

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 21st September, 1921.

	Page
Queensland Colliery Disaster, Message in reply ...	858
Questions: Coal afire in bunkers ...	858
Fremantle Harbour Trust ...	858
Consular Agent for Italy ...	858
State Children Department ...	858
Perth Tramways ...	859
Tramway Project, South Perth-Como ...	859
Hospital for the insane—1, Accommodation for patients, 2, Hospital dairy ...	859
Pleuro-pneumonia ...	859
Leave of absence ...	859
Bills: Land and Income Tax, 1R. ...	859
Permanent Reserves, 1R. ...	859
Official Trustee, 1R. ...	859
Fisheries Act Amendment, returned ...	859
Electoral Act Amendment, 3R. ...	860
Motions: Wheat for local consumption ...	860
Gratuity Bonds, Disposals ...	861
State Insurance ...	860
Return: State Implement Works ...	863
Papers: Woodline Dispute ...	867

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

QUEENSLAND COLLIERY DISASTER.

Message in reply.

The SPEAKER: I have received the following telegram in reply to the resolution of condolence passed by this House yesterday and by order of the House telegraphed to the Premier of Queensland:—

George Taylor, Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Perth, Western Australia. Thanks for your wire respecting the appalling disaster at Mount Mulligan. Theodore, Premier.

QUESTION—COAL AFIRE IN BUNKERS.

Mr. WILSON asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact that the ship "Clan Sutherland" was fast at "A" and "B" sheds at Fremantle on 1st August at 11.45 a.m., and that she left that berth on 7th August at 8.25 a.m. 2, Is it a fact that after coming alongside of berth on 1st August the ship had fire in her bunkers, and that the officers discharged the coal from bunkers into a punt that came alongside the ship? 3, Is it true that after a few days fire again broke out in the ship? 4, What place did the coal come from which fired the ship?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: 1, Yes. 2, The captain reported a fire in the bunker coal in No. 3 lower hold, containing about 180 tons of Indian and South African coal, all of which was unloaded into trucks. 3, There is no information available on this point. 4, Answered by No. 2.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Colonial Secretary: When will the report of the Fre-

mantle Harbour Trust for year 1920-21 be placed on the Table of the House?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The report will be presented to Parliament immediately on completion of the Auditor General's examination of the financial statements, which is expected to be about the middle of October.

QUESTION—CONSULAR AGENT FOR ITALY.

Mr. McCALLUM asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been called to a statement appearing in the "West Australian" newspaper of Saturday last, 17th inst., by Count Gallo, Royal Consular Agent for Italy, in Perth, in which he takes it upon himself to criticise a large section of Australian citizens who support a reasonable standard of wages as advocates of a "fool policy of high wages, which must cease"? 2, In view of the impropriety of a consul representing a foreign Government invading the arena of controversial local political and industrial subjects, will he cause the statement to be brought under the notice of the Italian Government? 3, Will he further inquire whether the particular Consular Agent has been entrusted by his Government with a mission to advocate a reduction in wages and a reduced standard of living for Australian workers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: 1, Yes. 2 and 3, The matter is being considered.

QUESTION—STATE CHILDREN DEPARTMENT.

Mrs. COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary: In view of the widespread interest being taken not only in this State, but in the Eastern States and in New Zealand, as the result of inquiries made on behalf of Western Australia by the member for North Perth, and the former member for South Fremantle, into the management of State Children Departments in those places, will the Government cause to be printed a limited number of copies of the interim report of the select committee appointed by this House, and the report of the Royal Commission subsequently appointed by the Government to inquire into the management of the State Children Department of Western Australia?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Yes.

QUESTION—PERTH TRAMWAYS.

Capt. CARTER asked the Minister for Railways: What was the actual profit or loss incurred by the Perth tramway system for last month?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The loss was £2,448.

QUESTION—TRAMWAY PROJECT, SOUTH PERTH-COMO.

Capt. CARTER: Yesterday I gave notice of a question regarding the papers dealing with the proposed South Perth-Como tramway extension. The question appears on the Notice Paper in a different form from that in which I submitted it. I wrote "will the Minister, etc," whereas the printed question reads "is it his intention, etc."

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member's question was put into proper form. The hon. member would not be allowed to ask the question in its original form.

Capt. CARTER asked the Minister for Railways: Is it his intention to lay upon the Table of the House all papers dealing with the proposed South Perth-Como tram extension?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: It is not so intended, but if the hon. member will move that this course be taken, the will of the House will be carried out.

QUESTIONS (2)—HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE.

Accommodation for Patients.

Mrs. COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is there any truth in the rumour that the Government contemplate affording additional accommodation, or providing new buildings for the insane, and that the site which has been favourably reported upon is at Jandakot? 2, Why has not better use been made of the property acquired at Whitby Falls, where a considerable area of good land could be made productive? 3, In view of the reported over-crowding of the institution at Claremont, would it not be possible to (a) convert the carpenter's shop and the tailor's shop, where at present two men are employed, into wards, and thus provide accommodation for about 40 patients, and (b) remove the six nurses who are at present in occupation of the isolation ward, to other quarters and thus make that ward available for about 30 patients? 4, Is the institution at Claremont actually overcrowded? 5, If not, are there any empty beds there, and if so, how many?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, Full use is being made of Whitby. There is no considerable area of good land there. 3, (a) No; the buildings are unsuitable and they are required for the purpose for which they are now being utilised; (b) there are 20 nurses sleeping in the isolation block, and no other accommodation is available for them. 4, Yes. The institution was designed for 727; there are now in residence 1,082; ten day-rooms have been turned into dormitories. 5, Answered by No. 4.

The Hospital Dairy.

Mrs. COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is it correct that the milk produced at the Claremont hospital dairy is mostly sold to outside hospitals, and that the patients at Claremont are given concentrated milk? 2, If this dairy has been

run at a loss, what was the loss last year, and what has been the total loss to date? 3, Would it not be more profitable to remove the dairy to Whitby, increase the herd, and place it under capable management?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes; between 50 and 60 gallons of milk produced at the dairy is supplied to Claremont Hospital for the Insane, and about five gallons of concentrated milk is used. 2, The loss last year was £623; total loss since inception of the dairy in 1912, £898. 3, No; Whitby could not carry the herd; the dairy is at present under capable management.

QUESTION—PLEURO-PNEUMONIA.

Mr. A. THOMSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, In view of the outbreak of pleuro in cattle in this State, is the statement correct that a large number of cattle are booked to come to this State, ex transcontinental train, from the Eastern States? 2, If so, has the train conveying these cattle left South Australia yet? 3, If not, when are they booked to leave, and what number are being sent? 4, Upon arrival in this State, will not the cattle have to walk from the transcontinental train to the slaughter yard over country browsed by dairy cattle? 5, If so, does not this provide means for spreading the disease? 6, What is the holding capacity of the yards at Kalgoorlie? 7, Are there sufficient feeding and watering appliances in the yards? 8, Are there buffer fences? 9, What is the average weekly consumption of cattle at Kalgoorlie?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes; but only two consignments; approximately 270 head were in transit, and these were allowed to complete their journey to Kalgoorlie abattoirs for immediate slaughter; it is not anticipated any others will be sent, and in the meantime Kalgoorlie butchers will have time to make arrangements for securing supplies locally. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, Answered by No. 1. 4, Precautions are being taken to prevent South Australian cattle coming in contact with local cattle. 5, Danger very slight. 6, Ample accommodation. 7, Yes. 8, This question is not clear, but cattle can be isolated. 9, 105.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. A. THOMSON leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Harrison (Avon) on the ground of ill-health.

BILLS (3), FIRST READING.

1, Land and Income Tax.

2, Permanent Reserves.

Introduced by the Minister for Works (for the Premier).

3, Official Trustee.

Received from the Council.

BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—WHEAT FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.42]: I move—

That in the opinion of the House the Government should immediately reduce the price of 9s. per bushel now being charged for wheat for local consumption.

The facts of the case embraced by the motion are so strongly in the minds of members that there is scarcely any need for me to do more than present the motion to the House. I may, however, briefly recall the principle features connected with the fixing of the price of wheat for home consumption. It will be remembered that towards the close of last year, about November or December, a meeting of the Australian Wheat Board was held in Melbourne. At that meeting it was agreed that the price then obtaining, namely 7s. 8d. per bushel, should be advanced to 9s., covering the whole period of the present year. Prior to the meeting of the board it was strongly contended by the farmers' representatives in this State that the price of wheat should be based from time to time on London parity. Immediately prior to the meeting of the board the price in London and elsewhere began to show a decided downward tendency. I have no doubt that in deciding to fix the price of wheat at 9s. for this year the Australian Wheat Board were actuated by no other desire than to secure to the growers of Australia a price for the whole of last season's output, which would be in advance of that which would have obtained had it been based on the London parity. They anticipated—events have proved that they anticipated correctly—that before we had been many months advanced in the new year the price of wheat in London would show a considerable reduction, and so the result has worked out. Throughout the whole of the year the people in Australia have been compelled to pay 9s. per bushel for their wheat for local consumption, although for many months past Australian wheat has been sold in other parts of the world at an equivalent of about 7s. per bushel. It is not denied that four or five months ago a considerable quantity of wheat was sold to Germany, working out at 7s. per bushel on the parity, and credit was given for a period of six months. In addition to that, wheat was sold for milling into flour in Australia for export to other countries, particularly to the islands of the Pacific, at a price of, or about 7s. per bushel. We have, therefore, the spectacle—which cannot be gainsaid—that whilst we are supplying the world, including the Asiatics and those who were only quite recently the enemies of the Empire—the Germans themselves—with

wheat at the equivalent of 7s. per bushel, the grower has been getting from our own people 9s. per bushel throughout. If we take the price of wheat as it is published in the newspapers, we find that according to the latest quotation the price in London is 74s. per quarter. This, at eight bushels to the quarter, works out at 9s. 3½d. per bushel ex ships' slings in England. With 70s. per ton freight and 38 bushels to the ton it works out at about 1s. 11d. per bushel for freight, and with 1s. 11d. bushel for freight and 8d. for overhead, handling and other charges, it brings the price of the equivalent of 9s. 3½d. in London down to 6s. 8½d. in Western Australia.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is at the siding.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. If the wheat-growers in Western Australia to-day were getting the London parity for their wheat they would be receiving 6s. 8d. per bushel instead of 9s. as at present.

The Minister for Agriculture: Oh, no! The London parity is free alongside ship.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We allow 8d. for that, and that works out at about 7s. 4d. It would be safe to say that for many months past the London parity would have worked out at somewhere about 7s. per bushel in Western Australia. It is not too late yet—although the people of this State have had to pay 9s. per bushel for nine months, an extortionate price, seeing that three months of the year still remain—to make a reduction at this stage. There is no argument against the fact that the present price of wheat is too high. It has been admitted during recent months in this House by wheat-growers and representatives of the farmers. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Hickmott) openly and frankly admitted that the price now charged for wheat for our own people was altogether too high. He made that statement in his speech on the Address-in-reply. Other members have said the same thing. It is admitted by the Minister for Agriculture that without the pool, which means without the organised backing of the people of this country through the Government, the farmers would not have been able to dispose of their wheat at all and would have been ruined.

The Minister for Agriculture: Did I make that admission?

Hon. P. COLLIER: His admission was very much like that. It has been uniformly admitted that the pool was the salvation of the farmers. The member for Pingelly said, "I agree with what has been said in regard to the price of 9s. per bushel for wheat for local consumption. I believe that only a fair price should be asked of the consumer." In reply to an interjection that hon. member further said, "Yes, I admit it is too much at the present time." The Colonial Secretary said, "Unless we have a wheat pool many of the farmers will in a short time be unable to carry on. If it had not been for the pool the farmer would have

been getting a mere pittance for his wheat." Everyone admits that without the assistance of the pool the farmer would have been unable to carry on. Having regard to these facts, I think we are justified in demanding a reduction in the present price of wheat for people within the State. The only semblance of argument against making a reduction that I have heard consists of the statement that the wheatgrowers of the local wheat board, or the Government of the country, have made a contract with the Australian Wheat Board and have agreed to pay 9s. per bushel for the whole of this year, and that it is not possible for the contract to be broken. That is the contention which has been raised. There is nothing at all in it and it will not stand for one moment. No binding contract and no obligation of any kind rests upon the Government to pay 9s. per bushel for this wheat. The Australian Wheat Board last year fixed the price at 9s. Mr. Baxter was the representative of this State on the wheat board. He was immediately advised by telegram by the Premier that he should not agree to the proposed terms until after he had returned to the State, and the Government had had an opportunity of considering the matter. Nothing was done by Mr. Baxter in the matter until after his return, and Cabinet then considered the question and agreed to fix the price at 9s. It is obviously open to the Government to make a reduction at any time. There has been no binding contract. I shall be glad if the Minister can show me where there has been any binding contract, or that there is any moral obligation upon the Government to continue the present price of 9s. until the end of the year. The price to be charged for wheat for consumption within this State is entirely and wholly a matter for decision from time to time by the Government of this State. They are perfectly free to reduce the price at any time. That being so, they might well at this stage, seeing that farmers have had the benefit of this exceptionally high price—having regard to the price obtaining in other parts of the world—for the remainder of the year, reduce their price to something like the London parity of 7s. per bushel. I consider everyone would be content, the consumers and all would be satisfied, to pay that price for the remainder of the year. I have no desire to labour the question because I feel that every member of the House is fully seized of the position. It has been under much discussion both on the Address-in-reply and on the second reading debate of the Wheat Marketing Bill. I will, therefore, content myself by moving the motion standing in my name, hoping that it will be carried without opposition.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE
(Hon. H. K. Maley—Greenough) [4.55]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	22
Noes	15

Majority for .. 7

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Boyland	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Broun	Mr. Richardson
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Denton	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. George	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Johnston	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. H. K. Maley	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Mann	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Money	Mr. Mullany

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Carter	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Troy
Mr. Collier	Mr. Walker
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Lambert	Mr. O'Loghlin
Mr. Marshall	

(Teller.)

Motion thus passed.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

MOTION—GRATUITY BONDS, DISPOSALS.

To inquire by Select Committee.

Mr. WILSON (Collie) [5.3]: I move—

That a select committee be appointed to investigate the methods adopted by financial agents and others regarding profiteering in the buying of war gratuity bonds from returned soldiers of the A.I.F., and the infringement of the Usury Act in relation to same; also in respect to certain land agents cashing war gratuity bonds in exchange for the purchase of blocks of land at fictitiously high values, and by such means indecently and flagrantly exploiting the returned soldiers; (2) That in order to permit the committee to exercise its discretion in admitting the Press to its meetings, the Standing Orders having reference to the publication of the proceedings and deliberations of a select committee should, for the purpose of this special case only, be suspended during the time the Committee is sitting.

In submitting this motion I have no desire to injure anybody, nor am I actuated by malice towards anyone. I am only obsessed with the idea of doing the digger some good and seeing that he gets a fair deal in his monetary transactions. A few days ago this interesting statement appeared in the "West Australian" under the headings "Gratuity Bonds," "Land Sale Scandals":

Ignorance of the war gratuity bond scandal in connection with land sales in this State was professed by the Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce) when seen by a "West Australian" representative yesterday shortly after his arrival. "If I am placed in possession of the facts," said the Minister, "then I will bring the matter before the Treasurer. So far, however, no representations have been made to me, and the matter does not come under me as Minister, because it is not under my department.

Senator Pearce in this statement declares his ignorance of what has been going on. He appears to be the only one who is ignorant in this respect.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: And it is not the only thing he is ignorant about.

Mr. WILSON: I know of many such cases. The Eastern papers have been teeming with reports of these scandals, and the Minister for Defence has the audacity to come along and say that he is ignorant of what has happened. To me it seems to be a case of "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." In introducing this subject to the House I make no apology because the time has long passed when others should have brought it forward, and I refer particularly to Federal members. The representatives in the Federal Parliament have had every opportunity to ventilate this matter with the object of doing some good for the men who bled for their country. But what did they do? They let the matter go by the board. I may mention that the Returned Soldiers' League has been endeavouring for some time past to get this matter brought prominently under notice, but there seems to have been some underground engineering which has had the effect of bringing the question to a standstill, and we are faced with the position that practically nothing has been done for the returned soldiers. It therefore devolves upon this House to bring to book some of those people who have been trafficking in the gratuity bonds of returned soldiers. I was amused a few days ago on reading the leading article in the "West Australian" where it stated the voice of the community was—

"We will do for our soldiers who have done so magnificently for us." And that some persons had read the sentiment to mean "we will do our soldiers."

That really is the case. Some people are bleeding the men who bled for them. They are bleeding them dry, and unfortunately at the present time, some of the soldiers who bled for the country are in front of this building, as an unemployed deputation demanding work. Hon. members will know that the gratuity bonds were issued in May of last year, and that they were issued under certain conditions. The bonds were issued to those who saw service abroad, and in some instances it was decided that the payment would be made in cash. May I say that an error was made by the Federal Government who agreed to pay

cash only to those men who got married after the Armistice, forgetting entirely the men who were married during the period of the war. Some of these had one or two children when they came back, and they were the ones who were left out. In my opinion, the man who was married a year before the war ended, was in worse circumstances than the man who married after the declaration of peace. Again, we have the State and Federal Governments making provision to enable the civil servants and railway employees to cash their bonds. We have the spectacle of the State civil servants getting their bonds cashed and the locomotive engine drivers doing the same thing. In my opinion, the person who might have stood back for the time being was the civil servant returned soldier who was in a secure position. Bill Bowyangs had to do the best he could to get his cash, and in many instances he was only able to negotiate the bond at considerable loss to himself. Both the Federal and the State Governments set a very bad example when they gave the returned soldiers who were civil servants the right to cash their bonds and left the other soldiers to the mercy of fate. In the "Australian" newspaper of the 6th August, 1920, this appears—

Recently the Federal Executive of the R.S.L. communicated with the Federal Prime Minister in reference to members of the Army Pay Corps having their gratuity bonds cashed. The following letter, received from the Prime Minister, has been forwarded by the Federal Secretary (Mr. Henderson) to the State Secretary (Mr. Knowles):—"With reference to your letter of June 10th, I am directed to inform you that instructions were issued to departments on July 19th providing for the cashing of war gratuity bonds of Commonwealth employees, both permanent and temporary. The temporary employee is to have six months service to qualify. Men serving in the pay corps, whether attested or as clerks, will be regarded as employees for these purposes.

In the "Daily News" of October 12th, 1920, appears the following:—

"Cashing the Gratuity." "Civil servants Benefiting." "Sinking Fund to be Used." It is the intention of the Government to cash the war gratuity bonds of returned men in the Civil Service. The announcement was made by the Premier (Mr. Mitchell) to-day to a deputation of returned men that waited upon him. "I hope to be able to cash the gratuity bonds of the returned men in the Public Service," said Mr. Mitchell. "The Government has practically finalised the arrangements with the trustees of the State sinking fund in London to use the money, which is about £300,000 a year, for the purpose of cashing the bonds. So soon as the details are finalised the Government will commence taking up the bonds. It will not be possible, however, to cash all the bonds at once." In answer to a question, Mr. Mitchell said he could not cash the bonds of all the holders

in Western Australia. To do so would mean advancing over £2,000,000.

Thus, hon. members will see that my argument is confirmed. I have a word of praise for the War Gratuity Board which was created by the appointment of Colonel Collett and others. Excellent work has been done by that board. In every case where it was possible to advance money to people who needed it, the board gave it, and even after turning down an applicant, they sometimes went into the case again and, having found that they were wrong, granted the money. I have in my possession two bonds, one an original, and one a transferred bond. The transferred bond was given in circumstances, the particulars of which are set out on the back of the bond. To get a bond cashed, it is necessary to go before a deputy paymaster and declare on oath that the applicant is receiving the full value of the bond. Some time back I was in the fortunate position of being able to cash one bond, the bond of a man who married in London. His name was J. McKay. I paid this man to the last farthing in principal and interest. I handed in the receipt to the Federal officer at the Treasury and three or four months afterwards the bond was transferred to me. This shows that business of this description can be done in a proper manner. It is also possible to indulge in some collusion, and collusion has been the bane of the whole affair. When a digger is hard up he will not mind entering into collusion to get the best results for his wife and family. I have McKay's bond here. Its value was £109 17s. 6d. and McKay got £111 and some odd shillings for it. There are many men outside this House who have cashed bonds generously. I am pleased to say that there are some members in this House who have cashed bonds. There are also members in another place who have similarly gone to the assistance of distressed soldiers. But there are those outside Parliament who have cashed bonds, and taken an unfair advantage of the soldiers, and they are the people I am going to deal with. I want to disabuse the minds of hon. members. Some people think that the land agents are the only people who have fleeced the digger; there are other people. There are the tailors, furniture sellers, and all sorts of traders who have battered on the diggers and fleeced them of their money. It is unfair to state that the land agent is the only man who is concerned in this fleecing process. The land agent is brought into it because one can trace transactions in land much quicker than is possible in other cases. I hope to show members something of what has been going on before I finish my remarks. Some people say that I should not divulge the names of the people I wish to expose. I am going to divulge some and I will divulge just as many and as much as I want to. I will not say here what I am afraid to say on the public platform to-morrow. The "wingies" and the "stumpies" had a social last year, when the Government gave passes over the railways to blind soldiers. At that

social I addressed the men and I warned them of what was going on. General Sir Talbot Hobbs was present, and I thought a man of his high position and distinction might perhaps have taken the matter up. So far nothing has been done and it remains for me to see this matter through. I will give the House some idea of what has occurred. I have here a statement given me by a late secretary of the R.S.L. It is in his own handwriting and is to the following effect:—

Judge, Smith & Co., land agents, of William Street, Perth, are cashing war gratuity bonds, discounting them at the rate of 8 per cent. per annum. This means to say that a man with a bond of £100 face value receives £72 for a bond. On redemption of the bond in 3½ years time the then holder of the bond receives for face value £100, and four years interest at 5¼ per cent., equalling £21 or a total of £121.

It will thus be seen that in this case the individual lending £72 gets £49 for his money in about four years' time. That is approaching closely upon usury, yet the man concerned is one of those who has talked patriotism. He is willing to fleece the very men who bled for him.

Mr. Troy: He was one of the win-the-war party.

Mr. WILSON: That is so. Here is another case, that of one Wright, who holds a prominent position in Western Australia. He is a dentist and the owner of not one block, but hundreds of blocks. I will quote some of the many blocks he has sold. One of the estates is at Jandakot or Queen's Park, I am not sure which. He sold over 70 lots. He was willing to sell lot 383 to the public for £20. He could not sell it at that figure, but he charged the soldier £40 for it. The valuator valued it subsequently and placed the high value of £12 on the block. Yet the digger had to pay £40 for it. Lot 348 was offered to the public at £15, yet the digger was charged £30 for it and the value placed upon it by the Federal valuator was £9. There were two other blocks which were sold together—blocks 366 and 353. They were available to the public at £27 10s. But the digger was charged £50 for them. Those blocks were valued at £18.

Hon. P. Collier: In each case he only put on 100 per cent.

Mr. WILSON: Yes; in some cases he has admitted that he has done wrong, because he accepted the value placed upon the blocks by the valuator.

Mr. Angelo: Did he take the gratuity bond as part payment?

Mr. WILSON: Yes, and I will show hon. members what the position is later on. Some land at Maylands was sold at £40 and it was subsequently valued at £10. In some cases the owner accepted £10 after first taking £40 from the digger. So much for Mr. Wright. Here is another case: A man named Chesters, one time mayor of Subiaco. By virtue of his position as mayor, he would be a justice of the peace.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Only ex-officio.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He stood for Parliament, anyhow.

Mr. WILSON: He was ex-officio a justice of the peace, and when he conducted the land business I will speak of he knew what he was doing. I will deal with some of the blocks sold by this man in connection with the Belmont estate. Lot 4 was sold to the digger for £45; lot 20 was sold for £45, lot 24 was sold to the digger for £55, lot 25 was sold for £50; lot 26 was sold for £40; lot 27 was sold for £45 and lot 48 was sold for £50. The valuator valued these blocks at £15 all round.

Hon. P. Collier: Where were these blocks?

Mr. WILSON: At Belmont. Scores of these blocks were sold at prices ranging from £55 downwards and the value placed upon them is only £15 per block. This man sold scores of blocks at Bayswater. Lot 44 was sold for £40, while lot 97 was sold for £40 too. The valuator would not place a higher figure upon them than £7. Chesters bought these blocks himself for £2 10s.; the valuator valued them at £7 and Chesters charged £40 for them. We have heard rumours about an individual selling one block five times over. This man (Chesters) is credited with having sold a block five times. It was a certain block—lot 30 on the plan under M.I. This block of land is a sand patch somewhere between West Guildford and the ocean. It comprises 1,250 acres and the man who surveyed this land cannot find the pegs now. They are covered with sand. Even when an applicant bought the block he could not find it. Lot 30, comprising about 10 acres of sand, he would sell to a soldier at a big deposit down, and then the digger would forfeit his deposit. Then he would sell it again as 30a or 30b or 30c, and so on, with the only difference that a half-acre or a quarter-acre was cut off for some reason or another. This block is reputed to have been sold five times to various diggers after being bought by this man Chesters.

Hon. P. Collier: That is to say, each man paid a deposit and had to forfeit.

Mr. WILSON: Yes.

Mr. Lambert: And he is a J.P.?

Mr. WILSON: At least he was a J.P. I would like to mention to hon. members that a man of repute and standing in the Old Country is said to have made a good many hundreds of thousands in dealing with 'diggers' gratuity bonds. An agreement between that individual and the digger would be made, whereby the digger was compelled to pay £50 from the value of his bond as a deposit for the block and to complete payment within one month's time. The digger of course could not pay up and had to forfeit his £50.

Mr. Pickering: The individual got the £50 deposit from the digger.

Mr. WILSON: That is so. When the agreement was made by this man with the digger, he must have known what the result would be. People know what a digger is like when he is hard up. He may have £50

or more at the time he exchanges his bond of £100 for £50 cash and a deposit on land, but when the month is up the digger has no more chance of completing the deal and paying the extra £50 than I have at the present time.

The Minister for Mines: His chance is pretty slender then.

Mr. WILSON: In regard to the Killarney estate, some of these blocks were sold for £30 and afterwards valued at less than £7. In fact some of the blocks at the present time are absolutely useless and would not pay for the transfer. There was a case which happened in my own district. This is just to show that while the boys were away, some unscrupulous men were quite prepared to take advantage of them. Two lads enlisted from Collie. They were brothers named Hansen. Before one—Willie—went, he lent £280 to a prominent man on some blocks of land in the surrounding district. He went to the war and forgot to get the proper exchange and transfer. While at the front he was killed. Later the other brother was killed and the old mother was left alone and ultimately died of a broken heart. One would have thought that in such circumstances the man to whom the money had been lent would go out of his way to offer assistance. On the contrary he took exception to the omission by one of the brothers and endeavoured to make capital to the Federal authorities that these people were of German extraction and that the name Hansen was a German name.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He came from Denmark, did he not?

Mr. WILSON: Yes, that is so. At any rate they were Australian colonists, bred and born.

The Minister for Mines: If they were good enough to go away and fight, it did not matter where they came from.

Mr. WILSON: That is so. When I came back I found out what had happened. Four or five lawyers had been looking after the business, but no finality had been arrived at. The orphan sister came to my house and told me all the sad business. I thought it was rather hard to ask me to take the matter over at that stage, but after a fight I got the matter fixed up. However, this individual would not remedy the position regarding some of the land and put too high a value on it. That shows how this so-called man treated these people.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: What was this individual's name?

Mr. WILSON: He was a lawyer in Collie, a man named Ogden.

The Minister for Mines: He is the Paris Nesbit of Collie.

Mr. WILSON: I asked that a valuator should be appointed and accordingly the land was valued. The valuation placed upon it was half that which this individual said it was worth. We got an agreement drawn up and he is now paying up. It will take four or five years, but he is being forced to pay.

That just shows to what extent some people will go in endeavouring to get money from the relatives of the dead and from maimed soldiers. I will give another instance which will be the last, though not the least. I do not intend to place too much before members, but what I have said is in support of my statement that it was not only land agents who are concerned in this business. When members have heard all I have to say they will agree that a case has been made out for clearing up this aftermath of the war. I believe there are a lot more things to be cleared up, arising out of the war. I say this advisedly, that as a result of many of the activities during the war, money was collected from various sources to help win the war and help relatives of soldiers. But in many cases at least some of the money so collected was never sent forward for the purposes for which it was given by the people. I want to tell hon. members a story. I was in Blackboy and the Rev. Mr. Riley, son of Archbishop Riley, was in camp there too. He sent for me and asked if I would be one of a party to secure leave and help him to get some money for the trench comforts fund. I got leave and we were successful in raising something like £200. Later on when we got to the front I was smacking my lips in anticipation of some of the comforts which would come to the tunnellers from that fund. But the tunnellers in the company I was in got no comforts that Christmas. When I came back I found that the £200 collected had been forgotten, and had not been forwarded. If that happened in one town, might not it have happened in another? How is it that many of these organisations which had not twopence to bless themselves with at the beginning of the war might now have a few thousand pounds? Is there any reason why some of these institutions should have palatial buildings while the people for whom the money was collected are in some cases on the verge of starvation? The sooner the Government or some other recognised body takes notice of these facts and makes a clean sweep of the whole business, the better it will be. Efforts should be made to see that the money is devoted to the purposes for which it was intended, and even if we were instrumental in having it used to assist some of the people who are in appalling circumstances, we would be doing some good. I have before me a declaration which was handed to me by the member for Moore (Colonel Denton), who I know has seen more service than most men. He went away with the famous 11th battalion and came back at the latter end of the war. I have the original document which reads:

22 Irwin Street, Perth, 14th April, 1921. I, Frank McParlan, No. 4316, Private, 48th Battalion, hereby declare that in September 1920 I approached a Mr. Stirling (Judge. Smith & Co.), representing the Mia Mia Pastoral Co., with re-

gard to the cashing of my war gratuity bond of face value £36 3s. 10d. He offered to arrange for the transfer of the bond to the Mia Mia Pastoral Coy., in exchange for a block of land situated at West Guildford and valued by them at £42 approximately, and the balance in cash. On the 27th September, I handed the bond to Abbott and Abbott, solicitors for the company, and received in exchange cheque value £31 odd. The title deeds to the property I received about a month later. Since that date I felt dissatisfied about the matter. I therefore asked Mr. Pickering, of the State Treasury, to have the block valued by the local land agent and valuers at Guildford, and the valuation given for block was £7. I consider that this has not been a clean deal as I received for a bond which with accrued interest was valued at £88 13s. 3d., a cheque for £31 and land to the value of £7, this making a total loss to me of approximately £50. Signed, Frank McParlan. Declared before me, April 15th, 1921, at Perth; signed, J. G. Cooper, J.P.

This is evidence to which we cannot shut our eyes. Whether we appoint a select committee or a Royal Commission, it is certainly up to the House to do something. If restitution only is made, I do not care what becomes of the people concerned. I do not care if the people who fleeced these men leave the country. If they did so, it would be a case of leaving the country for their country's good. I shall never be satisfied until the whole of these transactions are investigated, and the sooner we get a committee to make the inquiry, the better. Some people have suggested a Royal Commission. I have a certain amount of respect for a Royal Commission. On the other hand if we can get a body of men from this Chamber to investigate the circumstances without any expense, a body with power to subpoena witnesses and take evidence on oath, we shall be doing some good. If the committee then come to the House and ask to be converted into a Royal Commission, the matter can be sifted thoroughly. If any recommendation is made by the select committee I hope that this House will take heed of it and see that it is forwarded to the authorities of the Defence Department. I hope this motion will be carried and that after the inquiry has been held, we shall have no further occasion to bring matters of this kind before the House.

Col. DENTON (Moore) [5.37]: I regret exceedingly that my maiden effort in this House should be in defence of the men who fought for us. When I came to this House, I thought it would be my duty to assist to legislate for the country. I did not for a moment think that the men who had been out yonder would require any help of this description. When we

went away we went out to do a job, and when we returned we thought we would be back amongst friends, not enemies. When we realise the manner in which the returned soldier has been exploited, however, then it is time that someone stood up and spoke for them. Quite a lot was said when we went away and people waved flags and beat drums. A lot of the men who went away did not come back and many of those who did come back have been victimised by pirates. The member for Collie has given us examples of this victimisation such as are calculated to make cold the blood of any man who soldiered with those who made themselves the surety of the country and the Empire's safety. When the soldiers came home they expected to be among friends, and what kind of friends have these people proved to be? The answer is found in the instance mentioned by the member for Collie. A man with a gratuity bond of £88 17s. 6d. received £31 for it. Is that fair and just on the part of the man for whom this digger fought? I do not think it is.

Mr. Underwood: Is that the case of all of them?

Col. DENTON: No, this is one case, and it is a concrete case.

Mr. Corboy: One case would justify the holding of an inquiry.

Col. DENTON: Absolutely. This is not the only case which can be proved. There are others which will be produced at the right time. This is one case which calls for inquiry. When we find this sort of business going on, all I can say is that it is not what we went away to fight for. We went away to preserve the integrity of our country and bring back the honours of victory if possible. Our men have done so, and should they be victimised in this way? So long as I have breath in my body I will stand up for my comrades. It is absolutely appalling that one should have to come here to secure redress for men who fought for the country. We do not want charity. All we ask is justice. So long as I can speak I shall stand up for the men who fought for us. I had the honour of leading many of these men; I know them, and I am satisfied that they deserve the best that the country can give them. Without doubt they were our best insurance against danger during a long and trying campaign, and so long as life lasts I shall stick up for them and see that they get the fair deal they deserve. We are asking only for a fair deal.

Mr. Underwood: The returned soldier wants what he asks for.

Col. DENTON: He does not want anything which is not just.

Capt. Carter: He wants what is due to him.

Mr. Underwood: He wants what he asks for.

Col. DENTON: That is justice. No doubt members of this House had friends near and dear to them who were killed or incapacitated

in the war. I wish to throw back at them the question—"Are they going to stand this sort of thing?" I think not. If they are, then the principle for which we went away to fight will be lost. We went to fight fairly and squarely and bring back the honours of victory, and since our men have accomplished that object, surely it is the duty of this House to order a searching and impartial inquiry to ascertain the extent of the injustice done to our men.

Mr. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [5.45]: I also desire to support the motion. The fact that one man, namely, the mover, has been able to collect so many instances of unfair dealing with the gratuity bonds of soldiers, is sufficient warrant for an impartial inquiry into the whole of the dealings. The land agents are not the only people who have seized the opportunity to take advantage of men who were either too careless or too hard up to stand out for fair terms in respect of their bonds. I refer, of course, to soldiers who encountered difficulty in getting the Commonwealth to cash the bonds. Just in passing let me remind hon. members that in connection with a certain Bill we have had before us this session all members of this House were circularised by a certain association, because of interjections from the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) and myself. Let me further remind hon. members that the principal in one of the most glaring cases quoted by the member for Collie, I refer to Chesters, of Subiaco, the land agent who sold one block of land five times, is, according to the association's published statement, a member of the association. This circumstance in itself largely bears out what the member for Pilbara has said. It should not be necessary to labour the question. The fact that returned soldiers are alleged to have been dealt with unfairly, should be sufficient in such a Chamber as this to cause the appointment of an impartial committee of inquiry which will clear up the whole matter.

Capt. CARTER (Leederville) [5.47]: While not desirous of speaking at length, I do wish to support with all earnestness the motion of the member for Collie. There are one or two main reasons why the select committee should function at an early date. In the first place, it is necessary that wrongs which undoubtedly have occurred should be righted. The soldier should, if possible, be recompensed any loss he has sustained. In the ordinary course of my business I have come across men reduced to such a condition of impecuniosity, largely by reason of family responsibilities, that they were not in a position to make a bargain with anybody in the transference of their gratuity bonds. I give it to the House as a fact that men have come to my office with bonds approximating in value to £90 or £100, and have said, "Give me £50, give me £40, give me £30, give me anything, give me some cash, so that I may

have a chance to carry on." Obviously, such men were not in a position to bargain, or to protect themselves; they fell an easy prey to the pirates in the city. On another aspect let me say that it is within my knowledge that this class of piracy was not confined to land agents. Like the member for Collie, I could mention pastoral companies, drapers, and so forth, who engaged in the traffic. The member for Collie has referred, in this connection, to various professional classes.

Mr. Simons: Let us have the names; we want to know them all.

Capt. CARTER: I am not in a position to reel off all the names. Sufficient instances have already been quoted to convince the House that inquiry is necessary. If hon. members want the names, I am prepared to give some names to the select committee. The position is that a considerable number of people in this city have done a little trafficking in gratuity bonds. Some very glaring cases have come to my knowledge. Seeing that the matter has been so widely discussed, and that the evil has been so widespread, it is necessary, for the sake of the business men who are straight and above board, who have a few honest scruples, and who have given the digger a fair deal, that there should be an inquiry immediately so as to clear their names, as well as to recoup the digger and repair the wrong done him. With the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy), I say that if there is only one case of the kind brought forward, if there is only digger to be righted, the appointment of a select committee is justified. I agree with the mover that the inquiry need not be an expensive business, and that the select committee should be composed of men whose interest is "the greatest good of the greatest number," who have no partial interest, whose efforts will be directed towards attaining absolute impartiality. As regards one remark of that hon. member, however, let me say it is unfair that the association which has been referred to should be involved in these charges, for, as I said when speaking on a certain measure the other evening, the association in question have machinery which they can put in motion. At present, however, the association are in the same position as the House is in, as the man in the street finds himself in; they have only generalities and rumours to go on. Concrete facts are wanted, and the select committee will be able to give us those facts. Then the association will be able to move; and the association, I say, will deal with any delinquent members very quickly and very effectively. I hope the House will carry the motion without hesitation.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.53]: There is no need, I am sure, to urge the carrying of this motion. But whilst the appointment of a select committee will serve a very good purpose in eliciting the facts as to the trafficking in gratuity bonds, and in exposing, as the committee should expose, to the public gaze the men who have been guilty

of such actions as are complained of, the result cannot be to achieve all that is due to the men who have been victimised.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: One result will probably be to prevent such land agents from getting licenses.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. I was about to say that I consider it the bounden duty of the Commonwealth Government to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is essentially and primarily a Federal matter.

Hon. T. Walker: Yes; that is the whole point.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am astonished that the question has been allowed to rest so long. We have an organisation of returned soldiers. Of course I do not know what action the association have taken, but I am surprised that they have not been able to bring sufficient pressure to bear upon the Federal Government to secure an investigation ere this. The matter has been going on for a long time; it has been common knowledge for months; the dogs in the streets have been barking it for almost a year; and yet nothing has been done. Even now we want the Federal Government to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter, for, if it is found that the facts are as stated, that men have been acting in such an unscrupulous fashion as to deprive the returned soldier of his rights under the gratuity bonds, then the Federal Government should take steps to repay to those soldiers that of which they have been robbed.

The Minister for Mines: The Federal Government have that power now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. If the soldiers have parted with their bonds under stress of circumstances, then—I care not whether the men who have bought them hold hundreds or thousands of pounds' worth of the bonds—the Commonwealth Government ought to repudiate any obligation to the men who have obtained those securities by such means.

Mr. Willecock: That power is expressly reserved.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am glad it is so. Even if it were not so, in my opinion the Commonwealth Government would be justified in taking the necessary power by legislation. The select committee can ascertain the facts, but there the matter will end so far as they are concerned. If there is to be any redress given to the men who have been victimised, the Federal authorities must take action afterwards.

The Minister for Mines: The select committee might establish the case on so firm a basis that the Federal Government would not be able to refuse to take action.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the position. But, even though we can appoint a select committee, why not have the Federal Government carry on the whole investigation, starting from the beginning? However, we would not be justified in delaying investigation until such time as we can ascertain whether

the Federal Government are willing to take the matter up; therefore we ought to carry the motion.

The Minister for Mines: If we carry the motion, we must appoint a select committee.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so. I think we should appoint a select committee. But now that we have in Perth the Minister for Defence, who was intimately connected with all matters pertaining to the soldiers, let this business be laid before him. I was astonished to hear that the Minister for Defence declared he had never heard of the affair. It may be, of course, that there has been some neglect on the part of somebody in this State in not bringing the business under the notice of the Minister for Defence. I can quite understand that a Minister residing in Melbourne is not in touch with all that goes on in Western Australia. Still, it is to me a matter of astonishment that somebody did not bring the business to the Minister's attention. I am rather surprised, also, that the Returned Soldiers' League have, apparently, not mentioned the matter by way of correspondence to the Minister. Anyway, the Minister is now in this State, and before he leaves it he will become acquainted with all that has occurred in connection with the gratuity bonds. It seems to me that the Minister should consider it to be his duty to have the question probed to the bottom at once. I want to see those soldiers who have been robbed get their money back. I do not want to see certain people retain their ill-gotten gains. Moreover, there is a possibility of some of those who are most deeply involved in the traffic, who, if rumours speak true, have not got hundreds merely, but thousands, of pounds out of those transactions, skipping out of the State and so getting beyond the reach of any investigation by a select committee or a Royal Commission.

Mr. Richardson: Some have gone already.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It would be a great pity if they escaped the contumely which the public ought to heap upon them.

Mr. Mann: Cannot their transactions be investigated in their absence?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes; but, still, we shall not have the benefit of getting those persons cross-examined. I have no doubt whatever that when the full list of names is made public, it will be found to contain the names of some of those men who were foremost, as the member for Moore (Col. Denton) has remarked, on the recruiting platform, and in cheering our soldiers away, and in expressing a fixed determination to die for the welfare of the soldiers when the soldiers returned. I can picture the class. I know some of them, men always foremost in anything pertaining to loyalty or patriotism. They generally wrap the Union Jack right around them, put their heads back and their chests out, and proclaim themselves more loyal than the King.

Mr. Underwood: It is a good flag to have around one.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Nobody is saying anything about the flag. The only objection I have to it is that it is frequently prostituted to base purposes. It should be too sacred an emblem to be trotted out on every possible occasion to bolster up a little cheap notoriety and advertise men who would rob soldiers, as in this case. I hope the matter will be pursued by the Federal authorities. I do not know whether it is within the province of the House to even carry a motion requesting the Federal Government to appoint a Royal Commission.

The Minister for Mines: We can do that when the committee makes its report.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course, the committee will be able to make any recommendation it thinks fit. In the meantime, weeks, perhaps months, will elapse, and some of those concerned will make themselves scarce.

The Minister for Mines: The R.S.A. ought to see the Prime Minister when he goes through to-morrow.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am surprised that nothing of the sort has been done. There are returned soldiers in the House. I do not know whether they are associated with the R.S.A. Surely it is an opportune time for the R.S.A. to bring their influence to bear on the Prime Minister and induce him to see to it that the soldiers are not made victims by these unscrupulous land sharks who have been trafficking in the bonds.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [6.2]: The motion has been moved and seconded and supported by returned soldiers. It was not until the Leader of the Opposition spoke that any member who was not able to go to the war addressed himself to the motion. I can assure returned soldier members, and returned soldiers outside, that they have every member of the House with them in their desire to see that returned soldiers generally are not badly treated. Fortunately, a majority of the people of the State treat the returned soldiers well, but there is a small minority to whom this does not apply, as was evidenced by the speech of the mover of the motion. We, who through disability were not able to go to the war, owe an undying debt of gratitude to those who went and fought for us, and I shall do my utmost to see that justice is done to those soldiers who have been treated in the way recounted by the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson).

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [6.4]: I will support the motion, but I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that a State House has not much power in dealing with anything which is exclusively a Federal matter. A select committee of this House could have but very little power—

Mr. O'Loughlen: No power to give redress.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No. All that a select committee of this House could do would be to make suggestions or recommendations

to the Federal Parliament. In respect of the gratuity bonds, the soldiers themselves are to a very considerable extent blamable.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Some of them have been very foolish.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, they were foolish; those who sold their bonds were foolish. Returned soldiers have come to me and asked me to buy their bonds, suggesting to me all sorts of subterfuges, suggesting that I should pay them £70 or £80 for a £100 bond, and intimating that they were quite prepared to sign a statutory declaration before a justice of the peace to the effect that they had received from me £100 for the bond.

Capt. Carter: Is that true?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is true. After all, if any robbery has been done, if any robbery is being done, it is with the consent of the robbed.

Mr. Munsie: Not so where they were given a block of land which they expected would be up to the value named.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That was only subterfuge. I want to come to the transactions of the A.M.P. in respect of returned soldiers. If we are to have an inquiry, let it be an inquiry in full. The Federal Government allowed the A.M.P. to insure the men for four years, take their premiums for four years and give them the value of the bond less the premiums.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That was better than the sand-patch deals.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was not better at all. Say what you will about all land agents, the A.M.P., with the concurrence of the Federal Government, insured the men for four years and, taking the premiums out of the bonds, gave the men what was left. The Federal Government gave the A.M.P. a license to rob the returned soldiers.

Hon. P. Collier: It was a fair, legitimate business transaction.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Did the returned soldier want his life insured?

Hon. P. Collier: Yes.

Mr. Corboy: Everybody should be insured.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Why did not he get insured before he went to the war? The man who went to the war was not worried about his life. When the hon. member who moved the motion comes to inquire, he must inquire also about the A.M.P.

Mr. Wilson: About everything.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Because the A.M.P. were given a license by the Federal Government, and in my opinion it was a license to rob the soldiers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did they charge the soldiers any more than they charged other citizens?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They charged all they could get.

Mr. Willcock: Well, they cannot get any redress in that respect, so why should it be inquired into?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Well, why inquire at all? If we are to have an inquiry, let the inquiry comprise the A.M.P.'s transactions.

Col. Denton: That is coming on later.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am pleased to hear it.

Hon. P. Collier: The motion covers that and everything else.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am not opposing the motion, but I am taking exception to some of the remarks made. I know some returned soldiers. I am the father of one. He has no complaints whatever.

Capt. Carter: He is very lucky.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He has a soldier's bond. He has been treated well in every way. And, apart from him, I know hundreds who have been treated well in respect of their bonds. Mostly it will be found that those who have been treated badly in respect of their bonds are those who desired, who asked, to be treated badly in respect of their bonds.

Mr. Willcock: Necessity drove them.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Necessity never drove those to whom I am referring. In any case, if any great injustice is being done to the returned soldiers, why should not the R.S.A. take up this case?

Hon. P. Collier: That is the puzzle.

Mr. Willcock: You do not know where the motion originated.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It may not be a representative body.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Why did not they take up the case?

Col. Denton: We are taking it up in this Chamber.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That may be.

Col. Denton: It is so.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Returned Soldiers' Association represents—

Col. Denton: The men who gave you your integrity.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: My son did that. The Returned Soldiers' Association represents about 30 per cent. of the returned soldiers. The association have not put up this case. Why?

Mr. Wilson: I am representing 70 per cent. of the soldiers, and I am putting it up.

Mr. Munsie: The association demanded that the names should be published.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They did not. I have been speaking to officials of the R.S.A. I asked them what about it. They said, "All the file is down there. We are not going on with it."

Mr. O'Loughlen: A poor old crowd!

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Of course they are. Shall I say that the better soldiers do not belong to the R.S.A., although there might be some good ones in the association. Why do not the R.S.A. bring this matter before the Government which it concerns?

Mr. Corboy: They did so three times.

Capt. Carter: They have done it and been turned down time after time.

Hon. T. Walker: And you will be turned down again.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Presently there will be some turning down here.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I desire to bring these matters before the public and before Parliament. This motion has no application to this Parliament. Nothing that a select committee of this House can do will have any effect. It is a Federal matter.

Col. Denton: It is not a Federal matter.

Mrs. Cowan: It will have a big moral effect.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: On the Federal Government?

Mrs. Cowan: No, on the community generally.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The recommendations of the select committee, if it is appointed, could not be given effect to by this Parliament. The matter is one which should be dealt with by the Federal Parliament. I have no objection to the motion. I have higher feelings as well as the mover of the motion with regard to returned soldiers being taken down. I have an objection to any citizen of Western Australia being taken down. Some of the soldiers, however, a very small percentage of them, have begged people to buy their bonds. If there is fault on one side there is fault on the other side. One cannot buy a bond without making a statutory declaration before a justice of the peace that one has paid the full value for it, and the holder of the bond must also make a statutory declaration that he has received full value. When men are prepared to sign a statutory declaration that they have received full value when they have not done so, I do not know that we can help them very much. They are laying themselves open to be taken down, though I think I can say, as far as human nature is concerned, that Australians will do less of that sort of thing than will people in any other part of the world. Nevertheless there will be found in Australia, people who will be prepared to sign a sworn declaration that they have not been taken down and at the same time are prepared to be taken down by persons who are willing to do so. It is not altogether the land agent who is to blame. Ever since 1915, anyone who has wanted anything has always brought forward the returned soldier. When the land agents want a monopoly they ask for that monopoly on behalf of returned soldiers. I have already been struck by the fact that it is one for the returned soldier and 20 for themselves.

Mr. Wilson: I am not doing that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am not saying that of the hon. member, but it is a fact all the same.

Mr. Wilson: The returned soldiers want something for themselves now.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Exactly! The time is coming when the returned soldier will have to look upon himself as a member of the Aus-

tralian public. There are those here who were too young to go to the war, and have become and are becoming men. There are those who were too old to go to the war and others who were physically unfit to go. All these have rights in Australia as well as other people. Possibly this is the first time this point has been brought forward, but it will be brought forward more forcibly in the near future. I think I am speaking for 75 per cent. of the returned soldiers—and I have a great many relatives amongst them—when I say that, although they are returned soldiers, they do not desire to have a greater advantage in Australia than their fellow citizens.

Col. Denton: They do not want charity.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They do not desire any greater pull or any greater advantage than other people.

Capt. Carter: We are not asking for any pull, but merely for our rights.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The men who could not go to the war have as many rights as those who did go. A boy who has grown up since the war has his rights as an Australian just as the man who was grown up at the time of the war and actually went to it.

Mr. Wilson: What does all this lead up to?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It does not lead up to much, and the motion does not lead to much. It cannot have any effect, because this Parliament cannot carry out any recommendations that the select committee may make.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [7.37]: It is rather regrettable that the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) should have seized upon this opportunity of ventilating any grievances he may have against the demands of the returned soldier. The motion is very clear, and is understood, I think, by every member of the House. It certainly has the concurrence of the House. The returned soldiers should be protected. They were offered what were called gratuity bonds. These bonds were hedged around with all sorts of restrictions, and yet those who were given them were afforded an opportunity of disposing of them and trafficking in them. The hon. member stated that any recommendations that were made by this House could not be given effect to. It is true that they cannot lead to any actual result.

Mr. Wilson: Everyone knows that.

Mr. LAMBERT: The matter is outside the scope of State politics.

Hon. P. Collier: The motion will lead to results. It is all we can do as a State.

Mr. Underwood: It may lead to results.

Mr. LAMBERT: I had one experience with a man who came to me. He was badly off and asked me to cash his bond. I said I could not afford to do so, but would make inquiries and see if it could be negotiated in the ordinary course. I am prepared, if this could be done, to do what I could to help the man. I asked the manager of a bank what could be done, and he said the bank would

accept the bond as a security. I then went to Mr. Friel, who told me that the bond was a negotiable instrument. I thereupon cashed the bond, which was for a little over £100. After I had done so I was told that the security was not negotiable. That is the other side of the question. The member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) has put his case forcibly and every member is justified in supporting the motion. I regret that the member for Pilbara feels that the soldiers are asking too much, and that there is a growing feeling from the springing youth of the country or those who were too old, infirm or unfit to go to the war, that the returned soldier is getting too much.

Col. Denton: Not enough yet.

Mr. LAMBERT: It ill-becomes the hon. member to suggest that they should not get the very best the country can give them. If this country gives all it can afford to give to those who fought in defence of the Empire, then it is not giving too much. I regret the ill-timed and ill-advised remarks of the hon. member, who is apparently seeking in an indirect manner to discount the claims of those men who have seen fit to put them before the Government. I would not have spoken but that I think the hon. member, after reflection, will feel that he should not have given utterance to those remarks. We, as a party on this side of the House, will stand up for the returned soldier in any reasonable demand that he makes. He can make the demand upon his country and he can make it upon his countrymen, and we will support him. It is clear from the debate that we as a State authority should make the most searching inquiry into this matter, and see whether the returned soldier is getting that return for his gratuity bond to which he was entitled when it was handed to him.

Mr. RICHARDSON (Subiaco) [7.47]: Not many words are required from me in support of the motion. It has been very fully discussed and has been well supported. People are constantly asking why it is the Government do not move in the direction of preventing returned soldiers from being victimised. The Government now have an opportunity to carry out some of the promises that were made a few years ago when our soldiers were going to the war. The general public of Western Australia will, I am sure, welcome this motion. Many of our returned soldiers, through adverse circumstances, have been compelled to ask for cash for their gratuity bonds and have been absolutely victimised in doing so. It has been stated in the House that the R.S.A. should have moved in the matter. I wish to exonerate the R.S.A. I believe it is a matter which members of this House should have gone into many months ago.

Mr. Wilson: I had a motion on the Notice Paper last year.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I am surprised it was not carried at the time. Not only has this been spoken of in public, but it has

been fully discussed in many of our local papers. Some of the papers have gone so far as to mention the names of certain people, and other names have been mentioned by the member for Collie, and it is a surprising fact that the Federal Government have not been alive to the question and have not done something. It has been said that so far as we are concerned the carrying of this motion will have no effect. I disagree with that, because, if we carry the motion and if we appoint a select committee and they investigate and find out who these people really were, and to what extent the soldiers were victimised, I believe the moral effect of that will compel the Federal Government to take some action. In that direction we shall be doing some good, and we shall fulfil the promise made not only by this Government but by practically the whole of the people in Western Australia to the soldiers when they went away to fight at the war. I believe our action will have a strong moral effect also in other directions, and in all probability many of those who perhaps have not already been discovered will find it very convenient to make amends to the returned soldiers whom they have victimised. I hope the motion will be carried unanimously.

Resolved: That motions be continued.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [7.48]: The remark was made by the previous speaker "why do not the Government do something?" That is the usual cry. The Government are always expected to do something, but if the Government did everything they were asked to do, it would soon be found that there were not sufficient laws on the Statute Book to protect the people who will not protect themselves. It is not part of the duty of the Government to look after the people who do not watch their own interests. The matter under review, however, is somewhat different. Many of the soldiers who have returned to private life have settled down and are quite content to live and work for those who were not able to go to the war. We owe a duty to those people and we have to remember that special circumstances surround many of them, for very few came back in a normal condition, and there are some who even now are not yet returned to normal. If this inquiry were merely an ordinary one into the business transactions between ordinary people, I should oppose the motion, but I am prepared to regard the question in a different light. I do not know what can happen as the result of the investigation. It may be that some of these people may be brought within the law of the State. Beyond that, all that we shall be able to do will be to make representations to the Federal Government. I hope hon. members will realise that we are passing this motion because of special circumstances, and not because it is a part of our duty to appoint select committees to inquire into business transactions which have ended unsatisfactorily to one side or the other. I do not know why the hon. member desires to

secure the attendance of the Press at the inquiry.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: To let the light of day into it.

The PREMIER: I like to let the light of day into a good many places, but we must remember that during the course of the inquiry many innocent people may be charged.

Capt. Carter: And the inquiry will clear them.

The PREMIER: Personally I do not think any good can come from the publicity which the hon. member seeks to bring about. I know of cases where soldiers have given receipts for more money than they have received.

Mr. Corboy: That was done in many instances.

Mr. Underwood: And the declaration was made before a Justice of the Peace that payment was received.

Mr. Corboy: That does not make the man who paid the money any less a rogue.

The PREMIER: I shall not seriously object to the proposal but I do not think it is necessary to have the Press at the inquiry because the evidence will be available for publication afterwards.

Hon. P. Collier: Any man who has carried on a straightforward transaction will have nothing to be afraid of.

The PREMIER: It is a bad practice except where something very serious is involved. However I shall not seriously oppose the hon. member's wish to admit the Press.

Mr. BOYLAND (Kalgoorlie) [7.55]: I support the motion. The member for Collie must be congratulated on bringing the matter forward. If we give publicity to the investigation and the Federal authorities get full knowledge of what has taken place they will be compelled to move in the matter and protect those men to whom they gave gratuities. It has been said that soldiers have been robbed by those insurance societies having the right to insure these men through their gratuity bonds. We all know that insurance is a matter that all business men take up. I do not suppose there are many men who have not serious obligations in the way of families, who do not try to protect their families by means of insurance, and the soldier coming back from the war, being able to get an insurance on his life, is a fairly fortunate man, because we know what the war has done to incapacitate those who went out to fight for our liberty and freedom. It has always been said that while specific statements have been made, it could not be understood why the Minister for Defence had no knowledge of those statements. I may say that I never heard of soldiers having been robbed until quite lately. I do not know whether other hon. members heard of these cases. I have been associated with soldiers since 1914. They applied to me very often to assist them in many matters, and I never

heard of any of them having been robbed. It is only natural to assume therefore that a man in the position of the Minister for Defence may not have heard of such cases just as I failed to hear of them. That Minister, by the way, has had to administer a big department which he has administered well.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The fact has been published in every newspaper.

Mr. BOYLAND: Men have come to me to get their bonds cashed and they have had them cashed, and so far as our district is concerned, those men have been looked after well. Many of the statements which have been made are so much hot air. There is no man in the community who will not see that the soldier gets a fair deal. Of course there are bound to be a few wasters in the community, but we cannot help that, and it is those men who will be shown up by the inquiry. The majority of those who went to cheer the soldiers away—and I may say there were not many rotters amongst them; they stuck to the soldiers during their absence—must be protected. A general statement may go out from the House that those men, or most of them, who went to cheer the soldiers away, may have done so for the purpose of subsequently robbing the dependants of those soldiers. That has been stated more than once to-day but there is no truth in the assertion. I support the motion and I thank the member for Collie for having brought it forward.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [7.58]: I hope the motion will be passed with the full concurrence of the House and that tomorrow we may have the opportunity of putting it before the Prime Minister and letting him understand that 50 representatives of the people of this State, of all shades of political opinion, are in accord on the question of seeing that the returned soldier gets a fair deal. Western Australia has done its part in many ways, and it may do more if it can be shown to the Federal Government we are anxious in every possible way to secure the welfare of the returned soldiers. With regard to the bonds, there can be no one throughout Australia who is ignorant of what the Federal Government have done, and we were told through the Press frequently that any attempt to traffic in these bonds—for that is really what it means—to the detriment of the holder of the bonds would be severely dealt with. There is no question about that.

Mr. O'Loughlin: That was altered later on.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the select committee secures evidence on the facts which will be placed before it, this House can call upon the Federal Government to be true to the representations made at the outset when the bonds were issued, that there should be no trafficking.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is not illegal to buy bonds.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is illegal to traffic in them and to deal in them in the way we have had divulged to-night.

Mr. A. Thomson: It was distinctly laid down that the full value for the bonds should be given.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. I could have had a lot of these gratuity bonds for less than half their value, but I would have nothing to do with them because I was not in a position to give the holders the full price, and I was not anxious to feel that I was making a profit out of men who had offered their blood freely for the nation. I did not want to make money out of these bonds. I would class men who did that with the profiteers who, throughout the war, made huge fortunes out of the misery, trials, and sorrows of the people. If I had my way, I would be almost too drastic with people of that nature.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You could not do too much to them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would get a good stout piece of rope and use a good strong jarrah tree.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why did you not say "lamp-posts"?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Some of the lamp-posts have cast iron foundations, and I am afraid that they would not be equal to carrying the burden of so many people. A jarrah tree gathers strength every day it lives. I am astonished to hear that the Federal Government, or any member of that Ministry, are not aware of these things.

Mr. Corboy: They say they are not aware of them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Are these things not taking place in the Eastern States? Should such not be the case, it simply means that we have got in Western Australia all the rogues of the Commonwealth, because we know there are some rogues here. If we could get at the truth, I believe it would be found that they came from the East.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If I mistake not, this very question was discussed in the Federal House.

Mr. Corboy: It has been brought under the notice of the Federal Government by every branch of the Returned Soldiers' League throughout Australia.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know that we can do much as it is a Federal matter, but this is one of those chances which representatives of the people of every shade of political belief have of joining together and showing the Federal Government and the Federal Parliament that we know our business and can sink our differences when the common weal has to be safeguarded. I understood one Opposition member to say that the matter had been brought before the Federal Government and had been turned down. If it was brought before the Federal Government with

proof similar to that which the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) says he can get, and was turned down, they do not know their business.

Mr. Corboy: It is a fact, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Statements have been made that such transactions have not been confined to land and estate agents, but have extended to other sections of the community as well. If such cases were brought under the notice of the Federal Government with any proof at all, that Government had no warrant whatever to turn down applications for action. I am a little bit doubtful about the admission of the Press to the meetings of the select committee; not that I want to object to the Press attending, but I am satisfied that there will probably be a number of persons summoned to give evidence, persons whom the committee may believe have had transactions which were not quite square. They will have to go through a very painful ordeal during cross-examination. The answer to that statement is, of course, that if they prove themselves to be clear of any wrongdoing, the Press will indicate that in the reports, but hon. members know regarding their own speeches and representations that the space in the Press is so limited, and the Press have to condense matters to such an extent that it is quite possible they might unwittingly do injustice to persons appearing before the select committee. I would like to see that portion of the motion dealing with the Press deleted, because after the select committee has held the inquiry and taken the evidence, it will be quite open to the Press to publish the matter fully. If we intend to do anything in this matter let us pass the motion unanimously to show the Federal Government that there are men in this Parliament who, whatever their other political differences may be, have no differences whatever when it comes to the returned soldiers' question. Let us show that we have no differences as to how the returned men should be dealt with and protected against those who would take advantage either of the inexperience or the necessities of the individual soldier.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [8.6]: I desire to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Collie. During the debate on the Address-in-reply I dealt with the manner in which returned soldiers were being harshly treated by a certain section of the land agents in the metropolitan area. I was rather surprised to-night to hear some of the statements that have been made. Several members want to know why the Returned Soldiers' Association have not taken the matter up. The Returned Soldiers' Association of Perth have taken it up on three occasions. I have copies of reports of their meetings at which this matter was dealt with. The Returned Soldiers' Association here carried motions and forwarded them to Melbourne months ago. They demanded the publication of the names of the land agents who are responsible for defrauding the returned soldiers.

Mr. Underwood: What about the insurance companies?

Mr. MUNSIE: If the member for Pilbara desires me to refer to insurance matters, I can only say that I wish every returned soldier had invested his gratuity bond with the A.M.P. Society and insured his life. That would have been the best investment he could have made with his money.

Mr. Underwood: Licensed robbery.

Mr. MUNSIE: During the Address-in-reply I read a small extract from the "West Australian." The member for Collie has given the names of some land agents to-night. The newspaper referred to the case of a man who had disposed of the one block to returned soldiers five times over. No name was given in the Press but the name has been given by the member for Collie to-night. I take it that that hon. member has absolute proof or he would not have made that statement. The extract I referred to is dated 18th March, which is some considerable time ago. The extract goes on to say—

An agent who secured certain blocks for £2 10s. each was able to dispose of them to returned men for £40 each. These fraudulent sales, it is stated, have not been conducted by all agents, and the business method of many of the large estate agencies are not impugned. Nevertheless, the publication of the names of those who have exploited returned soldiers in land dealing would surprise the community.

Members will note those last few words, "publication of the names of those who have exploited the returned soldiers would surprise the community." If the inquiry by a select committee did nothing else, it would let the public know who those people are. I do not know where the influence has come from, but evidently some influence has been brought to bear from somewhere or other, for the executive of the Returned Soldiers' Association, who were so emphatic that they carried motions demanding the publication of the names, have now "gone dead" on the subject, and for three months have not discussed it. If they have discussed the matter during that period, nothing has been published. There was also a surprising statement made that the Minister for Defence might not have known anything about it.

Mr. Boyland: I referred to specific cases.

Mr. MUNSIE: Did the hon. member want anything more specific than what was published in the "West Australian" of the 18th March? That report was sent to Senator Pearce.

Mr. Boyland: Does he read every paper?

Hon. P. Collier: Surely he is interested enough to read the papers from Western Australia. He is a nice kind of representative who cannot find time to read the papers from his own State.

Mr. MUNSIE: It is immaterial to me whether the Minister for Defence reads the papers from Western Australia or not, but on the 21st March further reference was

published in the "West Australian" under big headings reading as follows:—"Cash gratuity bonds. Inflated land values." At the bottom of the criticism or remarks by the "West Australian" appeared words which I will bring under the notice of members. I do not know how the Federal Government can be said to have been unaware of this matter because the statement on that date came from a Federal Treasury official. On the date mentioned, the 21st March last, the Federal Government knew of this exploitation of returned soldiers, yet they have done nothing.

Mr. Wilson: The same sort of thing has gone on in the Eastern States as well.

Mr. Marshall: The activities of these people would not be confined to one State.

Mr. MUNSIE: Of course not. However, sufficient influence has been brought to bear to prevent the necessary inquiries being made. I hope the House will carry the motion unanimously, and that the inquiry will go on. Certain facts elicited from the inquiry will probably enable us to put up such a strong case as will compel the Federal Government to take the necessary action. Reverting to the article in the "West Australian" on the 21st March—it is a telegram dated Melbourne, 20th March—it says—

Referring on Saturday to land transactions in Western Australia in which holders of war gratuity bonds are alleged to have been victimised, the acting-Secretary to the Treasury said that the Treasury had full power to annul any transaction, irrespective of what stage it had reached. Inquiries were now being made into the cases reported.

This shows that on the 21st March last the Federal Government were making inquiries into the cases that had been reported in the "West Australian."

Mr. Marshall: And Senator Pearce says he knows nothing about it.

Mr. MUNSIE: There is the case of the man who sold one block five times over and yet Senator Pearce says he knew nothing whatever about it.

The Minister for Works: I do not suppose he does. Does he know anything, anyhow?

Mr. MUNSIE: Of course he did know of this, or the statement would not have appeared from the Treasury official.

Mr. Boyland: Can you prove that specific cases have been brought before him?

Hon. P. Collier: Why quibble?

Mr. Boyland: You are very anxious concerning the returned soldiers now.

Hon. P. Collier: I have been anxious for their interests all along.

Mr. Boyland: I can remember when you were not.

Hon. P. Collier: You cannot remember anything of the kind.

Mr. Boyland: You were not always so anxious.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! order!

Hon. P. Collier: You cannot remember anything of the kind.

Mr. Boyland: Yes I can.

Hon. P. Collier: You have not got Hannan-street behind you here. You have to stand up to your statements in this Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! order! Hon. members are in Parliament, not in Hannan-street.

Mr. MUNSIE: I want to continue reading the statement from the Treasury official. It goes on to say—"Inquiries are now being made into the cases reported." Specific cases must have been reported or they would not have had cases to inquire into, and they were making inquiries on the 20th March. The report proceeds—

It is stated that the £9,000 worth of bonds held by one estate agent is not unusual and is quite permissible, provided the transactions have been fair to the bondholders. Unfortunately, some of the returned soldiers do not assist the authorities to protect their own interests. Cases have been brought to notice where the soldier has not even inspected the block of land he is purchasing. He has given his bond in payment, and has received in return the excess value of the bond in cash.

Col. Denton: That is the exact position.

Mr. MUNSIE: This statement was made by a Treasury official on the 20th March of this year, and yet we have the Minister for Defence within the last two or three days stating that he knew nothing about it. We have the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Boyland) getting up in his place here and apologising for the Minister for Defence.

Mr. Boyland: Is the Minister for Defence a Treasury official?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kalgoorlie must refrain from interjecting.

Mr. MUNSIE: I trust the House will carry the motion unanimously, and that the papers will give sufficient publicity to this debate that the Prime Minister's attention may be drawn to it. I realise that the Prime Minister's engagements have already been completed and that he will be a very busy man when he lands here to-morrow, but busy as he may be, I suggest that the executive of the Returned Soldiers' League, who are entertaining him at the Soldiers' Institute, get to work again, irrespective of the influence that has kept them quiet for the last three months, and present the case to the Prime Minister. If they put up the case which can be put up, the Federal Government will have to do something which will surely be of benefit to the returned soldier. I trust that the action of the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) and the assistance rendered by other members of this House will prove beneficial to the returned soldier, but we can expect to accomplish little more than directing public attention to the matter. The attention we are drawing to it, however, should have a beneficial effect on the re-

turned soldier who has been exploited by some of the land sharks and other people in Western Australia.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [8.17]: I intend to lend whatever support I can to the motion, and to give any support in my power to the select committee appointed to inquire into this matter. I am not one of those who would take advantage of this motion to criticise some individuals outside this House. I do not know of any specific instances where returned soldiers have been victimised. What I do know is that there were many soldiers who were in need of cash when the war gratuity bonds were issued, and who begged to be relieved of their troubles by those who could afford to give them the full equivalent for their bonds. At the outset the private individual was not permitted to cash more than one gratuity bond, and the returned soldier who had a bond to cash was compelled to go to a so-called business man. I regret to think that there is one individual of this State who would take advantage of men who were in need of cash. We have seen times out of number that not only business men but men in private life were prepared to take advantage of anyone in extreme circumstances. If the committee succeed in bringing to light only one case of victimisation, the carrying of the motion will have been justified.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH (North Perth) [8.19]: I have pleasure in supporting the motion. The House is indebted to the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) for having brought the matter forward, and he must feel gratified at the reception meted out to his motion. I only regret that he did not have an opportunity to bring it forward last year when he first placed it on the Notice Paper. It has been suggested that this is a matter for the Federal Parliament. That is quite true.

Mr. Troy: Who said that?

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: The Leader of the Opposition and one or two other speakers. It is a matter for the Federal Parliament, but when the Federal Parliament has failed in its duty, the State Parliament should step in and support and protect the returned soldiers.

Mr. Wilson: Hear, hear! That is the point.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: The Federal Parliament has without doubt failed in its duty. I was surprised to read Senator Pearce's statement that he knew nothing at all about the matter. When the matter was brought under my notice some months ago I went to the trouble not only of writing but of telegraphing to one or two of our representatives in the Federal Parliament urging them to obtain the names of those land agents who had been guilty of taking down the returned soldiers. I was told it was impossible at that stage to get

the names, but that the matter was being inquired into. I then suggested that in view of the seriousness of the complaints, a motion should be tabled in the Federal House to permit of the names being published. For some reason or other not known to me, that was not done. I know from my own knowledge that the returned soldiers themselves have, after several meetings, communicated with the authorities in Melbourne urging that the matter be inquired into.

Mr. Munsie: Three times they did so.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: Again nothing came of it. It is altogether untrue to say that the Federal authorities knew nothing about the matter. They appointed land valuers to inquire into various cases here. The valuers investigated a good many cases and submitted a report, but for some reason best known to themselves, the report has been suppressed. It is all nonsense for Senator Pearce to say that he knew nothing about the matter. He may not have known of individual cases, but he must have known that it was a scandal in Western Australia that returned soldiers were being plundered of their gratuity bonds by unscrupulous land agents—

Mr. Pickering: And others.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: Land speculators and others. I do not single out land agents. There are other people in private life who cashed gratuity bonds and made a small advance on the real value of the bonds. This matter has become such a scandal in Western Australia that it is the duty of the House to appoint a committee to conduct a thorough investigation. It has been stated that names have not been mentioned. I know of one instance in which the name was mentioned in the paper in which I am interested. The name of the agent given here to-day was published, and he was accused of doing these things, but he did not reply; he did not challenge the statement or proceed against the paper for libel, as he was entitled to do if there had been no truth in the statement.

Mr. Wilson: A guilty conscience.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: This man is able, by the money he made in taking down the returned soldiers, to take a trip around the world. I hope that the committee will see that he does not go before they get his evidence.

Mr. Wilson: I think he ought to take me with him.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: There is no doubt that a considerable amount of good will come out of an inquiry of this description. While it is quite true that we cannot achieve very much, the scandal will be exposed to the public gaze. It is quite possible that a land agent found guilty of unfair practice, when he comes before the court for the license which we propose to issue under the Land Agents Bill, could be debarred from obtaining it. I think this

would be a very good ground for debarring him from obtaining a license. The conditions under which the bonds were issued enable the Commonwealth Treasury to cancel them, and I would say they should have no hesitation whatsoever in cancelling any bond obtained unfairly or fraudulently from the soldiers. I trust that in cases where it is not possible to do this, the Federal Government might be induced to make restitution to those men. I am afraid it will be expecting too much, but that is what I would like to see. The Premier and the Minister for Works have expressed some doubt as to the advisableness of admitting the Press to the inquiry. I trust that the House will carry that portion of the motion and allow the Press to report the whole of the proceedings.

The Minister for Mines: But they will not do it. If you can make the Press report it fully I will agree, but they will only report as much as suits them.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: I do not think that the Press will publish anything that will be detrimental to anybody. The Press may be trusted to see that no slur is cast upon any innocent witness.

The Minister for Mines: I mean a section of the Press.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Taken as a whole, the Press will see that nothing unfair is published.

The Minister for Mines: When you say the Press you include all sorts of sausage wrappers.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [8.28]: I wish to admit at once that I have no direct evidence that any of the things mentioned have actually taken place, but I venture to say that the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) has made out a *prima facie* case, which I think will lead the House to agree to an inquiry being held. I want members to appreciate the fact that what we are doing is really telling the public of Australia that, while we pride ourselves on the fact that we established a record in the way of enlistments and in the treatment meted out to our soldiers since their return, we are to-day advocating an inquiry into the actions of some of our citizens of a nature which will probably give us a very bad advertisement indeed. It may be concluded that these things have happened only in Western Australia, whereas, if one can judge from rumours heard in the East, the same thing has operated all over Australia. What we shall really do by passing this motion is to express ourselves very strongly against the attitude of the Federal Government in declining to do what we consider is a duty devolving upon them and not upon us. As a fact, the issue of the gratuity bonds was made, not by the State, but by the Federal Government. For a reason known to everybody—namely, that the cash was not available—the Federal Government gave the soldiers

bonds. It was intimated to the people of Australia that no member of the community would be permitted to make an unfair profit by taking advantage of the fact that the bonds were not negotiable, and were not payable for some period. On the other hand, if a soldier holder of bonds was able to submit to a board, constituted for that purpose, a case proving that he required, in order to meet immediate necessities, cash instead of bonds, then the cash was to be made available. In that connection certain rules were framed. Let me point out that in many instances the men in whose behalf complaint is now being made were not able to establish such a case before the board. I myself have submitted cases to the board, and have received answers which settled the contentions put forward. The Federal Government, being unable to find the total amount of cash required for gratuities, had to impose certain restrictions.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: The Federal Government could have issued bank notes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member interjecting appears to think that bank notes can be printed like newspapers. One of the causes of our recent industrial troubles is that Commonwealth bank notes have been issued too freely. However, a fair percentage of the bonds disposed of in quarters against which complaint is now directed, were the bonds of soldiers who established before the board their claims to be paid cash.

Mr. Wilson: Many of the bonds were cashed before the boards were established.

Col. Denton: Those men were robbed too.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not prepared to deny that. Neither do I deny that the member for Collie has made a case for inquiry. But are we to declare to the people of Eastern Australia that there are such rogues and robbers in Western Australia that a Parliamentary inquiry is necessary in this connection? We are telling the people of Australia, moreover, that the Federal authorities have been winking at the practice—which I do not believe. My belief is that the Federal authorities have made inquiries. Whether as a result of those inquiries they are satisfied or not, remains to be seen. While asking the assent of every member of the Chamber to this motion, we ought not to make the motion the vehicle of a party attack. Whether Senator Pearce is guilty or not guilty, he is not here to defend himself.

Mr. Munsie: The matter has been brought before the Federal Government.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Many of the matters brought before the Cabinet of which I am a member never come to my ears. The Federal Minister for Defence has nothing to do with the gratuity bonds. If it is argued that he could have read of the matter in the Press, I say that I do not read all that the Press publishes concerning the Government of which I am a member. While attending to my department I have not time to do so. In any case, what sections of the

Press write about me prevents me from getting grey. The Minister for Defence may not have read all these things, seeing that he is a pretty busy man, as one may learn by calling on him at his office. However, whether Senator Pearce is guilty or not guilty, that phase of the question need not be introduced when a select committee is being moved for. I do not hold that in this matter we have occasion to complain either of the Federal Government or of our Federal representatives. I object to this Chamber setting itself up as a tribunal to try Western Australia's Federal members, or Federal members generally. We have enough to do without that. On the other hand, I have always maintained that Federal members have no right to intervene in matters to which we here are supposed to attend. I object even to the Federal Prime Minister telling us what we ought to do in State matters. He has enough to do if he attends to Federal matters. And, similarly, I object to matters being brought up in this Chamber for the purpose of thrashing the Federal authorities. Of course, with regard to Federal actions affecting our State finances or the industries of Western Australia, I am quite prepared to raise my voice. In the opposite direction, however, I advised my Premier the other day to tell the Federal authorities to mind their own business, and not to interfere in Western Australian matters of purely State concern. While we may be dissatisfied to a certain extent with the Federal authorities, we have our proper method of expressing that dissatisfaction. Still, our complaints against our Federal members arise in large measure from the circumstance that we do not find out what has been done.

Mr. Troy: We never see our Federal members.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member has to attend to the affairs of his electorate here, and cannot always make himself available in Mt. Magnet. It is much more difficult to make oneself available to constituents here while representing a Western Australian Federal electorate in Melbourne. I am not objecting to the inquiry asked for by the motion, but I do want hon. members to consider what is likely to arise out of it. I object strongly to the suggestion of the member for North Perth (Mr. MacCallum Smith) that the Press should be admitted to the proceedings of the proposed select committee, unless we could make it a condition that the Press must publish a verbatim report of such proceedings. There is not a member here who will trust every section of the Press. Not even the member for North Perth will do that, although no doubt he will trust his own journal—which requires a fair degree of confidence. The privilege we have of appointing select committees to inquire into even the private affairs of our citizens is one which we ought to hold dear. We ought not to forget that the reason why the Press is excluded from the proceedings of select committees is that the members of the

public may have absolute reliance, when giving evidence in confidence, evidence which they do not wish to be sent forth to the world, absolute reliance on complete secrecy. In 1906 a select committee on shops and factories refrained from publishing some of the evidence taken. The committee would never have got that evidence had the Press been admitted to the proceedings. Personally, I believe that every bit of the evidence to be taken by the select committee here proposed will eventually be attached to the committee's report. But by admitting the Press to the select committee's proceedings we shall be introducing something that is dangerous, because every member hereafter moving for a select committee will contend that the subject of inquiry is sufficiently important to warrant immediate publicity through the Press. Thus one of the greatest safeguards of our methods of inquiry would be done away with. I see no urgency for publication in this matter. Moreover, the Press would publish just what suited it. The various sections of the Press would, each of them, publish just what they thought suitable to their particular readers. I could, if necessary, name the journals which would express conflicting views. The "Sunday Times" has a different class of reader from the "West Australian." The "West Australian" would publish the proceedings of the proposed select committee from the point of view of readers of the "West Australian." The "Sunday Times" report would be something entirely different, because addressed to a different class of readers. If once the Press is admitted to the select committee's sittings, each journal will publish, in each issue following a sitting of the committee, just so much of the evidence as it feels disposed. Then, when the report is brought up, the Press will publish the report, and nothing else, and thus the report is likely to be misunderstood, because some evidence will have been misreported in the Press and the misreportings will never have been corrected. Such a position cannot arise if the select committee's report is submitted with all the evidence attached to it.

Mr. Wilson: Let the committee exercise a discretion in the matter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I thought that course would be suggested. But there is a greater danger in that suggestion. If it were adopted, the select committee would have to decide how much the public should get of the evidence. If the evidence of, say, Thomas Brown is withheld by the committee from publication, then there will be such comments as "Thomas Brown gave evidence before the select committee, and the committee would not permit the Press to publish his evidence. Now, what has Thomas Brown got to hide? He must be one of the pirates." If the Press is admitted at all, the Press should be there from start to finish. I urge that the suggested practice would prove extremely dangerous. There must be a reason

why the rules of the British Parliament, and also of every Parliament in the British Dominions, exclude the Press from the sittings of select committees. I am satisfied to draw the attention of hon. members to the possibilities of the proposal. If my representations fail to carry conviction, and then if difficulties eventually arise, let not hon. members blame me. I declare on my reputation, if it is worth anything, that not two newspapers would publish a verbatim report of the select committee's proceedings. Is there a member of this House who does not occasionally complain of so much of the statements he makes here in this Chamber being omitted in the Press reports as to render those reports misleading? From the Press reports of the speeches of the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) one would imagine that that hon. member never said anything worth while. That is the case simply because so much is omitted.

Mr. Troy: I do not complain.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Neither am I complaining, but I am trying to make it clear that the Press will publish of the select committee's proceedings just as much as suits their purpose, or just so much as they can find space for, or just so much as may be considered spicy; and that thus a wrong impression will be conveyed to the public. All the member for Collie desires is an inquiry to ascertain what truth there is in the statements made regarding transfers of gratuity bonds, in order that anyone who has done wrong may be brought to book, and in order that redress may, if possible, be given to the soldier who has been unfairly dealt by.

Mr. Wilson: All I am after is to get his money back to the digger.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member cannot get it back to the digger by any such inquiry. He can draw attention to the matter, but whatever he does, he cannot compel the Federal Government to take action. All that he can achieve is to put a case before the Federal Government and ask that action shall be taken to secure redress.

Mr. Wilson: Some of these people have already paid the money back.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There will be some more of them before the week is out. That will not be through any action of the select committee. The committee can only find that these things have happened. If I may prophesy, I will say that the select committee will make a report and their recommendation will be that their report shall be brought under the notice of the Federal Government to secure relief for the returned soldiers. What is the necessity for introducing the Press in this particular instance, and thereby breaking down our own Standing Orders. The Standing Orders were framed for a very definite purpose, to show the public that while Parliament has this tremendous power of investigating, and examining witnesses on oath, calling for papers and inspecting books of companies

and individuals, it is not for the purpose of holding public inquiries but to secure one which is fair and just and to secure what is termed justice for the community.

Member: Why not move an amendment.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will not move any amendment, but I do not want members to proceed without a knowledge of the possibilities underlying such an action as is contemplated. This will rise again and while members say now that nothing should be hidden, it is a dangerous precedent.

Col. Denton: Nothing but the truth is wanted.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member may feel that way now but if it were proposed to hold an inquiry concerning something he was interested in, he would probably suggest that the Standing Orders should be complied with.

Col. Denton: It is just pure truth that is wanted.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and if the Press published the pure truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, I would not object, but the Press will not do that. They have never done it, and will never do it. The Press will publish so much as they can find space for, and so much as is suitable for the particular section of the community which reads the matter appearing in its columns. I want the report to be full, and that can be secured eventually in the report of the committee. The inquiry will take only a fortnight or three weeks perhaps, and I do not think any harm will be done by waiting for that period. To-night we have had an affidavit signed as far back as March or April. It will not work any hardship if we wait for a week or so. There is nothing to be lost, and we will continue to recognise the principle underlying the appointment of a select committee. That principle is that, having appointed the select committee, Parliament shall be the first to get the report and findings of that body, and the public will be informed afterwards through the columns of the Press.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [8.49]: The Minister for Mines has made a number of peculiar statements this evening.

The Minister for Mines: That is quite usual with me.

Mr. TROY: The Minister complained of the references made to the Federal Government and the blame attached to them. He said the Federal authorities may have made an inquiry.

The Minister for Mines: I do not know if they have, of course.

Mr. TROY: There was much froth and fury in his denunciation of members of this Chamber because they said that the Federal authorities might have taken action and because statements had been made that no such action had been taken. Now the Minister says that he does not know if anything has been done by the Federal Government. So far as the Minister knows, and so far as the

House knows, no such inquiry has been made. There has been no such announcement in the Press. His next objection was that the proposed action was a bad advertisement for Western Australia. Is it a worse advertisement for the State that Parliament has taken action to unravel something that is wrong and corrupt than for Parliament to close its eyes to the statements which have been made? What has happened in Western Australia has probably happened all over Australia. The same class of people live here as live in the Eastern States. Right throughout the world some persons posing as patriots have taken advantage of the soldier as they have done in Western Australia. An inquiry by Parliament in Western Australia may be a spur to other Parliaments to take a similar action. The same occurrences may have taken place in the Eastern States.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And to a greater extent.

Mr. TROY: The worst advertisement Parliament could have would be the announcement that, after hearing such statements as have been made to-day, we refused to hold an inquiry and give the fullest possible publicity to the proceedings. As to the Press, I have no reason to stand up for the Press.

Mr. Pickering: They are kind to you.

Mr. TROY: They could be kinder to me.

Mr. Angelo: Perhaps you do not deserve it.

Mr. TROY: The Minister has no cause for complaint.

The Minister for Mines: I am not complaining. I get publicity because I am worth it.

Mr. TROY: As to the Press reporting the proceedings adequately or not, I think this question is one which should be decided on its merits.

The Minister for Mines: I merely suggest that a section of the Press will adopt the attitude I indicated.

Mr. TROY: Naturally the Press will not give a verbatim report of the proceedings. They will not do so, otherwise the paper will be full of it. This is so important a matter, however, that if individuals have been guilty of the malpractices alleged, the people of Western Australia are entitled to know of the proceedings. Regarding the admission of the Press to select committees, that question should be decided on its merits too. In the particular instance under discussion, it is serious enough to warrant the admission of the Press. Is it suggested that the Press will set out to wilfully misrepresent the position?

The Minister for Works: Owing to the shortage of space, it may lead to that.

Mr. TROY: I do not think so. On this occasion, therefore, I propose to support the motion. Regarding the Standing Orders and the admission of Press representatives to select committee proceedings, the only reason for the procedure in the past has been that the select committee, having been appointed by Parliament, Parliament was entitled to receive the report of the select committee first.

Hon. P. Collier: If Parliament chooses to forego that right, it is quite all right.

Mr. TROY: That is so. The Standing Orders have been operating for a number of years, and because someone introduced them in the present form years ago, does not mean that they must remain in their present state for all times. I do not know whether the people who have been referred to are guilty of what has been alleged; I fear that a number of people are guilty, because there are always people who will take advantage of other people's necessities. The temptation is there, and some will succumb. It has been suggested that the Federal Government may make good the losses to the soldiers. There is no chance of that.

Mr. Mann: The Federal Government could stop payment of the bonds.

Mr. TROY: They could do that, and the Federal Government might have done that from the beginning. It was known when the bonds were issued that there would be trafficking. It is not my business to make any attack upon Western Australian members of the Federal Parliament nor yet to defend them. It is certain that they should be in Western Australia more than they have been, in order to speak for themselves. Some of them have not been here at all for years. I admit that members of Parliament cannot be in their constituencies all the time. It is not possible even for us to visit our constituencies sometimes, for we have business and various duties to attend to in the city. Some of our Federal members, however, are very rarely in the State and most decidedly they should be here occasionally. I support the motion hoping that the fullest publicity will be given to the proceedings before the select committee, that the fullest inquiry will be made, and that justice will be done to the individuals concerned.

Mr. SPEAKER: This motion should really be divided into two separate motions. In order to facilitate debate, I allowed the discussion to proceed as if it were one motion. I intend to put it in the form of two motions. I will read the first motion, which is as follows—

That a select committee be appointed to investigate the methods adopted by financial agents and others regarding profiteering in the buying of war gratuity bonds from returned soldiers of the A.I.F., and the infringement of the Usury Act in relation to same; also in respect to certain land agents cashing war gratuity bonds in exchange for the purchase of blocks of land at fictitiously high values, and by such means indecently and flagrantly exploiting the returned soldiers.

Question put and passed.

Mr. SPEAKER: The second motion will read as follows—

That in order to permit the committee to exercise its discretion in admitting the Press to its meetings, the Standing Orders

having reference to the publication of the proceedings and deliberations of a select committee should, for the purpose of this special case only, be suspended during the time the committee is sitting.

Question put and passed.

Ballot taken and a select committee appointed consisting of Messrs. Corboy, Denton, McCallum, Richardson, and the mover (Mr. Wilson), with power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to report on 12th October.

MOTION—STATE INSURANCE.

Mr. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [9.9] I move—

That in the opinion of the House it is desirable that the Government should immediately do all things necessary to establish a State Life, Accident, Sickness, Fire and General Insurance Office.

I want first of all to acknowledge the work done last session by the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) on a somewhat similar motion, and the support given it by the Minister for Works and the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie). The motion, if carried into effect by the Government, would be for the benefit of the State and more particularly of the people who find it necessary to insure themselves or anything that they have. The motion may be regarded as an indication of our desire to carry out the promise of our leader that we would be prepared to help the Government to do anything necessary to stop the financial drift. I have tried to make the motion as comprehensive as possible. The Premier seems a little amused at the motion, but I hope he will consider it in all seriousness, because to some extent at least it will, if carried, help him out of his difficulties as Treasurer. My object is twofold: firstly to assist the finances of the State, and secondly because it is essential that we alter the existing laws in regard to workers' compensation. To-day we are lagging behind many other parts of the world in respect of workers' compensation, whereas at one time we boasted that we were leading the whole world. Just as the Government control the currency of the country, so the Government should also exclusively control the whole of the banking and insurance business of the State. The results achieved by the Government Insurance Office in Queensland are an indication that a very great deal can be done by the Government taking up the same enterprise in this State. During the trading year 1920 the results of the Government Insurance Office in Queensland—although that office had been in operation for only four years—were considerably beyond expectations. The income for the year amounted to £513,143, while the claims paid totalled £265,999.

The expenses were £125,050; the amount added to reserves was £65,097, and the surplus on the whole of the year's transactions after the payment of all expenses and incidental charges was £56,997.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: How much did they lose in taxation?

Mr. CORBOY: I have failed to find any mention of any such loss in the report.

Mr. Troy: What do the people gain as a result of the lower premiums?

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. CORBOY: I will deal with that presently. Whatever the loss in taxation might have been, it could not have possibly been equal to the amount saved to the people of Queensland by the reduction in premiums. I went to some trouble to work out the effect of the reduction of premiums in that State, and I found that taking the whole of the trading as well as individual sections such as fire, it was really astonishing. Regarding fire insurance, I would like to quote from one of the documents of the Queensland Government office to show what savings have actually been effected on behalf of the policy holders. In Brisbane and suburbs, on a wooden building insured for £1,250 the premium charged by the private companies before the Government office started was £5 2s. 1d. The premium to-day for exactly the same amount of insurance on the same building is only £3 8s., and this despite the enormous increases in incidental expenses which have taken place during the last four years. On a brick building insured for £2,500 the amount of the premium prior to the Government starting was £3 15s. The amount to-day under the State Government scheme is £2 10s. For wooden business premises insured for £3,600, the amount charged previously was £4 14s., whereas to-day it is only £3 15s. 2d. Many other instances could be quoted, but these figures are sufficient to demonstrate that despite the increase in working costs during the four years 1917-1921, it has been possible under the State Government scheme of Queensland to materially decrease the cost of the policy to the insured. The reductions vary in the different branches from about 20 to 33 per cent., but the average reduction in premiums spread over the four years for which the figures are available show that the people in Queensland who have insured with the Government office have effected a saving of approximately £490,000. The actual saving as compared with the rates charged by the private companies prior to the Government starting approximates £500,000. Whatever may be the amount lost by way of taxation, members must admit that it would not nearly reach the amount saved to the people of Queensland by the reduction effected in the premiums. Further, there is more money available for taxation in other directions, if required, and if this money is not required by the Government, it is available to the

people of the State, instead of being in the coffers of private insurance companies. It is notorious that private insurance companies of the Commonwealth are making big profits. I have a life policy in a mutual office, and the fact that this office is able to distribute the bonuses it does is a sufficient indication to me that it is making very big profits indeed.

Mr. Sampson: But the profits go back to the insured.

Mr. CORBOY: Quite so; the mutual offices are distributing the profits, but there are many companies, including one recently started in this State, which are proprietary concerns, and which are not distributing their profits to the insured. Their profits go to a few shareholders. Savings have been effected in the Queensland Government office in directions which would astonish members who are wont to claim that directly any concern is put under Government control, the expenses mount up higher than those of concerns run by private business men. We have often heard the statement that if our State trading concerns were handed over to private enterprise, they would probably be run at a greater profit than they are to-day and that they would be a sounder commercial success. Under the Queensland Government scheme, the reverse has been the case. When the Queensland Government started operating, the expense rate for the private companies was approximately 40 per cent. This has been cut down by the Queensland Government from year to year until last year the expense rate was reduced to approximately 14 per cent. This has been possible because the Government have in their employ officers whose services can be made use of in a better organised way than would be possible in the case of a private company. The private companies are put to enormous expense sending out agents to scour the country, competing with one another, rushing hither and thither in motor cars to get in first, as a result of which the rate against the insured is loaded up. Under a Government scheme, with proper organisation and especially with insurance made a Government monopoly, it would be possible to cut the expense rate even lower than it is in Queensland to-day. There have frequently been made charges that Labour is wasteful when in office, that it does not handle the business of the country properly, and that consequently it is not to be trusted to handle such a scheme as this. We frequently hear it stated that Labour in office runs mad financially, that it does not efficiently administer the concerns of the State and that proper provision is not set aside. The Queensland Government have been most careful and conservative in their transactions under the insurance scheme. On their various furniture, fittings, typewriters, motor cars and so forth, they are writing off as depreciation no less than 20 per cent. of the capital cost annually. In other words they are assuming that the furniture, fittings, typewriters and motor cars will be useless at

the end of five years. I think members will agree that the Queensland Government are doing a great deal more in this direction than would be done by a private business concern, and it is well to remember that the profits I have quoted have been made despite the 20 per cent. depreciation written off each year. As illustrative of the success of this scheme, I would point out that when the original Act establishing the Government insurance office was passed, a sum of £100,000 was appropriated from Consolidated Revenue to enable the office to be established. During the five years that it has been operating, it has not been found necessary to touch one single penny of that £100,000. The office has been able to carry on right from the inception without asking the State Treasury for one penny. In addition to this the whole of the salaries and wages, etc., of the office is paid out of the funds of the office; there is no charge on the Treasury of the State in any way whatever. Further, there is in Queensland to-day a sum of £400,000 of the funds of the State insurance office invested in Queensland Government and other securities. Just think what it would mean to Western Australia if we had that amount of money flowing into the coffers of the State, approximately £100,000 a year for investment in bonds and other securities issued by the Government, and how much better it would be than having to go begging for money on the London market, as we have been doing. The whole matter of the financial administration of the Queensland Act is one that does credit to the Government who framed and passed the measure. The Act has been amended from time to time to make its provisions more adaptable to existing conditions. If it is possible for the Queensland Government insurance office, in competition with the private companies, to achieve such magnificent results on behalf of the State, it should be just as easy to do so in Western Australia. In connection with workers' compensation, the Government of Western Australia have for some few years been operating a fund for the insurance against accident and so forth of their men on the railways, etc., instead of paying a private company to effect the insurance. Although this scheme applies to only a comparatively few State employees on wages, during the few years the fund has operated, the reserve has been built up to a credit of £46,897. That has been done with regard to a few men working on the railways, etc., and I would remind members that it would be possible to do a great deal more if we were going on the open market for business. I believe that our people would be sufficiently patriotic to take their business to the State office. It has been possible in Queensland to confer very much greater benefits on the workers through the assistance rendered under their Insurance Act than had ever been possible previously. I shall refer briefly to what is possible in

Queensland to show how beneficial it is to have legislation of this sort enacted and an insurance office of this sort in existence. The Workers' Compensation Act there, worked in conjunction with the Insurance Act, has enabled the Government to do things which were not possible in any other part of the Commonwealth. When the pneumonic influenza epidemic was sweeping the country some time ago, the laws were sufficiently flexible to enable the Government to establish a temporary department under the Workers' Compensation Act to cover anyone who contracted pneumonic influenza while working on the ambulances or on the wharves as a lumper, or in any industry where a person was likely to contract influenza in the course of his employment. They have practically closed that down now. The period of trouble is past but the law was there to enable the Government to assist the workers to tide over any difficulties into which they might have fallen, or to assist the dependants who may have suffered loss through the breadwinner contracting pneumonic influenza. As a result of the flexibility of the legislation, there were not the same difficulties in Queensland with regard to bereaved persons as were experienced in other parts of Australia. By reason of this Act it has also been possible to deal with one or two other phases of an industrial aspect which have not been dealt with to the same extent anywhere else—I refer to industrial and mining diseases as distinct from accidents. Let me run briefly through the amounts which are to-day being paid in Queensland, and which are very much in excess of those paid elsewhere in Australia. For the loss of both eyes, or for the loss of an only eye, they pay £750. For the loss of both hands they pay a similar amount, and for the loss of both feet, a hand and a foot, for total and incurable loss of mental powers, for inability to work, for total and incurable paralysis of limbs, or of mental powers, they also pay £750. For the loss of the right arm they pay £600, and for the loss of the left arm £562 10s. There is also a scale referring to various other accidents, showing that the amounts payable are very much in excess of those paid in any other part of the Commonwealth. For loss of life, where there are dependants alive, a sum of £750 is paid. That is nearly double the amount paid in most other States of Australia, including ours. In regard to industrial diseases, it is provided that—

Where a worker at the date of death or incapacity has, whether before or after the first day of July, 1917, or partly before and partly after that date, being continuously resident in Queensland for at least one year; and was employed in any employment mentioned in the second column of the table of industrial diseases hereunder set forth, and such worker has died in consequence of any disease mentioned in the first column of the said

table, or is suffering from any such disease and is thereby incapacitated from earning full wages at the work at which he was employed, the worker, or in the case of death his dependants, shall be entitled to compensation in accordance with this Act as if the disease were a personal injury by accident suffered by the worker at the place of employment under Section 9 of this Act.

If an industrial disease is contracted which renders the worker unable to continue his occupation, or causes his death, he or his dependants are entitled to the same compensation under the Act as if he were killed or had suffered fatal injuries at his work. Various diseases are dealt with, including particularly mineral poisoning for those working with copper, zinc, and such like minerals, anthrax for those working amongst wool, and septic poisoning for anyone working with meat or animal by-products. Mining diseases are also dealt with. Similar provision is made for anyone who has been resident for five years in Queensland and has contracted any of the various mining diseases of the lungs, or of the hands and knees. There are also mentioned many of those mining diseases which cause disability for work. The worker is entitled to similar compensation to that which he would receive if he had met with some accidental injury at his work. The Government claim that it is not possible to grant in this State similar concessions to our workers. I put it to the Government that it is now time something was done to protect those men who contract diseases as the result of the work they do on behalf of the State or of private enterprise. We should do something to protect them and help them when their time of trouble comes. There are hundreds of men on the goldfields who are suffering from miners' complaints, and for whom it is possible to do very little. I admit that in most cases what is being done is being done well, but it is not possible to do for them all that we would like to be done. The member for Kaigoorlie (Mr. Boyland) when speaking on the Address-in-reply made particular reference to this question. Had we a State Insurance Act similar to the Queensland legislation, it would be possible for us to grant to the workers under the Workers' Compensation Act very much greater benefits than they have hitherto enjoyed. It would also be possible for us to give benefits to those who contract industrial or mining diseases. I trust the Government will not oppose the motion, and that something will be done to make proper provision for the helping of workers who are affected by their employment, and also to make proper provision for some adequate control over the money which is circulating in the community through the State Treasury for the benefit of all instead of for the benefit of a few shareholders in some private insurance company.

On motion by Colonial Secretary, debate adjourned.

Hon. W. C. Angwin drew attention to the state of the House. Bells rung and a quorum formed.

RETURN—STATE IMPLEMENT WORKS.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [9.40]: I move—

That a return be placed on the Table of the House showing the amounts written down or placed to a suspense account regarding the State Engineering and Implement Works—(1), Buildings and plant; (2), Losses during working, stating years; (3), Interest and compound interest; (4), Depreciation.

My reason for asking for this information is that many statements have been made of late with regard to the amount of money written off or paid to the suspense account in connection with these works. It is unnecessary for me at this stage to say anything about the history of the works. Those hon. members who were in the Chamber at the time when some difficulty occurred in regard to this undertaking will give me the credit of having put all my cards on the table. I told them honestly and in a straightforward manner the exact position. There was such an outcry from this side of the House, then the Opposition, that eventually a Royal Commission was appointed to, in effect, place me on trial in connection with these works. I say with all due respect to my hon. friend the Minister for Works, who is doing his best to help on this concern, that it was from that point the implement works began to improve. I say without egotism that it was the action taken by me that caused these works to move ahead. I notice from the Press yesterday that the Minister for Works made a statement in connection with a deputation from the Chamber of Manufacturers. Mr. Loeke, of Fremantle, Perth, Albany, Bunbury, and other places, said the works had been written down to the extent of £30,000. The Minister in reply said the amount was approximately £120,000, but when he took control he had accrued interest debited up which ran into rather a large amount, and that he had stock taken and a valuation made. The result was that no assets could be found to represent approximately £120,000 in capital, so that he had the amount carried to a suspense account. That is rather a serious reflection on those who were previously in charge of the works. I am going to take that as a reflection on me, rather than upon my colleagues who were associated with me in the Government.

Mr. Pickering: Very kind of you!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I shall take the responsibility upon my own shoulders. I can prove by the report of the auditor at the time that the statement of the Minister is incorrect.

Mr. Pickering: I will take your word for it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No report in regard to these works has ever been submitted

to Parliament by the Auditor General as required by the State Trading Concerns Act, since the 1916 report. Balance sheets have been presented, but no Auditor General's report. The Minister said there were no assets at the works to make up the amount necessary to wipe off the sum he mentioned. You, Mr. Stubbs, will remember—though not many members are present—the statement which I made in 1915 regarding the works. I then pointed out that I had found it necessary, upon taking control of the works, to have an inventory made, to have cost books established in order to ascertain whether the output was being sold at payable prices, and generally to take steps to put the works on a business footing. A further object, of course, was to ascertain whether any losses were being made, and, if so, how. Mr. Higgins, of the Public Works Department, was sent to the works for the express purpose of taking an inventory of all the stock and plant and other things connected with the works. Now, here is a report signed by Mr. Needham, an inspector of accounts for the Auditor General, who says—

The detailed costs of the fixed assets had not been kept. A valuation of the whole of the capital assets was made by Mr. Higgins, engineering draftsman of the Public Works Department. The valuation was as at the 28th February, 1915, and was based on the value of each asset at date of its instalment.

The valuation was based on the amount of money which Mr. Needham was told each article had represented at the date of installation.

The total valuation was in excess of the book figures to the extent of £5,546. To bring the valuation into line with the book figures, the following items were reduced by the amount stated:—Amalgamation of shops, £3,786; tools, £806; patterns, £954; total, £5,446.

Thus, it will be seen that there was an inventory, arrived at by valuing each item at what was its cost at the date of installation. The total of that valuation exceeded by £5,000 the total amount shown in the books. The articles representing the values were there then, in 1915; otherwise Mr. Needham could not have valued them and arrived at his total. It is necessary to place before such hon. members as may be present and interested in the work of the country—I admit they are very few—the figures relating to the State Implement Works. When those works were started, the whole of the plant and stock of the engineering works then on the quay very near the entrance to Fremantle harbour was transferred to Rocky Bay. A great proportion of the plant and stock in question had been in existence for 20 years, had been paid for, and largely was worn out. The plant and stock included hundreds, or even thousands, of pounds worth of useless tools. But all this plant and material was transferred to the State Imple-

ment Works at cost. Hon. members may be surprised to learn that some of the plant and material transferred from the harbour works will never be used by the State Implement Works so long as those works exist. That stuff is there to-day, awaiting sale.

Mr. Davies: There has been a belief for years that the works were over-capitalised.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes; and I am pointing out how they came to be over-capitalised. I will refrain from repeating ancient history, and simply refer hon. members to "Hansard" of 1915.

Mr. Hickmott: Was not a considerable amount written off?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Nothing at all has been written off. Hon. members are aware that in 1915 the works made a very heavy loss, a loss of £33,323. That was owing to manufactures being sold at considerably less than it cost the works to produce them. The farmers got the benefit of that fact. They were obtaining machines at as much as £20 below cost of manufacture.

The Premier: I do not think that is so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is so. In addition, there were orders at unpayable prices for large numbers of machines to be supplied during the next ensuing year, which in consequence showed a loss of £28,371. The Minister in control of the works has, according to his own statement, debited up considerable amounts for interest, which have been found to suspense account. The total cost of the works was not more than £93,000 or £94,000; so how could they have been written down by £120,000? But the £120,000 still appears in this year's balance sheet.

Mr. Mann: Did the ninety odd thousand pounds represent the cost of the works in the first instance?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That amount was for machinery and plant from North Fremantle, and for everything else put into the works. Next, I turn to the balance sheet for 1916. Of course, something was wrong at that time, though the work had commenced to improve by then. Buildings and plant were valued in 1916 at £94,591, less depreciation £1,873. The total amount of money expended from General Loan Fund, and expenses charged to Consolidated Revenue, and value of plant transferred, was shown at £94,644, less credit to Sales of Government Property Trust Account £54, bringing the amount back to £94,589. Evidently, there is a big mistake somewhere. Let me point out that I am not dealing with the trading account, but with the capital cost of the works.

The Premier: We are still paying interest on what was written off.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. In 1921 the total value of buildings, plant, machinery, etc., was written down to £62,010. That is to say, the total cost of everything connected with the works was written down to £62,000—which shows clearly the impossibility of writing down the capital cost of the works by

£120,000. From the statement published by the Minister for Works in yesterday's "West Australian," it is clear that he did not intend to say that he had written down the capital cost of the works, but that he had written down the capital—and that "capital" includes losses made in the two or three years to which I have referred, with compound interest added. This puts an entirely different complexion on the whole business.

Mr. Mann: The greatest losses were made up to 1916?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, because it was only in 1915 that I started to put the works in order—which occupied some time. The hon. member was not here then.

Mr. Mann: I am only wanting some information.

Mr. Davies: When did you open the works?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Early in 1914. However, a certain amount of construction work had been carried on previously, and that is possibly the explanation of various mistaken impressions, and of the mixing up of different charges. However, that matter being dead and buried, I do not want it formally resurrected, as has been done here in connection with that alleged writing down of £120,000. Let me ask the Premier and Treasurer whether he places to suspense account the £500,000 which the railways lose annually, and whether he proposes to charge interest on that loss at some future date?

The Premier: No, unfortunately not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But that is what is being done in connection with the State Implement Works for the express purpose of pleasing a few numbskulls in the city of Perth. The fact is that the State Implement Works are now becoming a power.

Member: They have a good manager now.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, and that manager started to put things right in 1915, since which time matters have improved almost from day to day. The works exist for the express purpose of steadying the prices which the people of this State have to pay for machinery. But for the existence of that State enterprise, our people would have had to pay far more for machinery and for engineering work. I have in my possession a printed copy of certain evidence taken by a select committee which, unfortunately, owing to the close of the session, did not complete its investigations, in the course of which evidence it is stated by an importer of this city that nobody could start to manufacture implements in Western Australia except the Western Australian Government, because any other competitor would be crushed by the large manufacturers in the Eastern States, who would immediately start dumping in Western Australia and thus kill him financially.

Mr. Davies: They have not killed Purser.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Purser is with them; he is agent for several of them. Only lately the Commonwealth Government introduced legislation to prevent dumping from other parts of the world. The British Government have taken similar

action to prevent dumping. The position to-day, however, is that dumping is taking place. They are keeping things in Western Australia as fine as they possibly can. Had it not been for the establishment of the State Implement Works, we would be paying far more for our machinery than is the case to-day.

Mr. Davies: Undoubtedly that is so.

Mr. Mann: I got some articles from Pursers and they added 20 per cent.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That should not be so. The price of machinery has decreased here more than in any other part of Australia. The State Implement Works are rather large and over capitalised for the number of men employed there at the present time. The works have a heavy burden to carry. Some 300 men are employed there.

Mr. Pickering: The works are badly laid out.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That cannot be helped; they are there. Last year the works paid commission on goods sold amounting to £4,372 12s. 4d.

The Premier: Who got the commission?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier knows.

Mr. Pickering: Not the Westralian Farmers Ltd.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, they got most of it. The works also paid in depreciation £1,977. They paid sinking fund amounting to £228 12s. 5d. and in interest to the Treasury, £12,680 15s. 7d., and on the year's working they showed a loss of £1,526. They showed a profit for the year 1920 of £2,342. There was a dispute, however, regarding commission and the question arose as to whether the Westralian Farmers Ltd. were entitled to the full amount claimed. In the end commission was paid amounting to £4,372, which included £1,700 due for the previous year. Thus the actual position for the two years was that in 1920 the works made a clear profit, after paying all charges, of £643, and this year a clear profit of £273.

The Premier: You must have left out something.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have left out nothing. I want it to be realised that the works are not a losing proposition but have become a paying concern.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. Davies: I do not think you need justify the existence of the State Implement Works.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is not necessary to justify the establishment of the works, but we must combat the statements made to the public. It is necessary, too, to inform the public that £120,000 is not written off the capital cost of these works because it is a matter of impossibility to write off such an amount when the total expenditure is only £94,000. The amount written off is interest charged back and losses; the latter forms the larger proportion of it. I desire

to procure these details in the return I seek, in order to ascertain how these different amounts have been made up. The reduction of the actual profit and loss suspense account—that means losses, etc.—shows that £77,309 has been written off. That is one item alone; I want to know how it is made up. I want to know whether the State Implement Works are dealt with in the same way and placed in the same position as other Government departments. What is the reason for saying that £120,000 has been written off when it is impossible that it could be done on the capital cost of the work. If the capital cost of the work is written down, it makes a considerable difference. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) knows something about writing down in connection with businesses and, in the case of the State Implement Works, the writing down was fully justified on account of the old plant. The machinery installed in those works was transferred from other departments and consequently it was not of the best type for carrying on such works. On the other hand, the machinery and plant constitutes a serious handicap. Stocks which were useless for the harbour works were charged up to the State Implement Works. To-day the works have £100,000 worth in stock and stores that are not required there. In the Railway Department, for instance, there is about £500,000 worth of stores, of which from £200,000 to £300,000 worth will never be used. The sooner they are got rid of, the better. As a matter of fact, there is no chance of getting rid of them. I object to the State Implement Works being charged up with a lot of old material which has been in existence for a quarter of a century, merely for the purpose of condemning this concern.

Mr. Davies: What do you suggest should be done with it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I suggest that the Minister has taken the correct action in charging it up to the suspense account until the works are rid of it. The State Implement Works should not be asked to carry this burden. For the sake of comparison, I will give hon. members one instance to show what the Government did when they first took office, to make the State trading concerns look as bad as possible. In those days they were not so pleased with them as they are to-day.

Hon. P. Collier: In those days they were opposed to the State trading concerns; now they support them.

The Premier: We still oppose them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When the war broke out, almost every sawmill in Western Australia closed down, throwing a large number of men out of employment. As many men left the timber workers' union to join the A.I.F. as from any other organisation in Western Australia. In order to provide work for the married men and single men who could not proceed to the front we were asked to fix special rates for

piece work in order to keep these men employed cutting sleepers. The sum of £100,000 was set aside for this purpose and some 2,000 men were employed cutting sleepers. Members will realise that sleepers represent good stock because sleepers are improved when dry. This work was carried out to alleviate the unemployed which was accentuated by the drought as well as by the war.

Mr. Davies: It was a very bad year altogether.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Immediately the Labour Government went out of office, so I have been informed, the whole of the interest on the £100,000 was charged up against the State sawmills, which trading concern had nothing whatever to do with it.

The Premier: The State sawmills sold the sleepers and secured the benefit.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The State sawmills department merely took charge of the work.

Mr. Mann: The State sawmills show a good profit to-day.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They made a very good profit last year. That instance serves to show how interest was piled on to these trading concerns when the Labour Government went out of office. It is because of such instances that I desire to have a detailed return. To-day the State Implement works are paying their way, showing a small profit after paying dividends. In a private company this profit would be placed to reserve. The profit was only a small one but it was secured after paying £1,700 on account of commission due for the previous year. The State has nothing to be afraid of regarding the State Implement Works. The men employed there are striving hard to make the works a good paying proposition, and I hope trade will revive shortly in order to enable them to increase their turnover. Last year instead of showing a loss of £1,526, the works paid dividends.

The Premier: You will have to come and help me to find a surplus for the Estimates.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I will help the Premier as I have helped his colleagues in the past. After paying interest and dividends amounting to £12,680 the works showed a profit of £273 this year, again after paying £1,700 which should have been paid in the previous year out of the profit of £2,433.

The Premier: The works collected money from the previous year as well.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It all appears on the balance sheets. The Premier can see the report of the officials on the balance sheets. It is set out there—

The commission increased from £686 17s. 2d. in 1920 to £4,372 12s. 4d. The latter amount, however, include a sum of £1,700 to the account of the 12 months ending 30th June, 1920, held in abeyance as it was then in dispute as to whether any liability existed with the Westralian Farmers Ltd. This has now been settled.

That is the report. I only want to see fair play and I believe the Minister in charge of the works is doing his best. I believe the Minister has his whole heart in these works

and he is so much attached to them that it would be difficult to make him part with them.

Hon. P. Collier: He will never sell them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The works are quite in his line, and I do not think that the Minister desired to make a statement that was misleading. Unfortunately the public gained a wrong impression. These works are beneficial to the State, for without them the price of machinery would not be kept down.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

PAPERS—WOODLINE DISPUTE.

On motion by Mr. Lambert (Coolgardie), ordered: That all papers in connection with the settlement of the woodline dispute on the goldfields in 1919 be laid on the Table of the House.

House adjourned at 10.16 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 22nd September, 1921.

	Page
Bills: Supply (No. 2), £542,000, 3r.	887
Fremantle Lands, 3r.	887
Coroners Act Amendment, 3r.	887
State Children Act Amendment, report	887
Adoption of Children Act Amendment, Com.	887
Electoral Act Amendment, 2r.	888
Administration Act Amendment, 2r.	890
Motion: State Finances, economy	891

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

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

1, Supply (No. 2), £542,000.

Passed.

2, Fremantle Lands.

3, Coroners Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day; Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair, the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister has moved a new clause, to stand as Clause 3, as follows:—

The record of any proceedings in the Supreme Court under the principal Act shall not be open to public inspection without the sanction of a judge,

to which Mr. Duffell has moved an amendment to strike out "of a judge" and insert in lieu "in writing of the Master of the Supreme Court without the necessity of a formal order."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Since the adjournment I have further consulted the Solicitor General with a view to getting a clause which would meet the desires of hon. members. Before I can move it, it will be necessary for the amendment now before the Committee to be withdrawn.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I will withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That the words "without the sanction of a judge" be struck out, and "except for some reasonable and proper purpose and with the sanction in writing of the Master" be inserted in lieu.

The Solicitor General points out that this is in no way a new departure, that in many matters, particularly in lunacy, a similar restriction is imposed. He has furnished me with a copy of a report of an English case in which the judge said that nobody was allowed to see the records without an order by one of the masters, or by a judge in lunacy, but that, on the other hand, anyone who could satisfy the master or the judge that he desired to see the records for a reasonable and proper purpose would be allowed to see them.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is done under the rules, not under a special enactment.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know, but without some special enactment it could not be done here.

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

New clause:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move—

That the following new clause be added, to stand as Clause 4: "Sub-paragraph (3) of Section 5 of the Adoption of Children Act is amended by inserting the following after 'years' in line 2: 'or if over that age has been under the care and custody of some person for a period of three years,