The board have been very successful and have conducted their business really well. Since their inception I do not think a single loss has been sustained.

Mr. Davy: They carry on in the simplest possible way; a secretary and office boy could do the job.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They have a trained and experienced staff and therefore are in a better position to handle the scheme than the Fremantle council would be, seeing that the council have neither the staff nor the experience. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

BILLS (2) RETURNED FROM COUNCIL.

1, Agricultural Bank Act Amendment.

2, Reserves (No. 1).

With amendments.

House adjourned at 8.20 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 19th November, 1929.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

1, Treasury Bills.

2. High School Act Amendment.

QUESTION—MINE WORKERS' RELIEF FUND.

HON. H. SEDDON asked the Honorary Minister,—1, What are the rates and conditions applicable to beneficiaries under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund? 2, How many persons—men, women and children—have received benefits under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund? 3, How many persons—men, women and children—are now receiving benefits under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, (a) Maximum allowance 45s. per week; (b) married couples receive 25s. per week if husband not eligible to either invalid or old age pension. If invalid pension obtained the allowance is 15s. per week, whilst 10s. per week applies if old age pension is granted. A further 5s. per week is payable for each child under 14 years of age; (c) widows: under 40, no children, a maximum grant of £19 10s. Under 40, one child, 30s. per week for six months after husband's death, then 7s. 6d. per week until child attains age of 14. Under 40, two children or more, 15s. per week and 5s. for each child until age of 14. 40 to 50, 20s. per week for three months after husband's death, then 15s. per week for three months, and then 10s. per week until remarriage or death. An extra 5s. per week allowed for each child to age of 14. 50 to 60, 20s. per week until remarriage or death. An extra 5s. per week allowed for each child to age of 14. 60 and upwards, 10s. per week and assistance rendered in applying for old age pension. An extra 5s. per week allowed for each child to age of 14; (d) single men and widowers: 25s. per week if not eligible to invalid or old age pension and subject to similar provisions as (b); (e) cause of incapacity must be attributable to an industrial disease acquired in the metalliferous mining industry of Western Australia. Contributions to the fund must have been consistently paid whilst working; failure in this respect, the benefits abate on a pro rata basis. Where men are over 60 years of age when relief is sought, the Board views that incapacity is also to a great extent due to advancing years, and the allowance is at the rate of 10s. per week. Where benefits are being extended under the Miner's Phthisis Act or Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act, no relief is

payable, but where compensation under the Third Schedule has been exhausted, relief is extended under similar conditions as would otherwise apply, but dating as from the time weekly compensation payments ceased, or in the case of lump sum settlements after expiration of period involved by such sum being exhausted at half wages. Except vide previous paragraph applications for relief must be lodged within two years of ceasing work. Benefits continue indefinitely and at discretion of board or liability ceasing by death, remarriage, or other causes. 2, 771 men, 643 women, 1,105 children. This includes beneficiaries at present on books of the Fund. In addition to the foregoing, 330 men have received a special allowance whilst inmates of the Wooroloo Sanatorium. 3, 74 men, 256 women, 123 children.

QUESTION—INDUSTRIAL STABILISATION COMMITTEE.

HON. H. STEWART asked the Honorary Minister,—Will the Government invite the Primary Producers' Association, the Pastoralists' Association, and the Mining Association of Western Australia each to nominate a representative on the Industrial Stabilisation Committee?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: It is considered that the commitee is large enough. The committee as constituted will no doubt consult with many organisations which are not directly represented on the committee.

QUESTION—WHEAT BULK HANDLING, GERALDTON.

HON. E. H. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary,—What conclusions have been arrived at consequent upon the consideration given by the Government to making provision for wheat bulk handling facilities in the construction of the new harbour works at Geraldton?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The harbour is so designed that there will be no difficulty in providing for bulk handling if and when that method is decided upon.

QUESTION—MIGRATION AGREEMENT.

HON. H. STEWART asked the Chief Secretary,—1, Is it a fact that for the money authorised to 30th September, 1929, under the Migration Agreement, a further 32,000 migrants have to be settled? 2, Within what period has the full number of migrants to be settled?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, In the case of public works undertakings, for every £75 borrowed one assisted migrant is to be received into, and satisfactorily established, in the State within ten years from the 8th April, 1925. In the case of land settlement schemes, a family consisting of an average of four persons is to be received within twelve months from the date the loan was made.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Read third time and *passed*.

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

Resumed from the 14th November. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair, the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on the following proposed new clause:—

Where the Main Roads Board in reconstructing an existing road, or building a new road, prejudicially affects the existing entrance-way from it to a property, the board shall provide a reasonable entrance-way to such property: Provided that in cases where such provision entails the acquisition of land outside the road reservation, the cost of such acquisition shall be the responsibility of the owner, but before acquiring any such land the consent of the owner shall first be obtained.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I have placed upon the Notice Paper a new clause which I propose to move in lieu of the one I brought forward at the previous sitting.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss the new clause on the Notice Paper without first withdrawing the motion he has already moved.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I ask leave to withdraw my motion with regard to the former new clause.

New clause, as previously moved, by leave withdrawn.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I move—

That a new clause be added, to stand as Clause 18a, as follows:—

(1.) Where the board, in reconstructing an existing road or building a new road, prejudicially affects the access to a property having a frontage thereto, the board shall at its own expense provide reasonable access to the reconstructed or new road.

(2.) If in carrying out the provisions of Subsection (1) of this section, it becomes necessary for the board to acquire any land belonging to a private owner, the expense of so doing shall be borne by the person requiring such access: Provided that, before any such land is so acquired, the board shall give at least 21 days' notice of their intention to acquire, and in the event of the person requiring such access dissenting from their so doing, the board's responsibility under Subsection (1) hereof shall cease.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—ELECTORAL PROVINCES.

Second Reading—defeated.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 14th November of the debate on the second reading.

Question put.

The PRESIDENT: It will be necessary for the House to divide upon the second reading of this Bill.

Division taken with the following result—

Ayes	15
Noes	9
	—

AYES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. W. H. Kitson	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. W. J. Mann	*(Teller.)*

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. A. Kempton
Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. Ewing
Hon. E. H. Harris	*(Teller.)*

The PRESIDENT: As this Bill must be carried by an absolute majority I declare that the question has passed in the negative.

Bill thus defeated.

BILL—SANDALWOOD.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th November.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [4.55]: The question of the sandalwood industry and its control in Western Australia has been a matter for very considerable comment and thought for many years past. It is interesting to observe the present position. At the time of the 1924 elections, members of the present Government were particularly strenuous in their criticism of the arrangement that existed then and has been in operation since.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They won two or three seats by opposing it.

Hon. H. SEDDON: It is interesting to note that the Government, after assuming the rights and privileges of office, have continued the agreement, and gone so far as to urge that it be perpetuated, even after the time of the original agreement had expired. The position affecting the control of sandalwood is a most difficult one. Prior to the making of the agreement, the people of the State were at the mercy of the dealers in the industry. The result was that many of the cutters were receiving a remuneration for their efforts that can be regarded only as very meagre. One of the results of control has been that the pullers have received a better remuneration for their labour than ever before. This is due to the agreement. The position has been complicated by the accumulation of stocks, which practically resulted from a rushing in of orders prior to the making of the agreement, and also since, in view of the fact that the stocks were held at Fremantle instead of being disposed of. It is recognised that China cannot take more than a certain amount of wood in a year. The provisions of this Bill, which deal with private pulling, have been subjected to considerable comment. Under this heading I should like an expression of opinion from the Minister on one or two points. We have to deal with the suggestion that certain contracts have been imperilled by the introduction of the Bill. I should like to know what the Government have to say concerning the position that will result from the passage of this legislation. At the last sitting of the House Mr. Cornell suggested that the position could be eased for private contractors by varying the proposed quota—now about

10 per cent.—allotted to them. If the quota were varied, the position might be improved. On the other hand, an alteration of the quota on the lines suggested by Mr. Cornell would have the result of restricting orders in other directions. In view of these perplexing aspects of the situation, I should be very pleased to hear the comments of the Minister in reply to the debate.

HON. H. A. STEPHENSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.58]: This question has been before the Chamber on many occasions. I have supported the action of the Government for some considerable time. Prior to 1920 the royalty on sandalwood was very small, somewhere in the vicinity of £1 per ton, or less. Western Australia at the time had the best sandalwood within Australasia, and a good market existed in China for a large proportion of it. Had the quantities exported been regulated in accordance with the market requirements, the possibility was that the market would have lasted for many years. By getting down to a business proposition it was also possible that the Government would very largely benefit and that the royalty could be increased. In 1920 the royalty was raised to £2 per ton, but very little pulling was done then. Owing to trouble in China, a slump occurred. A deputation then asked for a reduction in the royalty to £1 per ton, in order that the industry might be assisted. But very little pulling took place then. A quantity of sandalwood accumulated at Fremantle and it was found impossible to sell it. At that time it was costing something like £11 a ton delivered at Fremantle; that included pulling charges and the royalty to the Government. To show the position, something between 4,000 and 5,000 tons were sold to certain firms at £10 a ton, all ready to be put on board. After that a business arrangement was entered into and the position was very much improved. To-day the pullers of sandalwood are getting £16 a ton and the Government are receiving a royalty of £9 a ton, which is a different proposition altogether from what it was in 1920 and 1921. It will readily be understood that since that arrangement was entered into, Western Australia has derived considerable benefit from the industry. During the last few years the royalty received by the State has amounted to over £50,000 a year. I think it only right that the State should get all it possibly can by way of royalty, taking everything into consideration. But the position is that we find to-day there is only one way by which it is possible to keep the price at its present level and that is by regulating the export. The State has practically one buyer only and that is China, a country that can take only a certain quantity each year. If the present price is to be retained, it is obviously necessary that pulling should be controlled. This is the first year I have known sandalwood taken from private land to come into the picture, but taking all the circumstances into consideration, it is necessary that the output should be controlled whether the wood comes from private property or from Crown land. I intend to support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [5.5]: From what I can gather, the Government mean well by introducing this Bill, but I have to give consideration to the chap who pulls the wood, the man who gets it 70, 80 or 100 miles away from a railway and who does not receive any consideration from the Government. I consider that the Government should throw open the selling of the wood and all that they should worry about should be the getting of the royalty. Mr. Stephenson led us to believe that the puller to-day was better off than he has ever been. I say he is not.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: Not with £16 a ton?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not care whether he gets £16 or £60 a ton; he is restricted and that is the difficulty. In the earlier days the getter could pull an unlimited amount of timber.

Hon. V. Hamersley: And he is ruining the industry.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: No. The market for sandalwood has been one of those peculiar markets that was responsible for a very high price when the commodity was required. The whole thing reminds me of one of those arguments about the survival of the fittest—the man who can pull the wood and can manage to hold it gets the price.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do you believe in the survival of the fittest?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: We must be the fittest of our kind otherwise we should not be here. In the earlier days of sandal-

wood pulling, as Mr. Stephenson knows, the value of the wood varied from £2 to £13 and the figure was a very fair price before the Government took over the control. But at that time anybody could pull 100 tons and hold it.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: But the Government were not getting anything out of it.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: What is the position of the puller to-day ? He is restricted in the pulling from 16 tons a year to 37 tons a year. The man with a family of eight or ten children is permitted to pull the higher quantity and the single man is allowed to pull 21 tons, whilst those who are not altogether dependent on the industry are the section that are permitted to pull 16 tons. The prospector is allowed to pull from 5 to 12 tons. The prospector is the man who has had a helping hand from the industry and if the Government are sincere towards the industry they will see that the genuine prospector gets a better deal.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: To which Government are you referring?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Any Government that should receive the blame or take the credit for what is done by the Forests Department. After freight has been paid and the Government royalty has been deducted, the puller's share amounts to £12 a ton. That is the most he can possibly get.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: I was not allowed to come into it.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Neither was I, but probably it is right that the output should be restricted. Assuming the puller receives a profit of £12 for every ton he pulls, we may assume that his annual income will be about £300 on 25 tons.

Hon. E. H. Harris: How many would average that?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: There would not be more than 15. If more than 30 men are cutting 30 tons a year, I should be very much surprised. I happen to be the sandalwood pullers' representative on the Sandalwood Board and I know what I am talking about.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: Are they all getting paid.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: No, and that is why I say the Government are not acting fairly to the puller. The Government should allow the puller to sell his wood direct to China and they should be satisfied to receive the royalty of £9 a ton.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Would not that break down?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: No. Why should the Government worry so long as they got their royalty? Many more men were pulling sandalwood before the regulations were framed

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: The market in China may not be now what it was.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am quite prepared to admit that. At the time the regulations were framed, people bought sandalwood how and where they could, and that is where the trouble began. When the regulations took effect, the people who had bought had accumulated large stocks and they were asking high prices for the wood. If the Government intend to carry on as they are doing at present why do they not give the puller the right to sell through his own agents to the Chinese? The Government should not come in for the purpose of bolstering up the three firms at Fremantle. Those firms have the right the buy the whole of the wood that is allocated to them by the Forests Department. Why should not the puller do the business himself? At the present time he has to wait three or four months for his money. On this subject let me read a letter that I have received from the Conservator of Forests—

> With reference to your letter on behalf of certain sandalwood pullers who complain concerning delay in payment by Paterson & Company, I have to advise you that some difficulty has been experienced by firms dealing in sandalwood on account of the unsatisfactory sales in China during recent months. The department has been in constant touch with Paterson & Company, and proposals are now in hand which it is hoped will enable this company to send forward cheques against all outstanding accounts at an early date.

That was written on the 6th November. To-day I received a telegram from Mr. Arcus at Ora Banda reading: "What about sandalwood; no money since August." There we have a man who is out in the backblocks and who has not had a shilling for his wood since last August, and the people who are not paying are being bolstered up by the Government. Why should not the puller sell the wood direct to the Chinamen and finance himself? The man who sent me the telegram pulled 26 tons of wood and has had no money since August. The Chief Secretary said that the pullers themselves could

not sell the wood. Let the Government get out of the way and be satisfied to receive their £9 a ton royalty. The men would be able to sell it at a price that would give them a far greater profit than they are receiving to-day. According to the Chief Secretary, there are 7,000 tons of wood held up at Fremantle awaiting a price. It has been bought at £26 a ton and all that the puller gets out of it is from £9 to £12 a ton. If the puller owns a motor lorry, he can carry the timber 70, 80 or 100 miles to the railway and show a profit on the carting, but if he has to get someone to cart it for him the profit is reduced. Instead of continuing the existing farce, the Government should throw open the whole business and be satisfied to receive the £9 royalty. What would it matter if 20,000 tons did go out of the State? According to the Chief Secretary, under the agreement reached with South Australia, our sandalwood pullers are to be further reduced to the extent of 1,000 tons this year. A puller in this State gets anything from 16 to 37 tons a year. What is going to happen to him next year? The pullers live mainly in outlandish places and exist on the quantity of wood they get. There is no other work for them to do in that part of the State. Yet the Government, to bolster up the sandalwood merchants in Fremantle, have arrived at an agreement with the South Australian Government to reduce this State's output by another 1,000 tons. This will affect detrimentally, not the merchants in Fremantle, but the poor fellows existing in the outback places on 16 to 37 tons of wood per annum.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: It is a shame.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not know whether the hon. member is sarcastic, but I say it is a crying shame. Sandalwood pulling has been the occupation of such men for years, and they are now too old to do anything else. I hope no member will argue that the sandalwood puller is now better off than he was prior to the Government regulating the output. Previously he could pull as much wood as he chose, and sell it as he chose and at his own price. I ask any businessman to say whether the puller was not better off under that system. Give me 70 tons of sandalwood at £6 a ton and I could earn over £400 a year, whereas if I am restricted to 30 tons at £26 a ton, including expenses, I would get only a bit over £300. Consequently, why argue that the puller will be better off? Anyone who understands the business knows that the puller can pull 70 tons almost as easily as he can pull 35 tons once he gets into the bush where the sandalwood is found. I ask the House to have nothing to do with the Bill.

Hon. E. H. Harris: We have to do something with the Bill.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Then reject it. The competition exists; it has been proved that we can sell all the wood the pullers can get, and sell it at a profitable price. If the Bill be passed, a quota of 10 per cent. of the quantity is to be allowed for wood pulled from private property. What is happening to-day would happen in a much bigger way, for quite a large quantity of wood on private property is now being burnt. Where new settlement is taking place the sandalwood is being burnt, as there is no sale for it. The buyers at Fremantle will not purchase it because they have enough. If this Bill becomes law, I am satisfied that far larger quantities will be burnt. Having a thorough knowledge of the pullers' position, I am satisfied that the sooner the Government relax their restrictions on the sale of sandalwood, the better it will be. They could increase the royalty to £12 per ton, if they so desired, but they should allow the wood to be sold freely. If they did, they would receive a far greater amount by way of royalty and a far greater quantity of sandalwood would be sold. Everyone knows that the cheaper a commodity is, the greater is the sale, and that is what would happen with the sale of sandalwood in China. If free sale were permitted, a man pulling sandalwood, instead of being restricted to a mere existence, as he is to-day, would be able to pull as much as he liked, but he would still pay the Government £9 per ton royalty. We were told that when the Labour Party took office, one of the first things they would do would be to wipe out the sandalwood monopoly, but they have done nothing. Now they are trying to perpetuate the monopoly. I hope the House will vote the Bill out, and give the sandalwood men the chance enjoyed by everyone else in business to sell his commodity to the highest bidder.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [5.19]: My consideration of the Bill makes me fully in accord with the necessity for regulating the marketing of sandalwood. I think it is quite sound for the Government to gather revenue in the form of a royalty from this national asset. I approve of the

principle, and shall support the second reading of the Bill, but there are two points that occur to my mind. I should like to know from the Minister whether the royalty is to be charged on sandalwood that comes from private property.

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Surely the owner of private property would get the royalty!

Hon. H. STEWART: The owner of private property can agree to accept any royalty he chooses. He is not bound by the Government's standard of £9 per ton.

The Chief Secretary: The Government would not get any royalty from wood pulled from private property.

Hon. H. STEWART: I agree with the proposal to restrict the quantity of wood pulled on private property. Clause 3, Subclauses 2, 3 and 4, deal with that matter and provide that licenses shall be issued in order of priority. That is quite a reasonable provision. Subclause 1, paragraph (b), deals with sandalwood from alienated land. I do not think the measure should be passed in its present form. Clause 3 provides that no person shall pull or remove sandalwood (a) from Crown land except under a license granted pursuant to regulations under the principal Act. That is quite right.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is unnecessary.

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes, because similar provision is made in the Forests Act. It is repeated here in order that the law may be brought within the purview of one measure.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Is that the object of it?

Hon. H. STEWART: The hon. member can place his own interpretation on it.

Hon. J. R. Brown: It is the sugar-coating of the pill.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I did not know whether you were aware of the object.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member should be allowed to proceed without interruption.

Hon. H. STEWART: The main object of the Bill is to prevent the pulling or removal of sandalwood from alienated land unless the person is authorised to do so by a license in prescribed form granted to him by the Conservator of Forests under this measure. The contentious matter of the Bill is contained in that paragraph. I do not think the word "pull" should be included. I suggest that the clause should be framed to provide (a) that no person shall pull or remove sandalwood from Crown land, (b) that no person shall remove or sell sandalwood from alienated land except under a license in the prescribed form.

Hon. J. Cornell: That would necessitate an owner of private land taking out a license to sell his own wood.

Hon. H. STEWART: If the Bill be passed in its present form, the owner of alienated land will have to do likewise. A man with sandalwood on his property has an asset, and yet he is not to be allowed to pull the wood, even though it were on land that he wanted to clear for use. Mr. Williams suggested that a considerable quantity of sandalwood was being burnt. The owner of private property should be entitled to pull sandalwood and stack it, and market it in accordance with a license. If that were provided all the requirements of the Government would be satisfied. Once the wood was pulled and stacked, the owner would have an asset, and in the event of his desiring to sell the property or finance the property, he would have that asset to fall back on. He would simply await a license before putting it on the market. If the Bill were amended in the direction I have indicated, I think it would be greatly improved.

HON. J. R. BROWN (North-East) [5.25]: I do not think members realise the far-reaching effect of this Bill, especially as regards the pullers on the goldfields. I cannot see any way in which the measure can be dealt with, short of rejecting it. The fly in the ointment is this: the Government see that a certain quantity of wood is leaving the State on which they are not receiving royalty. Eight or nine years ago the royalty was about 5s. per ton, after which it was raised to £2 per ton. Now the Government are receiving £9 per ton, and on an export of 6,000 tons, they would be receiving about £54,000 per annum. To provide that a man may not pull wood on his own property is going a little too far. When a man has purchased or is purchasing land, whatever is on it belongs to him, and I cannot see why the Government should step in and place restrictions upon him. Mr. Williams said the Government could get the £9 per ton royalty on wood from alienated land. That is not right. The Hampton Plains Estate consists of about

170,000 acres and something like £5 per ton royalty is paid to the company. If they had to pay another £9 to the Government, it would mean a big amount. Some years ago sandalwood getting was a great boon to prospectors. A man went out prospecting and, when he had spent his last shilling and could get no further credit from the storekeeper, he would obtain a horse and cart, a chain from one of the old mines, an axe, and a bag of tucker and go into the bush after sandalwood. The storekeeper would give him credit on his new enterprise, whereas he would not give him further credit to chase the weight. The man would go out for six or eight months, make a cheque and then resume prospecting. Under this Bill that type of man will be cut clean out of the business. A few years ago South Australia did not market any sandalwood. The Government here now say that the quantity is to be limited to 6,000 tons a year. What is 6,000 tons of sandalwood amongst 400,000,000 Chinamen? Not a bite apiece, and a lot of them would go without his joss sticks. South Australia is to market 2,500 tons of wood, and that will reduce the quantity to be marketed by Western Australia to 3,500 tons. Of that 3,500 tons 10 per cent., or 350 tons per annum, is to be allowed for wood pulled on private property. That is not a fair proposition. Who will get the benefit of it? The man who is prospering on his holding; the man who has taken up land for wheat growing and is clearing his land. Normally, the sandalwood pulled on his property would be burnt, because he would get only half or three-quarters of a truckload, and being distant from a railway he could not cart it to the railway. The wood is really in his way and he burns it, though it is valuable wood, worth probably £70 or £80 per ton in China. If that man could get a market, the position would be all right; but he cannot unless some buyer outside the combine comes along with an offer. I know of pullers who have paid private property owners up to £20 per ton for their wood, the pullers making the other £5 or £6. The passing of the 1923 measure caused great indignation on the fields; indeed, one could hardly go there without being pulled up and questioned as to what Parliament had done in regard to sandalwood. From the hustings in 1924 the Government announced that the sandalwood contract was for only 12 months, at the end of which period it would be cancelled. However, upon the expiry of the 12 months it was announced that the arrangement would continue. That was another bomb. The Government saw there was a big thing in it for them. They forget, however, that the present Bill, if passed, will have more far-reaching effects than they anticipate. One of its effects will be to strengthen the position of South Australia and Queensland. Sandalwood is being got in Queensland now, though only to the extent of two or three hundred tons annually. Still, there is good sandalwood in that State, which has not yet woke up to the fact that China offers a market for the commodity. If we allow the present arrangement to continue, we shall drive our sandalwood getters out of the country, since they can pull only such limited quantities and then have to be in favour with Paterson and Company in order to obtain an order. Any man to get an order must grease somebody's palm—

Members: Not now.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: True, we have a board now; and that is all right as regards seeing that no more palm-greasing is done. But the Government, in looking out for number one, will kill the sandalwood industry. Under the existing arrangement Western Australia during the last four years has lost the sale of about 8,000 tons of sandalwood from Crown and private lands. That allocation has gone to South Australia, and represents a loss to Western Australia, in that short space of time, of no less than £240,000. There is a dwindling of our sandalwood trade year by year, and eventually there will be no market at all for our product. Supplies will go from South Australia and Queensland, while this State will be cut out of the industry altogether. The passing of the Bill will be attended by results which are unexpected. I have here a letter from Kalgoorlie, and propose to read extracts from it. It encloses a cutting from the "Kalgoorlie Miner," which, however, it is not necessary for me to read. The covering letter says:—

> The letter attached hereto appeared in the "Miner" of this date . . . . I am writing on behalf of Mr. . . . . and several other prominent residents, who all consider the measure referred to another grossly unfair attempt to further injure the goldfields and districts, as, if this measure is carried, it will not only throw a lot of hard workers on the labour market, but by depriving them of their means of livelihood force them into other avenues, and also, as happened previously, drive the pick of them to the other States. And you may

rest assured (now that the matter is gaining more publicity daily) that by strenuously opposing this Bill you will have the endorsement of the great bulk of the back-country men behind you; and we earnestly hope that your colleagues and yourself will use every effort to have this matter thoroughly ventilated before it is finalised, and (as we hope) ultimately thrown out.

I have here also a circular which certain sandalwood pullers proposed to send to members of this Chamber. However, if a circular of that kind is sent to members, they see it is headed "Sandalwood," and say "It does not interest me," and throw it in the waste-paper basket.

Members: We all have copies.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: Hon. members should not be in such a hurry; they have not copies of what I propose to read. It is as follows:—

(1) Under our agreement with our buyers in Hongkong we have made contracts with our cutters, who have in turn engaged a large number of men in cutting sandalwood; and they have entered into arrangements with storekeepers on the goldfields to supply their stores. (2) No warning was given that the Government intended taking this drastic measure, which would be only fair, as we entered into an agreement with the combine's representative in Hongkong in good faith and with the full knowledge and approval of the Conservator of Forests. (3) If this Bill is passed, it will be disastrous to us, our cutters, and storekeepers who are financing the cutters with stores. (4) Should the Bill be passed, we consider we should be given at least three months' grace to enable us to clean up our contracts with our cutters; and we are of opinion that special consideration should be given to the following points:—(a) That special time be determined for the new arrangements to take effect, say, February, to enable us to clean up our stocks on hand, also to enable the cutters reasonable time to clean up their contracts with the men. (b) That special consideration be given our cutters, providing they are otherwise entitled, to obtain Crown land orders in the future, and that they will not be victimised owing to having been employed by us on private lands, the board having refused pullers grants who were employed on private property on the ground that they were in competition with the board.

It is unfair that anyone should be victimised because of having pulled sandalwood off private lands. The House does not realise the magnitude of this question from a goldfields point of view. Mr. Stephenson, I think, spoke just to air himself a little, and without having gone thoroughly into the question. This time he is behind the Government, and letting us know that he is behind them.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: I am not like some of the pullers, who pray: "Save me from my friends."

Hon. J. R. BROWN: I do not know that the sandalwood puller has too many friends. I hope the Bill will receive unhurried consideration. There are men pulling who have contracts with China for two years ahead, and those contracts are not yet cancelled. In one case pullers have 170 tons of wood ready for shipment; and the passing of the measure will cut them clean out of the market without a moment's warning. That would be most unfair. I repeat, hon. members would do well to consider the Bill thoroughly before passing it.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.41]: I cannot subscribe to statements which have been made as to insincerity on the part of some hon. members. The Bill contains a principle which should receive most careful consideration, inasmuch as it involves interference with the individual in the disposal of the products of his land. My desire is not to appear in a false light. I consider that as a rule a man should be permitted to do pretty well as he likes with the products of his land, so long as he does not act detrimentally towards other people; but in this case there are exceptional circumstances which I consider warrant the measure. Prior to the regulation of the sandalwood industry the Government received, I understand, about £2 per ton royalty. Then the royalty was raised to £9 per ton, and it was provided that the pullers should receive £16 per ton; but evidently it was overlooked that the high price would have the effect of putting on the market considerable quantities of sandalwood from private lands, in competition with the high-cost product. Sandalwood on private property, not being subject to royalty, would be able and has proved able to compete unfairly with the wood of licensees obtaining supplies from Crown lands. The result, I am informed, is that large stocks have accumulated at Fremantle, and that unless some such action as that contemplated by the Bill is taken, stocks will continue to accumulate. The Bill seeks to restrict the unfair competition, and only for a brief period, though a period long enough to allow some respite to the people who have money sunk in accumulated stocks. I have here figures vouched for by a man well known in the sandalwood business, showing the extent and

value of stocks held in Western Australia, South Australia and China, as well as the amount of royalty which the Western Australian Government have received. I am informed that there are 7,654 tons of sandalwood held in Western Australia, the cost value of which is £206,388.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is, if it has been paid for.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Of that total value the Government have received, in royalty, approximately £64,000. That is a large amount of money for firms to have idle, and with no prospect of relief, owing to unfair competition. These exceptional circumstances, in my opinion, warrant the Bill. I am also informed that South Australia has accumulated stocks of 2,000 tons of sandalwood, valued at £50,000, awaiting opportunity of shipment and sale. In China, I am given to understand, there are stocks of 3,240 tons of Western Australian sandalwood and 800 tons of South Australian awaiting sale, the total value of the sandalwood awaiting sale there being £135,760. If we add to that the value of the stocks held in Western Australia and South Australia, we find that there is £392,148 worth of sandalwood awaiting sale. Sandalwood is a commodity for which there is a restricted demand, and for that reason I think we can safely support the Government in this Bill.

On motion by Hon. E. H. H. Hall, debate adjourned.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Roads Closure (No. 2).

2, Fremantle Endowment Lands.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—HOSPITAL FUND.

Second Reading.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [5.49] in moving the second reading said: I have taken an unusual course in connection with the Bill, and it is incumbent upon me to justify the attitude I propose to take up. At the outset I desire to thank the Chief Secretary for giving me this opportunity to place the Bill before the House. Hon. members will remember that on two occasions the Government submitted to us a Bill to provide for the financing of our hospitals. The Bill contained two major principles. One dealt with taxation, and it was proposed to create another taxing authority in the shape of the Public Health Department. The other principle involved the payment of subsidies from the tax to private hospitals. We were able to amicably adjust the position regarding taxation, and it was agreed by both Houses that there should be one tax gatherer, the Commissioner of Taxation, and that the Health Department should not create another taxing branch. With regard to the subsidies to be payable to private hospitals, however, we were not able to reach an agreement. Clause 10 of the Bill that was rejected on that occasion contained the following provision:—

> Whenever a contributor to the fund, or the dependant of a contributor, receives treatment in a private hospital, or in a private ward of a public hospital, the department shall pay to the hospital authority a subsidy at the prescribed rate towards the hospital charges for such treatment.

The subclause also went on as follows:—

> Such payments may be made by way of refund to the patient, on production of receipts for payment by him of the hospital charges, or may be made to the hospital, so as to afford a corresponding reduction of the charge for hospital service to the patient.

We appointed a select committee to consider the Bill and we were told by medical gentlemen who gave evidence that if such a provision were agreed to, there would be created a number of mushroom institutions that in course of time would claim, by reason of the subsidies they could collect under the provisions of the Bill, to be entitled to goodwill. The Council could not agree to the provision I have read, and at a subsequent conference between the managers of this House and those representing another place, our managers stood firm and the Bill was lost. Since then our hospitals have been languishing in a parlous condition, not knowing how to pay their way. Last year the Children's Hospital received a subsidy of £7,000 from the Government and collected £22,000, but was still unable

to pay its way. I understand that the Perth Hospital was in a similar position. During the recess, the authorities in control of the hospitals I have mentioned, discussed the position with the officers of the Public Health Department and with the Minister for Health (Hon. S. W. Munsie). The result was that the Minister agreed to delete the provisions relating to private hospitals from the Bill, and to confine the measure to the payment of subsidies to public hospitals and to contributors to the fund, who might require to go to private hospitals and might therefore claim the subsidy. The Bill was drawn up on those lines and was handed to me. I perused it and said I was in favour of it and that, although it got rid of the proposed payments to private institutions and the consequent creation of goodwill for those hospitals, it still involved the question of the establishment of intermediate wards at our public hospitals. I said I thought the majority of the members of this House would also be in favour of the Bill, so long as the private hospitals were cut out and that the man who paid the tax was the man who would receive the subsidy. I want to tell hon. members the whole story so that they will know exactly where I stand. Although it may not perhaps be necessary to tell all the details, I shall do so, Members will thus appreciate the position. It was represented to me that the Government could not introduce the Bill again even on the lines that are now proposed, and it was suggested that we should arrange a deputation from those members of the Legislative Council who were in favour of the new proposal, to wait on the Premier and, after assuring him that there was a chance of its being agreed to, ask him to introduce it. I said I could not do that, and that personally I would not be party to such a proceeding. I said I did not think hon. members of this chamber would be in favour of going as a deputation to the Premier in such circumstances. I said that the best thing to do if the Bill was acceptable to the Government, was for members of the Council to discuss it themselves and the best assurance the Government could get would be the Bill itself as approved by the Council. Mr. Law and Mr. Horace Jones saw me and handed me the Bill, which had been prepared by the Public Health Department and approved by the Minister for Health (Hon. S. W. Munsie). I saw the Minister later and he impressed upon me the fact that the Premier must be seen and that Mr. Collier must have some assurance as to what would happen if the Bill were presented to members here in its present form. I told Mr. Munsie that if he approved the Bill as handed to me, I would move the second reading and he could see what the Council would do. That is what I am doing now. The Bill that is now before hon. members is exactly the same Bill as we agreed to in a previous session, without an additional "i" dotted or "t" crossed.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is this Bill in the form in which the other Bill left this Chamber last session?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes, except Clause 10.

Hon. J. Cornell: Half of the clauses are printed in italics and we cannot alter them.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The hon. member knows why portion of the Bill is printed in italics: it does not make any difference at all. Those parts printed in italics are in order under our own Standing Orders, and are in accordance with the practice of Parliament.

Hon. J. Cornell: Yes, but we cannot move requests on those portions, once the Bill is passed in this Chamber.

Hon. A LOVEKIN: If the hon. member reads up Parliamentary practice, he will know that before the third reading is agreed to and the Bill sent to the Legislative Assembly, I will have to move that the words in italics be struck out. Then the Bill will be printed with the words now in italics appearing in erased type. In that form the Bill will be received by the Assembly. In another place the Government may require to provide a Message, but I am not sure on that point because I think they have a Message now. It will be for the member in charge of the Bill in the Assembly to move to insert the clauses that will appear in the Bill in erased type. I do not contend that that is a common practice, but is is not unknown.

Hon. J. Cornell: I am merely pointing out that if the Bill came from another place, then this House could request amendments to clauses that now appear in the Bill in italics.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Quite so, but the hon. member appreciates the fact that the words appear in italics in order to avoid the point being raised in another place that

the Bill provides something in the nature of appropriation. Hon. members know that the words appearing in italics are word for word with the corresponding provisions in the Bill that we agreed to last session. There can be no controversy between us on that phase. The only controversy possible is in connection with Clause 10, which differs from Clause 10 of the Bill of last session, which was thrown out in the end. The clause of the Bill we threw out contained this passage—

Whenever a contributor to the fund, or the dependant of a contributor, receives treatment in a private hospital or in a private ward of a public hospital, the department shall pay to the hospital authority a subsidy at the prescribed rate towards the hospital charges for such treatment. Such payments may be made by way of *refund to the patient on production of receipts* for payment by him of the hospital charges.

That was the Bill as submitted to us.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: The department had the option of paying either way: to the hospital or to the private individual.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The department had no option at all.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Under the old Bill they had the option.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The department had no option under the old Bill. It was provided that the department shall pay the subsidy to the hospital authorities. The hospital had to come first. It was provided that payments might be made by way of refund to the patient on the production of receipts for payment by him to the hospital. But, under the old Bill, first of all the obligation was to pay the private hospital, and so establish institutions that presently, when the subsidy should be withdrawn, would call upon the State to pay goodwill. The new proposal materially differs from that. Subclause 3 of Clause 10 of the Bill before the House reads as follows:—

Whenever a contributor to the fund is unable to obtain suitable accommodation in a public hospital, and in consequence has been compelled to enter a private hospital, he may make application to the department for a subsidy towards the charges for services rendered to him at such private hospital, and the department on being satisfied that the period during which such contributor has remained in such private hospital has not been prolonged unduly, may reimburse him to an extent which shall not exceed 6s. for each and every day on which his retention as a patient in such private hospital is justified for medical or surgical reasons. Such reimbursement shall be made by way of refund to the patient.

Not to the hospital.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I think I would rather deal with a few hospitals than with a large number of patients.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: That is for the department to consider. Already we in this House have said we will not have the private hospital provided for in the Bill, because they will multiply and we shall be creating a goodwill for them when we come to provide the intermediate wards in our public hospitals and cease the subsidy to private hospitals.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: We have also said we would not pay the patient in a private hospital.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not think so. If a man has been paying his tax and contributions for several years, are we to give him nothing at all when he falls sick? If he is bona fide in a private hospital he will get the subsidy, but if he is malingering in a private hospital——

Hon. W. J. Mann: Do men malinger there?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: That was one of the reasons why we threw out the original private hospital proposal. We have a lot of unemployment at the present time. What is to prevent mushroom, or bogus private hospitals being established and saying to the unemployed, "You are pretty tired and want a rest. Come in here and we will give you 10s. a week for cigarettes and free board and lodging." Then the private hospital proceeds to draw a subsidy of two guineas a week, and so can well afford to give the patient 10s. a week for cigarettes. Under this proposal a patient in a private hospital has to satisfy the department he has not been malingering, and that his presence in the hospital was necessary for medical or surgical attention. Under the old Bill there was no check whatever on him.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: He required to have a doctor's certificate.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: No, he did not.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Under this Bill he will have to say he was unable to obtain suitable accommodation in a public hospital. What is the interpretation of "suitable"?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I should say it would depend on the station in life of the patient, or on the particular accommodation he requires. Instead of going into a ward, he might wish to have a private room.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Suppose he said a public hospital was not a suitable place to be in, and so he went off to a private hospital.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The Bill does not say a public hospital is not a suitable place for him, but that a public hospital had not suitable accommodation for him.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Has the patient to make application to a public hospital and be refused before he is eligible for this benefit?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: No. He finds himself unable to obtain suitable accommodation in a public hospital, and so he goes into a private hospital. What is wrong with that?

Hon. E. H. Harris: Under this clause, could not the patients declare a public hospital black, and all go to private hospitals?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not know what labour unions can do. Sometimes they call black, things that are really white; I cannot tell what extraordinary things people may do. But we have to try to provide the means of allowing our hospitals to carry on, and if we do not provide the means by this Bill, we shall have to provide them in another way, for the hospitals must be properly supported. A number of members are complaining of taxation.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Cannot the Government economise by cutting out their trading concerns and giving to the hospitals the money lost on those trading concerns today?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Country members are very keen about a big reduction in the land tax. How can they hope to get anything of the sort if the Government have to find additional thousands for the hospitals? The one saving grace of the Bill introduced by the Government last year was that everybody had to contribute to the tax, instead of its being left to the few income tax and land tax payers that we have on the list. If we do not make some such provision for the hospitals, they will still have to be provided for, and so taxation will have to be raised against the ordinary taxpayer. The present land tax would be fully required to make good the deficiency.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Do you think the Government will reduce the land tax if we pass the Bill?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: That is a question I cannot answer. But what I can say is that there is infinitely more chance of the land tax being reduced if the Bill be passed, because the amount produced by this Bill will not then have to be taken from the land tax. So the land tax might then be reduced, for the Government could not say, "We cannot reduce the land tax, because we have to make extra payments to the hospitals." The tax proposed in the Bill is an equitable one, because the whole of the community has every right to look after its sick. The Bill does provide for that. It makes an attempt to compel all classes, not merely wealthy men, to contribute something towards the care of the sick, which is a very proper thing. The Government have behaved fairly in this matter by saying, "Although we have been in favour of paying this subsidy to private hospitals, we will agree now to pay it to the individual who has paid his tax or contributions to the fund."

Hon. G. W. Miles: When did the Government say that?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The Premier in another place said their objection was to taxing a man and giving him nothing for it. I think the Chief Secretary in this House said the same thing.

The Honorary Minister: That is very different from what you said just now.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I say the Government have agreed to the principle of this Bill. I tell members that the text of this Bill was handed to me from the health authorities and that it has the approval of the Minister for Health; for when I saw him I had the Bill as it was handed to me from the health authorities. So I think I am justified in saying the Government have approved of the Bill. What is more, the Minister for Health said, not only to me but to others, that if we could give the Premier an assurance that the Bill would get through this House, it would be put up, but not otherwise. It is for that reason I am taking the unusual course of putting up the Bill to the House.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Have you given the necessary assurance that it will pass this House?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: No, I could not do that.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Why do not the Government put up their own measures?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I have twice told the hon. member that the Government, having put this up twice, were not disposed to put it up a third time without an assurance that it would meet with the approval of this House.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Well, what assurance have they?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: No assurance, unless this House passes the Bill. I am testing the House to see whether it is agreeable to passing a Bill that eliminates all payments to private hospitals and makes the payment to the man who contributes to the fund, if it is necessary for him to go into a private hospital. If the hon. member can suggest anything more equitable, I shall be pleased to learn it. It is only right and fair that we should all contribute to the tax, and that we should receive some benefit from the fund if necessary.

The Honorary Minister: Why did you not agree to that principle last session?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I could not agree that the subsidy should be paid to private hospitals.

The Honorary Minister: But the principle you have just enunciated.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I did agree to that principle. The hon. member knows it.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. A. LOVEKIN: Before tea I said I would produce the Bill as it was handed to me from the department. It shows the interdelineations of the officers in their own handwriting. I have not altered a single word. I will place it on the Table of the House so that members may see it. The action I am taking is in accordance with the report of the select committee, which reads—

1. In view of the evidence your committee is unable to advise the passing of the Bill in its present form. 2. In the alternative your committee suggests—(a) that the Bill be recast for the purpose of dissociating the collection of the tax from the distribution of it.

That was carried.

(b) That so much of paragraph 3 of Clause 10 of the Bill as provides for payment to private hospitals be omitted.

It is with paragraph 3 alone that I am now dealing in this Bill.

(c) That intermediate wards be provided at public hospitals as early as possible. 3. That as the need for further financial aid in respect to public hospitals is urgent it is advisable that some measure of relief be established without delay.

I was a member of that committee, and am trying to give effect to its recommendations. The vital points of the report which I stress are "That so much of paragraph 3 of Clause 10 of the Bill as provides for payment to private hospitals be omitted." There is no reference to payment to contributors to the fund. Following upon that the Minister offered a suggestion, "Why was it not put up before?" I put up practically and substantially what is in this clause now—not the same phrasing—but with a little more added to it, and both Ministers had a copy of this at the time. It cannot be said that I kept anything back.

The Honorary Minister: Did not the hon. member vote against it?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Not against the report of the select committee.

The Honorary Minister: Against the proposal.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I voted against Clause 10, Subclause 3 of the Bill as it stood, providing as it did that a subsidy should be paid to private hospitals. I did not have the opportunity to vote for the other. I submitted it to Ministers, who turned it down. It was substantially the same thing as now submitted to me and which appears in this Bill.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There is something in the Bill about payment to intermediate hospitals.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: We agreed to that. The first charge upon the fund was to be the establishment of intermediate wards. That was agreed to beforehand.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Has the Premier agreed to this proposal?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not know whether he has agreed to it or not.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Who are "they"?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The Minister for Health, the Minister in charge of the Bill.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Has he given his endorsement?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Does he give his endorsement to the new Clause 10 (3)?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes. That clause was submitted by him to me.

Hon. E. H. Harris: By the Minister?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It came to me from the Minister through Messrs. Law and Horace Jones, who had seen the Minister. I saw the Minister myself after they had given it to me. He approved of it and told me it would be all right if the Premier approved. They could not put up the Bill again. The Minister said he would accept the Bill if he had an assurance that the Council approved it, and he said that the Premier would accept it if he received that assurance.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You said you did not know whether the Premier had approved of it.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not know. I have not spoken to the Premier about it. I know only what I am told. The Minister said the Premier would require an assurance, and I told him the best assurance we could give would be the Bill.

Hon. E. H. Harris: We may be able to give him that assurance later on.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I hope so. I suppose the Government want it. I have not put this up as so much political propaganda. I do not want it to be said that the responsibility is upon this House for the existing state of affairs. I do not like another taxing Bill. There is too much taxation already. The only hope we have of reducing taxation is to provide some other means of raising revenue. If we want the land tax reduced we can only hope to bring this about by providing some fund for hospital maintenance.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Government found extra money behind the Arbitration Court award to give to the railway employees. This ran into hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not want to say too much about the financial aspect. Undoubtedly money is fairly tight.

Hon. H. Stewart: There is a reason for it. Money would not be so tight if £200,000 a year had not gone to the railways.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I only know what did happen and what the position is to-day. The whys and wherefores do not matter much. We know that only half the loan money is available this year compared with last year. Taxation must be kept up.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are you putting this up for the party?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I am with Mr. Holmes: there are no parties here.

Hon. C. B. Williams: He is the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: At all events, I am on the hon. member's side of the House. I look upon a Hospitals Bill as a temporary measure to tide over a difficult time. If this goes through, I am going to bring down its corollary in the form of a Premium Bonds Bill. Under the Premium Bonds Bill I wish to raise money for hospitals and parks to enable us to get away from this Bill altogether.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: How shall we get money under that?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I will show the hon. member when I come to the Bill. It has been done elsewhere with great success, and if it can be done here we shall get rid of this legislation. I hope in four years' time at the most we shall be able to do without hospital Acts, and that the other means of raising revenue will take their place. I hope members will see the difficulty of the position, and will have regard for the condition of our hospitals, and realise that something must be done. I do not want to take the responsibility, as a member of this House, of casting aside this hospitals legislation.

Hon. G. W. Miles: We did not cast it aside. The Government dropped the Bill last year.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Because you amended it in such away that it did not suit them.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not say we cast aside the last Bill, but I do not want to see this one cast aside. It is one the Government ought to accept if they mean anything. If they do not mean what they said when they handed over this Bill, the responsibility must be with them and not with us.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is this a Government Bill?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It is a Bill which in a sense, is a Government Bill, and it is one which has the approval of the Minister responsible for this department. It was handed to me as being practically his Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [7.43]: It will be acknowledged by all members that the course adopted in respect to this Bill is somewhat unusual. The first question which naturally presents itself to one's mind is, was it not a measure that should have been introduced by the Government, so as to have ensured some

measure of success in its pasage through both Houses?

Hon. A. Lovekin: The Government said they would not introduce it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Precisely. Mr. Lovekin has taken upon himself the responsibility of introducing the Bill. He asked some questions, and received certain replies. These indicated that the Government was not disposed to introduce such a Bill, because the Bills previously presented did not receive approbation. I hardly think that was sufficient excuse for the Government omitting to take the responsibility of a measure such as this. Because of the great need, which we are informed exists at present and has existed for some time, of our hospital institutions, I think the responsibility did lie with the Government. I believe that some of those institutions are finding the greatest possible difficulty in providing for the needs of their numerous patients and I contend—and I am sure every other hon. member will agree—that a duty is cast upon that section of the community that is enjoying good health, to contribute towards those who are sick, and also to relieve their distress. Naturally, the first thing we would ask is whether this Bill provides for what is required. Mr. Lovekin has told us that it is an exact copy of the Bill that was previously presented to this House, with the exception of Subclause 3 of Clause 10.

Hon. G. W. Miles: As the Bill left this House?

Hon. A. Lovekin: As it was agreed to before it went to the conference.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Is this Bill, with the exception of Clause 10, a replica of the Bill as it went from this House to another place in its amended form?

Hon. A. Lovekin: I will give you the Minister's memorandum on that. He says this is a recast as agreed to by both Houses.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: With the exception of Clause 10?

Hon. A. Lovekin: Yes.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We have reached the point where both Houses were agreed, and really there is only one clause in contention; that is Subclause 3 of Clause 10.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And there is a consequential amendment in the interpretation clause.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If other hon. members admit, as I am prepared to admit, there is need for relief being extended, we must agree that something will have to be done in the direction indicated in the Bill. But I am prompted to say something about a difficulty that must arise. Under our Standing Orders we are not entitled —and I think Mr. Lovekin is aware of the particular Standing Order—to make any amendment or discuss any clause printed in italics.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is open to a member to put in an amendment in Roman letters if he likes; that will not be out of order.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No; the question could be raised or debated upon that particular clause.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It cannot be put.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That handicaps us somewhat in dealing with this particular feature of the Bill. The difficulty surrounding it was suggested by Dr. Saw's interjection regarding the payments to be made under that subclause. According to the subclause, payment has to be made to the individual, and he in turn will be asked to make payment to the hospital.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It does not say that.

Hon. H. Stewart: Paragraph (c) needs to be amended.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It would be necessary to suggest a safeguarding clause.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You can suggest an amendment.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But no question can be put.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You can move an amendment.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If, under our Standing Orders, no question can be put, then an amendment can hardly be accepted.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You can do it by way of additional proviso: it can easily be done if you want to do it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The only way it could be done, subject to the President's ruling, would be to move a new clause. The whole discussion will move around that clause, in view of the fact that this House actually agreed to the principle of the Bill on a former occasion. The matter will demand the very careful thought of every hon. member here in view of the need for the Bill, and the desire to try to assist the Government to relieve the anxiety of the people who have to seek the aid of these institutions. I will support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [7.54]: I should like to see the Government introduce the Bill in accordance with the principles advanced by Mr. Lovekin. The

discussion will hinge on Subclause 3 of Clause 10 and in the explanatory note we find this paragraph—

> In substitution of Clause 10 (3) in the previous Bill it is now proposed to eliminate the right of any private hospital to claim subsidy, and to confine the distribution of the fund to—(a) to public hospitals; (b) to those who have contributed to the fund and who, in consequence of not having been able to obtain suitable accommodation in a public hospital, have been compelled to enter a private hospital . . . .

I object to the word "suitable." If a person is admitted to a public hospital the accommodation will be suitable. To my mind "suitable" leaves the door open altogether too wide and allows too much discretion as to whom those payments shall be made. It seems unsatisfactory that we are not able to move an amendment in a matter like that.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [7.56]: Like other hon. members, I congratulate Mr. Lovekin on his initiative and public spiritedness in bringing forward this very necessary measure with a view to getting it passed. It is to be regretted the Government have not seen fit to submit the Bill, but if they will not present it, it is the clear duty of a private member to take on the task. With regard to the contentious clause, I have to thank Mr. Cornell for pointing out to me this afternoon something about I was not aware respecting a clause printed in italics; and also Mr. Nicholson for explaining the position this evening. I am unable to understand why it reads as it does. It says—

> Whenever a contributor to the fund is unable to obtain suitable accommodation in a public hospital, and, in consequence, has been compelled to enter a private hospital, he may make application to the department for a subsidy towards the charges for services rendered to him at such private hospital.

I take it members were willing to have the six shillings subsidy confined to patients in public hospitals. This is an endeavour to say that that shall be done but only in such cases where the public hospitals cannot accommodate a patient. I am wondering whether the Standing Orders can be overcome to enable us to strike out the word "suitable."

Hon. E. H. Harris: We can have a definition of "suitable."

Hon. H. Stewart: Strike out "suitable" and do not put anything in its place.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I fail to see why we require any such description there at all. We have not to go around to find out why Mr. Brown will not go to a public hospital, but prefers to go to a 10 or 12 guinea institution. I do not pretend to know any more about this Bill than any other member, but, like Dr. Saw, though he modestly disclaimed the other evening any knowledge about psychology, I have taken a great interest in this question. I am the secretary of the trustees' fund at the Geraldton hospital and also secretary of two bequests enjoyed by the Geraldton hospital, and I deem it my duty to the people I represent, and to the people of the State generally, to assist anybody—Government or private member—in trying to overcome this long-standing difficulty of providing decent accommodation for the sick throughout the State.

Hon. A. Lovekin: If the second reading be carried, I think I can show how effect can be given to what you want.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: No doubt many members have in mind that excellent institution, the Perth Hospital. Many country members rail about centralisation, but I as a country member think we have every reason to be grateful to the medical fraternity, the Government and in fact to all concerned on the manner in which the Perth Hospital is conducted. At the same time I should like to ask why the board controlling the Perth Hospital are not elected by the people who now contribute towards the maintenance of the institution. As members well know, the people who contribute to the committee-conducted hospitals in the country elect the committee, and it is a well-recognised principle that people should not spend money who take no part in raising it. For many years, for some reason that I cannot understand, successive Governments have taken the whole responsibility for appointing the members of the Perth Hospital Board.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Because the public contributions are so negligible.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The Government find the bulk of the money.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I would go further than Mr. Lovekin and say it has been only during the last 12 months that there have been any contributions at all. The Government, however, might well consider the advisableness of permitting some members of the committee to be elected by the

public and thus induce the people to take a greater interest in the hospital than they manifest at present. I wish to stress the point that not only would the passing of this Bill relieve the committee charged with the conduct of the Perth Hospital, but it would be gladly welcomed by the people engaged in conducting the many committee hospitals throughout the country.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [8.2]: I am in full sympathy with the object Mr. Lovekin has in view in endeavouring to make provision for proper hospital facilities, but when a Bill is so far-reaching in character, I think it is a measure for the Government of the day to introduce and sponsor. One half of the Bill is printed in italics.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We have not come to that yet.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I might say the essential part of the Bill is printed in italics. Our Standing Orders provide that no clause appearing in italics shall be put to the Committee.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We have not yet come to that point.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If a clause in italics, an essential feature of the Bill, cannot be put to the Committee and cannot be voted on, no discussion can take place on it.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Yes, there is plenty of precedent for discussion.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Ordinarily we deal with a Bill clause by clause and it is permissible to discuss the clauses, after which the Committee vote to pass, amend or delete each clause. After dealing with Clause 3 of this Bill, however, we should have simply to ignore Clause 4, which is in italics, and proceed by reading the marginal note to Clause 5. Clause 4 would not even be read to the Committee. We have another Standing Order providing that any clause appearing in italics shall, after the third reading, be struck out, but the fresh print of the Bill as transmitted to the Assembly shall contain such clause printed in erased type, and the same shall not be deemed to form part of the Bill.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is right.

Hon. J. CORNELL: In essence, all that portion of the Bill now printed in italics is no part of the Bill so far as this House is concerned, and the House has no say, voice or vote upon it. Although I as an individual might be agreeable to the Bill and the procedure proposed, there is something that far transcends those considerations. If the Bill had been introduced in its present form in another place, it would have come to this House as an ordinary Bill, and amendments could have been made to it as to an ordinary Bill. Whatever amendments were agreed upon would have been sent to another place in the form of requests. I feel that to deal with a Bill so far-reaching in effects as this one, in the manner proposed by Mr. Lovekin, would set up a dangerous precedent. For argument's sake, take the provision dealing with the tax. This is a machinery Bill that would necessarily be followed by a tax Bill, but this measure fixes the rate of tax at 1½d. in the pound and that clause is printed in italics.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is not the tax; it is the appropriation

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is the assessment, and a tax Bill would necessarily have to follow. The two measures could not be introduced together, and a tax Bill could not be initiated in this House. Many members may be in agreement with a hospital fund Bill, but there may be some disagreement because of circumstances that have arisen since the loss of the other measure, on the ground that a tax of 1½d. in the pound would be too great. If we accepted this Bill as it stands and it were approved by another place, we would have no further say in it.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Would it not come back to us?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Of course not, and therein lies the danger. If the Bill passed its third reading as printed and another placed passed it without amendment, would not that end it?

Hon. A. Lovekin: It must come back.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If another place did not amend it, we would be unable to do so. While I am anxious to help Mr. Lovekin, this House should not place itself in the position of setting up so dangerous a precedent. I do not pose as a constitutional authority, but I think that if it were permissible to pass the Bill in its present form, there would be nothing to prevent a member of this House from initiating a Bill to deal with the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, provided the clauses were

printed in italics. If the situation warrants the passing of a hospital fund Bill, the Government are the proper authorities to introduce it. I hope it is not too late in the session for the Government to do that. I cannot for the life of me see why the Government should have any objection to re-introducing the Bill if all that Mr. Lovekin has said he was told by the Minister for Health is correct.

The Honorary Minister: "If"!

Hon. J. CORNELL: If it is correct, there can be no reason for the Government not introducing a Bill. As to the point that if we passed the Bill and another place did not accept it, the onus of not making adequate provisions for hospitals would rest on the Government and not on this House, I cannot subscribe to that doctrine. The onus of the loss of the Bill last session is that of the Government and not of this House. A spirit of compromise could not prevail and the Bill was lost, not on a major issue, but on a minor issue. Although I could not express my opinion at the time —I was acting in your absence Mr President—I say now it was the greatest tactical blunder committed by the present Government that the Bill should have been lost on such a minor issue. The whole field of hospital accommodation and finance had been provided for even to the extent of passing a tax Bill to produce a revenue of something like £220,000 a year. Yet on a very minor issue, namely the payment of the subsidy to private hospitals, a system that was excellent in all its ramifications was jettisoned and the proper financing of our hospitals delayed indefinitely. I always like to help Mr. Lovekin to achieve his desires, but if the two Ministers responsible for the conduct of business in this House are not prepared to stand by the Bill and give an assurance that the Government will approve of it in its present form, there are only two courses open, one for Mr. Lovekin to withdraw the Bill, and the other for us to throw it out.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly, and read a first time.

BILL—MENTAL DEFICIENCY.

Second Reading—Amendment, Six Months, defeated.

Debate resumed from the 14th November.

HON. H. A. STEPHENSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.18]: I regret that the Government have introduced a Bill of this nature at the present juncture. We all know the financial position of the State to be precarious. Nevertheless, Ministers propose experimental legislation the carrying of which would involve the country in endless expense. The time seems utterly inopportune for the bringing-down of a Bill on a subject of which very few hon. members indeed have any knowledge. We should bear in mind the hundreds of unemployed in our cities and in the country districts, married men walking about all day long and part of the night looking for work vainly, unable to secure sufficient food for themselves and their families—a shocking state of affairs. Moreover, settlers have to cart water as far as 60 and 70 miles over roadless country; they lack reasonable means of transport, and other essential services. The Premier has stated repeatedly that the Government lack funds for necessary works. Almost daily we read of deputations waiting on the hon. gentleman with reference to problems such as I have mentioned. In almost every case the Premier is sympathetic, but replies that unfortunately money is not available. I contend, therefore, that the present time is highly inopportune for the passing of such a Bill as this. I listened attentively to what I may term the three big guns in the debate —the Honorary Minister, Dr. Saw, and Mr. Lovekin. When the matter is all boiled down, they have proved to us what we already know, that we still have amongst us idiots, imbeciles, and mental defectives. Dr. Saw, to whom in matters of this kind I look for guidance, has assured the House that he knows practically nothing of psychology. So far as I can gather, few persons in Western Australia have any acquaintance with the subject.

The Honorary Minister: That has nothing to do with the Bill.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: So far the arguments advanced by supporters of the Bill—and with the exception of Mr. Seddon every speaker has favoured the measure—have consisted of quotations. Dr. Saw quoted excerpts from a book also cited by

Mr. Lovekin. The Honorary Minister made references to experts in America and in the Old Country.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And the experts disagree.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Unfortunately the speakers omitted to show the other side of the picture. I propose to quote an extract from the "London Times" of the 16th November:—

Mental deficients. Sterilisation opposed by world famous expert. Dangers of birth control. "I know I am dropping a bomb," said Sir Robert Armstrong Jones, leading expert in mental diseases, challenging the arguments which Mr. Harold Cox, editor of the "Edinburgh Review," advanced when urging wider facilities for birth control among the lower classes and also voluntary sterilisation of the unfit at a lecture over which Sir Robert Armstrong Jones presided. "Large families are the greatest help, members assisting each other." He doubted whether there was any increase in mental deficiency, the apparent increase being due to more careful diagnosis. Moreover, mental deficiency was not found to be inherited. Personally he had discovered very little less evidence of it in the history of normal people's parents than in mental deficients. Moreover he could not see why afflicted people should be penalised. If they were going to sterilise mental deficients, why not criminals, drunkards, and political apostates?

Hon. A. Lovekin: Some of us would be sterilised.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Sir Robert adds—

Birth control has led to an increase in lunacy among women. My practice shows that the absence of children has caused neurasthenia among married women, leading to insanity. If we had birth control on a large scale, we would need lunatic asylums for mothers.

That is an entirely different proposition.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: He is in a great minority in his opinion.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: He is supposed to be one of the world's most famous experts in mental diseases. Only last night I had the pleasure of meeting a medical man who knows Sir Robert, and told me that Sir Robert's opinions are highly respected in every part of the British Empire, quite as highly as the opinions of any expert that has been quoted by hon. members painting the rosy side of the picture. We have had little or no authentic information. There has been a lot of balderdash about tracing the history of people in the United States back for 600 or 700 years. Those statements have not been verified. My experience is that men with fads of that description work out their own figures, which nobody takes the trouble to check. A man with a fad has only to start from false premises in order to evolve a theory that is wholly false. We have nothing to prove to us that the statements which have been made in support of the Bill are absolutely true. It has been said that there is a great decline in the Commonwealth's birth rate. The passing of this measure, I venture to say, with consequent sterilisation, would lead to further decline. The present average number of children per family is 1.6 Should the Bill be enacted, sterilisation, being thus legalised, will take place here wholesale. Holding such views, I move an amendment—

That the word "now" be struck out, and "this day six months" added to the motion.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (North-East) [8.27]: Mr. Stephenson has quoted Sir Robert Armstrong Jones. This evening's "Daily News" contains the following cable message from London:—

Lady Asquith, addressing an audience comprised mostly of women at the new health exhibition, declared that women, generally those interested in social work, favoured sterilisation of mental deficients. "Sir Robert Armstrong Jones, who does not see why these afflicted people should be penalised, is a great doctor, but he isn't a woman. No man can imagine the sufferings of women who know they cannot escape bearing defective children year after year."

I thought I would quote that extract in response to Mr. Stephenson's citation of Sir Robert. It is with much hesitancy I address myself to the Bill, realising that the question is mainly one for experts. However, I consider the Government deserving of credit for endeavouring to place such a measure on the statute-book. While not claiming to be especially thoughtful, I have wondered in my humble way for years past how it comes about that in this supposedly enlightened age, and in an enlightened and democratic community, we go on year after year without doing anything to promote in our own case that on which many people spend huge sums of money in connection with animal life—namely, improvement of the breed. I accept in all seriousness the statements made by Mr. Nicholson, but when I hear him saying that the time is not opportune owing to the straightened condition of the finances, I am reminded of the old saying, "The poor

we have always with us." Surely this is a measure which, although experts may disagree, the combined thought of the people as a whole will welcome. In addition to attempting to curtail the reproduction of those who are mentally deficient, I claim in all seriousness it is high time, in this young State of the Commonwealth, we made it more difficult for those who are physically defective to reproduce their species. Dr. Saw was brief in his remarks the other evening, but on a subject of this description we would be more disposed, despite his disclaimers, to listen to the hon. member, who is a medical man, than to a laymen such as his colleague, Mr. Lovekin, who was not quite so mercifully brief. With from seven to ten other hon. members, I felt it my duty to sit in my seat for a long time listening to Mr. Lovekin quoting extracts from documents and books relating to work undertaken in the United States of America. He gave us the results of the mating of deficient males and females. He gave us the records of some of these unfortunate people and traced the 250 descendants of some and showed how they had included criminals, prostitutes, thieves and so on. I wondered whether Mr. Lovekin was surprised at the results derived from the mating of two defectives. If he plants an apple tree, surely he will not expect to pick oranges later on! What else could we expect from the mating of mentally deficient males and females?

Hon. A. Lovekin: What do the Scriptures say?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am more in sympathy with Mr. Lovekin's Hospital Fund Bill than I was with him when he took up so much time of the House the other evening. Only to-day I came across an interesting book by Dr. Joseph Collins, who has evidently given a lot of attention to this important matter in the United States. Dr. Collins bears out what Mr. Stephenson told us on a subject of which we have heard so much in Parliament and regarding which articles have appeared in the local Press. I refer to that mythical word: "Psychology." With reference to the prevention of physically-deficient persons from propogating their species, I have in mind one instance that I would relate. I know people claim that isolated instances should not be made use of to judge a general question, but how else can we profit by experience? The business in which I am interested has had to lose the services of a very fine young fellow who was working behind the grocery counter. He was married over 12 months ago, just sufficiently long to enable a new life to be brought into the world. The father of the young man was very well known in town, and died from tuberculosis. As a layman, I have always thought that the boy suffered from the disease. It is now apparent when he is about 25 years old, and he has had to give up his position because he is in an advanced stage of tuberculosis. That boy has never worked in a mine, but unfortunately he has been allowed to marry and a child has been brought into the world without a fighting chance. On this point Dr. Collins says—

> Successful education of children rests on two fundamentals: Love and facts. The person who has not both cannot be the ideal teacher. That is one of the reasons why celibacy and pedagogy are enemies. There should be a teacher of social hygiene attached to every public and private school. He should teach the principles of bodily and spiritual health. The obstacle to the success of such a department would be the teacher. Unless he were the right sort, could separate sheep from goats, venemous serpents from benign, and had the right outlook on life, more harm than good might result to the pupil. The right outlook is the biological one. To have sex taught by a celibate woman, stored with sex-repressions, or by a pious man spiritually warped by vicarious sex appeasement in his youth, or by one whose sex endowment is feeble or errant, as is the case in so many private schools and colleges to-day, is to stage a tragedy. But the solution of the problem should not be beyond pedagogy and administration. A country that can accept the risk attached to the activities of so-called psycho-analysts would not be hazarding its chances of salvation by instituting departments of social hygiene in its schools.

Dealing with psychology, he says—

> Psychology had its origin with Wundt, Fechner, Helmholtz, and Darwin. Alexander Bain was its first populariser for English readers. It has been a science of promise, not of fulfilment. It has had workers and exponents who earned great fame such as James, Hall, Stout, Stumpf, Kulpe, Ebbinghaus, and it has had scores of men with natural reputations such as Ladd, Cattell, Witmer, Starbuck, Munsterberg, McDougall, Titchner, Woodward, Thorndike, but it has not made any fundamental contribution that has influenced man or his conduct. Any that approximated it have come from men who did not profess to be psychologists, such as Galton, Helmholtz, Darwin. No one identified with the science has so far been able to make a new formulation of the philosophy of nature.

When one asks that mythical creature, the man in the street, "What is psychology?" he answers promptly and correctly: "It is the science of the mind." When asked, "What is the mind?" he says, "Oh, you know what the mind is."

He means: No one knows. We know that it is an endowment of the human body which has a brain. And to this mythical man of the street the brain is the organ of the mind. It would not particularly advantage him to be told that physiologists and psychologists hold that every cell of the body is concerned in the genesis and display of the mind.

The brain generates the mind from material furnished it by the body and having generated it stores it or passes it over to the body to distribute. The result of distribution is human action, conduct, life. All that we have learned about its generation, storing and distribution has been organised and systematically formulated. Psychology is the science of this formulation. It was once wedded to metaphysics, but it has been divorced, and the former partners no longer speak; indeed, they scarcely bow.

Apart from the psychological phase of the question, we will be well advised, as legislators, to place the Bill on the statute-book. During the Committee stage we can discuss any new department that I think will be advisable. I read with pleasure in the "West Australian" this morning a statement by the secretary of the School-teachers' Union, Mr. Thomas, and I am in favour of the views he expressed. I think this question should be worked out in conjunction with the Education Department.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [8.40]: My remarks will be brief and I intend to refrain, more or less, from generalities. On the question of the proper control of mental deficients, surely there can be no two opinions. We agree to put a certain class of individual in durance vile for certain offences. In some instances we order them to be kept in detention during the term of their natural lives. Sanity is merely a question of degree, but we agree to segregate those who are mentally defective. We have accepted the dictum of the medical fraternity, although doctors may differ, on the question of insanity. Consequently we segregate in institutions those unfortunates who are deficient from that standpoint. We accept the decision of the medical fraternity as to whether such patients should be discharged or retained in our asylums. As I understand the Bill, it merely extends that line of reasoning to mental deficients and places the diagnosis in the hands of people best qualified to judge. There can be no two opinions about that. The Bill is a measure that is long overdue. As to the machinery, I agree with Dr. Saw that the Tasmanian board is a better one than that suggested in the Bill. It certainly looks to me a more workable board. I have been accused of being a great champion of woman in our domestic and public affairs. I still hold that, in all departments, my experience has been that woman is not the equal of man in all things. One thing that has surprised me, when I carry my mind back to the time when we discussed the compulsory reporting of venereal diseases and the galleries of the Chamber were filled to overflowing with women who opposed the provisions of that legislation, is that now no woman's voice has been raised on the question of sterilisation. Some members have regarded that as the most important feature of the Bill. To my mind it is a minor feature. Sterilisation is not made mandatory under the provisions of the Bill. I think every safeguard should be provided in respect of the application of sterilisation. If there are any technicalities in the way, I am sure Dr. Saw will see to it that the operation is made voluntary.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: In the Bill it is quite voluntary.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Much has been said about the United States and what is being done there. Some four years ago I had the pleasure of visiting the United States. I there met a Senator for the State of Missouri, who had been in the Senate House of Congress for 21 years and is still there. I spent a delightful two hours with him. He summed up America by saying, "I suppose, Cornell, you have discovered that America is what the world says it is, a nation of cranks and fanatics. You hear of their successes, which are very few, but you seldom hear of their failures." I do not think that sterilisation in the United States has the hold that many people would have us believe. To me an extraordinary feature that sterilisation has taken within recent years is that invariably it is advocated by elderly people, who have run their race and ought to be satisfied. On this question of sterilisation all sensible men and women would advocate caution. It ought not be made arbitrary that sterilisation should be carried to the extent that many people argue it should go. I have been surprised at one feature of this debate: Some

members have compared the human family with the beasts of the field, telling us that breeders have set out to improve their stock by sterilisation, etc. That is a very regrettable feature of the debate and one that does not redound to our credit. Because if we carry that action by the breeders to its logical conclusion, we find that they did not hesitate to kill off any inferior line of stock. When we introduce that reasoning into the human family we are on very dangerous ground.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: On a point of order. I do not wish to be misquoted. I did not say anything about stock. The hon. member is referring to remarks made about stock. My remarks were not about stock and sterilisation. What I said was that a great amount of money was spent by breeders on improving their stock.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Of course I did not mention Mr. Hall's name, perhaps for the very good reason that he was not in my mind at all. But during the debate other members mentioned stock breeders and their methods of improvement. I contend that we as members of the human family should hold ourselves a little higher in that regard. I support the whole of the principles contained in the Bill, except that of sterilisation. Although I will not be in a position to debate that clause when it comes before the Committee, I hope the good sense of members will prevail and that they will not accept anything beyond what is contained in the Bill; that is to say, that if the mental deficient has sufficient intelligence to be accepted as a consenting party, the operation may be carried out, but that where he is not capable of understanding all that is meant, it shall not be carried out. In regard to a fixed period of confinement, there is certainly an alternative. If the Bill becomes law, the department will be guided by experts who will be able to determine whether or not the patient has been sufficiently restored to warrant his release. On that alone should the authorities be guided. That is an alternative to resorting to the extreme measure of keeping a patient confined for all time.

The PRESIDENT: The question was raised as to the seconding of the amendment, that the Bill be read this day six months. It is the usual parliamentary practice that such an amendment should not be seconded, but in our Standing Orders we have an indication to the contrary. Therefore I ask that the amendment be seconded.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I will second it.

The PRESIDENT: Very well, the amendment is now before the Chair.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [8.52]: I will support the second reading. Despite the amendment, I hope the Bill will go through Committee and eventually be passed into law. One thing that appears to have been overlooked is the very great duty the community owe to the mentally afflicted. At present in Western Australia facilities for the proper care of mental deficients are very limited. I have always in mind the study the late Dr. Birmingham made of this problem. At one time I was interested in a young boy about to be incarcerated in the Asylum for the Insane under very bad conditions. Dr. Birmingham assured me that the ordinary man in the street could not realise what could be done by the education of mental deficients in institutions, and what they were capable of achieving under proper supervision. Dr. Birmingham had travelled extensively and seen some remarkable results in institutions in other lands. That is a phase of the question that, during the debate, has been largely overlooked. Judging by letters in the paper, I think the public are expecting the Bill to be passed and so provide for the proper care of those unfortunate persons. The House owes a debt of gratitude to both Dr. Saw and Mr. Lovekin for their very lucid addresses. Mr. Lovekin gave us an elaborate address in the preparation of which, evidently, he had spent a lot of time. I listened with great interest to his remarks. The facts he brought forward should go far to influencing the House in favour of the Bill. He drew the attention of members to the inadequate penalty clause. There may be a reason for the inadequacy, but it certainly does seem insufficient that penalties for rape and kindred offences in the Bill should be so much lighter than those provided in the Criminal Code. I should say the penalties against persons committing offences of that sort upon mental deficients should be trebled at least. I agree that that clause is totally inadequate and requires drastic amendment. I am in accord with the general provisions of the Bill and I favour the sterilisation proposals as expounded by Dr. Saw. In Committee I will support that proposed amendment. It is generally recognised that it

would be a humane step to take to provide a cause of that sort in an Act of Parliament. The reason why Mr. Stephenson moved his amendment was because of the lack of funds to properly administer the Act. In my view that is one of the reasons why we should pass the Bill, namely, because of the enormously increased expenditure occasioned the community by the propagation of mental deficients. Mr. Lovekin pointed to the growing expense of allowing things to remain as they are. In my view it is time the Bill became law, if only on account of the increasing burden of expense occasioned by those unfortunate people. The public recognise the necessity for passing the Bill into law, and when public opinion advances to that stage, Parliament can do nothing better than put the measure on the statute-book. I will support the second reading.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [8.58]: The objective of the Bill has my complete support. Still, being a young people, we should desire to promote the physical and mental benefit of the community as a whole and so improve the race. But, looking back at the history of various branches of science—psychology is claimed as a science—we can point to the time when those several branches were being developed and when their leaders, savants, were looked up to with great respect. Yet as time advanced and research went on the authority of those leaders in some instances waned. We can go back a hundred years. There is the Newtonian pronouncement in regard to gravity and the three great physical laws. In the twentieth century we have Einstein coming forward with a theory that practically upsets the Newtonian theory. We need not go back more than a few decades to note the changes in the field of geology. Researches in this direction had not been made in economic geology as they have since been made. We know that the resources of the Golden Mile were greatly under-estimated by the leading geologists of that day. I have heard you, sir, say that the geologists were all astray in their early pronouncements concerning Kalgoorlie. It is the same kind of thing in almost every field of science. Psychology has mainly been developed in practical application only in recent years. As far as I have been able to observe, this new science has mainly been developed in connection with rejuvenation by people who have got hold of some theory or hypothesis upon which they have formed their conclusions. There may be much in their theories which seem acceptable, but there is also much which remains to be determined. I had intended to quote from my marked copy of the report of the select committee, but not having it here I have decided to confine my remarks to general questions. There is much that is experimental in connection with the treatment of persons who are mentally affected. There is the mental defective, and the other four grades of abnormals set out in the Bill. Although I feel that something should be done, I believe the matter should be approached not in a comprehensive way but in a careful manner, and with as little experimenting as possible. Let us take a general survey of our position in this State. Seeing that we have so many calls upon the public purse, we should be very careful to take the true perspective concerning those things upon which we start and concerning the manner in which we shall carry them out. Is it not possible that some of our normal children are not receiving sufficient consideration for the value they are to the State? Whilst taking a perspective view of the situation, should we not consider whether we are inclined to look too much in the direction of those who are mentally deficient and not sufficiently towards those who are normal, and who, perhaps, are not being provided with all the necessary facilities? An illustration comes to my mind. We cannot dissociate the mental from the physical. My illustration appertains more to the physical. A few weeks ago the Minister for Education was asked to provide fly doors and fly windows for country schools. He said it could not be done because of the expense. Those who know the outback country realise what a pest flies become, and how many times they are multiplied compared with more settled and civilised centres. In outback districts the schools consist of small, hot, pokey, wood and iron buildings. There are no comforts to relieve the conditions, and promote the physical well-being of the children. The question arises in one's mind whether the demand upon the public purse is such that if we cannot provide that protection of fly doors and windows for children in the country, how can we go to the expense of treating abnormal children, and adults similarly affected? If we do that can we provide what is requisite, right and proper for the nor-

mal children? I admit that in the case of school children those who are normal may in some instances be suffering because of the presence of mentally backward children in the same school. Although we may incur certain financial responsibilities by passing this Bill, to a certain extent we shall afford relief to the normal children, because we shall be relieving them of the presence of the abnormal children. It is a matter of adjustment as to how far we can go in this direction. I then ask myself to what extent we can rely upon the pronouncements of psychologists? We have a difference of opinion amongst experts as to whether a person should be classed as a lunatic, a paranoic, or sane. That being so, are we justified in assuming that this science has really arrived at a degree of certainty and reliability to warrant us accepting it. No matter how qualified those associated with the science may be, or how high they may stand in the esteem of the community, I have grave doubts about the matter. I feel that this science has perhaps been developed by persons who are not altogether normal themselves. Judging by some of the works I have read, the authors themselves are tending towards the abnormal in the views they take upon these questions.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: It is the madness of genius, perhaps.

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes. When I view the matter in the light of past history and take into consideration the number of branches of science, I say we should go slowly and cautiously about this matter. I join issue with Mr. Cornell in his rather caustic remarks in connection with the progeny of stock. He says that faulty progeny are always killed. That is not the case at all times. When a stock breeder wishes to maintain or improve the standard of his stock, the first thing he does is to cull out all weak animals or those that do not conform to the standard required. Throwbacks are always coming to light. Everyone who has studied Mendelism knows how difficult it is to guard against weak strains appearing in any stock. We have seen results that can be obtained by careful selection and by preventing the unfit from reproducing their species. We are asked to put upon the statute-book a measure to provide for the treatment of mental deficients and I join with Mr. Lovekin in saying that persons who are proved to be mentally deficient ought to be sterilised. I have said that experts differ on all these questions. The time which has elapsed since this branch of science reached any stage of development is very short, and as a science it has not yet been proved to be one that can be accepted without question. It is a great responsibility to throw upon one person, and that person a woman, however well qualified she may be to deal with these cases. If two psychologists were appointed, it might easily happen that there would be a diversity of opinion at times and that we would not get harmonious results. If both psychologists held different opinions, it would prove that those definite and correct pronouncements which we have been led to anticipate can be obtained nowadays in this branch of science. are not always to be obtained. At any rate, I see no reason why a lawyer as such, and a woman as such should be members of the proposed board. The board should be composed of people who by training and experience, not only academic experience, but experience in the affairs of life and rearing of families and having to do with their own and other children, and who in fact are qualified in every possible way for the work that will devolve upon them. For positions such as these we require the services of men of the world; men qualified as legislators are qualified, by experience and thought; men who can realise the differences there are in children. Here we are guided largely by the pronouncements we read of the psychologist who is engaged on the work in this State. I shall support the second reading of the Bill and in Committee I shall carefully record my vote on any amendment that may be brought forward.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—on amendment) [9.20]: I am pleased to think that only one member has seen fit to support the amendment moved by Mr. Stephenson. Mr. Stephenson used very little argument in support of the action he took. He gave us the benefit of the opinion expressed by a London medical man, but that opinion dealt with something quite apart from mental deficiency. The subject particularly dealt with was birth control. Mr. Stephenson also introduced a phase on which members have already expressed themselves. I refer to the question of sterilisation. As Mr. Cornell remarked, that is only a minor part of the Bill and I should be sorry if any other

hon. member thought, from the remarks of Mr. Stephenson, that the clause dealing with sterilisation was of paramount importance. There are conflicting opinions on that particular point and when the Bill reaches the Committee stage I hope I shall be able to show that there is every justification for the inclusion of the clause as it stands. On the other hand, some members may say that we should go further. I repeat, however, that the question of sterilisation is only a minor matter compared with the others that are contained in the Bill. I hope the amendment will be defeated and that we shall have the opportunity to deal with the Bill in Committee. As I said when moving the second reading, if there is any clause that does not meet with the whole-hearted approval of any hon. member, we can try to improve it.

Amendment (six months) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	.. .. ..	2
Noes	.. .. ..	18
Majority against	..	16

Ayes.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson	Hon. E. H. Harris *(Teller.)*

Noes.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. W. H. Kitson	Hon. G. Fraser *(Teller.)*

Amendment thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—ABORIGINES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th November.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [9.28]: Like many other measures that have been been submitted, this tends in the direction of restriction. In this it is proposed to restrict the freedom of our aborigines. In the interpretation of "aboriginal" we find that it means and includes "any person being either of full blood or of not less than three-quarters blood of the aboriginal race of Australia, and a male half-caste whose age exceeds 21 years and who, in the opinion of the Chief Protector, is incapable of managing his own affairs, and is declared by the Chief Protector to be subject to this Act." That is far reaching indeed. The Chief Protector sets himself up, not only as a dictator, but as one who is going to judge his fellow man, who is going to say whether the man is capable or incapable. I do not know any other Act which would give one individual that power. If the Chief Protector were a qualified medical practitioner, there might be some excuse for action of this nature, but to say that he, as a layman, is going to have the power to determine whether an aboriginal or a half-caste person is capable or incapable of managing his own affairs, is going too far. Nowadays there are very few half-castes who have not received a good education; unfortunately some of them are better educated than are some of the white race.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Why unfortunately?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is unfortunate that the whole of the white race have not received the best education that it is possible to give them. Yet the Chief Protector sets himself up to say whether a man is capable of managing his own affairs. Let me now refer to Section 17 of the parent Act reading—

> It shall not be lawful to employ any aboriginal or a male half-caste under the age of fourteen years or a female half-caste, except under permit or permit and agreement.

That is quite right, but it is to be amended by Clause 9—and similar amendments are contained in Clauses 11 and 12—by substituting the words "twenty-one" for the word "fourteen." The effect is that whereas it is possible to employ natives or half-castes over the age of 14 without seeking a permit from the Chief Protector of aborigines, in future it will be necessary to obtain a permit to employ all aborigines or half-castes under the age of 21 years.

The Honorary Minister: It does not mean that at all.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Then I should like the Honorary Minister to explain it.

The Honorary Minister: I have explained it.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Then the Honorary Minister might explain it again. It must be remembered when dealing with aborigines, more so than with half-castes, that they mature at a comparatively early age. The female aboriginal, at the age of 26 or 28 years, is really comparable with a white woman of the age of 40. The natives mature so early. Native lads of 14 are quite able to do the light work they are asked to do. They are not expected to do very hard work. I have read the Act and the amendments carefully and I cannot see how any different interpretation can be placed upon the proposed amendments. If this power be given to the Chief Protector of Aborigines, one wonders whether that officer will be as lenient as in the past in issuing permits, or whether his action will be the means of throwing a lot of those people on to the State. A native boy of 14 or 15 is capable of doing useful work. Refuse a permit for him to work and he is rendered idle and thrown on the State for subsistence. Of what use would even a white boy be at the age of 21 if he had been refused permission to work prior to that age? Unless mind and body are kept fully occupied between the ages of 14 and 21, it is very difficult for any individual to establish himself in any walk of life and be successful. Now I come to the most important part of the Bill, Clause 17 of which reads—

> If an aboriginal or half-caste in the service of an employer sustains personal injury arising out of or in the course of his employment not attributable to his serious or wilful misconduct, and such employment was not of a casual nature, any expense incurred by the department for hospital charges for treatment and maintenance or, in the case of death, the cost of interment of such aboriginal or half-caste or for medical or surgical attendance shall be payable by the employer to the Chief Protector, and shall be recoverable by action at the suit of the Chief Protector.

First of all, consider a Government department setting out to provide medical attention. What a difficult position Government officials are placed in as compared with private individuals! A station owner, for the good of his station and staff, often arranges some sort of an agreement with a medical officer where available to attend to the medical requirements of his employees at a reasonable flat rate, but when Government officials take a hand in such matters, we know perfectly well that in business generally everyone looks to make them pay mighty dearly for any service. Worst of all, while the Chief Protector would be incurring the expense, the Government would not be paying it; the station owner would have to pay it, so members can judge for themselves where that provision would lead.

The Honorary Minister: There is nothing to prevent an employer from having his own doctor to attend to an employee.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I agree, but when the Honorary Minister has had the experience I have had of the Chief Protector of Aborigines and his department, he will probably take a different view. I ask the House to weigh these amendments carefully.

The Honorary Minister: Which would you rather have——

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I shall tell the Honorary Minister presently. The custom in the North—where I was interested until recently—is that a station owner, in case of illness or accident to an employee, hurries him in a conveyance to the nearest medical aid and hospital, and pays the charges incurred. If the department interfere, members can readily see the danger. Softhearted employers will go to any length to save the life of an employee.

Hon. J. Cornell: This clause refers only to expenditure incurred by the department.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It applies to an aboriginal or half-caste who sustains personal injury arising out of his employment, and consequently is a very far-reaching provision.

Hon. J. Nicholson: There would be a liability at present under the Workers' Compensation Act.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Not in respect of an aboriginal. If we set about amending the parent Act, let us make the amendments on sound lines. I know station owners who treat not only their employees in that way but who, when other blacks and half-castes practically make their homes on the station, treat them equally well. A view I formed years ago when I was a member of the Ministry was that the Chief Protector of Aborigines should be a medical practitioner. A layman going amongst the aborigines might inspect them, but how far does that carry him? He would be unable to detect any malady existing amongst them, and he could not judge of the treatment required.

Hon. J. Cornell: No one man could inspect all the natives of the North.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No; but such inspections as are made would be more valuable if made by a medical practitioner than by a layman. I do not wish to speak derogatively of the present Chief Protector; he is not a qualified man and cannot be expected to diagnose any malady amongst the aborigines he inspects. A better provision than that proposed by Clause 17, I think, would be the following:—

If an aboriginal or half-caste in the service of an employer sustains personal injury in the course of his employment not attributable to his serious and wilful misconduct, and such employment was not of a casual nature, the employer shall provide treatment, and where necessary, and practicable medical attendance, and in the event of death arising from such injury, bear the cost of interment of such employee. For the purposes of this section an employer of aboriginals and/or half-castes shall have in his possession an adequate and sufficient supply of first-aid materials and medicines.

The Honorary Minister: There is not much difference between the two, but one point you have overlooked.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Honorary Minister will be able to explain that later on. If the provisions of the Act are rendered too drastic there can be only one result, namely, a lot of unemployment amongst the aborigines, and that is very undesirable. When amending the Aborigines Act, we should not make it more stringent than is absolutely necessary in order to ensure justice to and good treatment of the native people. My experience of the North convinces me that the aborigines, with very few exceptions, have received the best of treatment. The pastoralist realises that the natives are of great service to him and that he must consider their health and comfort in order to retain them in his employment; and a stage has been reached when their employment is necessary to the success of the industry. In this State we have the largest native population of any other part of the Commonwealth, notwithstanding which we spend less upon these people than is spent elsewhere in Australia. The expenditure per annum in Queensland is £50,000; in New South Wales and South Australia £28,000, and in this State only £25,000.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: And we have the biggest area.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes. The relief comes from the fact that in Western Australia the natives receive more generous and better treatment from the station owners than in other parts of Australia, hence the Government are relieved of a lot of the liability. That is the reason for the comparatively small expenditure in this State. Clause 20 is an amendment of Section 42 of the Act. This is a most remarkable clause. Section 42 says that no marriage of a female aboriginal with any person other than an aboriginal shall be celebrated without permission in writing from the Chief Protector. No one could object to that; it is a far-seeing provision. Clause 20, however, provides for the amendment of that section by inserting after "aboriginal" the words or "Half-caste" and omitting the words "other than an aboriginal" in the second line. This completely alters the provision; it will make the Act read that no marriage of a female aboriginal or a half-caste with any person shall be celebrated without the permission in writing of the Chief Protector. If that is passed the result will be that half-castes up North will live together without marriage. That would be most undesirable. The Bill will enable the Protector to classify these people. What can he know about any couple up North?

Hon. E. H. Harris: Perhaps he will go up there and inquire.

Hon. J. Cornell: If they live without being married it is only what a lot of white people are doing.

The Honorary Minister: The hon. member knows the system in vogue.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Half-castes are enlightened people, and have been educated. This clause practically gives the Protector power over every half-caste in the State. He will be able to say whether they shall or shall not marry.

The Honorary Minister: It refers to a half-caste within the meaning of the Act.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: At New Norcia there are many well-educated half-castes. I have employed half-castes within the meaning of the Act. The Legislature should never countenance giving any official the right to say whether half-castes should marry or not.

The Honorary Minister: Do not keep back the essential part of the clause.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am not doing so. I have no desire to see a thing like this inflicted upon these people. We should not extend legislation of this kind to a class upon whose education we have spent

a good deal of money. Apparently it is desired that the Chief Protector shall say whether they are fit and proper persons to marry. Surely it is their own concern.

Hon. C. B. Williams: He may be dealing with people who are as brilliant as he is.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Some of these half-castes are well educated. It is not a very dignified attitude to take up to tell them they cannot marry. The effect is bound to be bad. I trust that in Committee the Bill will be amended in the desired directions. We should not go out of our way to make these people feel they are regarded as common animals, whose fitness or otherwise has first to be determined before they are allowed to take unto themselves a mate.

Hon. A. Lovekin: What about the feeble-minded half-castes?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They are not referred to in the Bill.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [9.50]: In dealing with these people, who represent a dying race, we are all agreed that they are entitled to our sympathy, and the best consideration and support we can give them. It is possible to kill people with kindness. I have no hesitation in saying that it was the generosity of the Imperial Government that did more to wipe out the natives in the South-West than any contact with the white races did. In the early days natives clothed themselves. They killed their own food, tanned their own kangaroo and opossum skins, and wrapped themselves up in them with the woolly side against their flesh and the tanned side outwards. They walked around all day in the rain, and lay down at night comfortably. That was not good enough for the Imperial Government. They sent out bales and bales of woollen blankets. I have seen them distributed winter after winter amongst the natives in the South-West. They ceased to make their own clothes. They wrapped themselves in these woollen blankets, which became wet with rain, and they lay down in them at night, with the result that they were soon wiped out with pneumonia and other pulmonary diseases. What we are likely to do is to spoil these people with kindness. The Act provides that no native or half-caste under 14 can be employed. This Bill fixes the age at 21. The natives mature earlier than white people and this is a fair age. They are also a mischievous race. If they are not employed until they are 21, they may get into mischief.

The Honorary Minister: It is not suggested in that form.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I wish the Honorary Minister would clear up the matter. Section 17 of the Act says it shall not be lawful to employ any aboriginal male or half-caste under 14, or female half-caste except under permit and agreement. Clause 9 of the Bill strikes out the age "14" and inserts "21." Could anything be clearer than that?

The Honorary Minister: That does not prohibit the employment of natives under 21.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Why should a permit be necessary?

The Honorary Minster: That is the position to-day with all aborigines, irrespective of age. You cannot employ an aboriginal without a permit.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Someone has taken a greater responsibility than he has a right to.

The Honorary Minister: No.

Mr. J. J. HOLMES: The Act is quite clear, and the Bill amends the Act.

The Honorary Minister: I have no desire to discuss the matter with the hon. member.

The PRESIDENT: The Honorary Minister cannot discuss the matter with him at this stage.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We are arming the Chief Protector with this authority. Further, none of these people is to be allowed to marry without his consent. In another clause he has power to classify the natives. If one person is a little dark in colour he becomes an aboriginal. If another is a little lighter in colour he becomes a half-caste. It is a question for the Chief Protector to decide. Half-castes are very sensitive. If we are going to order one section of these people into an aboriginals' camp and say, "You are aborigines," and are going to order another section to keep out and say, "You are half-castes," complications will arise which will not tend to peace and harmony amongst the coloured race.

Hon. J. Cornell: Some of the quarter-castes are blacker than the half-castes.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Chief Protector will decide to which section they belong.

The Honorary Minister: Would he not decide on the facts of the case?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not know whether there is a register of births and marriages amongst the aborigines.

The Honorary Minister: I thought the hon. member knew a little more about the native question.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I understand the Crown Law Department have ruled that aborigines can be brought under the Workers' Compensation Act.

The Honorary Minister: Any aboriginal who is employed comes within the scope of that Act.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Honorary Minister knows, and the Chief Secretary knows, that that was never intended when the Workers' Compensation Act was passed.

The Honorary Minister: And you know that it does not matter what is intended, but what is in the Act.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Why state it here if it is already so under the Workers' Compensation Act?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Chief Secretary and the Honorary Minister know it was never intended. It is one of the slips made by this House, a slip that should be rectified, because it is an absurdity to bring natives under the Act in order that if a native is totally incapacitated he may receive £750 or, if he is killed outright, his dependants may receive £600. No such thing was ever intended. When the measure was before the House I did point out what would happen with regard to the coloured people in Broome, people brought there from Koepang, for instance. In their case, previously the amount payable to relatives in the event of death was £20; and during Broome's whole history, I fancy, there was never any claim made for the £20. But after Parliament had included the coloured people at Broome in the Workers' Compensation Act, there were within two months a claim for £600 and another for £750. When that measure was before the Chamber and I was fighting the Bill, some hon. members told me I was more concerned about the Chinese and the coloured races than about any other people. However, the position I took was the opposite. When the Government of the day saw how Broome was likely to be penalised and the pearling industry wiped out, they brought down an amendment of the law as it affected indentured labour. Why have they not come along with a proposal to amend the Workers' Compensation Act by excluding aborigines? By this Bill they propose to give the Chief Protector of Aborigines power to deal with accidents happening to aborigines and half-castes. If the Workers' Compensation Act applies to them, that measure will apply as well as this Bill, because of the control set out in Clause 17.

The Honorary Minister: Is there anything wrong with that clause?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: By it we are putting the aboriginal in a different position from that in which we put the white man —in a better position. An injured white man comes under the Workers' Compensation Act.

The Honorary Minister: Do you regard the aboriginal as remaining under the Workers' Compensation Act if this Bill passes?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: He will so remain.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He will not remain there after the present Government go out.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Under the Workers' Compensation Act an injured white man has to fight his own battle with the State Insurance Office, but under this Bill the Government will step in on the aboriginal's behalf and incur any expense whatever. The white man cannot incur expenses and charge them up to the employer. Under the proposed new clause the Chief Protector of Aborigines can incur any expenditure whatever and charge it up to the employer.

The Honorary Minister: I will give the hon. member one or two cases.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Honorary Minister should inform the House whether the Government have decided that it shall be one thing or the other, that the aboriginal shall come under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act on the same terms as the white man, or that he shall be covered by this Bill and excluded from the Workers' Compensation Act. Those are one or two of the difficulties I see arising out of the Bill. At the present time stations can employ natives of 14 years and upwards. Under the Bill they cannot be employed until they have reached the age of 21. As I have previously stated here, aborigines mature more quickly than

whites; and aborigines, if not employed before the age of 21, will be up to some mischief.

Hon. E. H. Gray: At one time that argument was applied to white boys.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: In the North it is a debatable question whether coloured people will not have to be introduced for development purposes. Squatters and pioneers there are now working under especially adverse conditions. Those who follow the wool market, the labour market, the high cost of material, the high cost of shearing, the high cost of freight, and all the other charges piled on the industry of the North, with the prices of the products falling almost to zero, realise that this is not the time when the squatter should be attacked with pinpricks. What is the young native to do between the ages of 14 and 21? Boys of 16, 18 and 20 are going about the North getting into mischief. Why should a permit from the Chief Protector of Aborigines be necessary for their employment?

Hon. A. Lovekin: A permit is not required in the case of a white boy.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: This is really a Bill for the Committee stage, but I may draw attention to one other matter—

Every male person, not being an aboriginal or half-caste, who travels accompanied by a female aboriginal or half-caste, shall be presumed, in the absence of proof to the contrary, to be cohabiting with her, and it shall be presumed, in the absence of proof to the contrary, that she is not his wife.

Does the Minister know how the people in the far North carry out the mustering? They may be operating over 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 acres of country. The station manager, boundary riders and a crowd of natives may start off with 40 or 50 horses on a trip that will take them several weeks, during which they will muster bullocks by the thousand to be sent through to the meat works. The natives take their gins with them. According to Clause 21, if a male person, not being an aboriginal or a half-caste, travels in this way, he shall be presumed, in the absence of proof to the contrary, to be cohabiting with the gins! There is another little pin-prick that will not do any good but will merely hamper the people outback! The Minister has been through the North-West and knows the difficulties under which they are labouring. They are trying honestly to develop the northern portions of the State, and this sort of pin-prick will not assist them. Then another new provision is to be inserted. It reads—

Any person who sells or gives, or permits, or suffers to be sold or given, any poison to an aboriginal half-caste without the consent in writing of a protector, shall be guilty of an offence against this Act.

In the Kimberleys to-day, the country is over-run with dogs. There are thousands of them. Sheep have been exterminated in certain parts by the dogs, and a great proportion of the Kimberley areas would be carrying sheep to-day instead of cattle but for the fact that the dogs destroy the sheep and have been known to destroy calves. I presume it has been the custom of the pastoralists there to send their natives out with poison to lay baits for dogs along the track. Now we propose to introduce a new provision in our laws to make it an offence to give any native or half-caste poison in those circumstances, without the consent in writing of a protector of aborigines! The dogs may be had in a particular area and may be attacking sheep in different parts of a holding. The station owner may desire to send a body of natives out to deal with the dogs in one direction, and another party in some other direction for a similar purpose. In view of this legislation, however, nothing can be done to supply the natives with poison to enable them to carry out the work desired, unless the consent of a protector of aborigines has been procured. I do not propose to say any more. The Bill is one for consideration at the Committee stage. I have raised these points at the present stage in order that the Honorary Minister may consider the advisability of dealing with them in the course of his reply. I hope we shall be able to amend the Bill so that it will be more reasonable, equitable and applicable to the North than it is in its present stage.

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

House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.