

the exigencies of the position with which we are confronted, it is doubly justifiable to provide some tribunal which will be able to step in and say to the unscrupulous employer, "If you employ workmen and workwomen you shall at least pay them sufficient to keep body and soul together, or else you shall close down your business." I know that there are employers who would be unscrupulous enough to keep their businesses going while paying their workers such pittance as would hardly support existence. In normal times, workers have a safety valve in the shape of a strike if repellent conditions are imposed upon them. They can refuse to put up with such conditions; and they can rely on their more fortunate comrades in employment to give them assistance to bring such an unscrupulous employer to his knees, or, at all events, to a sense of the claims of fairness. In these times, however, the meaning of such a Bill as this is that it has become necessary to vary existing awards and agreements. Why necessary? Owing to the stringency of the money market, and the wide-spread unemployment likely to occur in our community. With all due respect to Mr. Gawler, I say that if this House does not insist on some body holding arbitrary powers to stop an employer from sweating women—and the women workers will probably be the first to be attacked—we shall bring about a state of affairs which will be repulsive, at all events to me. I hope that if a majority of the Chamber proceed to amend the Bill, it will be done on reasonable lines. Subclause 2 will easily admit of amendment on lines that are reasonable. Ways and means can be provided by which those best organised, and therefore best fitted to look after themselves, will be enabled to tide over the present difficulty. If the House decides to confer the powers of Clause 2 on the Arbitration Court, then I say it will be useless and hypocritical to endeavour to bring Clause 3 under the Arbitration Court unless members are prepared to give that court the same power as that given to the commissioners by Clause 3. I do hope hon. members will approach the question in a

humanitarian spirit. Let them picture in their minds an unscrupulous employer—and that is the only way in which the matter can be approached—an unscrupulous employer who will take advantage of the present unfortunate position of affairs to reduce his workmen and workwomen to such a condition as would be absolutely repulsive. I trust hon. members will approach the Bill in that spirit. If they desire that the Arbitration Court shall deal with the question, the least they can do is to give that court the powers which the Bill proposes to confer on the commissioners.

On motion by Hon. R. G. Ardagh debate adjourned.

## BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Assembly's Message.*

Message from the Assembly received notifying that it no longer disagreed to amendment No. 7 made by the Council.

*House adjourned 10.19 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 9th September, 1914.*

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

### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Statutes Nos. 14 and 15 of the University of Western Australia.

**QUESTION—PERTH TRAMWAYS.***Concession to Women Workers.*

Mr. ALLEN asked the Minister for Railways: Will the Government grant to women travelling to work by tram up to 9 a.m. the same concession as at present enjoyed by workmen travelling on workmen's tickets?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The same concession is available to all persons travelling on workmen's tickets, and it is not proposed to extend the time beyond the already liberal conditions.

Mr. ALLEN: I am very sorry that you cannot see your way clear to do so, because numbers of women do not get to their places of employment until 9 o'clock.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We cannot distinguish between the women who work and those who do not.

**BILL—POSTPONEMENT OF DEBTS.***Council's Amendments.*

Bill returned from the Council with nine amendments, which were now considered.

*In Committee.*

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

No. 1—Clause 2, line 1: After the word "may" insert "on the advice of a Royal Commission which the Governor is hereby authorised to appoint":

The PREMIER: These words really have no meaning. They are unnecessary, because we have powers under the Royal Commissioners Act to appoint a Royal Commission for any purpose, and as head of the Government, I gave an assurance when this Bill was before the House that any action taken under the measure would be on the advice of a Royal Commission to be appointed. The Government intend to adhere to that assurance. To insert the words "which the Governor is hereby authorised to appoint" would be positively absurd, because authority exists without this provision. There is neither sense nor meaning in the words as applied to this measure.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They do not hurt.

The PREMIER: They do no good. There is no necessity to amend a Bill unless the amendment has some value.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why quarrel?

The PREMIER: Another place takes the view that we should appoint a Royal Commission to carry out this measure, notwithstanding that I gave an absolute assurance that we would appoint a commission, and that the Government would act on their advice and not otherwise. Surely that is all that is necessary. I move—

*That the amendment be not agreed to.*

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is true the Premier gave an assurance that the Government would appoint a Royal Commission, upon whose advice they would act. In fact, I think his words were that they would consult the Royal Commission before taking any action. I was, and still am satisfied with the Premier's assurance, but, seeing that another place has thought fit to embody the assurance in words in this measure—

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Cannot they trust us?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think it unwise to quarrel with the amendment. I do not see what objection there can be to the insertion of the words when they merely convey the assurance the Premier has given.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Perhaps the member who moved the amendment thought we might suffer from short memory, the same as he does.

The Premier: Perhaps he thought we would appoint two commissions. He voted twice, you know.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I deprecate the idea of always digging to find some ulterior motive. The Government have decided to adopt this course. I suggested it and the Premier agreed to it, but instead of putting it in the Bill the Premier gave us his assurance. We were quite willing to accept the assurance, but the Council have inserted it in the Bill. Why should we quarrel if the amendment only carries out what the Government intend to do? The Premier says that the words "which the Governor

is hereby authorised to appoint" are unnecessary.

The Attorney General: A kind of insult to the Governor.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No.

The Attorney General: Telling him he is authorised to do this.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am sure His Excellency will not take it as an insult. It seems the Government are always looking for trouble.

The Attorney General: Another place makes trouble.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is the Government's duty to smooth over trouble and not get their backs up because of some little opposition to their ideas. If the Government cannot get their way directly, let them go around a bit. The amendment is the roundabout way. The Government have announced their intention of doing the very thing which the Council have provided for in the clause, so why object? It looks as if the Government do not want the Bill to pass.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You would not suggest that another place do not want it to pass?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No.

The Attorney General: It is so silly to insert those words.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not mind if they are crossed out, or if the whole amendment is struck out, but I do not want to raise trouble where no trouble need be raised. We have agreed to this course on the Premier's pledge, and should let the amendment go.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is no harm in having the commission mentioned, but it would be perfectly absurd to insert the words "which the Governor is hereby authorised to appoint." We would belittle ourselves in the eyes of everyone watching our legislation if we inserted those words when we have on the statute-book full authority for the Governor to appoint any commission. If there is to be a Royal Commission, the power already exists by a separate Act of Parliament.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is for inquiry; this is for action.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We can appoint a Royal Commission for any purpose. We specially amended the Act the other night to put it on a level with the Commonwealth Act, and to insert these words as suggested would be ridiculous in the extreme. I do not feel inclined to be a party to make Acts of Parliament ridiculous. We might agree to insert the words "on the advice of a Royal Commission," but we should not make ourselves look silly by inserting the others.

The PREMIER: I have no real objection to it being defined in the measure that we act on the advice of a Royal Commission. Under the Food-stuffs Act I have the power to act myself, but I gave an assurance to this Chamber that I would not take the power until I had consulted the Royal Commission which would be appointed, and I have done so in every case. When application has been made to me I have sent it along to the Royal Commission, and I have kept faith with my promise. It is absurd to make this amendment. I gave an assurance that the power would not be put into operation except under the advice of a Royal Commission, yet this amendment is inserted. At the time this amendment was moved and carried in another Chamber members there were not aware of a subsequent amendment that was to be made that the Perth and Fremantle Chambers of Commerce should appoint a member to the commission. I have given an assurance and I shall adhere to it, that no action will be taken except on the advice of the Royal Commission.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think the Premier is taking a wrong view. He starts out by implying some wrong motive to members who have acted, as he says, as if they were interested. Everybody is interested.

The PREMIER: All right, I will agree to it. Let it go.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Then I move—

*That the Council's amendment be amended by striking out the words "which the Governor is hereby authorised to appoint."*

Amendment on the Council's amendment passed; the Council's amendment as amended agreed to.

No. 2.—Clause 2, line 2: Strike out all the words after "of" down to "proclamation" in line 6 of the clause, and insert the following, "Any mortgage contracted or agreement entered into before the passing of this Act, or any purchase money (whether the whole or any instalment thereof) under an agreement for the purchase of land, which payment falls due after the passing of this Act":

THE PREMIER: I think I have conceded all I possibly can of the Council's amendments, except perhaps that in regard to the duration of the measure. This amendment is taken from the South Australian Act. I am not prepared to accept the South Australian provision. It does not meet the case in the slightest; at least not in the direction in which the Government wish to meet it. There are other questions than the purchase money of land that require consideration, because there are quite a number of people existing on salaries and wages in the community who are paying tribute to live on land. They are just as much entitled to consideration as the man who is purchasing a block of land. Evidently it was in the mind of certain people that this measure would permit people to pay their rents just as they pay them in normal conditions. In some cases, whilst people have been away from houses which they are renting the furniture has been taken out of the house and put on verandahs and even in the street and the doors locked. These people living in tenements are entitled to relief just as much as persons who are purchasing land. Where rents are unduly pressing on the community under existing conditions then there should be power to advise His Excellency the Governor to postpone the payment of these rents. The measure also provides that if a landlord can show that his tenant or tenants were not entitled to receive any consideration he could appear before any person appointed by the Governor to have the question

reconsidered. We only saw in to-day's newspaper where the chairman of the Arbitration Court told the workers when they came before him in connection with a breach of an award that they would have to come down to the 25 per cent. If workers had to come down to the 25 per cent., can they continue to pay the cost of living when prices are not less, and in many cases are higher, and still continue to pay the rents which existed under normal conditions? Another place, by the amendment, absolutely cut out of the measure the possibility of giving relief to that class in the community. I shall not tolerate it. No relief will be given to anyone if it is not given to these people. We have quite sufficient tenements in Western Australia to house our people, and there is no need for anyone to go without a cover over his head. If conditions that are brought about by what is happening in other parts of the world affect us here, surely we are not going to sit down and refuse to give a man and his family relief. We will not permit the landlord to exact rents and insist, as they have done, on tenants going into the street. If we have to permit that, by the second Chamber refusing to pass the measure in the form in which it was sent to them, they will get no relief for those who are securing land for themselves. I am not so much concerned about the man who may lose a block of land as I am concerned in a man being put into the street. If a man is in possession of his ordinary salary or wage he will be compelled to pay his rent as usual, but if he is suffering a reduction in income, are we going to fairly distribute the burden if we permit the landlord to exact the same amount of rent as he paid under ordinary conditions? Under the circumstances I am not prepared to accept the modification of our proposal made by the Legislative Council. The question has been raised through the columns in the Press and by letters which I and others have received as to how tenants can be protected from being put into the street, and we propose to protect them in the Bill, which is a fair measure of protection;

it is not unfair to the landlord, but at the same time it is fair to the tenant. I move—

*That the amendment be not agreed to.*

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think the Premier might have saved himself a good deal of unnecessary warmth if he had simply moved that the amendment be not agreed to. I said when the Bill was introduced that it provided very drastic powers indeed. Notwithstanding that a measure on these lines had been passed in New South Wales, it is a question whether we should ask for such powers. On consideration, and after reviewing the whole position, and remembering that we were to be without Parliament for at least a couple of months, I came to the conclusion that the Government were right in asking for full powers so long as the position was safeguarded. In New South Wales they undertook not to proclaim anything under the Act until they had consulted Parliament. I merely suggested that the Royal Commission should be accepted as a safeguard so that the Premier might get the best advice possible. In moving the rejection of the amendment, in which I am going to support him, the Premier has got off the track. He referred to my getting the sack. The matter of whether I sit on this side or the other side or on neither side is one of indifference to me, but I do want the Premier to remember this, that it is the extravagance of his language that operates against and prevents needful legislation from sometimes passing in another place. It is the extravagant language of his colleagues also. Why do they suggest, as they have done in another place, that they are going to declare a moratorium in connection with tradesmen's bills and accounts? We have not yet reached the stage for a moratorium upon anything so drastic as that.

The Premier: Who suggested it?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was suggested by a responsible member of that Chamber.

The Premier: Not by a Minister.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: By the Minister's lieutenant, I might say.

Directly the Bill comes back, the Premier indulges in that sort of language. He says he is going to protect rents. Up to the present time there is no need for the Bill at all. The Premier must think that also. The time, however, might arise.

The Premier: It has arisen.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It will come perhaps before we have an opportunity of meeting in the new Parliament. It is for that reason that we ask for these powers.

The Premier: Are they not restricting those powers?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am supporting the Premier in the rejection of the amendment. I am taking exception, however, to the extravagant language of the Premier.

The Premier: It is putting the thing right.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is not putting it right. It is not right to charge me and my hon. friends on this side of the House with wishing to go back to some period in the history of the country when he alleges that two or three families were obliged to live in one room.

The Premier: It was not against the hon. member.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier made a direct charge.

The Premier: I admit that I made a charge, but it was not against the hon. member.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He wants to go back to the period when I was in office.

The Premier: If the hon. member supports the attitude of the Legislative Council, yes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Even if I supported the attitude of the Legislative Council the Premier could not make that charge.

The Premier: I could.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He could do anything, but he could not do that honestly. Let me counsel calmness. We have not felt our hard times yet. I am sorry to think that we can see them coming and that they must get worse and worse for a period at any rate. I do

hope that, if we can keep clear heads, avoid all panic utterances or wrong charges either on one side or the other, we shall be able to win through out of all our troubles. We are all anxious to do what we can to help matters along. I think the amendments of the Council ought not to be agreed to. It will bring us right back to the South Australian measure. Whilst I realise that the very first thing we shall have to protect by a moratorium is repayment of capital owing under mortgages, I also realise that South Australia has her Parliament in existence and could at any time call Parliament together and have more extensive powers conferred on the Government if it were thought necessary. We could not, however, do so here, and therefore have to ask for these excessive powers. I think we might ask the Legislative Council to agree to delete the amendment that they have made.

Question put and passed ; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 3.—Clause 2: Insert new subclause to stand as Subclause 2, as follows:—“Land” includes messuages, tenements, hereditaments, and houses, and buildings, and also includes any estate or interest (legal or equitable) in land, and any easement, right or privilege in, under, over, affecting, or in connection with land:

The PREMIER: This is really a consequential amendment on the previous amendment which we have disagreed with, and I therefore move—

*That the amendment be not agreed to.*

Question passed ; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 4.—Clause 3, Subclause 1, line 2: Strike out the word “Governor” and insert “court”:

The PREMIER: It is proposed by the clause to give power to the court instead of the Governor, to order that the Act shall not apply to certain people if it is of opinion that the postponement effected by the Act is not necessary in the interests of the mortgagor, purchaser or debtor, and so on. That is merely adhering to the South Australian Act.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I think it is a good idea.

The PREMIER: The Commission if appointed would advise on these matters and if so many cases come before the Commission that they could not deal with them or they were in remote places, with the advice of the Governor-in-Council it would be possible to appoint a court or some other person to hear a particular case. A justice of the peace sitting by himself might be sufficient to decide the matter. It is desirable to keep the wording of the Bill as it was because it gives a wider scope. I move—

*That the amendment be not agreed to.*

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Committee will remember that I suggested that it would probably be advisable to utilise the different courts for this purpose. I think that the method outlined would be a satisfactory one. At the same time, I was quite satisfied with the explanation of the Premier, and quite satisfied that in some places people will not have a court within reasonable distance of them to which they may apply. I am not wedded to one thing or the other. If the Government like to accept the courts, I think they would perhaps be the proper tribunal. On the other hand the Premier says he wants to stand by his original clause that the Governor should appoint individuals, and that probably these would be justices of the local courts. If we deal with the question of small claims in dispute, I can see no objection to that. The only objection, if it be one, is that in the one instance the decision of the court is final, in the other instance the recommendation goes through to the Governor-in-Council, and the Government have to take the responsibility. Of course I presume that any of these reports of cases that have been inquired into would go through the Royal Commission, which would be appointed, no doubt from the metropolitan area, and that they in turn would recommend what verdict should be given. I cannot for a moment imagine that Ministers themselves are going to supervise these cases.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They would have a lively time of it if they did.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They will have plenty to do without worrying about these details. My idea is that the Commission should take a report, go through it carefully, sift the evidence, and send advice to the Government. I am not taking any exception to the disagreement with the amendment of another place.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think these courts properly equipped are capable of making all inquiries and taking the necessary evidence to decide any cases of this sort. We merely leave the position as it is in regard to the tribunal before which a creditor has to appear against a debtor, or *vice versa*. How do we know that there would not be considerable hardship and delay if the Premier's idea were carried into effect. He says that he will appoint some person.

The Premier: It may be the court.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In ordinary cases we do not say we appoint some person or another to inquire as to whether a man should pay his debts or not. The courts are such that they can be reached anywhere in the State. They are courts open for the purpose of dealing with cases of debt and I believe they are the proper tribunal. I think that the proposal of the Legislative Council as it stands is absolutely right. No person can object to the decision of a magistrate of a local court with all his experience behind him, whereas they might object to the finding of a commission, particularly when that finding will not be final and will have to be reviewed before finality can be reached. I suggest that the Premier should accept the amendment.

The PREMIER: The Bill we have passed must be satisfactory to all sections. It cannot be otherwise, because, while we are not providing in the measure that the courts shall not act, we are giving power under which the courts may be called upon to act if, on the advice of the commission, the Governor-in-Council is disposed to take that

course. If, on the other hand, the courts are not available or not considered suitable, any other person may be appointed. So we have given it the widest possible scope. The Legislative Council desires to restrict it to the courts. The matters which will be heard locally will not be nearly so complicated as some of those to be dealt with in the Old Country, yet the Imperial Parliament has passed a measure giving complete powers to the Executive to postpone any debts without conferring with anybody. I have just received a copy of the Act.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It does not apply to all debts.

The PREMIER: To any negotiable instrument.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is very different.

The PREMIER: Or any payment in pursuance of any contract.

The Attorney General: Nothing could be more general.

The PREMIER: It covers the whole field; and they were not requested to appoint a commission for the purpose of advising on such matters. Here we protect ourselves by providing a court of review. They cannot get any more protection. We cover all the field, and give all the protection necessary to both parties. In comparison with the Imperial Act we restrict ourselves by saying we will not act except on the advice of a Royal Commission.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 5—Strike out Subclause 2:

The PREMIER: This is consequential on the amendment we have just dealt with. I move—

*That the amendment be not agreed to.*

Question passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 6—Subclause 3, strike out "Governor" and insert "court":

The PREMIER: This also is consequential. I move—

*That the amendment be not agreed to.*

Question passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 7—Clause 4, strike out all the words after “until” and insert “the 31st day of March, 1915”:

The PREMIER: I propose to amend the amendment in such a way as to continue the operation of the Act until the 30th June, 1916, but making it lawful for the Governor to determine the operation of the Act at any time prior to that date.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You had better leave it as it is.

The PREMIER: We cannot, because it has been ruled out of order by the Chairman of Committees in another place, and unfortunately there is no provision for our disagreeing with his ruling, which was that a definite date must be stated for the determination of the operations of the measure.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then agree to the 31st March, 1915. Do not carry it on to 1916.

The PREMIER: I move—

*That the amendment be amended by striking out the words “the 31st March, 1915,” and inserting in lieu “the 30th June, 1915, but it shall be lawful for the Governor-in-Council by proclamation published in the Government Gazette at any time prior to that date to determine the operation of the Act.*  
Amendment on the amendment passed.

The PREMIER: I move—

*That the amendment as amended be agreed to.*

Question passed; the Council's amendment as amended agreed to.

No. 8—Add a new clause to stand as Clause 4 as follows:—“The court” shall mean, the local court nearest the place of business or residence of the mortgagee, vendor, or creditor as the case may be; or if the amount involved shall exceed the jurisdiction of a local court, then “the court” shall mean the Supreme Court of the State:

The PREMIER: This is consequential on the amendment already disagreed with. I move—

*That the amendment be not agreed to.*

Question passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 9—Insert the following new clause to stand as Clause 5:—“The Governor may make regulations for the conduct of applications to the court, and generally for carrying out the purposes of this Act”:

The PREMIER: I move—

*That the amendment be amended by striking out the words “for the conduct of application to the court and generally.”*  
Amendment on the amendment passed.

The PREMIER: I move—

*That the amendment as amended be agreed to.*

Question passed; the Council's amendment as amended agreed to.

Resolutions reported, and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of the Premier, the Attorney General, and Hon. Frank Wilson drew up reasons for not agreeing to certain of the Council's amendments and amending others.

Reasons adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Legislative Council.

#### BILL—PLANT DISEASES.

Message received from the Council notifying that it did not insist on its amendment.

*Sitting suspended from 5.55 to 7.30 p.m.*

#### BILL—INCOME TAX (WAR EMERGENCY).

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

*Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

#### *Second Reading.*

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [7.33] in moving the second reading said: No measure I have been called upon to introduce into Parliament has given me so much thought, and perhaps, to be candid, I may say so much pain, as this. It is regrettable that it should be necessary to introduce a measure of this kind, because one has to appreciate the fact that it



will, to some extent, change the channels through which money is already passing, and to a lesser extent will be harmful. At the same time I hold that the conditions prevailing at the moment, and which are likely to continue for some time to come, are such that, in my duty to the State and the people I am compelled to introduce this, a tax of an emergency nature. I want hon. members to clearly understand that it has not been introduced without a great deal of thought, in fact the matter of introducing a tax of this nature has been before the public for some time. It is true that we have not entered into a discussion either in regard to the necessity for, or the incidence of such a tax, but at the same time we have been using all the time that could be spared upon it to obtain all possible particulars from different parts of the country and from departmental officers, in order to arrive at something that would meet the case without bearing unduly on the people. To be perfectly candid, although I regret having to make the statement, I really believe that even the existence of a war between His Majesty and His Majesty's enemies in Europe would not alone create the necessity for the introduction of the Bill at this stage. I am not saying that such a tax would not be necessary did the war continue any length of time, even under normal conditions locally; but we are, unfortunately, faced with other difficulties which must be met. If hon. members will read the preamble of the Bill it will give them a better idea of the reason for the introduction of the measure. It is as follows:—

Whereas it is necessary and expedient in the present hostilities between His Majesty and His Majesty's enemies, and in the existing depression in the agricultural industry, to make provision for the additional expenditure by the Government thereby directly or indirectly caused, including the relief of the unemployed.

Hon. members will see from this that the Bill is introduced for a twofold purpose. First, perhaps it may be admitted, to relieve unemployment difficulties that have

already arisen, and which we expect will extend in the near future. After all, when we have our citizens unemployed it means a loss of wealth to the community as a whole, and ways and means must be found for the purpose of keeping our citizens fully engaged if possible. We have had quite a number of proposals submitted from different quarters, and all with the one object in view, namely of trying to find some satisfactory solution of the present difficulty. Those proposals vary, it is true, almost beyond one's imagination. Some have suggested that we should carry on by enabling those engaged on salaries and wages to accept a lower wage or salary. Others have suggested that not only the Government, but employers generally, should reduce the hours of employment, and others, of course, recognise the fact that whichever of those two methods were adopted, a certain number would be thrown out of employment. I think we all agree it is desirable not to curtail the labour of our citizens if it can possibly be avoided, because by doing that we restrict production, and it is not desirable to restrict production in the slightest degree at the present time, in fact it would be better if we could even keep our people more fully occupied under existing circumstances than they would be in a more normal condition of affairs. It is rightly claimed that it is the duty of the Government to provide work for its citizens. I have never varied my opinion that as a citizen has the right to live, so he has the right to work, and that the matter of ways and means is the solution of the problem. Somebody has said there is any amount of work to be done. That is admitted. There is more to be done in Western Australia than our present population could do. We could find immediate employment for double the population we have, but unfortunately, in finding that employment we are restricted by the cash available for the payment of wages and salaries, or material used. We recognise the fact that for many years a great number of us will be engaged in still preparing our agricultural lands for the purpose of pro-

ducing cereals. We recognise, too, that we have in the South-West a tremendous area that must some day be brought under the plough. It all means labour, which, after all, is capital; capital and labour combined is essential for making that area produce our food supplies. Under these circumstances it would be an absurdity for our people to remain idle when the land can be used. The only way of solving the difficulty is to find the means of paying for the work performed. Even under normal conditions our supply of cash is limited, but under existing conditions it is limited in such a way that I have to admit the Government cannot see how to find the money for the purpose of keeping our citizens fully employed under conditions prevailing at the moment. Already it has been suggested that on some of our public works we should reduce the men to half time, and put on a number of other men, even double the number employed in that particular class of work, and thus absorb the unemployed capable of doing the work. But, after all, in the final analysis it would mean a tremendous loss to the community to be occupying two men in doing work which one man could perform. It seems to me it would be an unwise policy to adopt, and we have decided that we will not be responsible for introducing a system of that kind unless absolutely compelled to do so through no fault of our own. We have had to look around for the wherewithal, and we have introduced this measure. As pointed out in the preamble, owing to the existing depression—which I regret exceedingly, and which I regret the more because I have to publicly admit it—in our agricultural areas, which is likely to continue, if not indeed to increase, we must find ways and means for tiding those people over their difficulty. It has to be recognised that while we may find money for the purpose of absorbing the unemployed in our industrial centres, in our cities and towns generally, it would be a foolish policy to merely find the money for the purpose of keeping employed what might be termed the industrial classes in our towns, if, at the

same time we allow those engaged in producing food stuffs to leave their holdings and thus retard production. Above all, at this stage, the essential is, not to retard production, but to assist it. Thus the two-fold purpose of the measure is to absorb unemployed and at the same time find ways and means of keeping on their holdings those already employed in producing food stuffs, of inducing them to remain there for the purpose of continuing production. Hon. members will notice that the measure is not a lengthy one. As far as practicable, we have dropped any clause which was likely to cause difficulty in arriving at the amount a taxpayer should pay. Under ordinary circumstances it generally requires a fair amount of computation and one complaint in respect to the Land and Income Tax Act is that the cost of making out returns sometimes exceeds the amount of the tax. We do not want that in connection with this Bill. We lay down plainly the amount a taxpayer will be required to pay, and in doing this we have been careful to avoid the necessity for his employing any outside aid from accountants or others. We have dropped all clauses which in the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act would cause difficulty in that way. But a number of clauses are necessary to provide machinery for the collection, and to provide the necessary means of compelling a taxpayer to meet his obligations under the measure. Those clauses have had to be put into the measure. In regard even to some of those we have taken from the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, we have applied modifications in order to make the measure as simple as possible. Under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act there is quite a number of anomalies which we have in the past attempted to adjust. But while we have embodied them on this occasion it is with the one object, that the income of all persons, companies, or individuals shall be taxed on the same basis. We do not want only one section of the community to pay more than any set of individuals who term themselves firms; we have

attempted to bring all in on the same basis so far as the emergency tax is concerned. The main principles of the measure then, outside what may be termed the machinery clauses, which are essential for the purpose of providing the means for enforcing the incidence of the tax, are merely those contained in the schedule and in the clause which provides for the appropriation of one-third of the tax to establish a fund for the Agricultural Bank to enable advances to be made to farmers for their sustenance, the maintenance of their holdings and for the continuance of production. The schedule, hon. members will see, is based on the assumption that when it is essential to introduce taxation of this form, it should fall mostly upon those best able to bear it, with the result that we have commenced with an exemption for those earning less than £100. A person receiving less than £100 per annum will not be taxed, but if he receives £100 and not less than £200 the tax is 1 per cent., and so it rises by 1 per cent. per £100 until it reaches the maximum of 15 per cent. Therefore, it will be seen that £1,500 per annum or any amount exceeding that would be taxed at the rate of 15 per cent. Hon. members perhaps will understand the incidence of the tax better if I give examples showing the amounts which will be paid by each taxpayer. It will be noted that we propose to make the incidence of this tax of such a nature that the contribution to the Treasury will be on a monthly basis, that is, the contribution will be made every month instead of annually as at present is the case. The object is that if the payments were made annually it would probably take about 12 months before the necessary machinery could be put into operation, and the money would not be received until after that period had expired. Under those circumstances, it would not render that immediate assistance which is essential for the purpose of tiding us over the present difficulties. The examples I have before me show how the emergency tax will be payable by individual taxpayers,

and members will get a better idea of how the incidence is provided if I quote the figures. The salaries and wages are based on 312 days of the year or 6 working days a week. If the amount of salary or wage is under 6s. 5d. per day or £8 6s. 8d. per month, or £100 per annum, nothing would require to be paid on that sum. That is the only exemption. Before I leave the exemption, may I say that we considered the question of making some other exemptions as provided in the Income Tax Act, and extending the principles by providing that the exemption should be higher in the case of married men than in the case of single men, but we found that there would be difficulties in putting such a scheme into operation. For instance, we propose in this Bill, in order to prevent too many returns being made, which is usually the case in all Income Tax Acts, that the employer shall deduct the amount of the tax from the salaries or wages he is paying to his employees.

**Hon. J. Mitchell :** They will not have anything to pay with.

**The PREMIER :** We will come to that in a minute. If an employer had engaged, as some employers have, as many as 500 or 600 men, he would naturally have difficulty in deciding who were married and who were single. He would merely have to take the word of the employees. Jones for instance would expect that he would have to pay a greater amount of tax if he declared that he was single, and he would immediately say that he was a married man, and the result would be that there would be a marvellous number of married men with big families quickly springing up in Western Australia. I am not saying this from the point of view that it would be impossible to put this into operation, but we consider that it would be better for the purpose of this tax to make one single exemption and provide that it should be under £100, as is shown in the schedule. Therefore, a man drawing under 6s. 5d. per day will be exempt from payment. If the salary received per month is £8 6s. 8d., a person

will be called upon to pay 1s. 8d., being one per cent. on the month's income. That cannot be claimed to be very heavy. If the salary or wage be 9s. 7d. per day or £12 10s. per month, or at the rate of £150 per annum, the tax would be 2s. 6d. per month, deducted from the £12 10s. If a salary or wage be 12s. 10d. a day or £16 13s. 4d. per month, equal to £200, a tax of 6s. 8d. would be deducted, which is at the rate of 2 per cent. on the income. On an income of £20 6s. 8d. per month or 16s. a day, equal to £250 per annum, the amount deducted would be 8s. 4d. On 19s. 3d. per day or £25 per month, equal to £300 per annum—and this will interest hon. members—the amount would be 15s. a month, or at the rate of 3 per cent. So far as members are concerned, the amount I take it will be deducted by the paymaster at Parliament House in some cases. If the salary or wage per day be 25s. 8d. or monthly £33 6s. 8d., or £400 per annum, the amount deducted would be £1 6s. 8d. per month. I think I had better give all the figures that I have here. If the salary be 32s. 1d. per day or £41 13s. 4d. per month, equivalent to £500, the amount to be deducted would be £2 1s. 8d., which is at the rate of 5 per cent. That also interests one or two members in this Chamber. If the salary be 38s. 6d. per day or £50 per month, equal to £600 per annum, £3 would be deducted. If it be 48s. 1d. per day, or £62 10s. per month, equalling £750 per annum, the amount to be paid would be £4 7s. 6d. per month. If it be 64s. 1d. per day or £83 6s. 8d. per month, or £1,000 per annum, the amount to be paid would be £8 6s. 8d. Some of my colleagues will be interested in that. If it be 96s. 2d. per day or £125 per month, or £1,500 per annum, the amount of the tax would be £18 15s. I am personally interested there. That of course is the maximum amount provided in the measure. If the income be £2,000 per annum, the amount to be deducted would be £25 per month, which again is 15 per cent. If the salary be £3,000 per annum, the sum of £45 would be deducted per month, which is still at the rate of 15 per cent. That statement shows the incidence of the tax. I think hon. members

will agree that for the purpose of an emergency tax it is difficult to find anything that would be fairer than the incidence we now propose. It would be merely a matter of guess-work if I were to say how much we expect to recover under a tax of this nature. I have seen varying amounts proposed from different quarters on almost the same incidence, but after consulting with those who perhaps are in a position to advise, I am of the opinion that the State will receive from £400,000 to £500,000 per annum.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is a lovely tax.

The PREMIER: It seems a large amount. I will admit, but at the same time the amount which will be required will be large.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What is the Commissioner of Taxation's computation?

The PREMIER: He was not prepared to state what this tax would provide. He said it would really be guess-work. It is my personal opinion, however, that the sum I have quoted will be that which will be realised. That, of course, is assuming that our citizens will be employed as much as they are employed to-day. I am doubtful, even with a tax of this nature, whether we will be able to keep things in a normal state, and thus be able to raise the amount I have mentioned. Members will appreciate the fact that some of this money will be coming back if we use the first month's contribution towards finding employment of an industrial nature or by making advances to farmers. It will be largely a matter of keeping the money in circulation. It will all come back again. The farmer will not put it in his ground. He will use it for his sustenance and for the payment of machinery, and he will be able to meet his obligations to the storekeepers and the merchants, and that being part of the income of the merchant, the merchant will have to pay a tax on it, so that it will be the same money coming back, and it will not be extracting that amount from the pockets of the people in one lump sum. I am not asking for power to compel people to provide for me at the moment from the cash they have available, £500,000. I am asking them to provide that the tax shall be paid monthly, so that

the money will be kept in circulation to provide work for unemployed and to assist those who are on the land. It will be found, on looking into the measure, that while we have stated in the preamble that it is necessary and expedient in the present hostilities between His Majesty and His Majesty's enemies, and in the existing depression in the agricultural industry, to make provision for the additional expenditure by the Government thereby directly or indirectly caused, including the relief of the unemployed, we have not merely provided that the money shall be raised without also providing that a certain proportion of it shall be ear-marked to meet the existing depression in the agricultural industry. We have provided, therefore, that one-third of the amount which may be raised by this tax shall be appropriated for the purpose of enabling the Agricultural Bank to make advances to farmers with a view to assisting those farmers in the maintenance of their holdings and in the continuance of production. If the amount produced by the tax were, say, £500,000, one-third would be a sum of approximately £160,000. Hon. members will appreciate the fact that £160,000 will not be anything like sufficient to render all the assistance necessary to keep fully occupied the men to-day on holdings, and to enable them to meet their engagements. One regrets that it should be necessary to admit the fact that the present outlook—and I regret this more than anything else—is not likely to be brightened, even were we to get the necessary rains now. The want of rain will bring about great distress in some of our agricultural areas. Whilst we suffered severely from shortage of rainfall, an almost total lack of rainfall, in some of our agricultural areas during the year 1911, this year is likely to result in even greater disaster. In 1911, while the rainfall amounted to little or nothing in the areas north and east of Northam, yet it meant better crops in most cases to the south of Northam as far as Katanning, and even south of Katanning. On this occasion, however, we have to regret exceedingly that the rainfall has been short throughout the

State. Thus, not only have we in this instance to carry on one section, but we may be compelled to give assistance right from one end of the wheat belt to the other. It is well to face the position now, and admit that provision must be made to meet the difficulty. That being the case, one will admit that £150,000 will not tide us over the period of stress. That amount will meet the case to a certain extent, but it will not be anything like adequate. It has been suggested that probably between £500,000 and £600,000 will be required for that purpose alone, merely to keep the agriculturist on his holding and enable him to continue production next year. If we do not take this opportunity of making the fullest possible use of our land available for cropping next season, we shall be missing a glorious opportunity, a magnificent opportunity, of recovering not merely from the position that has arisen to-day, but from the losses that accrued owing to a shortage of yield during the previous season. I mean by that—probably hon. members know this—that whatever may be the outcome of the present hostilities, even if they were to cease to-morrow, yet owing to the inroads which the war has made upon the able-bodied men of Europe, the falling-off in the European harvest must be tremendous. The result, undoubtedly, will be that wheat will increase in price. If we were to allow our settlers to leave their lands or—I say this in order to be candid—if we were, by refusing to take the necessary action, to compel these men to leave their lands, and thus miss the opportunity of increasing production, we should be failing, not only in our duty to ourselves as a Parliament, but in our duty to Western Australia as a part of the British Dominions. As a part of the British Empire it is essential that we should make full use of our opportunities to produce every possible grain of wheat from the lands available with the labour and machinery to our hands. Certainly, £150,000 will not be anything like sufficient, judging from the advices we have obtained. Therefore it is our intention to approach the Federal Government immediately, pointing out the special con-

ditions prevailing, and ask the Federal Government, apart from the applications we have already made for funds for public works, to provide us with additional funds, on exactly the same conditions as for other purposes, in order that we may be able to make up a sufficient amount to meet these particular agricultural difficulties. Although I am not in a position to say so definitely, I have no doubt that the Federal Government will meet us. I believe that the Federal Government will recognise the desirability of helping us, and that they will render what assistance we require. If that is the case, we shall be able to turn this sum of £160,000 into anything from £500,000 to £600,000. That amount will be sufficient, we believe, with careful handling, to carry us over the present unfortunate season, and probably to enable us to recover, if not next year, then the following year, all that has been lost in bad seasons. We want no misunderstanding in connection with this matter, and therefore we have provided in this measure a direction that one-third of the amount collected under the Bill is to be used for that particular purpose. I may say that for the time being I am not really concerned as to whether this action of the Government is going to be appreciated or not. All that I am concerned about knowing the position as I do, is that if I were to fail to appreciate the necessities of the case and fail to make provision to meet those necessities, then I would be failing in my duty. I do not care at all whether the tax will be acceptable or not, so long as I feel clear in my conscience that I have done the best at my command to tide farmers and others over their present difficulties. I know there will be some criticism of this measure. I know that even those who one might imagine would support the Government on an occasion such as this, will probably be loud in their condemnation of the present proposal; but, as I have said, whether it means general condemnation throughout the State or not, I am not concerned at the moment. I do not care what happens under the circumstances, so long as I feel clear on this point at any rate, that we

as a Government have done our duty in endeavouring to meet the unfortunate position which has been brought under our notice.

Mr. Taylor: The imposition of taxation is always objectionable, whether it is justified or not. It is always unpopular.

The PREMIER: Yes; it is always unpopular. I may say at once that it has been suggested by some of my best political friends that it is inadvisable to introduce a tax of this nature just on the eve of a general election. Those friends of mine have said, "Surely you could manage to carry on with the note issue until after the election, and thus avoid loss of political support in the country as a result of this taxation." I say at once that I am not concerned with that view in the slightest. I am not going to worry on the score of popularity at all. If the tax is not acceptable, not appreciated to-day, I shall not worry about it, so long as I feel in my own heart that I have done what I considered my duty, and that I have accepted the responsibility of my action. If we are not able to rise to the occasion and meet a position of this nature, then we are not fit to remain on the Treasury bench; and I will go even further and say, not fit to remain members of Parliament. We are here entrusted by the people with the task of caring for their interests under all circumstances; alike under favourable and unfavourable conditions. We are here to legislate and to administer the affairs of the State for what we believe to be the best. While we remain here we must accept our responsibility; and I am satisfied that when the final result of this proposed action is known, the action will be fully appreciated by the whole of the community—even by those whom the tax hits hardest. Only during the last few days we have had our attention drawn to the conditions prevailing in the agricultural areas. Perhaps I should say at once that the district most affected is Toodyay. One can regret that fact the more because of the circumstance that the settlers in that district suffered very severely in pre-

vious seasons, and that the present misfortune really represents a piling-on of the agony. Unless we come to their assistance they cannot possibly carry on. We have had all sorts of requisitions, as it were. In some cases, not because of any desire on the part of the storekeeper to be unfair to the farmers or to his customers generally, but merely because the storekeeper's own position has to be guarded, he has been compelled to stop credit. Now, stopping credit at the present juncture, within a few months of the reaping of such harvest as exists, is almost fatal. Unfortunately, many of the people in the agricultural districts to-day are almost on the verge of starvation; not so much because of the war—though that, it is true, has added to the difficulties—but by reason of the unfortunate climatic conditions prevailing. A number of these cases have already come under our notice, and my colleague the Minister for Lands eventually submitted to me a minute drawing attention to the matter, and making certain suggestions. In order that hon. members may understand the position perfectly, I shall read what the Minister for Lands submitted to me. First, I may mention that the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank has received a letter from a storekeeper. I will not mention either the district from which the letter was written, or the name of the writer, but I will read the letter, as it gives a fair idea of the position. I may mention that this is only one case out of many showing the difficulties that have arisen in the agricultural areas—

I must crave your indulgence for writing personally, knowing well how very fully your time is taken up, but the serious position of affairs in this district must be my excuse. Briefly the position is this : Unless at least one inch to two inches of rain fall this week, the crops in the whole of the district will be a total failure. There will not be seed to take off. Well, farmers round here owe me about £2,000; and, considering the prospects, I dare not longer carry them on. Other stores have long since demanded cash

for everything. What are the farmers to do towards paying what they already owe, and how can they pay for future stores when there can be no harvest this year? The Seed Wheat Board would be of no use, as there will be no wheat to distribute. I am glad to say that I can pay all my debts in full at the present time, but to carry on business and give further credit to farmers in the present state of affairs spells ruin.

That is signed by the storekeeper, and I can vouch that it is a genuine letter, and that this is a true copy of what was received by Mr. Paterson.

Hon. J. Mitchell : I had a letter to-day from the same locality to the same effect.

The PREMIER : The letter is typical. The minute of the Minister for Lands fairly explains the position—

The Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank has passed on the attached communication to me. The position therein detailed by the writer is typical of that of hundreds of storekeepers in the eastern agricultural belt; indeed, in very many instances, credit has already been stopped, and a very large number of settlers must now be at their wits' end to know where the necessities of life are to come from. 2, The fight which these people have waged against adversity has been heartrending, and now they are faced with what is almost a certainty: that all their efforts during the past season to secure a harvest will come to nothing. Failure of the harvest involves: (a) No funds to meet any portion of current liabilities, to meet store bills for food, farm supplies, debts to machinery firms, Government accounts. (b) No seed wheat for next year. (c) No hay to feed horses, thus compelling some owners to sacrifice them at low prices, because they cannot keep them on the farm. (d) Possible shortage of water. 3. If no steps are taken to meet the emergency, the Agricultural Bank will sustain a damaging loss on their securities, because there will be no

alternative to abandonment by a large number of holders, and we will be faced with the necessity of relieving settlers and their families who will be driven into the centres of population. 4. I believe it is sound, statesmanlike policy to use the note issue to encourage the production of foodstuffs which will be in demand as a result of this war. Wheat will almost certainly be a good price next year. I am afraid it will be at famine prices in Australia this year owing to unfavourable seasonal conditions over a large portion of the wheat-growing areas of Australia. 5. If we can provide relief in Western Australia it would have a beneficial effect on industry in this State in many directions.

This is the opinion of the Minister for Lands, arrived at after very careful consideration.

(a) That the Government should provide advances to pay for stores from now forward to the end of January, 1916. (b) That advances be made to provide feed, seed, fertilisers, and expenses incidental to the sowing and harvesting of a crop for the season 1915-16. (c) That the fertiliser firms be asked to supply these at a lower rate. (d) That the Commissioner for the wheat belt fix the amount of seed and fertiliser per acre to be used, as it is well known that more is sometimes applied by settlers than is necessary. (e) That the advances be made by the Agricultural Bank, repayable within a period of 18 months. (f) That the funds be provided by a special issue of Treasury bills, a public appeal being made to those able to subscribe an amount of say £150,000, and then notes to be obtained from the Commonwealth on the basis of four to one. 7. If we can keep production up to a high level in 1915-16, in regard to acreage, it will mean freight for our railways and revenue at the ports. If large areas are left uncultivated through the desperate condition of settlers left unaided by the Government, it will react disastrously on those concerns in which a large proportion of our loan capital is em-

barked. 8. Provision (e) of paragraph 6 is necessary as the Government will require to redeem notes obtained to meet this emergency in order to cut off at the earliest opportunity the payment of interest on this special accommodation, our ordinary interest bill being quite formidable enough to meet as a regular annual charge. 9. These are my ideas of meeting the situation which I feel impelled to place before you. If there are any points arising out of same on which you wish further information, I will be glad to look into them and endeavour to supplement this minute. (Signed) Thomas H. Bath, Minister for Lands and Agriculture. 8th September, 1914.

As my colleague has pointed out, this letter is typical of the condition of the storekeepers in a great portion of the agricultural areas, and it means that unless we render this timely assistance, not merely will the farmer suffer, but the storekeeper will suffer, and the merchant will suffer, and business generally will be crippled throughout the State. If I had the belief that our agricultural lands were of no value, that such seasons as we are experiencing at present would continue, it would be foolhardy on the part of the Government to raise money of this nature to further assist the settlers. But I am absolutely confident, and we have all the necessary particulars to back the opinion that our agricultural areas are all right and that we may expect normal seasons, and when we do get normal seasons we shall recover our position, perhaps not without compelling those who are working the land to pass through a very trying period, but we shall recover eventually and our action will make the burden much lighter to carry than it otherwise would be. I am a great believer in an individual reaping the fruits of his labour. When I make that statement I intend to make it apply to the farming community as well as to any other section of the community. To ask that these men who have gone out to pioneer the agricultural areas, who have fenced land and cleared holdings, and cultivated them to some extent, and built



ap for themselves farms which, under normal conditions, would provide them and their families with a livelihood, should, in consequence of conditions over which they have no control, leave their holdings, and that someone else should reap the reward of their pioneering work, is cruel, and if it can be avoided the State should avoid it, and under the circumstances I have outlined and the provisions of this measure, I think we shall overcome the difficulty. While this proposal may press hardly to some extent on the community at the moment, I hope it will be of short duration and eventually I am certain our action will be better appreciated, because we will have tided the State over a trying period, and on the return of normal conditions I hope it will be found that the burden has scarcely been realised.

Mr. Dwyer: Why not make it repayable over 10 years?

The PREMIER: I am not able to look so far ahead as to say that in 10 years we shall be in a position to recoup the amount provided under this measure. The tax may appear to be a severe one. Although a man's income may be high he may have proportionately heavy obligations to meet, but I am ready to admit that I am in an infinitely better position to pay £18 15s. per month during the present crisis—

Hon. J. Mitchell: Of course you are.

The PREMIER: That is the wage-earner to be out of work for half his time. So it applies to all incomes. A man receiving £3,000 per annum, which is £250 per month, can surely afford to pay £45 of it, which will leave him £205 for the month, and surely he is in an infinitely better position to provide that £45 under existing conditions—

Hon. J. Mitchell: You are very simple if you think a man can fork out £45 a month so easily.

The PREMIER: I know the attitude of the hon. member. He favours a man who is getting a large income being able to sit down in luxury at Claremont, or West Perth, or even Mt. Lawley—

Hon. J. Mitchell: I do not.

The PREMIER: While others are walking around looking for shelter. I have them coming to my office and house every day pointing out their difficulties because they have not a roof over their heads and do not know where they will get their next meal, and the hon. member would sooner this continued than that a man who can suffer for a period without inconvenience should help the State over this trying period.

Hon. J. Mitchell: A man with such an income spends it in wages at the present time.

Member: Some farmers are living on boiled wheat.

The PREMIER: Yes, and we are asked to permit this to continue and allow some who are getting £3,000 a year to refuse to meet their obligations. At first I had an idea that the people might voluntarily rise to the occasion and contribute for the purpose of meeting some of our difficulties. I never had too much faith in voluntary action of this nature because I know quite a number of people who are never heard of, or seen, when any request is made to assist those who are not so fortunate as themselves. Quite a number of people who have large incomes never subscribe a single penny and it almost makes one wonder whether it would not be desirable to put their names up, in order that the public might recognise them when they meet them. However, one does not desire to do that. After careful consideration we concluded that it would be better to make every one in the community bear, as near as we could make the incidence of the tax, his share of the burden. It is not fair to ask the salary man or the wage earner alone to carry the whole of the burden, nor is it fair to ask the salary man or the wage earner to carry the burden of the distress existing in our agricultural areas, and thus we have made the incidence of the tax heaviest upon those who are best able to carry the burden, although, even then, we shall not inflict anything like the same hardship upon these individuals as upon those who are receiving lower salaries or wages and are paying a smaller percentage on their in-

comes. I do not know that I can say anything more on the measure. It is not a pleasing duty by any means to have to introduce a Bill of this kind, but I have to recognise, with other hon. members, that if I ask the people to repose confidence in me and if I accept the responsibilities of administering the affairs of State, I must undertake unpleasant as well as pleasant duties, and when the moment arrives in which I am unprepared to undertake these unpleasant duties, merely for my own peace of mind, or perhaps to prevent criticism or dissatisfaction among any section of the community, I have no longer a right to ask them to repose any further trust in the Government, or myself, as a member of Parliament. The Executive carry on only by the will of hon. members and hon. members must face their responsibilities in these matters as well as the Executive. I cannot say any more, except that our position, unfortunately, is one which necessitates our finding further moneys to render this required assistance. Had not it been for the war, it might not have been necessary to take this step, but I believe that, had the war come, and had the season been normal, this emergency tax would not have been necessary. It is due to the two troubles coming together—the war crisis which has dislocated trade in a large measure and shut off the possibility of our obtaining further loan funds for carrying on public works and assisting development, and side by side with that the prospect of perhaps a greater disaster in our agricultural areas than we have suffered previously in the history of the State. The two coming together have made it essential, although it is unpleasant, to introduce this measure, and I hope hon. members will take the view that it is necessary to shoulder our responsibilities and undertake the unpleasant task as well as the pleasant, and endeavour, whatever the consequence, to remove the distress which exists and which must become greater unless we pass this measure at the earliest possible opportunity. I therefore, with regret, move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [8.28]: Notwithstanding that the time is so short, in view of the very great importance of this measure, I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

An adjournment until to-morrow will give time to consider the measure.

The Premier: Will you meet at 10 or 11 o'clock, if we agree to the adjournment.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have many business engagements to attend to; say three o'clock in the afternoon.

The Premier: The measure has to go to the Council later on to be considered, and an adjournment will probably be desired there. Could you meet at 2 o'clock or 2.30?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Say 3 o'clock.

The Premier: Three o'clock will not give us time. What about 2.30?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Very well. Motion put and passed; the debate adjourned.

## BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it did not insist on amendments Nos. 4, 5, and 6, but insisted on amendment No. 7, now considered.

### *In Committee.*

Mr. Price in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

No. 7.—Clause 18—Strike out the clause:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The amendment upon which the Legislative Assembly insists is to the clause which has reference to reservation of a portion of the wages due for a month in arrear in the event of seizure in the case of a bill of sale. I very much regret that the Council has taken up the position it has in this matter. It is always forgotten by those who look at the workers toils from the capitalistic point of view that the only capital of

the labourer is his industry, the time he spends and the efforts he puts forth to expend his life's forces in order that he may earn his livelihood and the support of those dependent upon him. This is his capital, and it should be protected by the law. He cannot, like a money lender or a merchant obtain a bill of sale over the product of his labour by the ordinary formalities the law affords. That being so, the law should step in and make a bill of sale for him and give him a preference for his work on the realisation to the extent at least of one month, and that is all that was proposed in the measure. There is to be no protection whatsoever for the workmen, many of whom indeed create by their industry that wealth which supplies the creditor. They must have nothing.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Their industry combined with the plant of the works and everything else.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I know that the plant and works and everything else can be secured by bill of sale, but the worker gets nothing. He can get no share of the wealth that is realised when a sale takes place. That is unjust. I was going to use the expression inhuman. What shall this committee do?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have a conference.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know that that would be of any advantage.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I think it would.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am inclined to accept the suggestion. The point is, how long is it going to take us? I confess without any offence or disrespect to another place that I fear the result.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I do not think you will have any need.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is this the only disagreement?

*Request for Conference.*

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. I therefore move—

*That a Conference be requested with the Legislative Council on the Bills of*

*Sale Act Amendment Bill, and that at such Conference the managers consist of three members.*

Question passed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—

*That the managers to represent the Legislative Assembly be the Hon. Frank Wilson, Mr. Dwyer, and the Attorney General.*

Question passed.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT. SPECIAL.

The PREMIER (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [S.H.]: I move—

*That the House at its rising adjourn until 2.30 p.m. to-morrow.*

Question passed.

*Sitting suspended from 8.42 till 9.5 p.m.*

#### BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

*Request for Conference.*

Message received from the Council intimating that it had agreed to a free conference respecting the Bills of Sale Act Amendment Bill and that the Council would be represented at such conference by the Hon. H. P. Colebatch, the Hon. D. G. Gawler, and the Hon. J. Cornell, as managers.

*Sitting suspended from 9.10 to 9.45 p.m.*

*Conference—Managers' Report.*

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker—Kanowna) [9.51]: I beg to report that the managers appointed by this Chamber to meet the managers appointed by the Legislative Council have conferred and have failed to arrive at any agreement. I move—

*That the report be adopted.*

Question passed.

*Council's Message.*

Amendment insisted on by the Legislative Council further considered.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Price in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I regret to say that the conference which has just met has failed to arrive at any conclusion. Those that went from this Chamber were unanimous in desiring to have Clause 18 retained in the Bill as originally submitted to this House, and I venture to say that arguments unanswerable were submitted, unanswerable from the standpoint of justice, from the standpoint of fairplay, and from the standpoint of humanity. Two classes of cases where the principle is admitted were shown to the managers. In other words we submitted to them the principle which recognised four months' preferential payment in bankruptcy to the workers, and the mines regulations which permit a preferential payment of one month. Notwithstanding this it was argued that it was an unfair principle to interfere with existing relations under existing bills of sale inasmuch as the times were not suitable for making any changes of this description. That was the argument which they used against us. It was held to be a principle on their part that securities granted to storekeepers and others whose goods were involved in the matter, should not be threatened or diminished in value. I, and others also, pointed out that it was a matter of compulsion very often for the worker to give his services, and trust to his employer for payment. The law would not give him the facilities for obtaining security that the money lender or anyone else taking a bill of sale possesses. Nevertheless the arguments that were used on our side were infallible, and I need not assure the Committee that the arguments that they used on their side did not affect a single one of those that came from this Chamber. A compromise was suggested that we should make this measure applicable to all further bills of sale that were made, leaving those now outstanding just as they were, unaffected by the introduction of this principle, but that suggested amendment was rejected. Another compromise was suggested that we

should make a fortnight the limit that a worker could claim on the realisation of a bill of sale, but that too was rejected. It is clear that the majority of those on the committee of management from the other House were fighting for a principle that they deemed to be principle, namely, the protection of securities, and we on our side were fighting strongly for a principle that we believed to be deeply embodied in human life and affairs, namely, the protection of the human beings who were dependent on their work for their livelihood and the support of those dependent upon them. We were fighting on our side for those requiring protection. We were trying to make a bill of sale for them by law so that they should not have to contribute to the value of the securities then realised and go penniless out into the world, having given their time, their labour, and their industry and health in order to preserve that security. Those two principles were diametrically opposed. We could not make any further compromise. There is no alternative but either to agree to the Council's amendments or to throw the Bill aside. I am not inclined to throw the Bill aside because, although we have not got all we wanted in other respects—and some of the amendments I have agreed to I was very sorry to agree to, and would not under ordinary circumstances have agreed to—we have retained in the measure some very valuable amendments to the Bills of Sale Act as it now stands. But we have gained something, although we have not gained all we want, and therefore, I am not inclined to throw the measure aside. I can promise if I am spared, and this Government is spared, that after the next elections I intend to return to this Chamber and try and bring the bills of sale legislation up-to-date, and codify all outstanding Acts upon the question. This principle will again be introduced. If I abandon it to-night it is not for ever. I am giving way to-night because I want to preserve the Bill, but I shall return to the matter fresh after the electors are made aware how the workers are

protected in the interests of security holders.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What about the poor unfortunate people who have goods under hire?

Mr. Bolton: Never mind the working man.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Every-one is unfortunate but the working man. It seems it does not matter what happens to him, he can go without everything, without wages, without home. The man who has a bit of paper that has a stamp on it is the unfortunate individual if he does not realise every penny the paper covers. One has flesh and blood, and the other has stamp and paper and ink, and yet the stamp and paper and ink are of more value than a human life. That is not my way of looking at it. I am going to return to the same principle at the first opportunity, and whether I am on this side or on that side of the House after the next election, I intend to fight for that principle. Under these circumstances I can only move—

*That the amendment be agreed to.*

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not think it is an occasion to go into heroics about what we will do after the general election, but I may be permitted to express my regret that we were unable to get the managers of another place to agree to any compromise suggested on this clause. It is, however, due to them to explain that under bankruptcy law wages are not protected against secured creditors. They have a preferential claim on only the unsecured portion of the debtor's estate. That is to say, a man holding a bill of sale is able to enforce the payment of his claim even before a wages claim; and in regard to the security given for wages on a mining lease, that is on the lease only, and not on the building and plant erected on the lease. It is necessary that this should be explained, because, after all, it is not quite so bad as the Attorney General would possibly infer, judging from his remarks. I agree with him that the wage-earner should have some measure of protection. It is only a moderate measure, and we agreed to it

on this side of the House. The wage-earner has, perforce, to give credit for his labour. He has to follow the usual custom of the industry in which he is employed. Men employed and paid fortnightly, for instance, cannot possibly demand their wages daily or weekly, nor can it be expected that the man seeking work should first ascertain whether there is a bill of sale over the goods and chattels of his proposed employer. Therefore, I say again I regret, with the Attorney General, that we could not come to some compromise on the matter; but I commend him for having accepted the measure, as it has some good features about it which it would be a pity to lose. Another occasion may arise later when the subject can be more fully considered and discussed, and I am convinced that after the elections it will receive very fair consideration at the hands of members of another place who have now thought fit, on a matter of principle, to throw it out.

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

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

*House adjourned at 10.5 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 10th September, 1914.*

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

### BILL — BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

#### *Assembly's Message.*

Order of the Day read for the consideration of the Message from the Assembly