

to go, before I test the feeling of the Chamber in regard to the taking of referendums.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.46 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 1st October, 1925.

Bill: Labour Exchanges, 2A., Com.	1133
-----------------------------------	-----	-----	------

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

BILL—LABOUR EXCHANGES.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 29th September.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [4.34]: I find some difficulty in the short time available in seeing just where this Bill is going to lead us. It is very easy to establish an innovation of this kind; it is not so easy to see just where it will take us to. I feel rather like a man faced with the next move in a game of chess. Even the most skilful chess players sometimes will deliberate for two hours before making the next move, considering all the time the various possibilities of the game. So when considering a new piece of legislation such as this, it appears to me one ought to have, not two hours, but some weeks in which to reflect upon it. However, I am sure we were all most interested in the address given by the Minister for Works on the Bill that preceded this one and which is equally rele-

vant with this Bill, when he described to us the work of the International Labour Office and the relationship of this country and other countries to that office. However, if I have drawn the right impression from him I must join issue with him if he suggests we are under any obligation to adopt the draft convention by the International Labour Office. Our obligation ceases with presenting to the competent authority that draft convention for acceptance or rejection. That appears quite plain from the words of the Treaty of Peace and the instruments creating this International Labour Office. It could not be otherwise. I do not believe the people of this country would for a moment agree that they were to feel themselves trammelled in any way as to whether or not they adopted or rejected any particular piece of legislation. It would be asking far too much that we, the elected of the people, should give away any of our power to make our laws in our own way. Certainly we should be negligent of our duty if we did not give the greatest possible consideration to the proposals of the International Labour Office. But there, I urge, our duty ceases. This House is entitled to consider this measure, and any of the other measures that spring out of the draft conventions, with a feeling of absolute freedom to take it or leave it. So we are entitled to feel that our duty will be properly fulfilled if we consider very carefully before rejecting the propositions put to us. It would appear pretty obvious that insofar as our duty consists of submitting the draft conventions to the competent authorities—which in Australia are the various State Parliaments, or the Federal Parliament—we are defaulters; because although many of the draft conventions have been passed for some years, yet this is the first occasion in this State upon which they have been submitted to the competent authority. I should imagine that one explanation of that is that we in Australia all have a feeling that we are not nearly so much in need of improvement in matters of this kind as are other parts of the world; and in view of the fact that the object of the International Labour Office is to obtain uniformity of Labour conditions throughout the world, we feel that perhaps we need not worry, at all events until some of the backward counties catch up. However, that may be, it is quite obvious that it is our duty, when these conventions are passed, to submit them to the Parliaments of the various States of Australia. I am in accord with

the Minister when he does that. However, I am not in accord with the whole of the Bill. Broadly it consists of two proposals, the first of which is to establish, or at all events to extend the operations of, the State labour exchanges. I imagine that the State labour exchange as established under the Bill, will be of a somewhat different nature from the existing State Labour Bureau, will have much wider ramifications and will be established under statutory authority instead of merely as Ministers may desire. My feeling about that is that I am not prepared to oppose it. After all it is well recognised everywhere that in the form of civilisation in which we live, it is the function of a Government to help its people to obtain employment. It must necessarily be, because when they are out of employment no Government would suggest that they be permitted to starve; we have either to feed them or get work for them. So, no one would argue that it is going outside the proper functions of Government to take such steps as may be deemed wise to see that employment is available. Of course such steps are bound to be wise steps, and bound to be honest steps; but apart from that, some steps should be taken. So it would appear that, as a corollary to that duty, it may well be a function of the Government to establish State labour exchanges, for it may well be that private enterprise is unable to do the job of finding employment as efficiently as it should be done. After all, in a country like this we cannot solve our problem by labour exchanges existing in only one part of the State. The system must have its ramifications throughout the State. Just where the establishment of these State labour exchanges will lead us I cannot quite see; in any event I am prepared to support the experiment, provided there is a check upon it. It appears to me the check that is required is the continued existence of private enterprise labour exchanges. I can visualise that if the State labour exchange is to have a monopoly, neither the employer nor the employee is going to get the service that he should be entitled to. I can visualise the employer applying through the prescribed channels for an employee, getting him, and finding he is not suitable, notwithstanding that the employer perhaps is not able to assign any very definite reason why he is not suitable. They part, and the employer applies again through the same channel for another man, and gets

perhaps the same man sent to him again; or alternatively the official in the exchange says, "I cannot be bothered with this employer; he is far too fussy." In the same way I can imagine an employee being sent to a certain employer and, finding he is not happy there, without being able to assign any definite reason, he goes back to the labour exchange and in turn is denounced by the official as being too fussy. The private exchange official on the other hand, has a very definite motive for giving service, because if he does not give service he is not going to earn his living. We need that safeguard. We need the possibility that a man who wants to obtain an employee shall, if he cannot get proper service from the State labour exchange, be able to go to the private enterprise exchange. If the private enterprise labour exchange is prepared to wager its capacity to give service against the capacity of the State labour exchange to give service, and throw in the advantage that the State labour exchange will have in making no charge, surely we are not running very much risk in permitting that! If there be ample facility for persons seeking employment to get it without payment of a fee, I fail to see how we shall be running a risk of having anyone suffer if we permit the private labour exchange man to say, "I am going to charge for my services. The State labour exchange does not charge, but nevertheless, by satisfying both sides, I am going to be able to compete effectively with the State labour exchange." There can be no risk in that, and I see a great resultant protection against the almost inevitable inefficiency of any State-run concern. We have heard a great deal about the enormous profits made by these private enterprise labour exchanges. I understand there are in Perth 11 different persons or firms carrying on the business. I am safe in saying the big majority are women, and of those women a large number are either widows or elderly spinsters or women who, through some accident, have been deprived of their natural support. Several of the women have serious obligations in the way of families to support as well as themselves, and I have not heard of any of them driving in Rolls Royce motor cars or even in Rolls Ford motor cars. If they are making the huge profits we are led to believe, it is difficult to understand what they do with their money, and it is also difficult to under-

stand why, when the field is open, there are only 11 of them in Perth. If they are making thousands a year, why are there only 11 persons with enough brains to get into the business?

The Minister for Works: The field is not open.

Mr. DAVY: I must differ from the Minister. As I understand the Act, a fit and proper person may apply for a license, and the rejection of a license is not a matter of mere discretion with the licensing magistrates.

The Minister for Works: I have been on the bench and refused a number of applications.

Mr. DAVY: On what grounds?

The Minister for Works: On more grounds than one.

Mr. DAVY: Of course, there are certain specified grounds in the Act. However, I shall deal with them later. If these people are making such enormous profits, it is remarkable that there are not more in the business, and it is remarkable what they do with their profits when they do make them. Most of these people are women, and most of them are without means of support except this particular business, and yet it is actually proposed that they shall be deprived of this means of earning a living and given no compensation. The only reason the Minister gave why no compensation should be paid was that the licenses are only annual and that these people are not being deprived of anything. That is not correct. True, in form, the license is issued for a year and renewed from year to year, in exactly the same way as is the license of a publican, but a person holding one of these licenses has an absolute right to renewal unless certain things can be proved against him, such things as that he was, or had ceased to be, a fit and proper person, or has committed certain specified offences under the Act—fraud and so forth. It is misleading to say they have only an annual license, just as it would be misleading to say that a person who had a three years' lease with right of renewal for another three years had a lease for only three years.

The Minister for Works: There is no right of renewal in this.

Mr. DAVY: I challenge the Minister on that. My reading of the Act is quite clear.

Section 8 reads—

Every licensee shall be entitled, subject to the provisos hereinafter mentioned, to obtain from the licensing magistrates a certificate authorising the renewal of his license on producing his license and upon payment to the proper officer of the annual fee due in respect of such license: Provided such license has not been allowed to expire or has not become void or liable to be forfeited from any cause whatever: Provided also that no objection to such renewal as is hereinafter mentioned shall have been taken and established in manner by this Act provided.

Section 9 reads—

At the hearing of any application for a certificate for, or for the renewal of a license, objections to the granting thereof on the ground that the applicant is not a fit and proper person to hold a license or of fraud, imposition, extortion, the conduct of the business for immoral purposes, or non-observance of this Act may be made—

and then it proceeds to state by whom objections may be made.

Mr. Thomson: And Subsection (2) of the same section provides for three clear days' notice of objections being served on the applicant.

Mr. DAVY: The tenure of an employment broker is more or less similar to that of a licensee under the Licensing Act, except that the conditions under the Licensing Act are a little stronger, and a renewal of license may be refused on very wide grounds, over some of which the licensee has no control, such, for instance, as the neighbourhood of a church. Employment brokers, who have built up businesses under statutory authority, who have their licenses and have their connection, have just as much claim to compensation if their business is taken away from them as has a man whose land is resumed by the City Council under the Public Works Act. It would be quite wrong to deprive people of their living as is proposed by this Bill, and I cannot believe that this House will agree to it. I do not intend to oppose the second reading, but in the Committee stage I shall endeavour to get rid of the clauses dealing with the abolition of private exchanges. If the House will not agree with me on that, I shall endeavour to insert clauses to entitle people whose property will be confiscated—it amounts to that—to receive suitable compensation.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.54]: I regret that this Bill is to some extent being rushed through the House without giving

members an opportunity to fully digest its contents. It proposes to abolish a business in which people have been lawfully engaged, and it will mean the setting up of a departmental bureau. I know the Minister for Works will say that a State labour exchange is not going to cost very much.

Mr. Sampson: I understood him to say that a number of inspectors would be required.

Mr. THOMSON: I think he remarked that, when the Scaffolding Bill was under consideration, a statement was made that its passing would mean the building up of another department and additional expense, and he went on to show that that had not happened under the Inspection of Scaffolding Act. Then he added that the same thing would apply to this measure. I admit that there may have been some abuses in the past, but no doubt the Minister selected the worst cases that were brought under his notice.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: Abuses on both sides.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes. If the Minister had introduced an amending Bill to prevent the recurrence of any abuses, I would have felt more inclined to support him. I view this measure with great concern and anxiety. I recognise it is the function of the Government to utilise as far as possible its various departments as employment agencies. There is nothing to prevent the Government from continuing to do so, while permitting the present practice to continue. All that was necessary was an amendment of the Act to overcome the abuses that the Minister alleges have occurred. Some of the things mentioned by the Minister do not reflect credit upon those who perpetrated them. If a licensed employment broker has been guilty of sending a woman, old or young, to an immoral house without her knowledge, he should be prosecuted.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the license should be taken away.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes. Such a person would also render himself liable to prosecution under another Act for the offence of procuring.

Mr. Teesdale: What are those vaunted women's institutions doing? Are not they looking into the matter?

Mr. THOMSON: There is no necessity for this drastic change in the system of

registry offices. As was pointed out by the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) there are only 11 persons in the business in the metropolitan area. An employer requiring employees is more likely to get what he wants from a private agency than from a Government bureau, because it is the business of the private agency to see that its clients are satisfied. I cannot say that my experience of the Government Labour Bureau has been favourable. It is the last office of its kind to which I would appeal if I required labour. On one or two occasions when I sent to the Government bureau from the country, I was not at all satisfied with the class of individual sent to me. I view the Bill, also, with a certain amount of suspicion. When the Arbitration Bill was under consideration the Minister secured the insertion of the following words—

Section 14 of the principal Act is amended by adding to Subsection (4) thereof the following words:—"including the Westralian Branch of the Australian Workers' Union."

To another clause he was instrumental in having the following added:—

But this section shall not be so applied as to prevent the registration of the Westralian Branch of the Australian Workers' Union.

No doubt the Minister will say I am of a suspicious nature. If private registry offices are abolished, every employer who desires to engage some employee will have to apply to the Government Labour Bureau or to whatever authority is set up. A few months ago, in Perth, we saw the spectacle of men who were out of work and who were absolutely starving for bread, and despite this a responsible Minister of the Crown said, "We will not give you work unless you have a union ticket."

The Minister for Works: That is not true.

Mr. THOMSON: The Honorary Minister, Mr. Hickey, made that statement, and it has been supplemented by the Honorary Minister for Health, Mr. Munsie. The statement appeared in the Press.

The Minister for Works: It was never made.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That statement did not appear in the Press as from me, and you cannot produce it. Why couple my name with it? I know the statement to which you are referring, but it is not as you have set it out.

Mr. THOMSON: I may have an opportunity of producing the cutting later.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You cannot produce the statement you have just made as coming from me.

Mr. THOMSON: If I had thought the statement would be challenged, I would have had it with me. Another statement was made that later on these people would be given an opportunity to work a sufficient length of time to enable them to get their union tickets.

The Minister for Works: That was the instruction from the commencement.

Mr. THOMSON: Now we have the Minister's admission that this was done under instructions. If, therefore, the Arbitration Act Amendment Bill passes another place and becomes law, and the A.W.U. becomes a registered body, no man in the State will be permitted to earn his living in the country unless he carries an A.W.U. ticket.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: Don't worry; they will not patronise the bureau.

Mr. THOMSON: They will have to do so. This places in the hands of the Government, or the Government department concerned, altogether too much power. Rural workers are composed of men who engage in fencing and clearing. I see many difficulties ahead. I strongly object to the rights and privileges of the people being whittled away. No doubt there are some good clauses in the Bill and I am prepared to assist the Government to broaden its principles. I am not, however, prepared to give the Government the sole right of cutting out those privileges that have been accorded by Act of Parliament to the people concerned. No doubt the Minister will say my statement is absurd, and that this is not likely to occur.

The Minister for Works: Your own conscience should tell you that.

Mr. THOMSON: I am making a statement I know the Minister will deny.

The Minister for Works: You know it is not true.

Mr. THOMSON: We must judge people by their actions. We know it is the policy of the Government to give preference to unionists, and that they believe in compulsory unionism. They propose by this Bill to wipe out the means of livelihood of 11 people who have complied with the law, paid their fees, and according to the law are entitled, provided they have done nothing wrong, to a renewal of their license. We

are asked to wipe out the rights and privileges of these people. I view the position with a great deal of anxiety. Whether or not we shall be successful in our opposition to the second reading, I do not know. If any abuses have occurred, and people have to pay more than a fair thing, let the Government have the law amended and the fees prescribed. The Act of 1918 contains the following:—

No payment or remuneration for, or in respect of, any hiring shall be charged by any employment broker to the servant which is not equally charged to the employer.

Why do not the Government introduce a Bill stating that no employee shall have to pay any fees, and that if an employer desires to use a registry office for the purpose of obtaining an employee, he alone shall pay the fee?

The Minister for Works: Will you support that?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes. It is a fair proposal to amend the Act in that direction. We know that the Government are in favour of preference to unionists. In following out that principle, they have exploited the necessities of men who have been starving for bread. They have said to them, "You can only get it under one condition, namely, that you join a union." I am utterly opposed to a principle of that sort. We claim that every man in Australia should be free to work, but on every occasion that is possible, by legislative enactments we are whittling away the privileges of the people, and giving up the rights for which our forefathers fought and paid for with their blood.

The Premier: Now for the lump in our throats: Sobs here!

Mr. THOMSON: We are whittling away the whole of our privileges. I am in accord with the Government in their desire to remedy any abuses that may have crept in. If they will introduce a Bill to make it compulsory for the employer only to pay fees, I will support it. Many years ago, when I was working at the trade, we used to have to provide for our own compensation out of weekly deductions from our wages. The Workers' Compensation Act was then passed, which placed the responsibility on the shoulders of the employers, who were then obliged to insure their employees. The Minister who brought down this Bill broadened the Workers' Compensation Act by placing greater responsibilities upon the shoulders of the employers. If he had done that in this

particular case, along the lines I have indicated, I should have been prepared to support him. For the reasons I have stated, I intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill.

MR. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [5.10] : This is the most unfair Bill I have ever come across. I cannot help thinking that if the people who are engaged in this particular calling mustered 2,000 or 3,000, instead of 13, we should never have heard of the Bill, because too many votes would have been at stake. Because these employment agencies number only 11 or 13 they are of no consequence, and are to get it in the neck as their votes are not likely to matter.

The Minister for Works: I suppose that is what decided me to bring down this Bill.

MR. TEESDALE: I was struck by one statement the Minister made. I can scarcely think the illustration was exactly as he stated it. I do not think he had been properly informed as to the position. He sketched, in graphic colours, the case of two women who had advertised that a competent professional man was selecting the labour for the office. I will give the House the strength of that position. I think the Minister has sufficient compassion in him to feel sorry that he has brought into publicity this particular case. A widow with young children took over her dead husband's business. That business had been worked up to within the last two years, and was in a very fair position at the time the unfortunate man died. She had no other means of support, and she and her sister decided to try and wrestle with the business. The advertisement referred to by the Minister is a standing advertisement, which had been published for two years. It stated that a competent or capable man would select the labour. Can the Minister deny that a capable man is selecting that labour, although there is not a man on the premises?

The Minister for Works: That may be so.

MR. TEESDALE: This woman had helped her husband in the business, and is just as capable as a man of arriving at a decision as to whether a man is a decent sort, and a good workman, or whether a domestic is calculated to suit some employer or not. Plenty of women are running big businesses who have acumen and ability

equal to that of the average man. I do not think the Minister will deprive this woman of her living without giving her some compensation. It is one of the many hard cases I know of. Great abuses have occurred and I appreciate what the Minister said upon the point, but I do think he should give these unfortunate people a 12 months' chance of making some other arrangement.

The Minister for Works: They are to be given 12 months' notice.

MR. TEESDALE: I am extremely pleased to hear that.

MR. DAVY: But do they get 12 months' notice?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

MR. DAVY: Not under the Bill.

The Minister for Works: I undertake to give them 12 months' notice.

MR. TEESDALE: I thank the Minister very sincerely. That promise will relieve the minds of these unfortunate people considerably.

MR. LUTEY: Let them do the same as a man does when he loses a job—get another one.

MR. TEESDALE: That is hardly fair. A man can do many things that a poor woman with a small child cannot do.

MR. LUTEY: You have changed your opinion since you spoke on the Jury Act Amendment Bill. What about the iron-jawed women?

MR. TEESDALE: That was merely a causal reference in the course of debate. It has nothing to do with this Bill. Surely the pack on the cross benches are not going to support the Bill! Have they no bowels of compassion at all? I will remember it against them. Perhaps the Minister will state how it comes about that this Bill has been brought down. Have the officers of his department failed? Have the inspectors not been able to supervise this poor little tin-pot industry comprising 11 people? Surely there are inspectors enough to cope with such an industry. It is not a great sprawling affair with employers and employees scattered all over the place. Moreover, inspectors seem to have autocratic powers, seeing that private letters have been read, extracts from ledgers produced, and letters from employers quoted here. Evidently the inspectors have every means of finding out what these employment brokers are doing,

and to deal drastically with them in case of wrong-doing. We have been given to understand that the inspectors are fairly hard. How is it that they have not exhibited the necessary firmness to weed out offices that have been acting unfairly or dishonestly? Does the Minister think that the average civil servant in a Government office can select a domestic servant to be sent out at a moment's notice upon request through the telephone? What sort of results are likely to be achieved if women are simply picked up for such situations? Surely the position will be extraordinary if domestic servants are brought within the scope of this Bill.

Mr. Davy: Everybody will be brought under it.

Mr. TEESDALE: The Minister's promise, however, has cut a great deal of the ground from under my feet. It represents a good admission. The 12 months' notice is more than I expected to get. Indeed, the Minister has given me such a shock that I am incapable of going on any longer.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.21]: The Bill repeals the Employment Brokers Act of 1901, and the Amendment Acts of 1912 and 1918, thereby rendering it illegal for employment brokers to continue in business if this measure passes. Under Section 15 of the principal Act it is mandatory that charges levied shall be displayed in the offices of the private labour bureaux, and Section 16 prescribes a penalty of up to £20 for the offence of charging fees greater than those exhibited in the scale. In view of those facts, and in view of the sympathy which everyone naturally feels for those who desire employment and find it difficult to obtain, it is a matter for surprise that action has not been taken to discipline the employment brokers who have offended, and to deprive those who have been guilty of these offences of the opportunity of further carrying on the business. That seems to me the proper course to adopt. But to say that because in some cases there has been departure from correct procedure the line of business shall be made illegal, strikes me as unreasonably drastic. The Minister stated that 11 persons are engaged in the business and that they are all women. It has been said that the State Labour Bureau has rendered good service, and I do not for a moment doubt the further statement made by the Minister that excessive charges have in some cases been

made by private employment agencies to persons seeking work. Neither do I doubt that in some cases there has been misunderstanding as regards the sending of persons desiring positions to localities where the positions available were not suitable for the applicants. I have had some little experience of the State Labour Bureau, and I say at once that I have a great respect for the officer in charge of that institution. He carries out his duties well. I challenge the Minister, however, to declare that there have not been complaints in regard to the administration of the State Labour Bureau. According to the accounts submitted to us, certain women carrying on private employment agencies have done something wrong; but would it not be equitable and fair that, before the House decides on the drastic action proposed by the Bill, those women should be given an opportunity of answering the charges levelled at them? Is it fair that a verdict should be given against them in absentia, a verdict depriving them of the opportunity of making their living? I noted the Minister's statement that the measure, if passed, will not come into operation for at least 12 months. There may be a little satisfaction in that, but it is precious poor satisfaction. In the meantime the business of filling vacancies is open for competition, and if the State Labour Bureau is able to render good service free of charge, why should persons desirous of employment be prepared to pay private employment brokers what are alleged to be excessive fees? The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. Lutey) stated that the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) had no sympathy for men out of work; but the position here is entirely different.

Mr. Lutey: I did not say the member for Roebourne had no sympathy for men out of work.

Mr. Teesdale: If he did say it, he told a deliberate lie.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Lutey: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. SAMPSON: Evidently it is a mistake on my part. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe said that a man out of work—

Mr. Lutey: I said these women would do the same as a man out of a job—get another job. Other women out of work also get other jobs.

Mr. SAMPSON: The position here is different. If the member for Brown Hill-

Ivanhoe or I or any any other tradesman lost a position, it would still be competent for us to work in the same industry. But not so in this case. If the women who are carrying on employment agencies are deprived of that work by virtue of their business being declared illegal, what will happen?

Mr. Millington: As they are experts at finding jobs, they will be all right.

Mr. SAMPSON: They are experts at finding jobs for those who are qualified to fill the jobs, but they are not experts at finding jobs for those who are not qualified to fill the jobs. Possibly the interjection of the member for Leederville (Mr. Millington) explains some of the statements made by the Minister when introducing the Bill. Some people are not capable of filling a job. Often persons desirous of obtaining employment state that they can do certain work satisfactorily, and then it sometimes happens that they are found to be unable to do what is required, with the consequence that they do not hold the position. The women who carry on labour bureaux cannot be blamed in every case, surely. I am prepared to admit that there have been mistakes on both sides. However, before these women are deprived of the opportunity of earning their living, they should be given an opportunity of defending themselves.

Mr. Lutey: When the water scheme reached Kalgoorlie, the water carters lost their work, and they got no compensation.

The Premier: Almost every measure passed by Parliament deprives somebody of the opportunity of earning his living in the occupation he has been following.

Mr. SAMPSON: This Bill is going to render illegal the carrying on of a private labour bureau; but the people to whom the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe referred would not find that their occupation was entirely gone.

The Premier: It was gone just as completely as if it had been declared illegal.

Mr. SAMPSON: The number of persons affected in this case is very small, I know; but I refuse to be a party to supporting a measure which will deprive them of the opportunity of making a living. If it is desired to extend the State Labour Bureau, there is nothing to prevent the Government from extending that institution. The State Labour Bureau is giving good service. Let that service be extended. The fact of competition from private sources will not, I am

sure, make that service any less efficient. One provision of the Bill gives power to advance money for travelling. The providing of railway tickets for persons seeking employment has long been in vogue, and has proved highly useful. From that standpoint there is no need for additional legislation. I have not heard that the Auditor General has objected to debits being raised in cases where persons seeking employment have not repaid the amount due. To bring down a Bill for the purpose of preventing these bureau agents carrying on their work seems like using a steam hammer to drive a tack. If the work the agencies are doing is not of service to the public it must die out. If it is of service, the people will be the better for it. If the Government Bureau can do all that is necessary, the private bureaux will find no opportunity of continuing. I regret that such a measure has been introduced; I do not consider the circumstances justify its introduction and I intend to oppose the second reading.

MR. MILLINGTON (Leederville) [5.32]:

I have listened to the opposition that has been expressed regarding the measure. Personally I consider that the Bill is long overdue and that the International authority that has recommended a better system of organisation and the building up of better machinery for the provision of employment for those who need it, took a wider view than that expressed by those who are to-day opposing the Bill. My experience is that when a machine becomes obsolete it has to go. I have had experience regarding the provision of employment and I have had to deal with innumerable complaints from those who have suffered by reason of the inefficient machinery in existence, and it seems to me that instead of our spending so much time and thought on the discussion of the position of the existing agencies, we should consider the advisableness of making provision for the constitution of more efficient machinery for bringing the employer and employee together. In order to properly build up the machine which will provide a sole and centralised control, with of course subsidiary agencies throughout the State, we should in the first place have proper records. At the present time we are far behind other countries of the world. There are places where the whole of the man and woman power is tabulated, and where it is possible for the authorities to place their hands on given

districts where employment is needed. Provision is also made in those places well in advance of the time. There is such a thing as seasonal occupation, and as it exists in Western Australia, it should be possible to provide for it. The winter months particularly are a perfect nightmare to those who have to find work for the unemployed. Every year we have to face the same difficulty, and every year when winter approaches we find that no provision is made to overcome the trouble.

Mr. Thomson: Will the Bill make the position any better?

Mr. MILLINGTON: If the State has control, and secures a proper census of the unemployed—that will be part of the business of the agency—it ought to be more easily possible to cope with that annual trouble. The State agency will have to work in conjunction with the statistician; the agency will have at its disposal all the information that it is possible to secure regarding the out-of-work, as well as the employers who need labour. It will then be possible to have a systematised method, and better results all round should follow. At the present time it is impossible to do anything like this. I do not suggest that those who are engaged in conducting private agencies are doing particularly well out of those agencies. I cannot see how they can be doing well. But that is not the point.

Mr. George: Is anyone making £3,000 out of it?

Mr. MILLINGTON: I am not questioning what they are making; I merely wish to point out that there are 11 agencies in existence doing the work that should be done by one. Where there is all this duplication, those agencies must necessarily charge a higher rate of commission for the work they perform than would be done if there were only one in existence.

Mr. Thomson: Do you know that the agencies must submit a scale of fees to the Minister for his approval?

The Minister for Works: They do not.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Those people over whom the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) is shedding tears, are evading the law. It is most difficult to prove that they are doing so, but we can prove definitely that the unemployed—I am more concerned about them than I am about the agencies—

Mr. Thomson: Yes, you are concerned when you compel them to join a union before they can get a job.

Mr. MILLINGTON: We can deal with that afterwards. The position of the unemployed calls for the consideration of this House more than does that of the agents. The agents have no compunction whatever about evading the law; they charge the unemployed a fee and probably the unemployed have to borrow the money to pay that fee, which is generally excessive. The employer is not asked to pay anything.

Mr. George: What is the fee?

Mr. Sampson: Why do not those who are out of work seek employment at the Government Bureau?

Mr. MILLINGTON: We are told that the business is cut up amongst the various agencies. I suppose the unemployed try everywhere for work. The agencies do a certain amount of advertising, and the cost of that has to come out of the pockets of those who get the jobs.

Mr. Sampson: Is it a fact that the agents are approached by the better class of employers?

The Minister for Lands: Perhaps that was so when you were in office.

Mr. MILLINGTON: If there were in existence only one agency, and it were properly organised, the labour that was offering would go through that agency. I do not say that even with the one agency all the engagements would be made through it. At the present time there is a good deal of private treaty, and I suppose that will continue. There are innumerable ways of bringing employer and employee together. There would, however, be a properly organised central bureau with agencies in important localities, all directed from the one centre. As to giving thought to those who are to be displaced, I do not suppose there is any more humane section of the community than that engaged in farming. When it was necessary for that section to form co-operative companies, they did not worry about the man who had built up a business of his own.

Mr. Sampson: He was allowed to compete.

The Minister for Lands: He was driven into the bankruptcy court.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The acid was applied, and if he did not sell out at their price he had to face opposition. So far as the commercial world is concerned, if a thing becomes obsolete and can be replaced by something more modern, that which is obsolete must go. The agencies have failed to render the services they set out to do.

Mr. Teesdale: Every one?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Practically all; they have evaded the law by compelling those least able to pay, to bear the cost.

Mr. Lindsay: But they cannot do that; why is the law not enforced?

Mr. MILLINGTON: It is impossible to follow their records, and so they are able to evade the law. It is admitted that they do not charge the employer a fee; they charge those out of work, and the employer naturally will go to that agency which will provide labour for nothing.

Mr. Thomson: The law says that the employer shall pay.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The department is powerless; they have no means by which they can question the records which can be falsified.

Mr. Thomson: Why not amend the Act?

Mr. MILLINGTON: We have tried that. It has been mentioned that the private agencies have more incentive than the Government agencies to provide work for people. They have so much incentive that they send men and women to jobs of a most unsatisfactory character. I can well understand what the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) meant when he referred to fussy people. Some of the agents do a regular trade in providing jobs that last only a few weeks, and sometimes only a few days.

Mr. Sampson: We have been getting complaints about the New Settlers' League.

Mr. MILLINGTON: It can be said of the New Settlers' League that they do not batten on the unemployed as do the agents.

Mr. Thomson: You could get at the agents easily through an Act of Parliament.

Mr. MILLINGTON: We have tried to make the employer pay half the fee and have failed. It is unusual for the employer to have to pay at all. The records will show that. If an agency set up in business in Perth to-morrow on fair and square lines, it would have no clients.

Mr. George: I think it would.

Mr. MILLINGTON: No, because there are agents established who carry on business on different lines, and the employer will always go where he can get his work done for nothing.

Mr. George: Employers go to agents from whom they have had satisfaction, and they always pay.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Our concern should be to endeavour to set up additional machinery, so that the unemployed shall be able

to secure employment without cost. If we are to give the State control of this it will be for the State to build up an efficient organisation. It will be of immense value if we can organise this on the lines set out in the Bill, and no hardship will be imposed on anybody. Undoubtedly our first consideration should be for the unemployed. There can be no comparison between cancelling an employment broker's license and cancelling an hotel license.

Mr. Sampson: Where is the difference?

Mr. MILLINGTON: In one instance much valuable property is involved and stringent qualifications are required before the license can be obtained, while in the other instance all that is necessary is to have a brass plate on a door. Some members have referred to the paying of compensation for the taking away of these twopenny-halfpenny brokers' businesses.

Mr. Davy: If they are only twopenny-halfpenny businesses there will not be much compensation to be paid.

Mr. MILLINGTON: However, that can be discussed. I am satisfied that even the unemployed would readily contribute towards the compensating of some of these private agencies, so unfortunate has been the experience of their clients. The question we have to decide is whether it is in the interests of the people of the State that we should scrap a set of obsolete machinery and institute better machinery in its place. The other question of how we are to get over the difficulty of transferring from one system to another can be discussed. Our chief business is to decide whether we are to have the best possible machinery, or are to humbug along with the existing inefficient plant. Experience shows it to be absolutely necessary that the existing machine should be scrapped and a better one set up in its place. People who have had dealings with private agencies are unanimous as to the manner in which the agencies have been conducted.

Mr. Davy: They will no longer go to the private registry office if the State is to have a more efficient one.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Just the same, it will be necessary to have a State monopoly, for if the State labour exchange is to compete against the private exchanges the State exchange will have to advertise and adopt other business practices.

Mr. Sampson: It will be of no use having a State agency and keeping it secret.

Mr. MILLINGTON: There will be no secret about it.

Mr. George: I suppose we shall have paragraphs every day in every newspaper.

MR. MILLINGTON: No, the State exchange will be sufficiently well advertised amongst those using it. The whole thing will be simplified and modernised. This has been found necessary in other parts of the world, and it is about time we came into line with countries that realise the inevitable.

MR. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [5.50]: I suppose there is no more serious question in the domestic life of the State, of the Commonwealth or of the nation than that of unemployment amongst the people. In nearly every country of the world this problem of unemployment is giving statesmen the biggest trouble and worry they could possibly have; for if people are not working they are apt not only to be uncomfortable themselves but to make things uncomfortable for others. So I can understand the Government attempting to find a way by which unemployment can be grappled with thoroughly and efficiently. Whether the Bill represents the correct way, is what the House is now endeavouring to determine. It has been said that when a machine becomes obsolete the manufacturer scrap it. That is all right, but it is questionable whether it is right that the State should scrap the employment of certain people within its borders and throw them out on the world to scramble along as best they can. Reference has been made to State trading concerns. They were established by a Labour Government having high ideals and big hopes and expectations.

The Minister for Lands: And were carried on and extended by a National Government.

Mr. GEORGE: But the Labour Government that created those trading concerns did not attempt to scrap all other concerns in competition with them. They had to take their position in the ranks of traders and go into open competition with other concerns already established. In this instance, however, the Government appear to be frightened of the existing 11 private labour agencies. The Minister, when moving the second reading, and other speakers, have said that the private offices are used as a means of extortion against the employee. We have been told that the employer seldom, if ever, pays a fee. I have asked my wife what happens when one sends along to a private

registry office for a domestic servant. She told me that invariably the employer has to pay a fee.

The Minister for Lands: That happens only very rarely.

Mr. GEORGE: Only this afternoon there were several callers on my wife, and I put the question to the lot of them. I said, "When you go for a domestic servant do you have to pay a fee?" and, one and all, they said, "Yes, we do." I cannot understand any employer going to a private agency and trying to evade the payment of a fee. Of course, some might try to escape, just as some employees would fail to carry out their obligations. I cannot see why, in establishing State labour exchanges, it is necessary to interfere with the existing private agencies. If the State exchange fulfils its purpose, it will attract to itself the bulk of those seeking employment, because they will not have to pay any fees; and it will also attract, at all events such employers as would try to evade the fee charged by a private agency. Is the House asked to believe that in those circumstances the State labour exchange, with all the organised forces of the Government behind it, would be unable to stand up against a little competition? In addition to the fact that it is not good for the State that men should be idle, there is the expense to the State of feeding unemployed who cannot otherwise obtain food. It is quite clear from the number of applicants at the State Labour Bureau that the private agencies cannot meet the situation as a whole, and therefore I agree with the Government's attitude in trying to meet it. They must meet it, if only for the two reasons given, namely, that on general grounds it is not good to have men idle, and more specifically that it costs the State a lot to feed them. I cannot see why it is not possible to prescribe in the Bill a reasonable scale of fees for private agencies. At all events, such a scale could be indicated. Again, I cannot see why machinery should not be put into force for severely dealing with those who evade the payment of such fees. I take it that if an employment broker were to evade the Act under which he operates, and it were proved against him, he would in consequence lose his living. Quite right, too. I think the Minister told us that on the evidence of the man's own books, one private broker was making £75 per week.

The Minister for Works: No, I said on the figures taken from his own advertisements.

Mr. GEORGE: That is to say, that if he successfully placed all his clients in employment his fees would amount to £75 for the week? I should be very much surprised if a careful examination of that individual's books revealed that that amount of money had been made.

The Minister for Lands: Perhaps the business was up for sale.

Mr. GEORGE: That may be so; the Minister usually hits the nail on the head, and I know that there is cheating going on in other directions besides this. In Committee I shall have something to say about the employer being required to send in certain returns. Goodness knows, we have enough returns to supply now, what with income tax, land tax, and various other things, enough to drive a man cranky—they drive me cranky for a certain period once a year—and to ask us to send in more returns will make it somewhat of a farce as well as an imposition. When the Minister replies, I hope he will tell us what use these returns will be. In what way will they be of service? I think he will find that he will be able to gain his object, which is clear, though the clause itself is not clear. I hope the Government will reconsider the Bill and see whether they cannot permit those persons at present engaged in the avocation to continue. A lot of private employers would not care about going to the State Labour Bureau to employ men. There are employers who know the keepers of private registry offices, having dealt with them for years, and who rely upon their judgment to select for them the class of men required. They pay fees for this service, and they would prefer to pursue the course they have followed for years. I am not surprised that the Government should have introduced the Bill, because unemployment is bad for everybody.

Mr. Thomson: Will the wiping out of the private registry offices improve the position of the people looking for work? It will not provide any more employment.

Mr. GEORGE: It cannot provide any more employment, but if the Government bureau is properly organised, the officials will know exactly where employment is offering in any part of the State.

Mr. Thomson: You can ascertain that today.

Mr. GEORGE: Perhaps so. I am not going to object to an extension of the work that can be done by the Government bureau.

Mr. Thomson: No one has any objection to that.

Mr. GEORGE: No one can have any objection to it. The Bill will give the Government power to improve the system at present in vogue, and if it does that, it will achieve something from which the State will certainly benefit. As to that portion of the Bill I have no objection, but I see many objections to knocking certain people out of the business and giving them nothing in return for it. Whether they are entitled to compensation is a question that might be debated, but instead of that question being raised, I should like the Government to permit them to carry on their work on a scale of fees fixed by the Minister in such a way that evasion will be impossible. If that were done, it would be satisfactory.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [6.5]: I do not hold a brief for the 11 private registry offices that have been mentioned, and perhaps I would not have made any remarks on the second reading of the Bill but for the speech of the member for Leederville (Mr. Millington). He emphasised at various stages that the machinery had become obsolete and should be scrapped. I do not know on what he based that statement. The original legislation was introduced in 1897 and amended in 1909, and perhaps the hon. member considers that that makes it obsolete. I fail to see why we should amend an Act on that ground. The State Labour Bureau has been operating for a good many years. I think it was started under the Charities Department early in the history of the Forrest Government. I do not think the bureau is working under an Act of Parliament, but this measure has been extended to embrace it. The Government agency gives free service: anyone can go there without paying a penny and is supposed to get a reasonable chance of obtaining fair employment. There are private agencies that charge fees to both the employer and the employee, and still the Government bureau cannot compete with them after all its years of experience. I can only assume that this Bill has been introduced in order to wipe out the private agencies, and thus enable the State Labour Bureau to be made successful. It seems that the bureau, as with other State industries,

must have a monopoly or it cannot compete with private enterprise. I have heard that the private agencies have not acted correctly towards either the employer or employee at times, but I do not think they can be as bad as has been depicted during this debate. There have been arguments across the floor of the House as to what the State bureau did and what it did not do. Ministers and Honorary Ministers have been denying certain statements. I do not know whether the statement I am about to give is true, but it appeared in the "West Australian" a few weeks ago—

Unemployment and unionism—Members of the committee of the unemployed (Messrs. W. Lee, C. Cox, and J. Gaunt) called at the office of the "West Australian" on Saturday and complained of the effect of the strict application of the policy of preference to unionists in the distribution of employment on Government work. They instanced the case of a man, with 10 years naval and four years active military service to his credit, who had been out of work for 10 weeks. Because he had no union ticket he had been debarred from getting a job through the State Labour Bureau, in spite of the fact that his name had been called out three times within the past fortnight. They said that as many of the unemployed had been out of work for some time, and in some cases had been previously employed in rural work not covered by a trade union, it was impossible for them to have union tickets.

I give that to the House as it appeared in the Press.

Mr. Thomson: That was the paragraph I was trying to find.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That is a statement by the unemployed to the "West Australian." It is not the statement of a Minister.

Mr. Thomson: But Mr. Hickey made a statement.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Not the statement you said he made.

The Minister for Lands: The member for Mt. Margaret knows that the statement in that paragraph is not correct because all the migrants coming here have been started in the country.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I read the statement in order to give Ministers an opportunity to reply to it.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Is not that a statement by the unemployed to the "West Australian"?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Then I have yet to learn that the "West Australian" is a Minister.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Here is another statement in the form of a letter sent to the editor of the "West Australian"—

The statements concerning unions and unemployed in the "West Australian" of September 21 are correct, although I personally have not been selected by the State Labour Bureau for employment though registered. The bureau, however, gave me definitely to understand that no man would be taken on any Government works unless a union member. After receiving this information, I deemed it wise, as I am married and helping to support my mother, to join a union at once. On interviewing the secretary of the A.W.U., I was surprised to learn that in no circumstances whatever would they enrol new members until (I understood) the whole of the union members now unemployed were absorbed. I next tried the M.C.W., meeting with the same answer. D. Fagg, 74 Armagh-street, Victoria Park.

The Minister for Lands: What is the M.C.W.?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I suppose it means municipal corporation workers.

The Minister for Works: There is no such union.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Statements of that description are read and discussed by the public and, if they are untrue, the Minister should take the opportunity to deny them.

The Minister for Works: We have done so over and over again.

The Minister for Lands: If we denied every published statement that is untrue, we would be doing nothing else.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I can give you the author of most of those statements and also of the deputation to the "West Australian." It was Mr. Whitbread, a communist in this city, who tried to do his damndest to spoil Labour.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not know any of those people who formed the deputation, nor have I spoken with any of them whether communists, industrialists, or anything else.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Well, I do know.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I have spoken with men I have known for years, genuine men and members of organisations, for whom I have tried to get work, but I have not had any opportunity to discuss any of the difficulties with other unemployed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: At the tea adjournment I was pointing out that these agencies which the Bill seeks to remove were doing some service, and that it was one with which

the State Labour Bureau could not compete. The bureau is free to anyone who likes to apply to it either for employment or for some employee. People can get free advice there. They prefer, however, to go to the firms to whom they have to pay fees. That is proof that the State bureau has up to the present not fulfilled its functions as they should have been fulfilled. I do not know whether the Bill will make the bureau any more vigilant, more attractive, or more capable of carrying out its functions than has been the case in the past. It has been in existence for over 30 years, but notwithstanding that, private firms have come into existence. We are now asked to wipe out the 11 agencies, and to give the State bureau a monopoly of the business. I do not feel disposed, unless some valid arguments are brought forward, to support anything of that kind. I am not going to debate the interjections that have been made with reference to legislation putting people out of action, or with reference to persons being put out of employment when some big works are completed. In the case of works of this nature, people are put out of employment because the works are completed. It is still open to them to find similar work or some other class of work elsewhere in the State. In the case of the employment agencies, it is intended to wipe them out altogether. No valid reason has been advanced for this action. These firms have been able to survive against an institution which is giving its services free, but has failed to compete with them. I cannot see any reason for supporting the Bill.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [7.35]: The debate would have been more interesting had it been taken on general lines, indicating that this Bill amounts to an increase in the State enterprises and an intrusion upon the capitalistic system. True, that is a very old saw. I often feel as I sit in the Chamber that it would be of great advantage to the House if during the term of this Parliament an opportunity had been afforded for a full-dress debate upon the question. This small instance is quite a harmless one in itself. It is hard for me to oppose a simple move of this sort to make one modern system of employment agencies, as opposed to having seven or eight struggling concerns that may be badly housed and working under great difficulties. It is easy to argue on the lines

that a single concern would be better, and it is therefore difficult for me to oppose it. The only way I can deal with the matter is that it is one of the many instances that have been afforded during the last 20 years of private enterprise being superseded by State enterprises. As these concerns are superseded it is argued by those who oppose State enterprises that the general efficiency drops. In this case it has been shown that there is an institution now running that cannot get the business although it gives its services free. I know it is hardly fair to leave it at that without giving reasons why the State bureau has not been a success. I am told the reason is that many employers and employees are rather frightened of it, and prefer to go to a private firm whilst one exists. It may be argued that if these private firms disappear, the public will have no choice but to deal with this one concern, and that in time it may meet with some success. It occurs to me that the only way to dispute the matter is to voice the ordinary protests of those who are opposed to an extension of State enterprises. The Premier might have considered calling this bureau a board. I heard him say not long ago that there were too many State enterprises, and that there was too much for Ministers to do, and that it was time that matters of local concern were run locally.

Mr. Lutey: Matters of local utility.

MR. NORTH: It is trivial and petty to have to fight this measure purely on the ground that the State bureau is not as satisfactory as it might be. Probably it will be more satisfactory if in the future there is one institution doing the work, when there is not room for a number of small ones to do it. It is, however, sufficient for us on this side of the House to oppose the Bill on the ground that it is one more inroad into that free competition which has made so many countries, where this appertains, successful in business. It is no use anyone holding those views being dogmatic about them. I never have felt when debating the question of the capitalistic system against State enterprises that I am right. It is only that I feel that these views are more acceptable to me. I cannot see how we shall know for another 20 or 30 years what will be the effect of the trial that the present Government and the great movement in Australia are making. This is one instance of many where it is said that because there are difficulties and evils,

and possibly cases of extortion, we should supersede the existing system of competition by a State concern. I should like to remind members of the experience of other State concerns. How can we shut our eyes to the fact that although on many occasions State concerns start under good auspices, in the course of years they become less efficient, politically coasty. It then becomes necessary for other means to be adopted. Perhaps a Commission or a committee of inquiry is appointed and then some expert is brought from overseas to put things right for a few years, and so history repeats itself. There are other means of dealing with the evils which the Minister has pointed out. I refer to the evil that certain firms have overcharged or have done some other mischief. This goes to the root of the great question that is at issue between the two sides of this House. Surely it is reasonable to suggest that rather than form a State concern, as we have done in other matters, we should regulate this particular industry, prescribe the fees to be charged, and the general conditions under which it should be run. Another whisper is heard in connection with the subject, namely that if this State enterprise is launched and the firms are closed down, it may have the effect of leaving swinging in the air those who do not belong to any union. I am told that this will be the case. So long as it is possible for a man to join some union there can be no objection to the Bill from that point of view. I can, however, see the position where a man may go round from one union to another and still be unable to gain admittance to any one of them. If that is the position and this State organisation is started, we must come to the point when many men cannot get a job. If it is made possible for every man in the country to join a union, these remarks will have no application, and I am glad to hear the Minister for Works say that this is so. I understand it is possible for a man to go to different unions, and be refused admittance by all of them.

Mr. Thomson: That is according to a statement read by the member for Mt. Margaret.

Mr. NORTH: If these inroads into private enterprise are to be made by State concerns, we must have the position for many years to come when there will be thousands of persons who cannot get into unions, and who will be available for employment only if there are no unionists

awaiting employment at the bureau. I should like to hear more from the Minister on the subject.

The Minister for Works: I have dealt with that matter so often that I am tired of repeating it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have never heard it.

The Minister for Works: I know what your game is.

Mr. NORTH: I was wondering whether it would be possible for the Arbitration Act Amendment Bill to include the right of consumers to form a consumers' union. If that could be done all would be well. Anyone who then applied to the State bureau for employment would be sure to get an engagement in his turn. There might also be other great advantages derived from such a union. As a rule, when we have competition between the State and private firms, the State is able by reason of its greater purchasing power to undermine and compete against the private firm in the matter of price. In this particular case no fees are charged.

Hon. G. Taylor: And still they cannot hold their own.

Mr. NORTH: It appears that members of the public, because of some prejudice or their experience in the past, have a horror of the bureau and will not patronise it. For these reasons I feel it my duty to oppose the Bill. It may be said there is no reason why the State should not run this concern. But I cannot see why it should go further and deny a living to the few people who are engaged in this particular business, merely because it is stated that they have imposed heavy charges which are said to have been unfair to the workers in certain specified instances.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [7.45]: We have heard numerous reasons for the introduction of the Bill. One of them is that there shall be an efficient machine for the employment of labour. Another is that private employment bureaux may be put out of action. It seems to me that yet another reason is to put into operation the Labour Party's plank for the socialisation of industry; and in this connection I give the Labour Party credit for having the courage of their convictions. The socialisation of industry can only be attained through the destruction of the present system.

The Premier: This would be an immense stride towards that.

Mr. LINDSAY: One means towards socialisation of industry would be to get job control. That is the reason for the introduction of the Bill. As regards effective machinery for the employment of labour, we have to-day the State Labour Bureau in operation. Though it does not operate under any Act, yet it does operate. If there is reason for its extension, I fail to see why it cannot be extended. Numbers of people get employment through the State Labour Bureau without paying any fee, and quite a number of employers send to the State Labour Bureau for employees. On the other hand, quite a number of employers do not do so. I used to do it, but have not done it for years because I found that the State Labour Bureau was more concerned to send people out of Perth to jobs than to ascertain whether a man was competent for the job he was being sent to. Private labour bureaux get their living by picking the right class of man. If a private employment broker does not send the right class of man, the employer will not apply to that bureau again. The member for Leederville (Mr. Millington) says this proposed monopoly is required in order that there may be a register of unemployed in the State. But the State Labour Bureau now keeps a register of unemployed applying there, and the private bureaux keep similar registers. That has to be done under the Employment Brokers Act. Therefore the Bill is not needed from that aspect. Further, the Employment Brokers Act lays down that the scale of fees charged by a private bureau must be posted up in the office, and that the employer and the employee shall each pay half the fee. If the private bureaux are charging too much, the matter should be looked into. If what we are told is correct, the employees are paying fees, and the employers are paying nothing. I know that I have been called upon by private employment bureaux to pay fees and have paid them. So far in the debate the whole question has been as to the unemployed and as to the private employment brokers. Another aspect, one which appeals to me, is that of those who employ labour. The Minister for Works in introducing the Bill told us about the Geneva Convention and about what was being done in other countries, but I have yet to learn that any other country has done more than Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: I gave you the names of the countries.

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes, but the Minister did not say that any other country had abolished private labour bureaux.

The Minister for Works: I gave the names of countries which have done so.

Mr. LINDSAY: So far as I can gather, no country has passed legislation definitely declaring that everyone should be employed through a State labour exchange. The Minister read a good deal from files to show what a terrible man the employer of labour is. But there are two sides to every question. The Minister told us that the Inspector of Factories was the officer who wrote comments on the files. The Minister took his information from those files.

The Minister for Works: Some of the information came from the Police Department.

Mr. LINDSAY: To show that there are two sides to this question, I will relate an experience I had with the State Labour Bureau. Probably I am described on the files as a terrible employer. I sent to the State Labour Bureau for a farm hand at a reasonable wage. The bureau sent a man. However, he was not a man at all. He had never worked in his life, and never intended to work. Yet I was forced to pay that man's railway fare and to keep him. Once a man gets on the job, one has to keep him for a week or give him a week's pay. I did not keep this man the week; I preferred to give him a week's pay and send him off. I then wrote to the State Labour Bureau saying that I had asked for a farm hand, and that the man sent was more suitable for a lady's maid. Doubtless that man, on his return to Perth, gave me a very bad character as an employer. If he had been a member of a union and had reported me to the union secretary, probably I would have been black-listed. An employer does not always get good men, even though he treats his employees well. There are bad employees as well as bad employers. Members opposite always overlook that fact. Let me give another instance. I took up a young fellow from Fremantle to my farm. The next morning I had to go away on some semi-public business. I gave the young fellow a job to do, and when I came home that night I found he had not started it. Instead of doing the job he had taken a packet of cartridges and gone shooting. The next morning at breakfast I said to him, "What about it?" He said, "I don't think I'll start to-day." I said, "Pack

your swag." He went to the police about the matter, and I daresay the police files report what a terrible man I am.

The Premier: In confidence I may tell you that it was from a file referring to you the Minister for Works quoted.

Mr. LINDSAY: This young fellow of 21 had said to me that he did not want to leave Fremantle because of his sister. He asked me could I find a job on the farm for his sister. I got my wife to undertake to employ the girl.

The Premier: Was the girl his sister?

Mr. LINDSAY: That's just the point; she was not his sister. If the girl had come on the farm, seeing that this young fellow was not her brother at all, I might have got into trouble over it.

Mr. Panton: You ran a bit of a risk.

Mr. LINDSAY: My reason for mentioning these cases is to counteract the statements of the Minister for Works. As I am so well known in the country, any man who gets stranded in my district is sent to me. If I see a man stiff I always give him a week's work. Frequently, however, I prefer to give a week's pay and let him go, simply because he is not able to earn his cut. The point about the Bill that strikes me most is that all the employers will have to go to the State Labour Bureau. We have been told in this House by Ministers that men employed on Government jobs must join the union within a fortnight, during the second week, or else they will not be allowed to remain on the job.

Mr. Marshall: After the second pay.

Mr. LINDSAY: It amounts to the State Labour Bureau being used as a means of organising labour unions.

The Minister for Works: The State Labour Bureau has nothing to do with it.

Mr. LINDSAY: But the unemployed must go there.

The Minister for Works: The State Labour Bureau has lost sight of a man by the time he gets his second pay.

Mr. LINDSAY: But a man is not allowed to go on a job unless he agrees to join the union. I do not say the Minister for Works would do it, but I say there is a means by which the labour unions can use the State Labour Bureau as a means of organising. They can have an organiser at the bureau, and he will tell an applicant, "That job is no good, it is not the standard wage," or, "That employer is no good: a man went there last week and was sacked." Unionism is here, and

it should be here. I have no objection whatever to unionism. But I cannot agree with the idea of utilising the State Labour Bureau to force people into unions. As regards the efficient organisation of employment, I have not heard one argument advanced that the Bill would operate in that direction. The Ugly Men have done a great deal of organising with a view to placing migrants. They send representatives through the country for that purpose. The Ugly Men charge no fee.

The Minister for Works: Theirs is a semi-Government institution.

Mr. LINDSAY: We know that in practically every country town there is a Government official who assists the State Labour Bureau. If there is work in the district, he notifies the bureau accordingly. But under this Bill everybody is to be marshalled into the one department, employers and employees alike. The employers will have to send to that department for men. There is a feeling in the country districts that we do not get the best deal from the State Labour Bureau. We have read in the newspapers, though I do not say it is correct, that each and every name on the roll is called, and that every man has to take the next job offering; that is, if the man wants a job. I know many men do not want jobs on farms if they can possibly avoid taking them. The only alternative or loophole that I can see for the employer is to advertise for men in the newspapers. No doubt some members of this House will not object to that. However, a time may come when employers will even be prohibited from advertising for men. Those are my views on the Bill. If improvements with regard to employment bureaux are necessary, they can be effected by amending the existing Act. If all we are told about present abuses is correct, and if those abuses have been known to the Minister for Works and other Ministers, it is strange that the Government should have allowed the present legislation to exist for so long without making any attempt to amend it. I am not prepared to believe the statements made about the wickedness of the private employment brokers. If they were as bad as they have been painted, the Chief Inspector of Factories would have complained long ago and their licenses would have been taken away. I agree with the member for Kaitangia (Mr. Thomson) that the Act should be so amended as to require the employer, not the employee, to pay the broker's fee. The

reason why we favour the private agencies is that they are there to engage the class of man one wants. That is their job and they are efficient at it. I am not prepared to say that the State Labour Bureau is equally satisfactory.

Mr. Withers: Are the private agencies always so satisfactory?

Mr. LINDSAY: Not even the hon. member is always satisfactory. I shall oppose the second reading.

MR. C. P. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [8.2]: I want to voice my objection to the principle underlying the Bill, more particularly as it applies to rural employment. Through the private agencies we can obtain just the man or woman we want for work in the country, but under the Bill the first man to come along to the exchange in the morning will be the man sent out to the job. That has happened at the State Labour Bureau and has given great dissatisfaction in country districts. That in itself is sufficient to induce me to oppose the Bill. Again, I have yet to learn that there has been any serious complaint about the operations of the existing private agencies, although it may be that some have indulged in a little sharp practice in the collection of fees. The existing Act with its amendments is quite sufficient to overcome that difficulty. There has been no demand for the Bill either from the worker or from the rural employer. If the Bill were restricted to the metropolitan area I should have no objection to it, but under it we shall not be able to get satisfactory men for country work. I agree with the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) that there is more behind the Bill than appears on the surface, namely, that it embodies the principle of forcing rural workers under the log of the A.W.U. In the eastern districts we have shown that we are not opposed to certain branches of industry coming under a log, but generally speaking rural work cannot be brought under any rigid set of conditions because of the diversity of the jobs and of the circumstances in which they have to be carried out. I am not opposed to the A.W.U. bringing under their respective logs as many shearers and chaffcutters and other specialised workers as may be practicable, but when the Minister attempts to force all classes of rural workers into the union, he is doing something prejudicial to indus-

try, and so I will not support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [8.5]: I have been hoping to hear from some of my friends opposite, but apparently they are not all unanimous in their attitude to the Bill.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The Bill expresses our opinions.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then I am very sorry for your opinions. If any subject is worthy of discussion it ought to be this subject, because of all subjects the employment of our people is surely the most important. As a rule the Minister for Works is not very pliable, but apparently the Geneva Convention has had a wonderful influence on him. He told us that sitting at the conference, considering the great labour question as it applied to the world, were a number of men of whom he knew one. He knew only one man at that convention.

The Minister for Works: I knew many more than one.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister mentioned only one.

The Minister for Works: No, I mentioned two from this State, and I knew many others.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He told us that Mr. Curtin was the Australian representative of the workers.

The Minister for Works: My knowledge is not confined to this State.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No indeed, it is very wide. If the Minister had known of any other person from Australia he would have mentioned the fact.

The Premier: There were two Western Australians there, Mr. Curtin and Mr. McNeil.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not think the Minister mentioned Mr. McNeil.

The Premier: Yes, he did.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: However, the Minister for Works was greatly influenced by that convention at Geneva whereas we on this side of the House cannot influence him at all. We can rave at him from 4.30 till midnight night after night and yet have no influence with him, although the Geneva Convention had a wonderful influence on him.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You see, sometimes the conference was right, whereas you on that side are never right and so you can have no influence.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I should be sorry to be right with the hon. member. What I object to is the way these Bills are introduced and the way we have to deal with them. Instead of trying to make it appear that every employer is a bad employer and the whole world upside down because employers are not doing their duty by the workers, we should be deploring the fact that there is insufficient employment for all our people. Yet Ministers come down here with measures that cause bother and trouble and irritation to the employers. The Bill before us is no exception to the rule. The Minister did not say that he objected to private employment brokers because of the work they do; he said he objected to them because of the charges they make.

The Minister for Works: I said the whole business was immoral.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, the member for Toodyay said that.

Mr. Marshall: He suggested the possibilities of it.

The Minister for Works: He produced the evidence.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister said the private employment brokers take one-half a week's wages from the worker and a similar amount from the employer. If they do, of course it is far too much. The Minister said the whole principle of having to pay for securing a job was immoral. It may be so, but after all no worker is compelled to go to a private broker for a job. As a matter of fact there are thousands of employers in this State who have never gone to any employment bureau, private or State, for their workers, but have always secured them for themselves.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The same thing will obtain after the Bill becomes law.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I want to know why, if the private employment brokers' charges are the only thing to complain of, it should be necessary to close them up. Men would not go there if the charges were too heavy.

The Premier: But if the employers go to private exchanges the men looking for work must go there also.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: By the same reasoning, if the men go to the State Labour Bureau the employers must go there too. I know something about the State Labour Bureau, for it was under the control of the Premier's Department for some time. I know that it is very well run and that the

staff do their best for everybody who goes there. Every employer knows that he can send there for a man without having to pay fees. Moreover, he knows that if a man be sent out from the State Labour Bureau his fare will be paid and so there will be no trouble about that for the employer. Naturally some workers prefer to go to a private agency because they feel they will there get a little better treatment since there are not so many men there in competition for a job. Then, too, as has been pointed out, the requirements of the employer are better understood by the private employment broker than they would be at the State Labour Bureau. Still, as I say, I know that the staff at the State Labour Bureau is a very capable one. I do not know why we should fear competition from private agencies or why they should be wiped out of existence. What is the reason for it? No good object will be served, there will be no more work in the State, no greater amount paid in wages than is paid to-day.

Mr. Thomson: But there will be another Government department.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, for we have the department now. I can see, of course, that there will be a good deal of trouble forced on the employer if the Bill becomes law. Instead of expressing our doubt as to the honesty of the employer, instead of all the time trying to make bad blood between employer and worker, we should be encouraging the employer to find increased employment. I cannot understand this continually expressed doubt as to the good intentions and honesty and decency of the men who find work for others. I myself have not had many men who have not been willing to work. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) seems to have been very unfortunate.

Mr. Marshall: I should say he was very lucky.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: My concern is that there should be work for people to do. Also I am concerned that the employer should not be put to unnecessary trouble. I do not know why the Minister has inserted in the Bill some of the clauses I find there. For instance, an employer will be required to send in a return to the Government Labour Bureau showing the men working for him and stating their occupation. I suppose the Minister will require him to state also the amount of wages paid in each

case, and when and how they are paid, and such other information that the Minister may determine to be necessary. Employers are not going to be bothered unnecessarily. Under the measure, if an employer took on a boy under 21 years of age for a day, two days or a week, he would have to include his name in the return. If the boy was only 15 years of age, the employer would probably be punished, as it would be an offence under the Act. Is all this sort of nonsense necessary?

The Minister for Works: Where is that made an offence under the Bill?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In one of the clauses.

The Minister for Works: You cannot see it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Can't I?

The Minister for Works: Then you can see more than is there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Probably the Minister has not read the Bill. I can quite picture the Minister issuing instructions for the preparation of the Bill something to this effect—"Wipe out these iniquitous private labour exchanges; let us establish one Government labour exchange; see that the employers are tickled up and are compelled to do something; put in something that will make them remember it." Of course, such a thing would be an offence under the measure. The Minister may treat it as a light matter, but all these things do deter employers. It is not always necessary, when a man is given work, that he should be put on. The member for Toodyay has told us that often in his own district he has given a man a week's employment in order to help him along. That often happens. We should not discourage an employer who is willing to do that. We should encourage the employer in every possible way, and should not endeavour by every means in our power to create difficulties for those who are willing to provide work. We have dealt with a great many Bills this session all drafted in the same way as this Bill is drafted. In almost every clause, and almost every line, the employer is treated with suspicion. This Bill cannot do any good to the workers of the country. It cannot save them any cost; it cannot help them along the road which is difficult enough as it is; and not a penn'orth of good can it do to any of them. On the other hand, it may do some harm. We would be very

much better engaged upon some real constructive work.

The Premier: Like that we were engaged on last night?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, even the discussion of last night.

The Premier: Constructive work!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, constructive work. I venture to say that the measure discussed last night, if given effect to, will do very much less harm to the people we are endeavouring to serve than will this Bill if it be passed into law. Yesterday everyone was keenly interested. I never knew the House to be so concerned at any time. It was quite an inspiring day and I really thought when listening to the debate that members on the Government side had at last awakened to their responsibility and had determined that they would no longer be led. From their attitude last night I expected, when this Bill came down, we would find the same independence expressed, and I still expect it when the Bill goes to a division. I think they were truly divided last night because they did express their true opinions. I hope they will display some semblance of independence to-day, when we come to vote on this Bill. Yesterday was a great day, not because we were discussing a great subject, but because for the first time members on the Government side displayed the independence that we all admire, an independence that had not previously been in evidence during this session. The Minister for Works trembles to-night for the fate of this Bill. I can see that he is afraid. The Minister should read the Bill before it is taken into Committee. Does not the Minister understand that under the Bill an employer will not be able to send to his agent in Perth to secure men for him? Does he know that that provision is made in the Bill? I believe that under this Bill pastoralists will not be able to arrange through their association for shearers to go out shearing. This is most important because arrangements have to be made for shearers to go from one station to another long before they leave Perth. Yet I do not believe the Pastoralists' Association would be able, in view of this measure, to engage shearers. I think the station owner would have to come here and make his own arrangements with the shearers. If a man at Albany wanted to engage a workman in

Perth, he would not be able to send to his agent in Perth to pick up a man for him.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Would not he deal through the local branch, as he does to-day?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Does the hon. member mean that a man at Albany, wishing to secure a workman in Perth, would have to join the union to which the workman belonged, before he could employ him?

Mr. A. Wansbrough: I meant the local branch of the labour bureau.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member will find that a union secretary could not be asked to do the work because he would be doing it for fee or reward. A union secretary could not pick up men even for another union.

The Minister for Works: You are sure to support that clause.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Yes, that is one clause on which we shall get your vote.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: After all, I think the Minister for Works must have had some hand in framing this Bill, because of that and one or two other clauses appearing in it. The Minister admits that only unionists are employed in the Government service, and he admits there is a concession that if a man is employed in a Government job, he must join the union within a reasonable time—when he draws his second pay. Failing that he must leave the Government job. That is entirely wrong. The Government hold office to administer affairs in the interests of the country and not of the unions. I am surprised to hear that that is the system. I was told by the unemployed that they could not get Government work because they had no union ticket. I am glad to hear that it is not necessary to have a ticket before they are employed. I was told they had to produce the ticket before being put on a Government job.

Mr. Hughes: They are all employed now.

Mr. Thomson: How long do they remain without tickets?

The Minister for Works: Not too long.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: A good number have remained a long time.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No one has a right to force any man into a union, and taxpayers have a right to get work in the country if there is work for any Government department. It is not right that the Government should use their power to

employ or sack in order to compel a man to take out a union ticket.

Mr. Panton: You set a bad precedent in the conscription campaign.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You compelled a man there to offer his life. It was a grand and wonderful thing! No independence then, not the slightest.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know what the conscription campaign has to do with preference to unionists.

Mr. Wilson: You voted for compulsory unionism on one occasion.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I believe I did, but it was a very clever thing that was done on that occasion. We got a majority against the question by tricking the hon. member and his friends.

Mr. Wilson: You helped me with the trick. At any rate I did not think you would stoop to a trick.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It was a rather clever move on the part of members on this side of the House to defeat the measure, and the fact that we voted where we did induced a majority of the House to vote in opposition to us, with the result that we carried our point. If I was the member for Collie and whip of the party, I should be ashamed to mention it. I hope that in future we shall approach a measure of this description with a desire to do good, and not with a desire to do good to one section and harm to some other section of the community, with the result that we may do harm to all. We have no right to make it difficult for people to find work, or to give people trouble that will produce no result. That is what will happen under this measure. Neither have we any right to say that the Government must have a monopoly of the right to run labour exchanges. It is ridiculous that we should be spending any time upon a measure of this description when there is so much more important work that we might well be engaged upon. I hope the Minister for Works will entertain for members sitting in opposition at least the same regard that he has for people who sat at the convention, and who came from China, Japan, I suppose South America, and other countries. If we can only influence him to the extent that members of the convention have influenced him, we might at least provide legislation that will do not a great deal of harm even if it does not do a great deal of good. When

the Bill reaches Committee, we shall show the Minister what we think of it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle—in reply) [8.29]: I am surprised at the silence of members of the Opposition regarding the aspect of the Bill bearing on the obligation of this Parliament to the League of Nations.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have not any obligations. We do what they say, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is only one advantage that the workers of the world can be said to have derived out of the great war. They endured the suffering while the war was in progress. It was held up to them that after the war a new world was to be opened up. Big promises were made to them as to the position they would occupy in subsequent years. Now we are told that this International Labour Conference, which has been set up under the Peace Treaty, is merely a debating society, some glorified institution whose decisions, arguments, functions or recommendations are to have no weight, and that this Parliament is under no obligation towards it. I should like the workers of this country clearly to understand that they are now being repudiated by those who while the war was on tramped the State, beat the big drums, flapped the flags, and in every part of the country made extravagant promises as to what they would do.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What rot!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They now say that this Parliament is under no obligation to the peace treaty. We are told by the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) that our responsibility ends with the submission of the Convention to the competent authority. So long as it is submitted in that way that is to be the end of it. He considers here is no further moral obligation.

Mr. Davy: I said there was a moral obligation to consider it, and to consider it deeply.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He said there was no legal obligation upon this Parliament to give effect to the decisions of the conference. We are to tell the workers that there was nothing in all the extravagant promises that were made while the war was on. We warned them that they would be repudiated afterwards, and we were held up to public ridicule and told that we were dis-

loyalists because we gave this warning. We told the workers that the promises that were being made to them would not be fulfilled. Now we come out into the light of day. The very men who on the platforms of this country made these promises are now repudiating the very organisation the nations who are in the treaty have set up. They hold out no hope of these promises being fulfilled.

Mr. Sampson: Who made that statement?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The statements were made by practically every member opposite, by the whole of the political forces of the country that are opposed to labour. They tramped the State from one end to the other making these promises. There will be no advantage to the workers of the world as the outcome of the war if the League of Nations cannot give it to them. They suffered privations, hunger, pain and penalties while the war was on, and they have suffered them ever since. There has now been set up an organisation that is supposed to give effect to the promises that were made to the workers as to what would accrue to them out of that bloody conflict. We are now told that we must not consider them, that they must be brushed aside.

Mr. Davy: Nothing of the sort. I said we should consider them very deeply.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not saying the hon. member went as far as that, but I do say that quite a number of speakers opposite have said so. The inference to be drawn from their speeches is that we are not to take the decisions of this body seriously. The Leader of the Opposition said by interjection that we should run our own business without interference from them. The member for West Perth went so far as to say that we should be content to wait until the more backward countries catch up to us.

Mr. Davy: I did not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I took down the words of the hon. member.

Mr. Davy: You are wrong. I said that the reason why Australia was backward might perhaps be explained by the fact that we felt we were still ahead of other countries.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am sorry if I have misinterpreted the statement of the hon. member, but I wrote down his words.

Mr. Davy: You wrote them down wrongly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I took them to mean that we were to be content to

wait until the more backward countries caught up.

Mr. Davy: You got it down wrongly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is an argument that those of us who have been charged with the responsibility of negotiating on behalf of the industrial unions of the country have had to meet for many years past. We were told that we were asking for impossible conditions, that it was useless for the workers of Australia to ask for a betterment in wages or working conditions while the rest of the world was so far behind. That has been a weight around our necks. It has dragged us backwards in many movements we have made to improve the position of the workers in Australia. It is realised by the Governments of the world that the workers' position has now become more dangerous than it was before. We know that to-day there are groups of English capitalists establishing organisations of industry in China and in India, shifting their enterprises from their own land, and establishing them there because of the cheap labour that is available, and because they get away from the industrial laws and the hampering and restrictive legislation passed by their Governments. People were told during the war that England was to be made a country fit for heroes to live in. To-day those heroes are walking the streets unemployed and receiving doles, while the captains of industry are establishing themselves in other countries where there is cheap labour and where there are no industrial laws. This is not confined to English capitalists, but it was the recognition of this happening that caused the International Labour Conference to be set up with the idea of trying to level up the backward nations, and make competition between the nations a little more even than it is to-day. I should be sorry to take the view that we are to stand still until these backward nations catch up to Australia. I am indeed grieved and surprised to find the way in which the Bill has been received by members opposite. I thought they would be the last to wipe aside the obligations that are cast upon this Parliament, which is a part of the League of Nations. If all the decisions of that conference are to be treated in that manner, and we are to be told that there is no legal or moral obligation upon us to give them serious consideration, I want to know why this Continent is being taxed to keep that body

in existence. Why are we called upon to send three delegates each year from Australia, at big expense, to take part in the conventions and all the ramifications of that body, which now extend throughout most of the countries of the world? Australia has to pay her share of the expense, and has to send these delegates away each year. And yet we are told we ought to brush these decisions aside and not give them serious consideration. Where are all these ultra loyalists? Where are those men who talk about keeping the British Empire intact? If this is not an attack upon the British Empire, when they say that no matter what Britain's status is amongst the League of Nations, to what extent she has to hold her head up in order to occupy the honourable position that history has shown her to possess, I do not know what it is. It has to be demonstrated throughout the world that Australia is a defaulting nation, that we recognise no obligation on our part to give effect to the principles laid down by the International Labour Conference. It is a very sorry look-out for us. These people have been prone to prattle about their loyalty and their faith in the British Empire, and to accuse others of being disloyal; of wanting to disrupt the Empire. Those people should not hold up their heads again. I want the workers to understand the action of members of this House. No doubt their position will be reflected elsewhere. Just now while there is so much loyalty being talked about, it is well that the people should know how much attention is given to the important undertakings that are entered into by the Governments on behalf of the people of this nation. The decisions of the conference are to be repudiated, not to be recognised, and the workers are to be told that they are not to gain any advantage from the League of Nations, that the promises made are not to be fulfilled and that no further discussion is desired upon the matter. They are to be told that this is all a mere scrap of paper.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They want work and wages, not scraps of paper.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The other night I gave the House a list of the different countries that have given effect to this convention. And yet we are told that there is something suspicious about the move of the Government in this matter, that some insidious attack is being made upon the freedom of certain citizens, that there is a move to use the functions of Government to build up trade unions. The decisions of Geneva are

to be wiped aside as being of no importance. Perhaps it is thought the Geneva Conference had behind it the building up of the A.W.U. in Perth.

Mr. Thomson: Perhaps they had behind it the idea of wiping out registry offices in Perth.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One of the ideas was to close down all the private registry offices in the world. Is it any use my reading out article after article which has been laid down by that convention, and then for the member for Katanning to ask me whether this was done or not? I read out an article which set out that the private registry offices of the world were to be abolished at the first opportunity. This was the recommendation of all the nations that were a party to the league. When we suggest it here, members opposite smile, and say that there is some insidious move behind it on the part of Trades Hall in Perth, in order to undermine the freedom of our citizens. We are not to take all this seriously, but to repudiate the honourable undertakings that were given to the workers.

Mr. Davy: Do you suggest we should not discuss this Bill?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. George: You are scolding us enough over it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am scolding members opposite for saying that the whole thing is to be repudiated, and that there is no moral obligation upon us to carry it out.

Mr. George: I did not say anything like it. I say you have no right to scold the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am scolding members opposite, as I have a perfect right to do, and I shall continue to do so.

Mr. Lindsay: We do not mind the scolding.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am enjoying it, too.

Mr. Thomson: So are we.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is argued that this legislation is depriving someone of his liberty. That phase of the matter was surely considered at Geneva, where representatives from the other nations were all present. It is not merely a question of 14 private registry offices in this State being abolished; it is a question of all the private registry offices being abolished in those

countries which have subscribed to the articles of the League of Nations.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Let us do our own thinking in our own way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Leader of the Opposition repudiates every obligation of every description. He says we are to do our own thinking.

Mr. George: We claim the right to our own independence.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He says we are not to give the matter any consideration at all.

Mr. Davy: What is the use of debating the Bill if you say we should be content to accept any of the conventions?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is a considerable moral obligation cast upon the Parliaments of all the countries which make up the League of Nations to give effect to these decisions.

Mr. Davy: Where do you get that from?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: From the articles.

Mr. Davy: It says that the obligation is to submit it to their competent authority for acceptance or rejection.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not saying that every nation has got to accept verbatim all that is put up to it. I am not saying that with regard to either of the Bills I have submitted.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not setting up that principle. I am not going as far as that, particularly in regard to day baking. I am not asking for the abolition of the baking of pastry or of confectionary at night, as set out in the convention.

Mr. Davy: As soon as you admit that we have not to accept this literally where are you to draw the line.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course we do not accept it literally.

Mr. Davy: But where do you draw the line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am putting forward my position. I am setting out in the Bill where I think the line should be drawn.

Mr. Davy: Surely we are entitled to an opinion where the line should be drawn.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member wants to draw the line right across the face of the Bill, deleting it altogether.

He wants to draw a great black smudge, wiping the whole Bill out.

Mr. Davy: No.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member will not admit the principle of the Bill in any respect whatever. That is the objection I am taking. Not one member opposite has spoken without condemning the very principle of the Bill.

Mr. Davy: That is not so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is a fact.

Mr. Davy: No.

Mr. SPEAKER: This continual interruption must not take place. The Minister is replying to the debate. New matter is introduced by interjections, and that in itself is disorderly. Hon. members know that interjections are at all times disorderly, and are permissible only on rare occasions for the eliciting of further information or the clearing up of a point.

Mr. George: Surely, Sir, there are some—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has no point of order.

Mr. George: I have plenty of points, but I do not know how to put them.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must listen in silence, and allow the debate to proceed in an orderly manner.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Practically every Bill enacted by Parliament affects the living of somebody. If a railway is constructed, someone's living is taken away. Even the control of traffic means depriving someone of his living. It cannot be argued that in this respect the present Bill is unique. Other countries have not all abolished the private registry offices. In some countries a time limit has been given. In other countries it is provided that persons at present holding licenses as employment brokers shall be permitted to continue, but that no new licenses shall be granted. From that aspect I am prepared to discuss the matter. I say that in any case at least 12 months' notice will be given. The matter is open for discussion as to how far we should go. The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) stated that unemployed were not allowed to get work until they obtained a union ticket. The hon. member first of all accused a Minister of having made that statement, but when the Press cutting was read it was clearly shown that the statement

came from the unemployed. There is absolutely no truth in the assertion.

Mr. Thomson: Did you state that you make it a rule that only unionists shall be employed on Government works?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will explain the position as I have explained it often. The Government have given preference of employment to unionists throughout Government employment, and have allowed those Government employees who are not once to unionists again. The second pay day day to become members of an organisation.

Mr. Thomson: And otherwise they have to get out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Why should not they?

Mr. George: Why should they?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not want to go into the argument as to preference to unionists again. The second pay day may be a week ahead, or a month, or even two months where payment is made monthly. Such men are given up to the second pay to become members of an organisation, and surely that is long enough.

Mr. Thomson: You use your position as a Minister to compel men to become unionists.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. Thomson: That is all I want.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That policy was put before the people, and was endorsed by them; and as long as the Government remain in office, that policy will be observed. I wish to emphasise that that preference applies only to Government work, and that we have not instructed the State Labour Bureau to observe that principle at all when engaging men for private employers.

Mr. Thomson: That is a difference without a distinction.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Obviously, the hon. member does not want an explanation.

Mr. George: You have said quite enough.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have said enough to show that the Government are living up to the promises they gave to the people who sent them here. What the registration of the A.W.U. can possibly have to do with this Bill passes my comprehension. It is absolutely beyond any flight of imagination that I am capable of. I utterly fail to see how there can be any con-

nection whatever between the two things. There are hundreds of unions—for the moment I forget how many—registered with the Arbitration Court. At some time or other some of the members of each of those unions find employment through the State Labour Bureau. Yet it is contended that the registration of one union, provided for under another Bill now before the House, has something to do with this measure. I suppose the League of Nations when sitting in Geneva had that union in their minds! I suppose the delegates from all the nations of the earth, when sitting at Geneva, entered into a conspiracy with me here in Perth in order to secure this particular registration of the A.W.U. and thus obtain control of the State Labour Bureau in Stirling-street! I suppose that is the result of some insidious propaganda I have been carrying on through all the nations and the governments by means of the employers' representatives! I have had them all in the bag, and have dictated to them what they must do! I have manipulated the Geneva conference gathered from the four corners of the earth! What kind of ridiculous nonsense is that to submit for the consideration of Parliament?

Mr. Thomson: I am game to bet it is pretty right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Are we to take it that the hon. member seriously believes that? Then the argument is advanced that by passing this Bill we shall be taking away the living of the private employment brokers. That, undoubtedly, is one object of the Bill and undoubtedly was one object of the Geneva conference. The whole principle of paying in order to obtain work is, as I have said, recognised to be immoral.

Mr. Thomson: Did I not say I was in favour of the employers paying?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is just as immoral for the employers to pay as it is for the workers to pay. That being recognised by the nations, the conference recommended the Parliaments of the countries represented to abolish private employment agencies at the first opportunity.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: One has to pay to get work now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But one has not to pay half a week's wages before getting a job. After one gets a job the employment broker prays that one may lose it as speedily as possible in order that there may be another vacancy to fill and so another fee to collect. The private employ-

ment brokers want to get a man out of his job as quickly as they can. It is all "bunts" to them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What blackguards they are!

Mr. Davy: How can they get a man out of his job?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I am prepared to give the hon. member a couple of instances privately.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Let the hon. member move about amongst the institutions in this State and he will find out how it is done. On the other hand, nothing whatever is said about the rights of hundreds and even thousands of young girls who seek employment, and who are entitled to obtain it without being charged a fee. Every civilised being is similarly entitled. But nothing is said about that aspect by hon. members opposite. An immense deal, on the other hand, is said about 14 people who hold licenses as employment brokers.

Mr. Thomson: Did I not say distinctly that I was in favour—

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member to keep order. He is the leader of a party, and he knows that interruptions are disorderly. I would ask him to read Standing Order 148.

Mr. Thomson: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will resume his seat.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdaie) referred to the case of two ladies who are carrying on an employment agency. He said that if I knew the particulars, I would not have cited the case. However, I have full reports from the inspectors. The hon. member seems to have missed the point, which was that the advertisements published by that agency contained a statement that employees were selected by a practical man, whereas the agency was run by two women, with no man there. The objectionable feature of the case was that employers were led to believe that employees would be selected by a practical man with an understanding of the work. It is the deceit that is objected to. There is no objection to the women themselves.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why cannot you wipe them out without abusing them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not abusing them. I have, however, to give a reason why I want them abolished. It is

no use asking Parliament to do things unless reasons are given. Had I wanted to be abusive, I could have been so; but I have merely stated facts. My endeavour is to state facts just as I find them, and to leave the matter for the House to decide. Then it was argued by members opposite that the department should have taken action if excessive fees were charged. But there is no legal power to take action for the charging of excessive fees. The law does not fix the fees. The law merely states that the same fee shall be charged to the employer as is charged to the employee. It has been contended that the department should have prosecuted if they knew that fees were not being charged to employers. Now, members opposite have been in possession of the Government benches for a period of eight or nine years, and report after report was made to them on this matter, and yet in not one instance did they prosecute. I have here the reason why prosecutions have not been undertaken. This is the opinion of Dr. Stow, the Crown Solicitor—

If it can be shown that there is an arrangement with the employer that the charges against him will not be pressed, then the broker can be prosecuted for a breach of the Act, but the mere fact that the broker does not press for payment because he thinks that to take that course would do him more harm than good, is not sufficient to render him liable for a breach of the Act.

That was the Crown Solicitor's opinion, given to the previous Government in 1919. Even the previous Government saw that it was no use proceeding under the Act, there being so many loopholes that it was, and still is, almost impossible to prove a case. As against the provision in some of the other Acts, I have greatly modified the clause providing for a return by the employers, for I saw the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition. I had dreamed of a machine being created under which we could have kept our finger on the pulse of the labour market each year. This State, more than any other State, suffers from fluctuations of employment. With seasonal occupations it is most difficult to provide against unemployment occurring at certain periods of the year. If we could have got a census of the employment in each industry in each district for each month of the year, it would have been possible to meet the bad time that comes to us for two or three months in every year, and so direct employment from one industry to another

as to avert serious unemployment. That was the idea in asking for that information. While I am not here to say that the State Labour Bureau has done all I had hoped it would do and which, I suppose, its founders hoped it would do, yet I am not going to admit it has not been as successful as the private agencies. Although not possessed of the exact figures, I think I am safe in saying that the State Labour Bureau places as many in employment as do all the private agencies put together. Moreover, I think that for every complaint made against the State Labour Bureau there will be found at least two or three complaints against the private agencies. I hope the suspicion that there is in the Bill anything likely to regulate admission to unions will be dismissed entirely. The statement read out by the member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) that certain individuals were refused admission to the A.W.U. was entirely without foundation. The hon. member, with his experience, must know that one does not have to apply to the A.W.U. for admission; one simply goes to an agent of the union and buys a ticket.

Mr. Marshall: Usually the agent comes to you and sells a ticket.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The A.W.U. is the one outstanding union that has no election to membership. It is clear that the statement read here to-night was written with ulterior motives. The writer was anonymous. Yet we are asked to take a note of the statement and reply to it! When very much younger I gave so much time to replying to anonymous newspaper writers that I have since determined to take no notice whatever of such writers.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Minister is not accusing me of having made a misstatement?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, but the hon. member, with his experience, must be aware that there is no election to the A.W.U., that all one has to do is to buy a ticket. Whoever wrote that article to the newspaper stating that he had been refused admission to the union must know how far it is from the truth. It is all part of the propaganda instituted to discredit the trades union movement, and it has a certain political significance as well. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) said he understood that at the State Labour Bureau the applicants for work were taken

in the order listed and sent out to engagements. Does he not know that time after time, while the unemployed agitation was on, the Government were asked to authorise that system, but declined to do it. The proposition was too ridiculous. It might be that a navy was asked for, and that the next man on the list was a weakling, totally unfitted for the work; yet because he was next on the list he was to be sent out as a navy, or perhaps as a farm hand. We declined to listen to the proposition. The hon. member must know that the unemployed at Fremantle went on strike because the Government would not agree to that proposal. I hope I have said enough to convince members that there is no foundation whatever for the suspicion that there is underlying the Bill any ulterior motive. The object of the Bill is to cater for the unemployed who, surely, deserve the best consideration and assistance of every member of the House. It is the function of Parliament to live up to the undertakings given while the war was raging. We as a country have pledged our credit and our honour to live up to the terms submitted to us from the International Labour Office, and so long as we remain a party to the League of Nations the obligation is on us to do justice to those terms.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	22
Noes	..	..	..	..	8
					—
Majority for	..	..	..	..	14
					—

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Collier	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Davy	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Heron	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Withers
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Kennedy	(Teller.)
Mr. Lamond	

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Thomson
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. North	Mr. Lindsay
Mr. Sampson	(Teller.)
Mr. Taylor	

PAIRS.

AYES.

Mr. Chesson
Miss Holman
Mr. Lambert
Mr. Millington
Mr. Troy
Mr. Willcock

NOES.

Mr. Richardson
Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Mann
Mr. Griffiths
Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Denton

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Repeal:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister ought to postpone this clause until we have dealt with the other clauses. He himself said he would allow a year's notice to the private employment agencies, so it would be inadvisable to repeal the existing Acts.

The Minister for Works: The Bill will not come into operation until proclaimed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Minister is wise he will postpone the clause until we have dealt with the other clauses, for we are certainly going to object to some of them. If we agree to the repeal of these Acts, it will be useless to oppose the other clauses to which we take exception.

The Minister for Works: This measure will not come into operation until it is proclaimed, which may be 12 months.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then these Acts should not be repealed if this measure is not likely to be proclaimed for 12 months.

The Premier: There have been Acts that have not come into operation for years—the Miners' Phthisis Act.

Mr. Davy: And the Weights and Measures Act.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Miners' Phthisis Act was contingent upon the Federal authority doing certain things that have been done only recently. Even the Minister might change his mind within the space of 12 months. If this clause be passed, private registry offices will either have to operate without Government control or will have to cease to operate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am prepared to discuss the clause providing for the immediate abolition of privately owned registry offices. I have already stated that

at present I have no idea of giving other than 12 months' notice. I am not compromising on the repeal of that Act. It would take the best part of 12 months to arrange the necessary organisation and establish branches throughout the State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The private exchanges would operate during the 12 months?

The Premier: You want the execution to take place at once.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, I do not want it to take place at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am prepared to consider any suggestion short of repealing the Act governing private registry offices.

Mr. DAVY: If we repeal these Acts, the moment this measure comes into operation, all private exchanges will cease. The Minister desires to have his new powers so that he may create State Labour exchanges as soon as possible. It may be that a compromise will be arranged to give these people two years, and if the proclamation of the measure were delayed for two years, the Minister could not proceed with the organisation of his State labour exchanges. If there is to be delay, we might be able to provide for the repeal of the Acts to synchronise with the period agreed upon.

The Minister for Works: Very well, I shall agree to the postponement of the clause.

Clause postponed.

Clauses 3, 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Duties of State labour exchanges:

Mr. DAVY: The duties of a State labour exchange are stipulated as (a) to bring together intending employers and persons seeking employment; (b) to act as agent for procuring employment or labour; (c) to make known opportunities for self-employment; and (d) to carry out any other prescribed duties. Why not define all such duties? Paragraph (d) will give the Government power to write their own ticket as to what State labour exchanges shall do.

The Minister for Lands: They do other prescribed duties now.

Mr. DAVY: Then include them in the Bill. I move an amendment—

That paragraph (d) be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I like to have everything stated clearly in the measure, but a number of minor duties may be required, and it is impossible to stipulate them now because they will become apparent only with the development of the scheme.

Mr. Davy: Will not you be able to provide for them under Clause 12, which gives power to make regulations for the purpose of carrying out the objects of the measure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There will be accounts for advances for railway fares, the keeping of records and that sort of thing.

Hon. G. Taylor: That will come under ordinary administration.

Mr. Davy: The regulations will fill any gaps like those.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I raise no strong objection to the amendment.

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

Clause 6—Advances to meet travelling expenses:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This clause will permit of advances being made by way of loan to meet the expenses of persons seeking employment, or requiring to travel to places where employment has been found for them through any State labour exchange. We do this now by granting passes. How far does the Minister propose to go?

The Minister for Works: A man may need a meal on the track.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I cannot see why the Minister should take power to make advances for other purposes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The object is to be able to assist a man to travel to his work. That is done at present by providing fares, and frequently a man is given a few shillings from the Charities Vote for meals on the track. There may be other expenses. We provide tents, for which men pay a rental of 1s. a week, but the tents remain the property of the department.

Mr. Sampson: Is there at present any difficulty?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, but there is no legal authority for it; it has been done by executive act. This will merely enable us to carry out what has been done for years.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have no objection to the payment of fares. Sometimes a little more has to be done for a man, and is done. Good honest workers come to the city from the country and soon their money is gone, and they would either have to walk back to the country or be provided for. These men do make an effort to repay advances for travelling expenses. In one instance a man made a repayment five years after having received the advance. Until the last year or two most of the money that we advanced was returned. It is wonderful how much of this money was repaid. I have no objection to the subclause so long as it deals only with the work to be done by the employment bureau.

Mr. THOMSON: If the bureau sent an incompetent man to the country, would the employer be responsible for one week's wages and the fare of that individual?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the expenses ran into £2, the officer in charge of the exchange would deliver an order to the employer for the collection of the £2 from the wages due. This amount might be collected at the rate of 10s. a week, and if the man stayed only a week the employer would be liable only for that week's instalment.

Mr. Davy: It would amount to a garnishee over the wages.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. SAMPSON: Is it not necessary to redraft the subclause in order to set out the intentions of the Minister?

The Minister for Works: They are already set out.

Mr. LINDSAY: I take it employers will have to protect themselves by obtaining receipts for the wages they have paid. If the bill they receive amounts to more than the wages they have paid, I take it they will not be held liable for the full amount.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—Penalty for misrepresentation or fraud:

Mr. THOMSON: Perhaps the Minister will explain this clause. A farmer may choose to advertise for a farm hand, and in the advertisement request him to call at the head office of the Primary Producers' Association. Would that be an infringement of the law?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The clause goes too far. A farm hand may claim that he has driven a team of horses, but if

that turns out to be untrue he may be fined £20. If a farmer said that his team was a quiet one and his farm hands found it otherwise, he too might be fined £20. There is also the alternative of imprisonment. We think that the workers should receive more consideration than this clause gives them. It is not one of those that was put up by the Geneva Convention. The Minister says he does not want anything in the Bill that is not contained in that convention. I move an amendment—

That the words "Twenty pounds" be struck out and "Two pounds" inserted in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Leader of the Opposition and the members for Katanning have lost sight of the first part of this clause, which part clearly set out that the clause refers only to those who make false representations or are guilty of fraud or artifice. The clause represents a protection against wasters, and is highly necessary, as for the want of it the Government might be victimised for considerable amounts. Before the Bill finally passes through Committee, I will look into the point raised by the member for Katanning. The amount of £20 represents a maximum penalty.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But you would not prosecute under this measure for deliberate fraud.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. The offence is set out here.

Mr. LINDSAY: I hope the Opposition Leader's interpretation is not absolutely correct, because when looking for a job I myself sometimes said that I was something which in fact I was not. As regards the maximum penalty, a justice of the peace in trying a case takes the maximum penalty as a guide. When the maximum is £20, he probably fixes £5; whereas if the maximum is £5 he will probably fix 5s.

The Premier: That is bush justice! I thought it was the merits of the case that decided the penalty.

Mr. LINDSAY: One may say it is a bush Bill that fixes these penalties. At all events the seriousness of the offence is indicated by the maximum penalty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Section 29 of the Interpretation Act clearly states that the penalty set out at the foot of a section of an Act of Parliament represents

the maximum. This clause is directed against the possibility of men setting out on a trip through the country on the pretence of looking for work, and £20 is not too high a maximum for such an offence.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.55 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 6th October, 1925.

	PAGE
Assent to Bills	1163
Bills: City of Perth, 3a.	1163
Auctioneers Act Amendment, 2a.	1163
Forests Act Amendment, 2a., Com.	1165
W.A. Trustee, Executor and Agency Coy., Ltd. Act Amendment (Private), returned	1172
Entertainments Tax Amendment, 1a.	1172
Entertainments Tax, 1a.	1172
Electoral Act Amendment, 1a.	1172
Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment, 1a.	1172
Workers Compensation Act Amendment, 1a.	1172
Water Boards Act Amendment, 1a.	1172
Goldfields Water Supply Act Amendment, 1a.	1172
Narrogin Soldiers' Memorial Institute, 1a.	1172
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment, 2a.	1172
Adjournment: Royal Show	1179

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. J. W. Kirwan), in the absence through illness of the President, took the Chair at 4.30 p.m.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the undermentioned Bills:—

- 1, Real Property (Commonwealth Titles).
- 2, Plant Diseases Act Amendment.
- 3, Transfer of Land Act Amendment.
- 4, Land Tax and Income Tax Act Amendment.
- 5, Public Education Endowment Act Amendment.
- 6, Ministers' Titles.
- 7, Roman Catholic Geraldton Church Property.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

BILL—AUCTIONEERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: The amendment to the Act that it is proposed to effect by this Bill is a very simple one, and should commend itself to the support of the House. It is sometimes overlooked that under the Auctioneers Act of 1921 a restriction was placed upon the holding of auction sales of every description, with the exception of the sales of freehold or leasehold lands, or shares in any incorporated company, or wool. Section 11 provides:

No person shall act as an auctioneer after sunset or before sunrise on any day except for the purpose of selling freehold or leasehold lands, or tenements or shares in any incorporated company, or wool included and described in a catalogue issued prior to and for the purpose of the sale of such wool: Penalty, £50. Provided that this section shall not apply to sales by auction held, with the approval of the Colonial Treasurer, at a bazaar or sale of gifts for charitable or church purposes.

This restriction has been found to work a certain hardship in connection with the class of conveyance which has become very popular during the last few years, namely, motor vehicles. It has been recognised that the exemption provided in the case of the selling of lands and wool, and of shares in companies, might for very good reasons be extended also to the sale of motor vehicles. With that object this Bill should commend itself to members. Clause 2 provides—

Section 11 of the principal Act is hereby amended by inserting after the words "incorporated company" the words "or motor vehicles."

The exemption provided for this particular class of property would, by the passing of the Bill, be extended also to motor vehicles. The measure has not been introduced without the various associations or bodies concerned having been consulted. I have here copies of letters from the Chamber of Automotive Industries of Western Australia, signed by the honorary secretary, and from the secretary of the Auctioneers, Land and Estate Agents' Association of Western Aus-