Mr. Dodd's secretaryship, we must acknowledge that the services he rendered were great. During that period there was little or no industrial trouble; and that fact, in my opinion, was largely due to the wonderful influence the late gentleman had over the workers, and the wonderful confidence they placed in him. Perhaps some hon. members from the goldfields may hold a dif-

ferent opinion. I can affirm that Mr. Dodd's counsel was availed of in most cases at meetings which occasionally were rather turbulent. We need only contrast the late gentleman's actions with the actions of other secretaries of other unions elsewhere in Australia. We saw what occurred during the waterside trouble. If the secretaries controlling that branch of the industry had acted in the same manner as Mr. Dodd did, the saving to the Commonwealth of Australia would have been enormous. We do not realise the services rendered by Mr. Dodd. Some hon. members may say that his secretarial work cannot be taken into consideration, but I consider that that work resulted in great benefit to the State, such benefit as can hardly be measured by a vote of Parliament. I need not refer to what Mr. Dodd did as a member of another Chamber. No matter what our political views may be, hon. members generally realise the value of the services rendered by Mr. Dodd in the other House. I shall not probe the position of his family. They are carrying on a business which I understand is not too flourishing, but I shall not enter into that aspect. I do not think it wise to make public too much on such a subject, especially when there may be heavy obligations. If the resolution is carried, the Government can go into that aspect of the question—not in any public manner, but sufficiently to guide the Premier as to the action he will take. I feel sure the Premier will do what he thinks is the correct thing. I cannot with any degree of fairness to the people press the argument that because the family have been left with a business carrying a heavy mortgage, the Government should come to the rescue. That is not a precedent which could be reasonably established. But I do pin my faith to the services rendered, which should receive recognition. The Government should satisfy themselves as to whether there is necessity for taking action as indicated by the resolution. Such action, I feel sure, would have the support and sympathy of both branches of the Legislature.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [9.57]: I had personally known the late Mr. Dodd for a period of 25 years; in fact, he was on my platform when I was first elected to this House. Mr. Dodd and I were

associated in many directions for most of the years since then. We were in the same Cabinet for nearly five years, and I can subscribe to all that the member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) has said regarding Mr. Dodd's unselfish work both out of and in Parliament. That work was recognised by all who had the privilege of his acquaintance. However, I do not really see how the House can agree to the resolution, no matter how sympathetic we may be—and I am sure we all feel sympathetic. It is rather difficult to set up a special case for recognition in such circumstances. Admitting all that the late Mr. Dodd did for the State, we must also agree that a great many men who have been in Parliament, and who have died as members of this House, and a great number of men who have never entered Parliament, rendered great and distinguished services to the State. It is not necessary that one should be a member of Parliament in order to render service to the State. I do not see how we can set up the position that the late Mr. Dodd's services were of so rare and distinguished a character that they could be singled out by Parliament for special recognition. If the object is to assist the widow and family, then we reach the point that so many members of Parliament have died and left families unprovided for, and nothing has been done for them. Can we single out this case and say that it stands so far out from any other that we are justified in taking the action suggested? I know there is a general feeling amongst many members that when a member dies and leaves a widow in need of assistance, some principle should apply, so that it would be adaptable to all cases. But many members have died at various times, members who have rendered very great service, and nothing has been done. Thus I fail to see how we can take the step proposed, no matter how anxious we might be to help. If we consulted our own personal feelings and desires, everyone of us would be glad to do something, but I do not know that the case is of such a nature that we can take a special step, remembering that no action has been taken in so many others of a similar nature. I might be prepared to consider the question from another angle, but I do not think the House will be justified to pass a motion of this kind. I do not consider the circumstances to be such that we would be justified in accepting the motion without taking a step that has never

been adopted before, even in cases that have been very deserving. Without mentioning any names, we did nothing in a recent case where there was a widow and young children left totally unprovided for. All the members of the late Mr. Dodd's family are grown up. There are five sons, the youngest being 22 years of age. I believe one is in ill-health.

Hon. G. Taylor: Three are married.

The PREMIER: The motion is based on the services rendered by the late Mr. Dodd. There again, whilst we recognise that he worked honourably and conscientiously all the years of his life, he was after all not alone in that respect. Therefore, I do not really see how the House can agree to the resolution passed by another place.

On motion by Mr. Panton, debate adjourned.

#### **MOTION—NORTH-WEST DEVELOPMENT.**

Debate resumed from the 31st October on the following motion moved by Mr. Angulo:—

That, in order that a more comprehensive policy for the development of the North and North-West portions of this State might be formulated, it is, in the opinion of this House, desirable that the Government should engage an expert irrigation engineer to make inquiries as to the suitability of the rivers of those divisions for irrigation and closer settlement.

**MR. LAMOND** (Pilbara) [10.6]: The member for Gascoyne who submitted the motion dealt very fully with the benefits that would be derived from a scheme of conserving water in the North-West for the purpose of irrigation. I have very little to add to what he said, but at the same time I wish to offer a few remarks. Perhaps it would have been better, and it would have helped the discussion, if we had had some authentic information with regard to the area that could be served or brought within the scope of the irrigation scheme along the various rivers in the northern part of the State. Members representing North-West constituencies have a fairly good idea of the area of land that would be suitable for irrigation, and which would be conserved by irrigation if the conservation did not prove too costly. Speaking as a layman, I know there are many rivers, particularly in the far North, that

would lend themselves to irrigation schemes, provided the water could be conserved at reasonable cost. The district I represent does not particularly lend itself to irrigation because of the fact that most of the rivers run through auriferous country, and it is not until within a few miles of where those rivers enter the sea that they pass through land that would be regarded as being suitable for cultivation. That, however, does not apply to the Kimberleys or the Gascoyne. I believe a great deal could be done in those places, especially having regard to the fact of the wonderful growth made during the wet months in that part of the State. It would be difficult to estimate the carrying capacity of the land there during the rainy season, and so it could be fairly claimed with the application of water to the land several times in the year, growth could be maintained during the whole of the 12 months and the carrying capacity over the whole period greatly increased. Some time ago an application came from my district for the resumption of a small area of land for the purpose of irrigation. It was claimed by the applicant that by means of irrigation the particular piece of land, which was very small, would carry about 30 sheep to the acre. He believed it would do that during the rainy season, and he was quite prepared to go on with the small scheme provided the Government would make available for him about 300 acres of land. The matter was submitted to the Minister for Lands, but it was pointed out to the applicant that the cost of survey would have to be borne by him, and it would be expensive to send a surveyor up for the sole purpose of surveying that small area. It is a pity the Government did not give some little help in that instance. After all, the applicant was prepared to find the whole of the money that would have been involved in putting in a small irrigation scheme to test the area right out, and to see whether it would be possible to so improve the country as to make it carry between 20 and 30 sheep to the acre. I can remember a few years ago when the common at Port Hedland was a mere sand patch. There was practically nothing growing on it apart from a few bunches of spinifex which were of little value from a fodder point of view. A few pounds of grass were imported from India and scattered about the common, and to-

day it has a splendid growth of grass over the whole area. It not only established itself, but there have been several hundred bags of seed taken from it and sent to other parts of the State. Some was actually bought by the Queensland Government and many of the station people also purchased the seed and spread it about their runs.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And it is a very good grass, too.

Mr. LAMOND: I believe it is. That goes to show that with the importation of foreign grasses, something can be done to increase the carrying capacity of parts of the North-West. The Queensland Government have spoken very highly of this particular grass. The chairman of the local road board recently received a report from Queensland that the grass had made great headway. In some parts of the North-West, particularly on the coast, this grass has thoroughly established itself, but it does not appear to do very well further inland. I hope if the motion is agreed to the Government will give some attention to it. I have a recollection of a motion moved by myself and agreed to by this House some three years ago having been forgotten.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Well let us turn out the Government.

Mr. LAMOND: I would be prepared to do that if it were possible to put a better Government in their place.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I will help you in that direction, too.

Mr. LAMOND: If the motion we are now debating is agreed to I hope the Government will take some heed of it. Had the desire of this House been given effect to, it would have not been necessary for the hon. member to bring down this motion, nor would it have been necessary to appoint the Royal Commission to inquire into the cattle industry, for that body could have done all the work that was requisite. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [10.16]: I support the motion. If anything is to be done in the way of agriculture in our North-West, it must be done by irrigation. If we could secure the services of a first-class irrigation engineer from India, we might get a report that would be of inestimable value. I do not know, how-

ever, that anything can be done to bring such an expert to the State until the Premier has made some announcement with regard to handing over portion of the North-West to the Federal Government. I thought he intended to give members an opportunity to discuss that matter during the present session.

The Premier: I think you suggested we should not waste time upon it, and I took your advice.

Mr. Teesdale: It was not good advice.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The rainfall in the North-West is so light that we must have irrigation facilities before we can do anything in the way of growing tropical products. It is doubtful whether cotton could be grown in the North by white labour in competition with those countries where cheaper labour is employed, but we should be able to supply our own wants in the matter of tropical fruit. I should like to see established somewhere near Camden harbour, a small settlement of persons who would be part fishermen and part farmers, or agriculturalists. There are good facilities for irrigation there, and there are other places in the North-West where water could be held up, where many products could be grown by irrigation, and where a big population could be carried. It would be well to get the advice of a good irrigation expert, having in view that it would be possible to establish such a small settlement as I have suggested. The matter is one that could well be considered. No one knows how many tropical plants will grow in the North. We cannot say that rubber will not grow.

Mr. Latham: Coffee would grow there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Possibly, tea as well. Some time ago it was suggested that we could grow sugar there, but the rainfall is insufficient for that particular product.

The Minister for Works: To grow it commercially.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. Sugar cane is grown in the gardens near the Supreme Court. Some plants or products could be grown in the North, and an inquiry might be made so that we might be in readiness for the time when a tropical fruit industry could be established. I do not know that we can do very much to develop the North because we cannot do all that is necessary in the more temperate climate of



the south, where people can live in greater comfort. I approve of the suggestion, however, and hope that some inquiry will be made.

On motion by Mr. Coverley, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 19th December, 1928.*

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

### HOSPITAL FUND BILL SELECT COMMITTEE.

*Report presented.*

Hon. A. LOVEKIN brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the Hospital Fund Bill.

Report received and read.

### MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST.

*To disallow Regulation.*

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.37]: I move—

That Regulation No. 112, made by the Fremantle Harbour Trust, relating to outward cargo (wheat for export), published in the "Government Gazette" on the 14th inst., and laid on the Table of the House this day, be and is hereby disallowed.

With the close of every session of Parliament we have a very real grievance against the Government bringing down Bills late in the session when there is not time to give consideration to them. Here we have something far worse, in that this regulation has only to be published in the "Government Gazette" to be put into effect, whereas a Bill has to pass both Houses before coming into operation. It ill becomes the Government to allow any department to put up regulations and have them laid on the Table of the House and gazetted during the closing hours of the session. In this instance the regulations were not laid on the Table until the very day when Parliament is likely to go into recess. The regulations contain outstanding increases in wheat charges as follows: Unloading wheat from trucks into stack and reloading wheat on to gentry or on to elevator, per bag .50d., per ton 6.15d. It would be interesting to know why those increases have been imposed. Already the charges for the handling of wheat at Fremantle are very high, owing to the fact that the handling is done by the Fremantle Harbour Trust. The wheat shippers themselves would be very pleased to handle the wheat at the old rates without any increase, and would not be at the work many years before making a very substantial profit out of it. And in addition to the wheat shippers, there are stevedores familiar with wheat handling who would be only too pleased to take a contract at the rate existing before these amended regulations were brought out. Let us examine the charges. The old charge per bag was 2s. 3.982d. per ton and the new charge is 2s. 10.132d. per ton, or an increase of 6.15d. per ton, or 22 per cent. These charges do not come out of the shippers, but are extracted from the producers of the State. I do not know when the Government are going to stop penalising the producers.