

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 12th December, 1934.

	PAGE
Assent to Bills	1933
Papers: Land Transactions of Mr. H. Hale	1933
Resolutions: State Forests, to revoke dedication	1933
Tramways closure, Claremont Station to Waratah Avenue	1961
Bills: Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment, 1R.	1933
Bread, 1R.	1933
Licensing Act Amendment, 2R.	1935
Roads Closure, 1R.	1943
Reserves, 1R.	1943
King's Park and University Land Exchange, in Administration Act (Estate and Succession Duties) Amendment, recom.	1943
Agricultural Bank, 2R.	1944
Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment, 2R., etc.	1961
Geraldton Sailors and Soldiers' Memorial Institute Enabling, 1R.	1963
Factories and Shops Act Amendment, Committee, Bill lapsed	1963

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read, notifying assent to the under-mentioned Bills:—

- 1, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 2, Gold Mining Profits Tax Assessment.

PAPERS—LAND TRANSACTIONS OF MR. H. HALE.

HON. H. J. YELLAND (East) [4.35]: I move—

That all papers dealing with the sale, or negotiations for sale, of property or properties offered to the Returned Soldiers' Settlement Board by Mr. Harry Hale, of Perth, be laid on the Table.

I wish to state my reason for moving the motion. The motion is restricted to papers relating to negotiations between Mr. Harry Hale and the Returned Soldiers' Settlement Board. The motion of which Mr. Hamersley has given notice this afternoon refers also to negotiations between Mr. Hale and the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board. I am prompted to move my motion as the result of statements made by Mr. Cornell when speaking on the Agricultural Bank Bill. The hon. member made certain statements which, in a subsequent issue of the "West Australian," Mr. Hale intimated were regarded by him as innu-

does against his integrity. Mr. Hale challenged the accuracy of Mr. Cornell's remarks. In justice to both gentlemen, I consider, the papers should be laid on the Table, so that we may see for ourselves what is the position.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment.
- 2, Bread.

Received from the Assembly.

RESOLUTION—STATE FORESTS

To Revoke Dedication.

Message from the Assembly requesting concurrence in the following resolution now considered—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State Forests Nos. 4, 15, 20, 22, 27, 28, 36, 37, and 38, laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor on the 5th December, 1934, be carried out.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.42]: I move—

That the resolution be agreed to.

Under Section 21 of the Forests Act, 1918, a dedication of Crown lands as a State forest may only be revoked in whole or in part in the following manner:—(a) The Governor shall cause to be laid on the Table of each House of Parliament a proposal for such revocation. (b) After such a proposal has been laid before Parliament, the Governor, on a resolution being passed by both Houses that such proposal be carried out, shall by Order in Council revoke such dedication. (c) On any such revocation the land shall become Crown land within the meaning of the Land Act, 1898. In this instance it is proposed to excise 11 areas containing a total area of about 2,043 acres. This is in continuance of the policy of excising from State forests any sufficient areas of agricultural land which are unsuitable for or no longer required for forestry purposes. The papers I laid upon the Table of the House contain full particulars in regard to the individual areas and localities.

Before any such revocation is recommended the Conservator of Forests makes full investigations, and if he is satisfied that the land is no longer required for forestry purposes, or in some cases can be exchanged for land that is better suited to his purpose, he then recommends that the areas be excised from the forest concerned. Once the land is excised, it automatically becomes Crown land and is available for selection in the ordinary way, in accordance with the provisions of the Land Act.

Altogether 11 areas are involved, comprising 2,043 acres. The Conservator of Forests has certified that these areas are not required for forestry, and are suitable for agriculture. The first area is at Collicardiff, comprising 26¼ acres; the second lot is 2½ miles east of Worsley, comprising 30 acres; the third is one mile north-east of Greenbushes, comprising 1¼ acres; the fourth is three miles south-east of Byford, comprising 23 acres; the fifth is two miles south-east of Dardanup, comprising 1,630 acres; the sixth is 11 miles south-west of Kirup, comprising 13 acres; the seventh is eight miles south-west of Jardee, comprising 20 acres; the eighth is four miles south-west of Jardee, comprising 170 acres; the ninth is 18 miles east of Manjimup, comprising 47 acres; the tenth is 16 miles east of Jardee, comprising 78 acres; and the eleventh is 13 miles south-east of Manjimup, comprising five acres.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [448]: I hope the motion will be carried. It merely puts into effect a policy enunciated years ago of making available for selection portions of the State forests known to be devoid of marketable timber. There are throughout the State forests still many areas eminently suitable for settlement, areas which the Conservator of Forests can make available for settlement if so required. I congratulate the Government on following up this policy, and I hope the department will give the same favourable consideration to applicants who may desire other areas now included in our forests.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [449]: For several sessions we have had brought down these Bills for the taking away of certain areas from our forests and making them available for settlement. So far as

I can see, there has been no attempt to make up to the forests these areas of land excised. The original intention was that there should be maintained as a minimum 3,000,000 acres of forests, and it would be interesting to know what effect these repeated eliminations of areas for settlement have had on that total. It looks to me as if the continual taking away of these small areas is making more or less a farce of that proposal to reserve a definite area of forest land, and it appears necessary that the House should look more closely into the matter and see if something cannot be done to maintain the minimum area of forests. So far as I can learn, no attempt is being made to provide other areas in lieu of those taken from the forests.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [452]: I hope the motion will be agreed to. Year after year we in the South-West have been urging the Government to set aside certain areas from the State forests, areas which do not include good timber country. Every forest area has gullies and sections of reasonably good agricultural land which is by no means good forest land. It has never been suggested that good forest land should be alienated: all that is required to be excised is good agricultural land. Quite close to my own farm is one of these areas to be revoked—forest land which is quite useless for timber. Actually it is not even good agricultural land, although it is not bad for the purpose of agriculture, and will grow reasonably good subterranean clover. As forest land, it is quite useless. It is only right that the forests should be gone over and this inferior timber land eliminated and set aside for settlement. I hope the Government will continue the policy of throwing open the better-class agricultural land, so long as it does not interfere with the good timber land.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [454]: As the result of my investigations, I think I can say that until the Government to which I was attached in 1924 accepted office, very little was done in the direction of dedicating timber country. During our term of office an immense area was dedicated to forestry purposes. More recently this has been carried on on a big scale, especially since the depression arose. The land taken

for settlement has been taken in small blocks, and the Conservator of Forests is satisfied that they are not suited to the re-growth of timber. I call to mind that towards the end of our term of office several members of the House urged that some of the land suitable for agriculture, and not suitable for timber purposes, should be thrown open.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: We still urge that; it is the right thing to do.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If it were good timber land, timber would be growing on it to-day.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is so. From what I can glean from the Forests Department, this land can never grow timber successfully. So why should it not be devoted to agriculture?

Question put and passed.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.56] in moving the second reading said: In the Licensing Act of 1923 provision was made for a referendum to be taken on the subject of prohibition in 1925 and henceforward every fifth year. A referendum was held in 1925, but there was no change made. Probably nobody really expected that there would be any change.

Hon. H. Seddon: Is that why you are not game to take another one?

The **HONORARY MINISTER**: There is no question of being game. The conditions of a referendum are that 30 per cent. of the electors for the Assembly shall vote, and that before any change shall be made three-fifths of those voters shall record votes in favour of the change. There should have been another referendum taken in 1930, but Parliament agreed that there was no necessity for it in that year, and consequently it was not taken.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Why not amend the Act and wipe out that provision?

The **HONORARY MINISTER**: Under the Act a referendum should be taken next year, in 1935, but the same conditions prevail now as were prevailing prior to 1930. The object of the Bill is to extend the time when the next referendum shall be taken to 1940, instead of 1935. The taking of a

referendum means the expenditure of approximately £6,000. Then, of course, there would be a lot more expense incurred by the parties who would take an active part in the referendum, for and against, and I think I am not exaggerating when I suggest that the expense in that connection would be wasted. There is no demand for the referendum next year. In recent years there has been considerable improvement in our hotels and in the regulation of the sale of liquor throughout the State. So I feel there is no need to take a referendum next year, and if the Bill be agreed to there will be no referendum taken until 1940. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.59]: When the original Bill was first introduced many members felt there was need for an alteration in the control of our liquor laws, and no doubt many were persuaded to support the taking of a local option poll. But in the meantime vast changes have occurred. First of all our licensing laws have been amended and, after experience in other States of the Commonwealth, I am pleased to say we in this State have occasion to be very proud of our licensing laws. The result has been very gratifying. There is no need for alteration there, and any attempt to close the hotels at six o'clock would be a false move and would have a bad effect. One bad effect would be that liquor would be taken to the home.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: That was said when it was decided the hotels should close at 9 o'clock.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There is a vast difference between closing the hotels at six o'clock and nine o'clock. The hour of six is that at which many people cease work and not having time to rush into a hotel and satisfy themselves, they see to it that bottles of liquor are taken to their homes. With nine o'clock closing there is not the same likelihood of that happening. Anyway, that is beside the question. Regarding hotels in Western Australia, we cannot deny there has been a vast improvement during the last 15 or 16 years, and to-day we can be proud of the majority of our hotels.

Hon. R. G. Moore: In what way have they been improved?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: If the hon. member had travelled throughout the State as I did 15 years ago, and within the last few years, he would not ask such a question. The hotels have been improved in every way, and especially with regard to accommodation. The Licensing Bench got to work properly, and the country hotels, which were places that one would have willingly stayed away from at one time, are now establishments where one does not hesitate to put up. The Minister has told us that a poll will probably cost £6,000. If hon. members spoke sincerely they would say there was no possible chance in life of local option securing the necessary majority. Everybody knows that well. Therefore why cause turmoil amongst the people in the State, to say nothing of the expenditure of money unnecessarily? These sectional questions almost invariably breed trouble, and surely we have enough at the present time without adding to it by taking a poll on the liquor question. I hope the House will agree to the Bill which provides for the extension of the period for the taking of the poll for five years.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.4]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Members: No, let us go on with it.

Motion put and negatived.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [5.5]: I do not know why Mr. Seddon should want to move the adjournment of the debate over a very simple matter such as this. If I spoke for an hour I do not suppose it would make the slightest difference, not even to the extent of one vote.

Hon. H. Seddon: It might.

Hon. R. G. Moore: Do you know anything about the subject?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, my knowledge is second to none in this House. I have been a wouser and have stood for the total abstiners and local optionists, and I know that there is nothing in this world that can be prohibited by legislation if the human frame requires it. The only objection I have to the Bill is that it does not go far enough, and when we reach the Committee stage I shall endeavour to have the poll extended not to 1940, but to 1980,

when I shall be dead. If members are aware of what prohibition has done in America, they will agree that it has been anything but a benefit to mankind. If they do not agree with that, then I might be tempted to say something like Mr. Moore's comment last night, that hon. members were not using their brains. We know of the sufferings of America during its years of prohibition, and the tragedies that occurred. Since prohibition has ceased there, there have been fewer murders and crimes. Thank God Australia has been well ahead of America in this respect. Since the last prohibition poll took place in Western Australia I have gathered wisdom; I have learnt something of the narrowness of the ways of prohibitionists; also the narrowness of their minds. Anybody reading the history of the world will realise that prohibition is just sheer hypocrisy. We have had considerable experience of the liquor traffic, and in the town in which I live it might well be said that next to gold mining, hotel keeping is the most prosperous industry. No one goes to a hotel unless he wants to do so. No one is pushed into a hotel. The soft-drink houses may do a fair business, and there is no policeman to raid them on a Sunday or after 11 o'clock at night. They have what might be said an open go. After the experience of America I do not know that anyone wants to preach prohibition. I support the Bill.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [5.10]: This is a Bill that I can support wholeheartedly. I have only one regret, and that is that it is not a Bill for the repeal of the provision for the taking of a poll. It was my privilege nine years ago to notice the effects of prohibition, so-called, in the United States, and in Canada, and since then there have occurred what I might describe as the two miracles of modern ages. One miracle was how 48 States in America ever agreed to prohibition as a national affair. One of the last conversations I had on the subject was in the province of Ontario with the Chief Liquor Dispenser in Toronto, who declared that the United States would never get away from prohibition for the simple reason that it would require 12 States to object to the country going out of it. He said, "When you cross the line"—I am speaking of the time when the Tennessee trial was on—"you will find the rural provinces of the United

States are as puritanical as they were in the days of the Pilgrim fathers." My informant told me that the nonconformists ruled the United States and that the nonconformists would see to it that prohibition was never lifted. The other miracle is that after 16 years of direct application of prohibition as a national affair, the people of the United States have agreed that in the national interests prohibition is no longer capable of application, and the great American States have decided to go back to something rational. Most of the Canadian provinces went for prohibition voluntarily during the war, but Senator Meighan, now in Eastern Australia, who was Prime Minister of Canada at the time, forced Quebec Province into prohibition as a national measure. But he, later on, was forced out of his job. All the Canadian provinces have now gone away from prohibition. Colonel Cross of Saskatchewan, then Attorney General, told me that he would be a prohibitionist if prohibition could be applied, but that in Saskatchewan all that prohibition did was to make liars and hypocrites of hitherto truthful and candid people. The law provides that every five years we shall take a referendum on the question of prohibition. That means to say, we are to take a referendum on a veritable futility that has been weighed in the balance and found wanting in countries where the people are similar to our own in thought, feelings and so forth. It is just as well to use common sense in such a matter and avail ourselves of the experience of 120,000,000 people. The combined population of the United States of America and Canada exceeds 120,000,000, and the consensus of opinion in those countries is that prohibition is incapable of human application. All it has achieved has been to build up an illicit trade and to develop a great number of scoundrels and criminals. That has been the result of prohibition in the United States. In that country prohibition has brought about such a state of affairs that even with a return to legalised State control of the liquor traffic, the authorities cannot suppress the organisation of illicit traders. If we do the right thing, we will dismiss any consideration of prohibition in Australia and centre upon the proper and rigorous control of the liquor traffic.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Like it is on the goldfields.

Hon. J. CORNELL: We must not encourage drinking but make the liquor traffic respected by the people. It is essential. The people want liquor, and want the trade maintained. If the trade is conducted by persons who command the respect of the community, I shall have nothing to fear from the liquor traffic. When the public lose their respect for the traffic and for those who conduct it, then the liquor trade will have dug its own grave. That time has not yet arrived. We are asked to spend about £6,000 on another prohibition poll. If we fail to pass the Bill and that expenditure were incurred for that particular purpose, I think the people would be justified in petitioning His Majesty to force us to resign and give someone else a chance.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.18]: I opposed a similar Bill some years ago and because of the attitude I took up then, I desire to make a few observations at this stage. My opposition to that earlier Bill was because the law provided that a prohibition poll should be taken at given intervals. At that time the advocates of prohibition were vigorous in their demand that the poll should be taken. I contended then that as the law prescribed that they had the right to demand a local option poll, it should be conducted. At the same time I told members that if the poll were conducted and prohibition were defeated, as I felt sure it would be, I would be perfectly agreeable to altering the law so that there would be no more local option polls for a period of at least 25 years. I agreed then, and I believe still, that there is no possibility of any vital alterations in our liquor laws being effected by such polls. We have the most reasonable liquor laws of any that, to my knowledge, operate anywhere in the world.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do you mean that they are the most reasonably interpreted?

Hon. W. J. MANN: If any objection can be raised, it may be that in towns where the residents are engaged in mining gold, the law there may have been stretched a bit. The law has been stretched there so far that sometimes I think it will break.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is when the Trans. train arrives at the station.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I agree with other speakers that the time has arrived when we can reverse our views of five years ago. We

can do so if for one reason alone. In the interim the advocates of prohibition have not shown any evidence of their desire for a change. Occasionally some fanatical person, who would wipe liquor off the map altogether, has something to say, but apart from that we have heard nothing.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You have travelled in America. Tell us about the liquor traffic there.

Hon. W. J. MANN: It is true that I had opportunities of seeing what goes on in the United States.

Hon. G. Fraser: I bet you got drunk while you were there.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I never went without it. I saw more drunken men in the City of New York during the first two days I was there than I saw in any other part of the world, with one exception. At one centre I visited I did see more drunken men, but in New York I saw drunken men, women and children under conditions that were simply appalling.

Member: Under prohibition!

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes. I can assure hon. members that I was able to secure a glass of ale in New York that had a much higher alcoholic content than any I have ever had in this country. I had that drink just off the side walk in New York while policemen were walking up and down, watching the people drinking. I shall support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. H. SEDDON (South-East) [5.22]: The extraordinary feature of the debate has been the remarkable attitude adopted with reference to the Bill. Its purpose is to defer for another five years the taking of a poll on the question of prohibition. When the Licensing Act was first introduced, provision was included in it for the taking of such a poll every five years. That was done because of the feeling prevalent at the time. It was considered that progress had been made in public opinion and that the public should be allowed to express themselves. Accordingly the opportunity was provided. As the Minister pointed out when moving the second reading of the Bill, a similar measure was introduced in 1925 to defer the taking of the poll for another five years. There have been some most remarkable utterances in this Chamber regarding the taking of the poll. The

debate has assumed the form of a discussion on prohibition. The Act was designed to allow public opinion to express itself. By passing the Bill under discussion, this House will prevent the public from expressing their opinion for still another five years. Some extraordinary circumstances have attached to the introduction of the Bill. It was introduced in the Legislative Assembly last night. That was the first intimation we had of any action contemplated regarding this question.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You knew the poll was due this year.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The introduction of the Bill last night was the first knowledge we had of any action to be taken. I will admit that I was approached on this question some time ago and it was suggested that possibly legislation of this sort might be introduced.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Were you approached by the liquor crowd or the anti-liquor people?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I will not say any more than that.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Let us know.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Last night's action was the first intimation we had of any such move, and it was the first notification that the public received. Last night the Bill passed through all its stages in the Assembly and was sent on to this House.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It was agreed to practically unanimously.

Hon. H. SEDDON: We pride ourselves on being democratic and upon allowing the public to express their opinion on matters of importance. Surely when a Bill of this description was to be introduced, the people concerned on both sides should have been given an opportunity to express their opinions and place their views before members of Parliament. It is not usual for legislation of this description to be introduced in the closing hours of a session without the parties concerned having some idea of the steps to be taken. Nevertheless the Bill has been sent to this House and, from its position, is made one of the most important matters mentioned on the Notice Paper. That is what happens in this Chamber, after the Bill has been rushed through the Legislative Assembly in one night.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Wonderful expedition.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Let us hope we will have it here too.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Five years ago the experience was somewhat similar. The interests concerned should have had an opportunity to express their opinions. That was the reason why I suggested the debate should be adjourned till next week so as to give the parties concerned an opportunity to consider the Bill. I can see from the tone of the debate that members intend to push the Bill through just as expeditiously as it was rushed through in the Legislative Assembly. If members are prepared to do that, it is quite all right. A lot has been said of the evils of prohibition. We have now an indication of the terrible power of the liquor interests, when such things as this can be done. It creates a certain amount of dismay in my mind to think that members of this Chamber are not prepared to allow the public to express an opinion, but are determined to rush the legislation through in the manner that is indicated. That is practically all I have to say. I do not intend to discuss the question of prohibition or the administration of the liquor laws in this State. I shall content myself with dealing with the Bill alone. I contend it is utterly and entirely wrong that this House should consent to rush the legislation through without allowing the people to express their opinion. With regard to the cost of taking a poll on prohibition, I have recollections of the expenditure incurred on the last occasion. I took part in the campaign and I have some knowledge of the expense incurred by both sides. I am inclined to think that the Bill is possibly the result of the experience obtained on that occasion. I know that for every £1 raised by voluntary subscription among those who supported prohibition, there must have been at least £10 spent by the other side. We have been told that the poll cost the State £6,000. Other referenda have been submitted to the people at even greater cost to the State.

Hon. J. Cornell: The secession referendum got us into a nice mess.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Evidently the cost of taking the secession referendum did not weigh with those who desired that it should be taken. If any other public question were raised upon which it was considered advis-

able to obtain an expression of public opinion and there was a demand for a referendum, cost would be an entirely secondary consideration. When we have made provision for a referendum on prohibition, as has been done, it should not be set aside without some good reason. The people should be given an opportunity to express their opinion. I have referred to the fact that the Bill was introduced in another place only last night and put through immediately. Apparently a similar course is to be adopted in this House. In the interests of fair play, I must object to such indecent haste.

Hon. J. Cornell: What do you mean by fair play? I have not heard anyone speak of prohibition for five years.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Surely when the law provides for the people to express an opinion on a certain question, they should have the opportunity to exercise that right.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Do you think that many people will alter their views if the poll is postponed?

Hon. H. SEDDON: No, but those people who favour the holding of a poll should be given an opportunity to express their opinion, just as well as the people who are opposed to it. I shall oppose the second reading, and I trust that the House will heed my appeal and not permit the question to be decided so hastily.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan Suburban) [5.32]: The Bill appeals to me in quite a different way from that in which it appeals to Mr. Seddon. I should like to move that the whole of Part VI. of the Licensing Act—the portion headed "Prohibition"—be repealed. The Constitution provides that a number of members shall be elected to Parliament to pass laws for the good government of the country, and I cannot see why, when any question arises, we should take a referendum of the people. We are here to guide and lead the people. To submit to the people questions on which we should express an opinion would be equivalent to the tail wagging the head. I shall vote for the Bill, but I do not like it because it does not go far enough. It proposes to postpone the prohibition poll until 1940. In the ordinary course of events there will be an election in 1939, and we know full well what will happen then. On the hustings every candidate will be badgered as to

whether he is a prohibitionist or otherwise, and a party returned to office may claim a mandate from the country to undertake extensive sewerage works, simply because they were mentioned in the course of the election speeches, whereas the people based their choice of candidates on their attitude to prohibition. To all intents and purposes, prohibition is dead, and I think rightly so. If the liquor laws are not sufficiently rigorous, they can be tightened up, but we shall never be able to prevent human beings from indulging in alcoholic liquors.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Especially on a hot day like Monday last.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Hot or cold does not matter. In cold weather humans look for alcohol to make them warm, and in warm weather they look for it to keep them cool. To provide for the taking of a referendum in future is, in my opinion, entirely wrong. Why not provide in all our Acts for a referendum to be taken on each burning question? It is quite wrong that any Act of Parliament should provide for a referendum of the people. If members cannot decide the question of prohibition, others should be elected who are capable of deciding. I am pleased that the Bill has been presented quickly before there was time to publish in the Press what I might describe as a lot of hot air on the pros and cons of prohibition. This is a matter that members can decide, and decide quickly. If the Bill be passed, we shall not have a poll until 1940, but I trust that next year a measure will be introduced to repeal the whole of Part VI. of the Licensing Act.

HON. R. G. MOORE (North-East) [5.37]: I do not intend to oppose the Bill, but that does not necessarily indicate that I would vote for prohibition. I object to some of the remarks of previous speakers. Mr. Parker said that when members had been elected by the people to do the work of the country, they should do it without ever referring to the people.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: We refer to the people every six years.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: Why was not that attitude adopted on the question of secession?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It would have been much better.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: Why was the question of conscription referred to the people?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I think that is provided for in the Constitution, but I am not sure.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: Some constitutions cannot do without alcohol.

Hon. C. B. Williams: And they cannot make war without it.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: I do not think there is any possibility of getting a vote in favour of prohibition. Much has been said about the effect of prohibition in America. Members have referred to the number of crimes committed while prohibition was operating, and since it was repealed. Those crimes were not due to prohibition; they were due entirely to the liquor traffic. Whether the traffic was licensed or unlicensed, lawful or unlawful, the crimes were the result of dealing in liquor. I am not sure whether prohibition would be the best thing for Australia, even if the people favoured it, but I do think that the liquor laws should be tightened up. That is work on which we should concentrate our efforts. It is the abuse of alcohol, not its use, that causes so much trouble the world over. Many evils are solely the result of abuse. If we could only educate the people to a realisation of the evils arising from excessive indulgence in alcohol, much good would follow. A man can make an absolute hog of himself through over-indulgence in alcohol.

Hon. C. B. Williams: So you can on iced water on a hot day.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: If a man ate to the same extent, he would be regarded as a pig, and nobody would sit at the same table with him, but when he makes a hog of himself by drinking, he is regarded as a good fellow.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I like to see a good eater.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: Reform will probably come soonest by instilling into the minds of young people the evil effects of alcohol.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You do not know much about its effects.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: I do not profess to have had as much experience as the hon. member has had. He can talk with much more authority than I can. Still, I have eyes to see, ears to hear, and ability to understand. One can obtain much knowledge without having the experience. A man need not hang himself in order to find out

that hanging will break his neck. No good purpose would be served by taking a referendum at present. I agree with Mr. Seddon that the Bill is being rushed through, and that people who would wish to express their views on the postponement of the poll should have an opportunity to do so.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.42]: I support the second reading, but in so doing it must not be thought that I am in the grip of the liquor interests.

Hon. W. J. Mann interjected.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not a teetotaler, but am very near to being one. I do not consider it wise to incur the expense that the taking of a referendum would entail. It has been suggested that if a referendum were desired on some other question, the matter of cost would not be considered. I would not consider it on the question of prohibition if I thought there was any possible chance of its being carried.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are a prohibitionist?

Hon. G. FRASER: No, but if there was a possibility of something being achieved, the people should have a right to exercise their privilege. To use a racing term, I do not think there is a thousand-to-one chance of getting anything like a 50 per cent. vote in favour of prohibition. If advocates of prohibition concentrated their efforts to secure a tightening of the liquor laws and to educate children to the evils of the traffic, they would be more successful in their campaigns. The mere fact of passing a resolution to give effect to prohibition will not make people sober.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [5.44]: I intend to support the Bill. I always entertain respect for the opinions of other people, and amongst my greatest friends are some teetotalers. If I thought there was any reasonable hope of a vote in favour of prohibition being recorded, I would have no objection to that vote being taken. In the circumstances, however, I regard it as a waste of time and money. There is some very important legislation before us, and coming before us, and the quicker we decide upon this measure the better. I support the second reading.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [5.46]: I support the second reading and wholly approve of the remarks of Mr. Parker. It is high time referenda were done away with. These matters should be left in the hands of those who make the laws of the country. Parliament should regulate the licensing laws of the State. These laws are being well managed.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Very harshly.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Why do we want prohibition? Our liquor laws are properly conducted. There is no need for prohibition. If the vote were taken it would cost the country £6,000. That would do no good. Our laws are well policed. Hotels and places where liquor is sold are well conducted, and there are no complaints about them, either in the city or the country. Everywhere one goes one finds the hotels well kept, and the tariff low. I have seen very little drunkenness anywhere in Western Australia. The laws relating to juveniles being allowed to drink are also strictly observed. That is a very important feature of the administration of the licensing laws. I am glad the Bill has been brought down.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [5.48]: I agree that the Licensing Board is exercising efficient control over the trade, but that does not obviate the necessity for giving to the people an opportunity to express by referendum their opinion on the subject. This right was given to them by the original Act.

Hon. C. B. Williams: We are another Parliament. Are we not entitled to disregard a previous Parliament?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Members of Parliament usually regard themselves as servants of the people who sent them here.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I do not know that many prohibitionists sent us here.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is our duty to observe the law ourselves. There may be occasions where variations should be granted. I echo the sentiment expressed by Mr. Seddon, that there has been undue haste in this matter.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It helps to show the public that we can work when we like.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We should know, and the public should know that when the necessity arises, we do work. An emphatic right was given to the people by the orig-

inal Act, which says that in the year 1925 and in every fifth year thereafter, at a date to be fixed by proclamation, there shall be taken a poll of the electors in every electoral district on the proposal that prohibition shall come into force in Western Australia, and so on. That is a direction for the poll to be taken. The last poll was taken in 1925. The next one should have been taken in 1930, but it was not taken and the period was extended until 1935. It is now proposed to extend the period for a further five years. This will involve an interval of 15 years since the last poll. This undue haste may be misinterpreted by the public.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There will have to be a lot of haste between now and Friday week, if we are to get through.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not mind when we get through.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You live here, but we live away.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The hon. member has taken his seat, and it is his duty to be here. We all have a duty to perform. The rushing through of a Bill like this at the end of the session will be misinterpreted by the public.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Not on your life.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That will be detrimental to everyone connected with Parliament.

Hon. J. Cornell: In what way?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We are not giving to the people the right that the law gives to them. They should have an opportunity to express their opinions on this matter. So far, they have had no opportunity to do so. The Bill was introduced in another place yesterday and we are dealing with it here to-day. An effort is now being made to rush it through. That will react to the detriment of those whose interests are vitally concerned.

Hon. C. H. Wittenoom: Cannot we take as long as we like over it?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It was suggested that the debate should be adjourned.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There was no refusal of that suggestion.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Despite what has been said concerning prohibition in America and elsewhere, I maintain this haste will react very seriously to the detriment of those whose interests are vitally centred in this legislation.

Hon. J. Cornell: There can only be a reaction at polling time.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is unwise to rush this legislation through. I have been informed that a deputation waited upon the Minister in charge of the department, and placed certain views before him.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Were they prohibitionists?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not know.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Whom did they represent?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am not aware of that. I understand the Minister promised to give the deputation a reply, but apparently the reply is embodied in the quick despatch and passage of this Bill.

Hon. C. B. Williams: We are all free agents here. No one is forcing us.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That will react to the detriment of the Government responsible for this sort of thing. It will injure the feelings of a large section of the people.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What about the cost?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The matter of cost should not be introduced when the rights of the people are concerned. In this instance it is the right of the people to have a poll. They have that right and would be justified in denouncing the Government for the unseemly haste that has been exhibited in the passage of this Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: Will the hon. member deny that those who give the right cannot take it away?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not say that, but the right has been given and it exists to-day.

Hon. J. Cornell: And we have the right to take it away.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The right was given for a poll to be taken every five years. By this Bill there will be no poll until 1940, and the last was held in 1925.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Let us hope there will be none for 100 years.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the question of cost is to weigh, it would be possible to take the poll at a general election, although it would be a pity to introduce a controversial subject like this at such a time.

Hon. V. Hamersley: It should not be taken at election time.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No. I understand that no reply was given to the deputation,

but this Bill will come as a surprise, I am sure, to a large section of the community which takes a deep interest in this question. I hope even at this late hour the Honorary Minister will allow the debate to be adjourned so that those who are interested may have an opportunity of voicing their opinions.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That would not influence one vote. Why waste time?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That has nothing to do with the exercise of a right. We are depriving the public of a right to express their views on this subject for a total of 15 years. I am not concerned whether prohibition is carried or not. I do not claim to be a teetotaler.

Hon. C. B. Williams: A very frank remark; I am pleased to hear it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But I do stand for the rights of the people whether in respect to this Bill or anything else. I hope the Honorary Minister will allow the debate to be adjourned, seeing that we have had this Bill before us only for an hour or so. In all the circumstances I feel disposed to vote against the second reading.

HON. E. H. ANGELO (North) [6.1]: I shall support the Bill. By doing away with the referendum fixed for next year, we shall save some money; but I join with Mr. Seddon and Mr. Nicholson in protesting against the unseemly rushing of the Bill through Parliament. That course deprives a most respectable section of our community, who have certain ideas, of the opportunity of expressing their views. In the circumstances, is it any wonder that there are rumours and assertions such as I have heard only a few days ago, to the effect that the liquor traffic of Western Australia has got members of Parliament in the bag? That is the sort of thing we shall have thrown up at us if we pass the Bill in this unseemly manner. While supporting the measure, I certainly agree with the two hon. members I have mentioned in suggesting to the Chief Secretary to postpone the second reading until next Tuesday. I do not think that by doing so we shall lose a moment of time. On the other hand, we shall be extending some consideration to a most respectable section of our community.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	14
Noes	12
Majority for	2

AYES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. R. G. Moore
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. C. G. Elliott (Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. B. Williams (Teller.)

Motion thus passed; the debate adjourned.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Roads Closure.
- 2, Reserves.
- 3, King's Park and University Land Exchange.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT (ESTATE AND SUCCESSION DUTIES) AMENDMENT.

Further Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson, Bill re-committed for the purpose of further considering Clauses 3A and 45.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3A:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Last night the Committee struck out the words "subject as aforesaid." I now move an amendment—

That after the words "principal Act" there be inserted "as hereby repealed."

As promised, I have seen the Parliamentary Draftsman on this matter.

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

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: The Clerk informs me that owing to new Clause 3A being qualified by having that designation, it will be necessary to insert it after Clause 3.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But I want it to be taken out of the Part in which it is now. I move—

That Clause 3A be inserted immediately after Clause 2 in Part I.

Question put and passed.

Clause 45—Valuation of partnership interests:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That after "sections," in line 5 of subclause 3, the words "thirty-eight" be inserted.

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

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I understand that the necessary alteration in Clause 50 will be made by the Clerk.

The CHAIRMAN: Then the hon. member desires that in the re-print of the Bill the original Clause 50 shall be Subclause (1)?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is so. And Subclause (2) will begin with the words "nothing therein contained."

The CHAIRMAN: Very well. That will be done.

Bill again reported with further amendments.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 6th December.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [7.40]: Following a fairly extensive trip through the South-West, during which this Bill was frequently mentioned, I have come to the conclusion that a large number of clients of the Bank are under a serious misapprehension. Most of them appear to entertain the idea that this Bill has been designed to afford them some further relief. As one spoke with them it was not difficult to realise what prompted them to arrive at that conclusion. In a number of instances it was pointed out that prior to the last general elections candidates supporting the present Government were very zealous in criticising the Agricultural Bank and the

actions of the then Government—tardy actions they called them—in affording those clients the relief they considered to be their due. There is, I think, some justification for their viewpoint, for it was frequently said by candidates that the time had arrived when there should be a change of Government, and that if the people returned the Labour Party to power those candidates would see to it that some improvement was brought about. Many of those clients assured me they had voted for the present Government on account of those promises. They contended they were definitely led to believe that as soon as the Labour Party got into power they would set about dealing with the Agricultural Bank in such a way as to ensure considerable relief to the Bank's clients. I am not going to say that all supporters of the present Government went out on the hustings and made those promises, but I am assured a number of them did. This Bill, after all, is not very different from the existing legislation. Practically all the Bill seeks to do could have been achieved by an application of the legislation already in existence. However, the Government have brought down the Bill and, as I said, it is very disappointing to many people. In fact, I heard one man say, using the old scriptural injunction, "We asked for bread and they gave us a stone." That is the way those people feel about the matter. A number are fearful that the conditions imposed in the Bill will not bring about an alleviation of the farmers' troubles, but more likely will they have the reverse effect.

Hon. T. Moore: On the group settlers?

Hon. W. J. MANN: I am speaking chiefly about the group settlers. At the outset, I said so, and I did not pretend to speak for the people in other parts of the State. To deal with the position, the Government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the operations of the Agricultural Bank. I have no fault to find with them for that. I agree it is a pity that the Royal Commission was not appointed earlier, because there is no doubt that the affairs of the Agricultural Bank were in a chaotic condition. The Commission sat for a considerable time and took voluminous evidence, and from a purely banking procedure point of view, they furnished an interesting report. There is not much else in it. They certainly suggested a means for the adjustment and condition-

ing of debts through the medium of a central board, on lines, I think, existing in South Australia, and they added some reference to seasonal credits for necessitous farmers, also on lines existing in South Australia. The position to-day as far as the Bank is concerned is that the institution has about 18,000 clients representing cereal growers, sheep and dairy farmers and orchardists. Of that number 13,824, according to the report of the commission, represent the industries I have just named. A very small proportion of that 13,000 is in a fair way and able to pay interest. I do not know what the proportion of Bank clients is that is meeting the full interest, but it is not big. There is a proportion able, with extreme difficulty, to pay a portion, and finally there is a great majority not paying anything at all. It is very evident that the Agricultural Bank, or any other Bank, could not continue to function properly with its clients in such a position. This is caused, as everyone knows, by the low price of agricultural products following a partial collapse of the world's markets. In the aggregate, the fault is not altogether with the Agricultural Bank clients. They have been the victims of circumstances, and there must be sympathy for the victims. In dealing with the Agricultural Bank, it is as well to be fair and point out that while there may be those who are inclined to be unduly harsh in their criticism of the Bank, and also of its clients, there is something to be said for both. As far as I have been able to gather, the Bank is in the unenviable position to-day of having 1,250 abandoned farms on which principal and interest aggregating over a million and a half is owing. That is an enormous amount, and the position is worse because the asset covered by those figures has diminished to such an extent that I suppose one would be well within the mark if he said that the present day value would be at least 60 per cent. below the real value. A lot of farms are not nearly worth what we not so long ago recognised to be their normal value. The productive capacity of those farms is the only way in which one can assess their value, so the position we find ourselves in is that the Bank assets are nothing like what they appear to be on the Bank's books.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Does not the human factor play an important part?

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes, but even if we try to value the human factor to-day, we find that that value is much below what it was, not because it has deteriorated, but because the individual has become so disheartened and his interest in the industry has waned. I take it that the duty of the House is to see that any change to be brought about by the passing of this measure will not put any undue hardship on the people who are the basis of the Bank's operations. That is the point we have to bear in mind, and we must not get away from it. If we are going to interfere unduly with the people who are left on the farms, who are still Agricultural Bank clients, then there will be such an exodus that instead of there being 1,200 abandoned farms, there will be two or three times that number, and the position of the Bank will be correspondingly worse. I feel that in this matter of assisting, or seeing that the Bank clients are assisted as far as it is reasonably possible to do so, that the State must bear some large measure of responsibility. In the past for a number of years the main urge of this State was to people the land. There was a general idea that anybody could farm. The advantages of Western Australia, with its wide areas, its wonderful climate, rainfall and fertility were broadcast not only throughout the State and Commonwealth, but in other lands as well, particularly in Great Britain. And it is not the Agricultural Bank's fault that so many people were brought to this country and put on the land. So many as we know now have proved misfits, and in no circumstances could they possibly have been made farmers. The genesis of the land settlement policy was the early Land Act which provided for the grant of a free homestead farm of 160 acres to anyone who cared to apply for it. The Government almost begged people to come out and take up this area, and also purchase land at from 3s. 9d. to 10s. an acre. So little was known about the fertility of the land at that time that much of the country, in the South-West at any rate, that was classified as third-class is to-day of higher value than the land now classified as first-class. Last Saturday I passed through an area of country that went begging for many years as third-class land. I was surprised to note the wealth of natural herbage and the crops that the land carried. Not only did the

Government endeavour to people the land but when the Agricultural Bank was inaugurated, the general manager was instructed to go out amongst the farming community and do everything possible to induce them to borrow money. That seems rather an unusual statement to make, but my mind reverted recently to a conversation I had with the first general manager, the late Mr. William Paterson, than whom there was no greater friend of the farmer in his day. He asked me, "What is the matter with the people in the South-West? They are not borrowing any money!" He assured me plenty of money was available, and that the people in the South-West should borrow some of it. Then I remembered an advertisement that appeared in a paper that circulated in the South-West, and I hunted it up. In order to refresh our minds regarding the inducements that were held out to the farmers to borrow money, I will read the advertisement to the House. It was published in the issue of the 1st November, 1907. The advertisement did not contain a great number of words but the Agricultural Bank authorities gave instructions that the wording should be spread over a 12-inch space. The matter could easily have been condensed into four inches. Members will see that the desire to impress upon the farmers the fact that money was available was most apparent. The advertisement read—

Agricultural Bank.

The Agricultural Bank Act, 1906.

Section 28 below fully explains how and for what purposes advances can be made—

28. (1.) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the Bank may, if the trustees think fit, make advances on the prescribed security for—

- (a) ring-barking, clearing, fencing, draining, or water conservation; or
- (b) discharging any mortgage already existing on any holding; or
- (c) the purchase of stock for breeding purposes.

(2.) Every application for an advance shall be made on the prescribed form, and shall contain such particulars as may be prescribed.

(3.) Advances may be made of an amount not exceeding three hundred pounds to the full value of the improvements proposed to be made.

(4.) Further advances may be made of an amount not exceeding two hundred pounds to one half of the value of additional improvements proposed to be made.

(5.) No advance shall be made under paragraph (b) of subsection 1 to an amount ex-

ceeding three-fourths the value of the improvements already made on the holding.

(6.) At no time shall the advances to any one person exceed the sum of five hundred pounds, and no sum exceeding one hundred pounds shall be advanced to any one person for the purchase of stock.

Now I will quote the part of the advertisement that showed how the authorities absolutely begged farmers to borrow from the Bank—

Don't defer making application until you are in financial difficulties. With ordinary foresight you should be able to anticipate your requirements by at least two or three months. If you are in doubt as to being able to tide over the unproductive stage of development, put in an application before you start your improvements. If the request is a reasonable one you can confidently look for assistance, and, in the event of approval, the proposed work effected since date of application is paid for. It should be clearly borne in mind that the Bank does not pay against work done prior to that date.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: That was before the war.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Of course it was. After reading the advertisement, I ask members: How many of those on the land could resist an invitation to borrow, such as that included in the advertisement? It is a great pity that Section 28 of the Act was ever interfered with. If it had remained in its original form, many farmers might have been much better off to-day. The Act has been amended from time to time according to the differing policies of various Governments, until the limit to-day is £2,000, plus additional funds that may be obtained by other means. I read that advertisement to members because a lot of those people who owe money to the Bank were invited to go along and ask for as much money as they cared to, up to the very limit. Having taken advantage of the offer to that extent, most of the clients later availed themselves of additional opportunities, as alterations were made to the Act from time to time, and accordingly borrowed up to the increased limit.

Hon. J. Cornell: If that limit had not been extended, the trading banks would have provided the balance.

Hon. W. J. MANN: That is true. I also enjoyed myself looking through "Hansard" from 1907 onwards. If I were to quote fully some of the speeches made by members

who urged that the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act should be liberalised and more money made available to the farmers, it would be agreed that the State is culpable to a certain degree for the position the farmers are in now. There was a time, not so far distant, when in some parts of the State not to be an Agricultural Bank client was quite a novelty. Such a person was someone quite out of the ordinary. We cannot escape the fact that the people on the land were not alone responsible, but that the people generally and Parliament were contributory causes of the Bank's difficulties. In allocating the blame, we find it is apportionable between the city and country alike.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Why the country?

Hon. W. J. MANN: The truth is that business concerns, big and small, captains of industries and trading offices, all shared in the money that passed through the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. J. Cornell: Westralian Farmers Ltd. in particular.

Member: And also some of the "backyarders."

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes, not alone the "backyarders" but some of the big manufacturing firms did very well out of the Group Settlement Scheme, for instance. I have in mind some carts that were provided for group settlers. I was present on a visit to group settlements in company with the then Minister for Lands, Mr. Angwin. When we examined some of the carts, we found we could easily push a pencil between the tyres and the felloes. When he saw them, Mr. Angwin asked where the nearest post office was to be found. We went there as quickly as we could and the Minister sent a telegram to someone not to send any more carts of that description to group settlers.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Were the carts made by a man in his backyard?

Hon. W. J. MANN: The carts were constructed in someone's business establishment. I can assure the House those facts are correct. Not only could we easily push a pencil between the tyres and the woodwork, but the spokes could be rattled. The carts were anything but satisfactory. They were not provided by a small manufacturer, but by one whose big undertaking is not far from Perth.

Member: Were they constructed at Busseton?

Hon. W. J. MANN: No, the people at Fremantle, or thereabouts, were too smart. Very little of the money provided to Agricultural Bank clients remained in their own pockets. They spent the money and business people throughout the State benefited accordingly.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: Including the newspapers.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Of course. Some of us got twopence a week out of it while others did not get anything because they were not paid. I do not think the point can be controverted that the people of the State—mostly those associated with big businesses—participated generously in the money made available to the rural community through the Agricultural Bank. Even the State had returned to it much of the money advanced through the Bank.

Hon. C. B. Williams: By means of the income tax?

Hon. W. J. MANN: No. Unfortunately the farmers were not in a position to pay income tax. The Government received the money back through all manner of charges that were levied. The irony of it all is that some of the worst critics of the Bank are those who brought about the downfall of so many of the agriculturists through inducing them to purchase goods that were really not required. That position applied not only in the South-West but in the wheat belt as well.

Hon. J. Cornell: And throughout Australia.

Hon. W. J. MANN: While Agricultural Bank money was available freely, armies of commercial travellers journeyed through the rural districts urging farmers to buy things that they did not really require. I do not close my eyes to the fact that the trustees of the Agricultural Bank, in a measure, lost grip of the situation.

Hon. H. Seddon: Will the Bill provide them with a bigger grip?

Hon. W. J. MANN: As I interpret it, the Bill will provide the commissioners who will be appointed with more extensive powers than the trustees ever possessed, and if the commissioners exercise those powers rigidly, then there can be nothing but disaster ahead. The trouble is that in conducting the business, the trustees of the Agri-

cultural Bank endeavoured to do too much. It is absolutely useless to endeavour to compare the Agricultural Bank with the average chartered bank. We frequently hear the average chartered bank held up as an example of what the Agricultural Bank should have done. I cannot see for the life of me how any comparison can be drawn. The agricultural clients of the chartered banks might be numbered perhaps in hundreds, whereas the trustees of the Agricultural Bank were expected to handle effectively and know all about and keep track of no fewer than 18,000 accounts. It was a physical impossibility. Unfortunately, the trustees imagined that they could do it. We are not going to condemn them exactly, except to say it was a pity they did not realise that the work they were undertaking was beyond the capacity of any three men.

Hon. J. Cornell: And every Government loaded them with other duties as well.

Hon. W. J. MANN: There have been mistakes and great losses have occurred. Those losses are largely attributable, in conjunction with the other causes I have mentioned—world economic causes—to all political parties in this State. We cannot deny the Agricultural Bank further assistance if it is to be carried on. It would be fatal to allow a majority of the present clients to drift into the cities and towns where there would be no prospect for them but sustenance. I regret that the Government have not outlined some concrete proposals for relief as well as proposals for the reorganisation of the Bank. If that had been done, I believe the morale and tone of the people in the agricultural areas would have been considerably improved. I cannot see that any great relief will come to the farmers as a result of the passing of this measure. When the Minister replies I do not want him to say, as has already been said this session, that if we do not agree with what the Government have introduced, it is our province to bring down proposals. I remind the Government that while members are here to assist them, we are not here to formulate Government policy.

Hon. G. Fraser: They often do it.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The Government have proved rather stubborn in quite a number of instances, and have made it fairly clear that they do not intend to tolerate too much interference with their policy. We

must not lose sight of the fact that the Government have control of the purse; they have the assistance of the departments and the officials; they have the aggregate wisdom of Cabinet, which should be a valuable factor; and they can be assured of the support of this House for any proposal that will help the farmers and be for the good of the country. I do not want the Ministers to say that if we criticise we should also offer constructive proposals, and in effect take the business out of the hands of the Government. That is not our province. There is need for the reorganisation of the Bank, and we all agree that the position of the primary producers everywhere is extremely precarious. The wheatbelt representatives in this House have told us of the disabilities their constituents are suffering, and we know that those disabilities are extreme and that the position is exceedingly grave. There is a ray of sunshine, not very pronounced, in the fact that the Federal Government propose, on top of assuring farmers of a reasonable price for wheat, to make money available for necessitous farmers. There will be enough necessitous farmers to share that money. The amount that the Commonwealth will make available, I am afraid, will not go very far. Still it is something. The position of the dairy farmers, fruitgrowers, and mixed farmers is not so bright. So far the Federal Government have not shown any inclination to go to the support of those branches of primary production.

Hon. G. W. Miles: They provided £8,000 for the growers of mandarins.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I have not seen any computation as to how much per grower it will amount to, but it was so little that one would probably not bother to try to find it. The position of the dairy farmers particularly is extremely acute, and notwithstanding the assurance of Ministers that group settlers are not being turned off their holdings for non-payment of interest, I regret to say that that procedure is still being followed. I have spoken with the responsible Minister many times, and I have always been assured that men were not being put off their blocks for non-payment of interest. Up to a point that statement is true. The Agricultural Bank officials, however, are able to find other causes which they contend are sufficiently grave to justify farms being repossessed. I am not in a position

to tell the House the contents of an order that I understand was issued a week or two ago. Last week-end I was informed on fairly good authority that an order had been issued that the proposal to send men adrift and repossess their farms was to be strictly enforced, and that no further requests for the granting of additional consideration should be granted. That is hearsay; I hope it is not true. I believe that one of the most foolish things that the Agricultural Bank, through the officers, has allowed to be perpetuated for some time is the sending of good men off a number of groups. Undoubtedly there have been misfits. Undoubtedly there are men who, if they were given £1,000 a year, would never make farmers. They went on to the groups without the right spirit, and as a matter of adventure. Others went there to see what they could get out of it and leave again as soon as possible. Such men constitute only a proportion of the whole. I say definitely that this State has lost some of the finest men one could wish to meet because of the irritating and pin-pricking methods adopted by officials and their failure to understand the mentality of settlers. Men who were above the average were brought under the discipline of inspectors, some of whom should never have been entrusted with much power. If we investigate the history of group settlement we find that in the early days easily 75 per cent. of the men who were appointed foremen had been failures on their own properties. I feel that I may take a little credit for one thing. In the early days of group settlement, if one man approached me with the idea of recommending him for the position of group foreman, there must have been 50. I recommended two men only. One of them recently resigned after having held the position of senior foreman for seven or eight years and proved himself a tactful and valuable officer. He resigned to go on to a farm of his own where he is doing well. The other is the present field officer at Denmark. They are the only men I recommended. Unfortunately the Government of the day and those responsible for employing foremen picked up any man who came along with a fair amount of assurance and ability to tell a good story.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Who was responsible?

Hon. V. Hamersley: Very often the Minister.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I think the man responsible is no longer with us.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Was it the Minister or an official?

Hon. W. J. MANN: An official, I think. A tremendous amount of money has been wasted, not altogether by the settlers, but by the department. Whoever become commissioners of the Bank in future will be confronted with a very difficult task. I want to put in a word for the men who are worth keeping on their holdings. Many splendid families have walked off because of the irritation and annoyances which could have been avoided by a little tact and ability on the part of the officers. I am not blaming the Government, for it is impossible for Ministers to know all that is going on in such a big scheme. Under the system followed, hundreds of abuses have occurred, and these have contributed to the present position. Whatever re-organisation is agreed to, this House should endeavour as far as possible to prevent the disabilities that have been suffered in the past. I wish to pay a tribute to the Managing Trustee of the Bank, his colleagues and many of their officers. They deserve to be commended rather than condemned. I do not agree with many of the findings of the Royal Commission, although a most informative report has been furnished. I do not agree with many of their findings any more than I admire the manner in which, particularly by the Chairman, the investigation was conducted. A perusal of the volumes laid on the Table of the House discloses some things to which I would be sorry to have to plead guilty. I do not say they were criminal, but I do think they displayed a lamentable want of good taste such as we might easily have expected of gentlemen of the reputation they enjoyed. The contention that the trustees had not been subjected to political influence in the past is nothing less than humbug. Pressure was brought to bear upon the trustees at all times and openly.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: The Minister denies that.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The Government may deny it as much as they like, and members of the Royal Commission may deny it. It is astounding that those gentlemen should pretend such ignorance. Practically every member of Parliament has at some time seen the trustees. Whilst we have not

subjected them to pressure, we have found them courteous enough to receive us, and to listen to us when we have put forward the cases of clients who we thought were entitled to further consideration or some alleviation.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: I would not call that undue pressure.

Hon. W. J. MANN: No. The trustees all along have been subjected to political pressure.

Hon. J. Cornell: I have gone to the managers of trading banks on behalf of their clients.

Hon. L. Craig: The trustees were always subject to the policy of the Government.

Hon. W. J. MANN: And that was carried into effect by means of pressure. They were told to do this and do that. The Government and the Royal Commission may deny this as much as they like, but they will not make me believe the denial. I should like to refer also to the man who has paid his interest. What will happen to him when the re-organisation takes place? There are men who have put the whole of their capital into their farms and have made an honest endeavour to be successful. There are individuals who have put every penny they could scrape together into their holdings and this money represents their equity. I hope the Government will see, whether it is called pressure or not, that the commissioners safeguard the position of such men. I do not want to see them treated in the same way as the persons who have sat back, paid nothing, done nothing and allowed the State assets to deteriorate. Many clients of the Bank have done their best to maintain the State's assets. I hope the commissioners will see that in any readjustment that is made these factors are given due consideration. There are many instances in which, through no fault of their own, farmers find their liabilities outweigh their assets, although the assets represent years of hard work, frugal living and great endeavour. The position of those men must be safeguarded. The Bill contains some clauses to which I am opposed, and concerning which I will reserve anything I have to say until we reach the Committee stage. I am afraid if some of them are passed as printed they will not be understood by the settlers. I refer particularly to Clause 50. I have endeavoured to fathom the exact meaning of that clause which the Minister regards as

vital to the Bill. It is also vital to a great majority of the Bank's clients, who are in extreme fear that if it is allowed to pass in its present form their position will be absolutely untenable.

Hon. L. Craig: It will have a bad moral effect upon them.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes, a very great moral effect. No doubt a lot of debate will ensue upon that clause. I do not want to see the Bill lost, but would not like to see anything contained in it that will be detrimental to the interests of the deserving clients of the Bank. These people merit the most sympathetic consideration that can be meted out to them by this House and by the Government.

HON. E. H. ANGELO (North) [8.40]: Members would find much food for thought if they would read "Hansard" of the 5th September, 1894, when the first Agricultural Bank Bill was introduced by the late Lord Forrest. I have read his speech most carefully as well as the speeches that followed. I have come to the conclusion that the policy of the then Government was to help the small settler, the man who was hampered for a little cash, to carry out his own improvements and in that way endeavour to build up the agricultural industry. They were very cautious in those days. The maximum advance was £300, and the extent of the advance for any improvements was limited to 50 per cent. of their value. The following few lines set out the policy of the Government—

The smaller settlers on the land are generally struggling men who may have a little capital and are not generally men of means, so that the difficulty is as to how persons of that class can be assisted in the early stages of settlement without risk to the State. Everyone has to consider very carefully whether in assisting them one would not be incurring the risk of losing the capital with which they are so assisted.

The then Premier went on to say—

The business to be carried out under the powers of this Bill is to be of a safe and sound character. This Agricultural Bank is intended to pay its own way, and there should not be any loss to the country upon the transactions occurring under the provisions of this Bill.

At that time the idea was to assist the small man to create a security, so that when he had done this he would be able to go to one of the cheque-paying banks and get them

to take over his account. The amounts that would then be repaid to the Agricultural Bank would be available to help other men along, and so the business was to proceed. The capital of the Agricultural Bank was limited to £100,000. It was understood that the money could be used over and over again to assist men as they came along. That is the policy adopted in connection with workers' homes. There was some excuse for the Agricultural Bank and a policy of that kind at that date. I have here some interesting figures and will compare them with the figures of to-day. In 1894 there were six cheque-paying banks trading in Western Australia, and to-day there are eight. The deposits at those banks amounted then to £4,577,000, and to-day they stand at £17,570,000. The advances in those days amounted to £2,826,000 as against £23,000,000 to-day. Of those advances only £13,750 was loaned to the Government, whereas to-day the loans to the Government amount to £2,922,000. It appears to me that the Government are borrowing money from the banks to lend to agriculturists. In those days we had 31,488 acres under wheat; to-day we have 3,183,000 acres. At that time we were producing 243,000 bushels yearly, as against 37,305,000 bushels last season. In 1894 we had only 2,248,000 sheep, now we have 10,322,000. Then we had only 16,814 milch cows; we have now 121,818. I think it can safely be said that the Agricultural Bank as then established has done the work for which it was created—to build up the agricultural industry. Cannot the same work now be done by the other institutions, thus relieving the State of a great deal of work which really is not a function of Government? Nearly every one of the Associated Banks has increased its capital, and if not trebled, certainly doubled its reserve fund. The Associated Banks have now the necessary funds to assist the agriculturists of Western Australia. In addition, Western Australia now has three large stock firms as against only one operating at that time. The Agricultural Bank has done all that the late Lord Forrest wanted it to do. It has done all it was required to do. It has established the agricultural industry of Western Australia on lines which would have proved perfectly sound had it not been for the late depression. The question should now appeal to us whether the time has not arrived when we should

call a halt and see whether any good can be achieved for the State and also for our agriculturists by suspending the operations of the Government institution. In my opinion, the time has arrived when we should commence to wind up that institution. No more advances should be made to new clients. Mr. Mann's speech, and the pitiful tale he told of the operations of the Agricultural Bank—

Hon. T. Moore: In the South-West.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: —strengthen my opinion that the time has arrived when we must review our policy.

Hon. J. Cornell: If there are to be no new clients, what is to be done with the 2,000 abandoned farms?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I am coming to that. What has happened to the Agricultural Bank? Mr. Mann says we ought to take serious notice of the Royal Commission's findings. By them we see that there is about £16,000,000 of the State's money tied up with Agricultural Bank clients. The Royal Commissioners think the State has already lost £6,000,000 of that amount and will probably lose a further £6,000,000. Can Western Australia afford anything like that?

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: We have got to.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Yes; that is our position. But should we carry on and enlarge that position, making it possible for things to get worse in the future?

Hon. J. Cornell: The Wyndham meat works are getting worse.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I know that, but two wrongs do not make a right. Moreover, what are the losses of the meat works as compared with the losses of the Agricultural Bank?

Hon. J. Cornell: Nearly as much.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Some hon. members would say, "A nice position for the wheat farmers if we stop the operations of the Agricultural Bank and start to wind it up!" I do not for a moment suggest that any hardship whatever should be inflicted on the agricultural community. It is going to take at least ten years to wind the Bank up. However, no new clients should be taken on. The present trustees could carry out the work of liquidation. Every client should be helped along until his position has so improved that he can go to another bank,

or some other financial institution, and be taken over.

Hon. A. Thomson: You are not suggesting that our agricultural industry is finished, are you?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I do not suggest anything of the kind. I would not be a party to imposing any hardship on the present clients of the Agricultural Bank. They should be assisted until they are in such a position that some other institution will take them over.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They should assist themselves.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: The other institutions will see that they assist themselves.

Hon. T. Moore: What about the Primary Producers' Bank?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: That bank had to close its doors because of the closing of the New South Wales Savings Bank. I am glad of the opportunity to explain that matter. The day after the New South Wales Savings Bank closed, there were at least one hundred clients of the Primary Producers' Bank drawing out so much money and handing it to the Savings Bank's customers. That went on for six weeks, and the Primary Producers Bank lost £400,000 in deposits to depositors in the New South Wales State Savings Bank.

Hon. T. Moore: Do you blame Jack Lang?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Absolutely. No one else.

Hon. T. Moore: Put it on to Jack!

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: So far as Western Australia was concerned, the Primary Producers' Bank had enough money to pay everybody the day following.

Hon. J. Cornell: They are not all paid yet.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: That is because we here have to throw in our lot with the other States. In connection with the Agricultural Bank there should be no hardships at all. That is exactly the position regarding clients of the Primary Producers' Bank. That bank is not compelling any of its old friends to sell up. It is gradually helping them to improve their position; and every week two or three of the clients go off to another bank, and no loss whatever is incurred. If the Primary Producers' Bank can do that, surely the Agricultural Bank can do it. It might be said that there would

be hardship to the staff of the Agricultural Bank. I do not think there would be any. It will take at least ten or 12 years to wind up the institution. As the clients went away to other institutions, less staff would be required by the Agricultural Bank. I think retirements by reason of old age and probably deaths during the next ten or 12 years would just about keep pace with the winding up, so that practically nobody need be dismissed.

Hon. J. Cornell: No new men would be taken on?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Take on no new staff whatever, and take on no new clients whatever.

Hon. A. Thomson: Let the Bank die out?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Yes. It has served its purpose. Plenty of money is now available at low rates of interest from other institutions, which are prepared to help in the development of the industry. It is no trouble at all now to get money at low rates of interest for agricultural purposes provided the institution is satisfied with the security.

Hon. J. Cornell: Go to Southern Cross and try to get a bank to take you on!

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Exactly. No chartered bank would have taken on an advance in the Southern Cross district. Had the Agricultural Bank not taken on any advances in that district, it probably would not be in such a bad position as it is in today.

Hon. J. Cornell: For years the Southern Cross district had the average for the State.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Why did the Agricultural Bank take on advances in that district and in other districts which had been condemned as wheatgrowing areas? Because of political influence.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why were the meat works at Carnarvon taken on?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: The pastoralists paid for the meat works at Carnarvon. They lost £45,000. Mr. Mann said he was satisfied there had been political influence in connection with the Agricultural Bank. I too am satisfied that there has been political influence, and not only from Parliament but also from Governments and from members of Parliament. The same thing will happen in the future. No Government or semi-Government institution, no institution in

any way connected with Government, can ever dodge political influence. That is a fact we have to face in the future. Why not be honest and admit to ourselves that the Agricultural Bank overgrew itself? If it had stuck to what it was originally intended to do, help the small man to create a security and thereupon go into the proper avenues of finance, we would not have this terrible mess, the State would be millions of pounds better off, and our agricultural industry would be on a much firmer basis. The Agricultural Bank has gone into areas into which it should not have gone. Advances have been given to people who should not have been given advances. Those things would never have occurred if the financing had been in the hands of properly controlled institutions with competent men to direct them. It may be said that a Government institution of this kind is necessary in case a crisis comes along, or some dreadful depression. In such circumstances we must help our agriculturists, but surely there are other ways of doing that. We have a vote for the development of agriculture. In the case of a decent man who is well reported on by his neighbours and whom a bank is unable to help further, what is to stop the Government from saying to a private institution, "We want you to help this man, and we will stand for him for £200 or £300 during the depression by way of a guarantee?" If that were done, we would have not only our Agricultural Bank inspectors watching the man; we would also have the bank managers spread in the various branches throughout the State watching the man in such cases. I am perfectly certain that many men who are not pulling their weight to-day, after having been financed by the Agricultural Bank, would be compelled to pull their weight, and would be far better off, under proper supervision. If that course were adopted, if it was decided to call a halt with the Agricultural Bank and to get that institution's advances repaid, this Bill would not be necessary. The present trustees know every one of the borrowers. They know all parts of the State. They know the areas that are not safe for wheat production. We could not have any better men than those we have at the present time as trustees, to act as liquidators until the Bank is wound up.

The Honorary Minister: What is there in the Bill giving rise to your remarks?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: The Bill is to re-create an institution, and I am opposing the measure because I do not think the Bank should carry on, and therefore I do not think the Bill is necessary. As I have said, the other banking institutions have plenty of money available gradually to take on the clients of the Agricultural Bank as they come into a position to be taken on.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: After writing them down 75 per cent., I suppose.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I will vote for a provision giving the trustees authority to write down.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: That is given in the Bill.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Yes, but I do not think the Bill is necessary. A short amending Bill giving that authority is all that is required.

The Honorary Minister: You believe in the Associated Banks taking over all the clients of the Agricultural Bank?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: The Agricultural Bank was never intended to come into competition with the trading banks. In the early days it was necessary to create the Agricultural Bank, because the deposits of the Associated Banks then amounted to only about 4½ millions, and the goldfields probably had most of that. Another thing: I hear there are other banks not represented here to-day, and other stock firms not represented here, who are willing to come to the State and do business in an open, proper way, but they are being handicapped by the Agricultural Bank, which is offering greater facilities at the cost of the State.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Keeping the men on the land.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Yes, how many abandoned farms have we to-day? Is that keeping the men on the land? The other banks would help to get clients from the Eastern States, sons of farmers who want land; they would help bring those men over here and put them on the land backed by a proper guarantee. If the Bill passes, and the new commissioners are appointed, they will start out with the best intentions, telling themselves there is to be no political influence. But what will happen? In a few years the Government of the day may adopt another policy; the organisers of the farm-

ers probably will come along and have their say, and members of Parliament will go to the commissioners and say, "We want you to help this man because we know him to be of very fine character." It has been done in the past and it will be done again in the future, and I am satisfied that if the Bill goes through we shall have within the next decade another orgy of borrowing, more Royal Commissions, and huge bad debts for the people of the State to shoulder. For those reasons I will oppose the second reading.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [9.5]: At the outset I have to confess that I have not looked up "Hansard" of 10, 20 or 40 years ago, and neither do I propose wasting the time of the House in reading advertisements that appeared in ancient newspapers.

The **PRESIDENT**: The hon. member ought not to reflect on what another member has done.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am sorry. To my mind, having regard to the little time left of this session in which to deal with so many important matters, it is wasting the time of the House.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There is all next year untouched.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes, and probably we shall have to touch a considerable part of it to get through the legislation we have before us. Mr. Mann made certain reflections regarding vehicles supplied to group settlements in the South-West.

Hon. W. J. Mann: And he can substantiate his statement.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am going to give him an opportunity to do so. In the early days of the development of the State there was great demand for all agricultural implements, including vehicles. Only last night some members supported legislation against backyard factories. I can assure Mr. Mann that is where most of those vehicles came from. The implication he made was that those vehicles came from firms I represent.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I made no such implication. I ask for a withdrawal.

The **PRESIDENT**: Mr. Bolton, I am sure, will accept Mr. Mann's statement.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes, I am glad to accept his withdrawal.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I object to the hon. member misconstruing my remarks in that way.

The **PRESIDENT**: What Mr. Mann said was that he had made no such implication as Mr. Bolton thought. That is not a withdrawal.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: All I said was, that I accepted his withdrawal.

The **PRESIDENT**: "Explanation" would be better.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: If that pleases Mr. Mann, I will accept his explanation.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I want a withdrawal. This is not fair either to the House or to me.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am not very clear as to the position. I have agreed to accept Mr. Mann's explanation. If he desires me to withdraw the suggestion I made, that I withdraw what he said, I will do that.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Is this flouting the authority of the House? I distinctly asked for a withdrawal. The hon. member, endeavouring to be facetious, put into my mouth words that I did not use.

The **PRESIDENT**: What does the hon. member wish Mr. Bolton to withdraw?

Hon. W. J. Mann: The inference that his firm was connected with those carts.

The **PRESIDENT**: I am sure Mr. Bolton will withdraw.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes, I am quite willing to withdraw. I did not understand what the hon. member wished me to withdraw. Certain members may have thought it was an implication made by Mr. Mann, but now Mr. Mann has denied that and I am satisfied. Mr. Mann also suggested that many of the big firms benefited by the operations of the Agricultural Bank. He was perfectly right in that, but I am equally right in saying that those big firms who supplied agricultural implements to settlers are to-day carrying considerable losses as the result of that business. As a Metropolitan member I make no apology to the House for addressing members on the Agricultural Bank Bill, because I have had dealings with the Agricultural Bank over a period of 25 years, and during most of that time I have been a client of the Bank. It seems to me there is one angle that has been overlooked by most of the members who have spoken, overlooked by the general public and also by the Royal Commission which sat in judgment on the Bank a few

months ago. I was pleased to hear Mr. Angelo give the Bank credit for some of its actions during the early days. I do not think sufficient credit has been given to the Bank for the wonderful help it has been to the development of the State. Had no such institution been created when it was, I am certain that not nearly the advancement that has been made would have been made. Moreover, many farmers, including myself, would not have been able to make the start we did. Some of us at least have been successful, and therefore have been of some benefit to the State as a whole. I have many times expressed the opinion that the trustees would have been better advised had they adopted a firmer policy towards many of their clients. Fully 30 per cent. of their clients should have been off the land years ago.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The trustees were not allowed to do it; they wanted to do it.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am coming to that. You probably helped to keep the men on the land. But those clients were allowed to remain there, getting deeper and deeper into the mire, and so they have dragged the industry down to the level in which it is to-day by over-capitalisation, which present prices give them no hope of ever meeting. Unless the prices of primary products recover at an early date, the only possible hope for those men is relief from their debts and relief from all taxation. But when we consider legislation for this purpose, we should be well advised to consider also what repercussions may arise from it. The majority of farmers who are heavily involved will, I have no doubt, ask that their debts be re-conditioned, and will bring forward evidence to prove the low values of their properties. It is suggested that a farm is to be valued at what it will produce, apparently without taking into consideration the capabilities of the farmer. Those of us who know anything about farming are aware that for years we have been praising Western Australia as a producing country, claiming that the best wheat in the world is grown here, the best wool, and the best fruit. We consider it wise to praise our State, and there is no doubt that the advertisement a country obtains is responsible for the flow of much capital into it. Now we are going to turn round and tell the outside world how low in value is our soil? The Bill is the Gov-

ernments reply to the Royal Commission, and one must give them every credit for their effort. It certainly has good features, but in many instances requires to be amended before I can give it my support. I shall vote for the second reading in the hope that the necessary alterations will be made in Committee, and as I shall be speaking in Committee, I intend but briefly to refer to them now. Before touching on matters in the Bill which in my opinion require to be amended, I desire to offer a few comments on the Royal Commission. I was absent from the State when the report was presented, and this is my first opportunity to say anything about the work of that body. I do not propose to criticise the personnel of the Commission as I doubt whether any three men appointed would have suited everyone. I was more than sorry to hear the remarks made by Mr. Cornell the other evening regarding the Chairman of the Commission. If the Government were cognisant of the facts as stated by Mr. Cornell, then the appointment should never have been made. Many hostile comments concerning the methods adopted to secure information were heard, and I join with those who sincerely commend the Managing Trustee and his staff for the dignified manner in which they received those attempts. If the information contained in Mr. Cornell's speech had any bearing on this, then, as I said before, I am more than sorry it was allowed to occur. It is claimed that the position of the Bank to-day is partly due to political interference. With this I am fully in accord and definitely say that had the trustees been in the position of the manager of an Associated Bank, and told many of us to mind our own business, things would certainly have not been nearly as black as they are to-day. On more than one occasion Mr. McLarty has confessed to me that when he decided to close down on a farmer and adopt a certain course of action, either the Minister at the time or some member of Parliament brought influence to bear that prevented it.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: The present Minister for Lands virtually denied that.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I do not care. I believe this House will agree with my remarks that in many instances what I have related actually happened. I have to confess that on more than one occasion I my-

self interviewed the Managing Trustee on behalf of friends of mine who wanted some little help or some favour.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are now putting yourself in the same category as that in which you put me a little while ago.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I do not think that you as a Minister in a previous Government—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: As Mr. Cornell has pointed out, members of Parliament have had occasion to approach the trustees, and I was telling the House that I had done this myself on behalf of a client of the Bank. But I have also told the trustees that I would not be justified in suggesting that they should do what I asked them to do.

Hon. J. Cornell: May I explain that what I said was that I had gone to the trustees and told them that the personal equation of a particular individual was all right. I also said to the trustees, "Give that fellow nothing."

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I see no harm in interviewing the trustees on behalf of clients, and I know that other members have done the same thing. A member would not tell any of his constituents that he refused to see the trustees, but if a member was doing a fair thing by the country he would say to the trustees, "I am speaking on behalf of Jones, but honestly I cannot recommend that any further assistance be given to him." Surely there is no harm in that, and I think that is the correct course to follow.

Hon. L. Craig: And what would you say to Jones when you saw him again?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I would tell him that I had seen the trustees and that I did not hold out much hope for him. In my long business career I know no man who has done more or given greater service to the State than the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank, and I have always stressed the opinion that his position was by far the most thankless in the whole public service of the State. I strongly recommend the Government to retain in an advisory capacity the services of Mr. McLarty whose knowledge of the Bank and the State is so extensive. One of the objects of the Bill was, I understand, to remove the Bank from political influence, but I ask how can

this be when the suggested appointments include as commissioner the Under Treasurer or his deputy, and a part-time officer at that? Surely the position warrants a full-time officer, and the work of the Bank justifies such an appointment. Of the other two appointments I support the suggestion of a previous speaker that while one might be appointed for seven years, the other should be appointed for a term of four or five years. This would guarantee a continuity of policy so necessary in an institution of this kind. The Bill empowers the commissioners to engage or dismiss the Bank's staff. Officers retained cease to have rights under the Public Service Act, and those dispensed with continue under the control of the Public Service Commissioner, who will appoint them to other positions that may be available. The chances are that there will be few, if any, vacant positions, and the officers will then be declared surplus and thrown out of employment. The Act should protect the rights of the present officers of the Bank, and they should have the right to appeal against the decision of the commissioners. Clause 50 is certainly one of the most contentious in the Bill and requires to be modified. In its present form it will practically close any outside avenue of credit taking precedence over banks, stock merchants and other financial institutions who have supplied farmers with stock under stock mortgage at 100 per cent. of its value at the outset. Under that clause the commissioners can take all profit and leave the institution that supplied the stock for the benefit of the farmer, without revenue. If it is thus intended to push aside securities hitherto regarded as sacred, it will be quite unsafe for other institutions to trade with any Agricultural Bank client. It further provides that the commissioners can take from a property in no way connected with their advance the crop yield, even though the other institution may have financed the crop there and taken as security a crop lien for the repayment of the moneys advanced to put in that particular crop. These things make dealing with an Agricultural Bank client practically unsafe if securities are to be so pushed aside. Another result of passing Clause 50 will be to dim the ray of sunshine on almost every farm. To take the proceeds of the few sidelines as intended

ould, in my opinion, be the last straw. Any proceeds from these are mostly due to the hard work of the farmer's wife and family, and many a child would have less to eat and less to wear, only for the efforts of the parents. I hope the House will restrict the statutory lien to apply only to main crops such as wheat, wool, stock, etc., and not include sidelines. I do not propose to say any more. I shall reserve any further remarks until we reach the Committee stage. I believe an honest attempt has been made by the Government to amend the Agricultural Bank Act and I support the second reading. In Committee the amendments to be moved, and which I consider necessary, will receive my support.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [9.57]: I do not propose to hold a post mortem on the activities of the Agricultural Bank. What worries me is the future of the institution. Many suggestions have been made but all I am concerned about is as to what is going to happen in the future. Mussolini's advice was, never look back except as an experience. So that what is past is gone and done with. Let us devote all our thoughts to the future of the Bank and let us get into Committee as quickly as we possibly can. I am perfectly satisfied that the group settlers or many of them, even if they had their farms given to them, free of all interest, would eventually leave those farms. Several of the farms themselves I would not have as a gift. The State has to stand the loss. It is proposed when the Bill reaches the Committee stage to move a number of amendments. I do hope the House will not carry all the amendments. The Bill is an earnest effort to do the right thing by the settlers and the State. After all, the State has rights, a tremendous lot of rights, and I trust those rights will be protected. The Bill does give a ray of hope to the genuine settler. The commissioners will be empowered to write off or to freeze a portion of the indebtedness for a period of years. That is as it should be, but I also think that the settler who the commissioners know perfectly well is in a hopeless position, and will always be in a hopeless position, should be removed as quickly as possible, not only for the good of the State, but for the good of the individual himself. What is the good of leaving on his block a

man who is hopelessly involved and quite incompetent? The sooner he is taken off the land and placed in some other industry, the better it will be for all concerned. With regard to the appointment of the commissioners, I take it the Government will use due discretion and will appoint men of integrity and honesty, men who know something about the job. It is a mistake to tie their hands too much. If by the passing of many amendments we are to tie them hand and foot, it will merely impede their actions. What is necessary is to get the right men to undertake the work. If we were to appoint a man to act as manager of a farm or as a director of a bank, we would not tie his hands but would give him a free hand and trust him to do the right thing. Unless the commissioners are given a more or less free hand, they will not be able to do the work to the best advantage. They will not be Shylocks and demand their pound of flesh, even though the patient should die. They will not be fools. I urge members to be reasonable and allow the Government to appoint commissioners who will have more or less a free hand to do the right thing. I support the second reading of the Bill and trust it will reach the Committee stage as quickly as possible so that we may get on with the real business.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [9.32]: My remarks on the Bill will be brief although the subject is one upon which much time could be spent. I have been struck by the comments of previous speakers, and I was sorry to hear the note sounded by Mr. Mann. He said the settlers asked for bread and the Government gave them a stone. He is the only member who has suggested that.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Do not get my statement inaccurately. I said that was the statement made to me.

Hon. T. MOORE: But the hon. member indicated that it was something that he himself believed.

Hon. W. J. Mann: No.

Hon. T. MOORE: Then I think it was wrong to make such a statement. I believe the Bill represents an honest endeavour on the part of the Government to do something to assist the men on the land. Do not let us get down to such statements as that made by Mr. Mann. Then again remarks were made concerning a particular clause that

was stated to be very contentious. I understand that the only difference between the clause and the provision already in the Act is the addition of the words "butter fat." The inclusion of those words was necessary because we must make provision for the group settlers. It is suggested that the inclusion of those words will mean, as Mr. Thomson suggested, that the money for eggs would be taken from a settler. To my mind that is drawing the long bow. It simply shows how some members are prepared to place a wrong construction on a measure that Mr. Craig and others have described as an honest endeavour to do something in the interests of the settlers. I wish to say a few words regarding the view of a large section of the wheatgrowers. I presume every member received a letter from the organisation known as the Wheatgrowers' Union. The union should know the position of the farmers to-day and the letter shows how they view the proposals of the Government. In their letter the union state that in the main they view the Bill now before the Legislative Council with approval, but that there are some clauses to which they are strongly opposed. The union set out the clauses and their contentions. They object to two clauses and one concerns the appointment of the commissioners. The union consider that the third member should be a full-time appointee and should not be merely a representative of the Under Treasurer. There is certainly something in that contention, and for my part I hope the third member will be a full-time commissioner. I believe it will not be long before the Government will appreciate the fact that there is ample work for three commissioners on full-time. The union also take exception to Clause 50 and urge that too much power is to be vested in the commissioners. They mention side lines and say there is no provision in the Bill for the protection of the farmers and consider that the whole of the proceeds will be taken. As a matter of fact, that could have been done under the parent Act. I agree with Mr. Craig, however, that the appointment of the commissioners represents the crux of the whole question. I take it the Government will select really good men as commissioners of the Agricultural Bank. Let members consider the powers vested in the Commissioner of Railways and the Commissioner of Police.

Let them think what those officers could do if they exercised all their powers and then ask if the possession of those powers has resulted in those officials acting improperly. No one has suffered because of the provision of those powers. It all depends on the type of men who will be appointed as commissioners. They should be vested with wide powers and I believe the Government will see to it that suitable men will be chosen to fill the positions. They will make an honest endeavour to get the best men to do the work. I have no misgivings on that point. The commissioners must be given the power that is necessary to enable them to assist the farmers. One feature that will be of particular aid to the farming community will be the power vested in the commissioners to write down debts. Some members spoke of the postponement of debts, but that is not what I hope will be done. The commissioners have the power to write down or postpone debts and, of course, there is a difference there. The time has arrived for the writing down of debts. In years gone by Western Australia waxed fat while the men on the land were spending money building up an asset. The business community generally had their go-getters and secured the rake-off, during which time the farmers were working hard to build up an asset for the State.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: And they have not been paid yet.

Hon. T. MOORE: It has been stated that £16,000,000 has been spent, but we have a great asset for that expenditure. In those circumstances, little harm has been done, seeing that we have the asset. It is true that because of the depression some of the holdings have not the value that attached to them a few years ago, but who can say what the position will be during the next 10 or 15 years? The pendulum will swing again and primary production will be worth what it was a few years ago. When those conditions return, everyone will want to go on the land again. I contend that that money has not been lost because an asset has been created. I have previously pointed out that to levy an interest charge of seven per cent. upon men who were creating an asset was quite unfair. The asset that was created must remain. It would have paid the State to charge one per cent. interest only on money spent upon clearing operations.

Let members consider the wealth that has been produced because of the expenditure of that money. Where would this State have been but for the work of the agriculturists? We would have been a puny community; with the expenditure of the money, we have developed and progressed. Those members who consider that the money was not wisely spent should look further into the matter. I admit that one mistake was the charging of seven per cent. interest and the State should have provided the money for much less than that. Once a man is placed on the land, everything he requires is taxed. The Federal Government impose a sales tax upon everything he has to buy and in all directions the settler has to pay out, although he will show a loss at the end of the season. While members have been so critical of the Agricultural Bank, let us see how the private trading banks have got on. Mr. Angelo claims to be an authority on banking and to have had much to do with that business. He held forth upon what should be done and he suggested that the affairs of the Agricultural Bank should be wound up. He was the only member who suggested that. I do not know what would happen if that proposal were adopted. He said that £16,000,000 had been spent through the Agricultural Bank. Is Mr. Angelo aware that the private banks have £17,000,000 invested in the industry?

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Yes, but the private banks have not the same ratio of losses.

Hon. T. MOORE: They went further than the Agricultural Bank and accepted second mortgages. The private banks talked many of the farmers into leaving the Agricultural Bank and conducting their business through the private institution. That is the position in which many of the farmers find themselves to-day. That is one phase that is not provided for in the Bill. It means that while Agricultural Bank clients will have their debts written down, the farmers who owe £17,000,000 to the private banks will not be placed in a similar position. That is wrong. I hope another Bill will be introduced to deal with that, or that the latter type of settler will have the benefit of some of the money that is to be provided through the Federal Government.

Hon. A. Thomson: The Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act will provide for the outside farmers.

Hon. T. MOORE: I hope that will be the position. For my part, I contend that Act and the Agricultural Bank Act should be considered side by side. It is unfair for the State to write down the debts of Agricultural Bank clients while the other farmers will not get the same consideration. Those members who criticise the Agricultural Bank should give both sides of the question. The private banks that have £17,000,000 out on loan are stated to be such sound business institutions. I am afraid in view of the position, considering Mr. Angelo's remarks, he does not know too much about it.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: I do not think that £17,000,000 is out, but the figure is more likely to be about £5,000,000.

Hon. T. MOORE: I am quite prepared to accept that statement, bearing in mind how the banks can manipulate figures to prove what they desire. They soon create a debt, though perhaps starting with very little. I have a letter from the Yandanooka Sub-branch of the Returned Soldiers' League which shows how interest affects the settlers. We want a writing down of repurchased estates.

Hon. L. Craig: Hear, hear!

Hon. T. MOORE: I believe we will get it, too.

Hon. L. Craig: We want a reduction of interest.

Hon. T. MOORE: I am not so much concerned about that. What I want is a writing down of debts. The letter states, *inter alia*—

As an example of how interest affects us, I quote from certified accounts from one of our settlers in respect to his account with the Lands Department, amounting to £1,613 0s. 7d., which he paid between the years 1923-1930. He was credited—

	£	s.	d.
Account, land ..	1,295	8	1
Account, bank ..	100	11	6
Interest ..	£1,395	14	7
	<hr/>		
	£	s.	d.
Account, principal ..	184	7	1
Account, principal ..	32	16	11
Principal ..	£217	4	0
	<hr/>		

A charge of £1,395 for interest in seven years makes it an impossible proposition. Something must be done for those settlers. That man was a good client, unlike some of the settlers in Mr. Mann's constituency, who do not pay. The letter continued—

This interest amounted to 86½ per cent. of his payments, and it would appear that the default of one year's payments robs him of all his equity in the holding.

Yet many people scoff about the farmers. They believe that the farmers are on a wonderfully good wicket, and have nothing to do but ride about in their motor cars. That impression, of course, is quite wrong. There are many good farmers in the country who are heavily involved in spite of the fact that they have put up as fine a battle as it was possible to do. This Bill proposes to do something for those settlers. To show further how interest affects settlers, let me refer to a matter that I took up with the Lands Department. I found that interest was being charged on survey fees to the amount of 1s. 3d. per acre, and the reply from the Lands Department stated—

You will no doubt recollect in the case of land within repurchased estates on which interest is charged in a similar manner that the effect is that the price at the end of 20 years is doubled.

All those things have been going on for years and there has been a fine rake-off. In years gone by settlers have done good work. They have created a wonderful asset, and not until the fall of prices occurred was it necessary for them to ask that something be done. Having done so much for the State, the State should now come to their aid and do some writing down for them. Writing down on wheat farms is going to be an extremely difficult matter. I know of a number of good farms in this country that cannot pay any interest at the present price of wheat. There are numerous farms that have been cropped and fallowed for years to such an extent that it is necessary for them to change over to stock. The farmers have continued to work the same country year after year, and they cannot now get results, no matter how well they work it. Some people contend that low returns are due to crops having been scratched in. On some land it does not matter how a farmer handles it, whether he fallows and works it half-a-dozen times or merely

scratches the crop in, the result is the same. The land needs a change.

Hon. L. Craig: So does all land.

Hon. T. MOORE: Of course. That is one of the things the Bill is designed to bring about. Where the money is to be obtained for the work, I do not know. I am hopeful that many of the farmers who have developed the habit of growing wheat will develop some other habit. We have certainly got into a habit of growing wheat, although nobody wants our wheat except at a price lower than it can be produced. Firms are prepared to finance farmers for wheat-growing, and they take a first lien over the crop. To change over to stock will be expensive, but it is a problem that must be faced if the farmers are to be kept on their holdings. It would be unsafe for many of them to continue to grow wheat. To change over to stock, water supplies must be provided in some parts of the State, and that is a difficult matter. Fencing will also be needed. This Bill will give the settlers hope. I know that the settlers have practically lost hope. Many men have put up a fine battle for years, only to find that during the depression their interest bill grew to such proportions that the load has become too great for them to carry. Interest must be reduced to as low a rate as possible on the amount which it is specified the farmer can carry. It may be we shall get some of the Federal money, but that only seems to be as a drop in the ocean.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That is right.

Hon. T. MOORE: To carry on farming in this State, money is necessary and farmers must change over from wheatgrowing to stock. The provisions of the Bill will give people hope for the future. I hope that few amendments will be made. I believe the Bill will prove to be a workable measure. Perhaps it may need slight amendments, but I hope that too much time will not be spent on it. Let us get into Committee so that the people will have hope of something being accomplished. After the Bill has been passed, there will be much work to be done. Many men will be required as valuers because the commissioners will not do that work. Every day we occupy will be a day wasted. Let us get the Bill into Committee as soon as possible, and pass it through the remaining stages. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILL—FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [9.54] in moving the second reading said: This is a 4-clause Bill containing two amendments to the Act. The first amendment is designed to give the Fremantle Tramway Board power to supply current to the Rockingham road district. Under the Act, the board may supply adjoining local authorities, but Rockingham does not adjoin. Therefore the first amendment is necessary to enable Rockingham to be supplied. The second request is to permit the Tramway Board to increase their overdraft at the bank from £5,000 to £20,000. The bank, I understand, is agreeable to grant an overdraft to that extent. The reason for wishing to increase the overdraft is to carry out the work to connect the Rockingham district and also to relay the tram track in the Melville Road Board area. The Tramway Board since commencing operations in 1905 have borrowed approximately £215,000. Of that amount, £136,000 has been repaid, and of the balance of £79,000, a sinking fund is available to cover all except £33,000. On the present policy of the board, the whole of the loan indebtedness of the board will be liquidated in 1938.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Very good!

Hon. G. FRASER: It would have been possible for the board to float another loan, but they preferred to have an extension of their bank overdraft.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What interest will they pay?

Hon. G. FRASER: That will be a matter for arrangement with the bank, but it will be less than would be paid on a loan.

Hon. L. Craig: They propose to have a working overdraft?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: And pay interest on a fluctuating balance.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes.

Hon. V. Hamersley: What is the district between Fremantle and Rockingham?

Hon. G. FRASER: The Fremantle road district, and permission has been obtained

to carry the lines through that area. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Nicholson in the Chair; **Hon. G. Fraser** in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 2.

Hon. G. FRASER: This clause does not give the Tramway Board a monopoly to supply the Rockingham district.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Can you secure an amendment so that the Government Tramways may be taken over as well?

Hon. G. Fraser: That is a horse of another colour.

Hon. L. Craig: I take it the Rockingham Road Board have entered into a contract with the Tramway Board?

Hon. G. FRASER: They are prepared to do so.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3, 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and passed.

RESOLUTION—TRAMWAYS CLOSURE.

Claremont Station to Waratah-avenue.

Message from the Assembly requesting concurrence in the following resolution, now considered—

That this House endorses the recommendation of the Western Australian Transport Board for the closure of the tramway from the Claremont railway station to and including Waratah-avenue, and sanctions the closure of the said line.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [10.5]: I move—

That the resolution be agreed to.

I ask the House to concur in the Message from the Legislative Assembly. It will be remembered that, when the Transport Co-ordination Act was under consideration

by Parliament, the existing order as regards transport matters was allowed to continue; that is to say, transport by train and tram was controlled by the Government, and bus services were conducted by private enterprise. The Transport Act gave to the Transport Board a controlling authority as regards fares, time tables and routes. This was necessary so that the interests of the travelling public would be the predominant factor in any license granted. Where the interests of the travelling public are not conserved, stringent conditions are imposed prior to the granting or renewal of the license, and if those conditions are not complied with the license may be refused. Section 11 of the Act provides that if, in the opinion of the Board, the services of any tramway are inadequate and the requirements of the district are or could be better served by road transport, the Board may recommend the closure or partial suspension of service of the tramway. It also provides that any such recommendation shall be put before Parliament for its sanction or otherwise. It is further provided that upon receipt of any such recommendation the Minister shall direct the Board to call tenders for road transport to serve the district or area served by the tramway. The result of such tenders shall be ascertained before the proposal is submitted to Parliament.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What if Parliament is not sitting?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We have to wait then until Parliament does sit. It is provided that no tender shall be accepted by the Minister until Parliament approves of the closure of the tramway. The Board has been reported as follows:—

“After having made exhaustive inquiries, the Board is of the opinion that the services of the tramway which is operating between the Claremont railway station and Waratah-avenue are more or less inadequate, and that the requirements of the district can be better served by road transport, that is, by omnibuses.”

The Board recommended that the tramway be closed. When making this recommendation the Board reported—

1. That the tramway was opened for traffic on the 26th April, 1924. 2. That the capital cost was £16,700. 3. Interest charges, £760 per annum; sinking fund, if based on 33 years' life, £500; total, £1,260. 4. The total receipts amounted to £11,952. 5. Actual operating expenses, £13,504. 6. Actual loss incurred, without taking into consideration interest and sink-

ing fund, £1,652. 7. The gross earnings for the 12 months ended 31st October, 1934, £880 14s. 5d. 8. The actual operating costs, exclusive of interest and sinking fund for the same period, £1,333.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Are the Government going to take up the rails?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is something to be considered in the future. Upon receipt of this report, the Minister directed the Board to call for tenders for road transport. Two tenders were received and the recommendation of the Board is as set out in the following statement—

“The United Buses, Limited, operate on two routes, namely, Perth-Stirling Highway-Bruce Street, and the River Road past the Old Men's Home to Waratah Avenue, which is the terminus of the tramway; and also from the tramway terminus along Westana Road into Perth, joining up with their main route at the corner of Westana Road and Birdwood Parade. When people who reside on or near the river frontages desire to make connection with the railway service or to do their shopping in Claremont they have to travel by bus for a comparatively short distance, and then transfer to a tram. If the tender of the United Buses be accepted, the people who live on the Claremont side of the Old Men's Home or on the Claremont side of Dalkeith Road will, without transfer to another vehicle, be taken into Claremont or to the railway station. Because it is possible for the United Buses, Limited to run a continuous service without transfer, they have agreed to co-operate with the railways in the matter of season ticket holders who travel by railway and to charge only 4s. 4d. per month for the conveyance of passengers by bus to and from a point near the Old Men's Home, and on the other route to and from a point about two-thirds of the way between Victoria Avenue and Dalkeith Road. Hitherto by co-ordination between the Railway and Tramway Departments, 4s. 4d. has been the extra monthly charge for transport by tram, only as far as Waratah Avenue.

United Buses, Limited, also undertake to convey school children from the intersection of Stirling Highway and Bruce Street right through to Claremont and to charge only a 2d. return fare, as compared with 4d. which is now charged when these children have to be transported by bus to Waratah Avenue and by tram for the rest of the distance.

The Board is very definitely of the opinion that the tender submitted by United Buses, Limited, should be accepted.

Apart from the reasons already given, the Board in arriving at this conclusion has in mind the fact that the United buses can and will render a through service, and will thus afford better transport facilities for the residents than could possibly be provided by the Metropolitan Omnibus Company.

The recommendation, therefore, is that the tender of the United Buses, Limited, be accepted, and that by resolution of Parliament the tramway should cease to operate from the 31st December."

The tender recommended provides for 63 services Monday to Friday inclusive, as against 34 services by tram, and on Saturday for 53 as against 30 by tram, and the same number of services on Sunday. From the financial aspect, the bus company will pay a premium of £220 per annum, which will be paid to the Treasurer to be used towards liquidating the cost of the tramway, whereas the position regarding the tramway for last year was that a loss of £450 was incurred. In view of the fact that, owing to the peculiar position of the district with its existing bus service, it is indicated that better service would be given to the public at no extra cost, indeed with some advantage, and that an annual loss of some £400 would be saved to the Treasury, I move—

That this House endorses the recommendation of the Western Australian Transport Board for the closure of the tramway from the Claremont railway station to and including Waratah-avenue, and sanctions the closure of the said line.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [10.15]: I support the motion. At the same time I ask the Chief Secretary to hold over the discussion for another day, because in the meantime I would like him to ascertain what is the position regarding that portion of the tramway from the Broadway to the main street in Claremont. Is that also a losing proposition? I should like the House to be informed on that aspect. There are in existence two services—the tram service, and a good taxi service which cannot operate. If the tram service is not showing a profit, but on the contrary showing a loss, why retain it? I do not think it is showing a profit. Its construction should never have been authorised in the first place. The unfortunate residents have not a reasonable service. In fact, the service is terrible. While not meeting the needs of the residents at all, the service is dangerous to other traffic. On the other route, which is served by buses, there is a favourable timetable. The figures quoted by the Chief Secretary show that there is a heavy loss on a small mileage of tram, apart from the aspect of pulling up the line. In addition to that, it will provide a better service for the people along

that route. I am afraid, as has been pointed out, that we cannot attain what we desire by amending the motion. We should let it go, and then try to do something else quite separately with regard to the other line if it is not a payable proposition.

Question put and passed.

BILL—GERALDTON SAILORS AND SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL INSTITUTE ENABLING.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee—Bill Lapsed.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of definition "Factory" in Section 4:

Hon. W. J. MANN: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (a) "less than four persons" be struck out, and the words "two persons or more" inserted in lieu.

It is rather anomalous that whereas formerly the Government thought that places where four persons were employed could be fairly exempted from the provisions of the Act, they now regard such a concern as dangerous and a menace to the big manufacturers. It seems strange that the big manufacturers with all their improved machinery and advanced methods are in such a condition that the small backyard concerns can be regarded as a menace to them.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Bill has reached the Committee stage without proper consideration. It was introduced yesterday and passed the second reading stage almost without discussion. This is not the time, seeing that so many people are out of work, to pass legislation to prevent persons who cannot secure jobs in factories from working in their own homes, and thereby keeping themselves off the dole. I propose to move to strike the clause out of the Bill altogether.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not surprised at Mr. Holmes's remark that the Bill was passed without proper consideration, seeing that he was not in the Chamber last night.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You know I did not mean it in that sense.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Had he been present, no doubt the Bill would have received fair consideration. The clause does not mean what has been suggested. It will not prevent people from working in their own homes, but it will enable the Minister, should the operations of one of these small concerns constitute a menace or amount to unfair competition, to bring the concern within the scope of the Act. What hardship is there in that?

Hon. A. Thomson: Do you suggest that these small backyard undertakings engage upon unfair competition?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, in some instances. It does not mean that they will all be declared to be factories. That step will be taken only where the Minister considers unfair competition is indulged in. It simply means they will be subject to the same supervision as are other factories. It has become absolutely necessary to bring some of these places within the meaning of the Act.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: I will support the amendment, for it will give a man opportunity to work without undue restriction. Frequently one can get out of difficulty by temporarily working long hours, as I know by bitter experience. Under the Act an employer himself is regarded as one of the employees, and so a minimum of two persons will only allow a man to have one assistant. It might be better if the mover of the amendment were to make it "three persons or more."

Hon. T. MOORE: We can see in Perth what specialising has done. Down town we find shop after shop stocking goods of Japanese manufacture, which, by specialisation, are turned out at ridiculously low prices. Our manufacturers are all suffering from unfair competition as the result of the importation of those Japanese goods.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: The Japanese are taking a lot of our wheat and wool.

Hon. T. MOORE: There was a time when we waved a flag and said it was good to be British.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: But Australia increased her already high tariffs and so we cannot now get British goods.

Hon. T. MOORE: I support the idea of fair competition, but do not let us do harm to our own established industries. Certainly every man should be given a chance, but, on the other hand, there should be due supervision over all.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The hon. member who has just sat down remarked that we ought to specialise, but ought not to prick the small man. The Bill gives factory inspectors ample power of supervision. The small manufacturer should be protected. The large manufacturer is able to protect himself.

Hon. W. J. Mann: He complains that he cannot protect himself.

Hon. A. THOMSON: A large manufacturer can instal modern machinery, but the small man specialises with his own labour. I was a member of the select committee that considered amendments to the Act in 1920 and we thought we were going sufficiently far by making the provision contained in Section 4. Small manufacturers are subject to the same labour conditions as are large manufacturers and there should be no cause for alarm about unfair competition. One member of this House works longer hours than any unionist ever did, and yet he favours the Bill.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: You do not understand the position.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The alternative would be for men to get work in the large factories, but those factories are not in a position to employ them. A man who shows initiative and tries to improve himself, in preference to going on the dole, should not be restricted as proposed. Founders of large businesses did not succeed by working 44 or 48 hours a week. I hope that this clause and in fact all the clauses will be deleted.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member wishes to delete all the clauses, I direct his attention to Standing Order 265.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr Thomson spoke of employers who worked more than 44 hours a week and said they would be prevented from doing so.

Hon. A. Thomson: In a factory after hours.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I was surprised to hear the hon. member argue that the employees of such a man should be compelled to work long hours.

Hon. A. Thomson: I certainly did not say that.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If the hon. member was not referring to employees, how can he associate his remarks with a factory of four employees?

Hon. A. THOMSON: I definitely stated that the owner of a factory had to comply with arbitration conditions, but under the restrictions proposed he could not be in the factory after hours.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That has nothing to do with the matter. If it will shorten the debate I will say I am prepared to accept Mr. Mann's amendment. I understand his desire is that there shall be no doubt about the position of the man who wants to work just for himself.

Hon. W. J. Mann: With an assistant.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The amendment would exempt those places where only one man is employed. All places will not be declared factories within the meaning of the Act, but only those where the competition is unfair and the Minister thinks they should be declared factories. The evidence would have to be strong before he would say that one man working for himself and employing no one else would be considered a factory.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Although I am a factory manager, I only put in a little extra time at the work, and am not necessarily employed there for any great length of time. I am not a factory in myself.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: Mr. T. Moore gave us the impression that the object of the Bill was to squeeze the small man out, and allow the big man to specialise. If that is its object, I will vote against the clause. There is no chance of our factories competing with the Japanese in any case. You might as well ask a man with an axe to compete with a machine saw. The person who is struggling along by himself with the help of one assistant ought to be allowed to work as long as he likes. I should like to see Mr. Mann alter his amendment to read "not more than two persons."

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Honorary Minister says that, whatever happens, the Act will be administered with discretion by

the Minister. This and kindred measures are part of the policy of preference to unionists. We cannot get away from that. The party in power does not like employers, but wants employees. It wants all employees driven into big factories where they can be controlled, and by means of which effect can be given to the policy of preference to unionists. The right of a man to work as and where he thinks fit, for the maintenance of his family, is a sideline compared with that policy. The effect of this Bill will be to exterminate all small men.

Hon. T. MOORE: The time has arrived when we must establish our own factories. There was a time when the Japanese factories were where our factories are to-day, but they did not remain there. The Japanese are prepared to sell all their surplus stuff to undercut us. If they cannot get 28s. for a bicycle, they will accept 25s. By the manipulation of their own money perhaps the Japanese worker may be better off in his own country than our workers are here. After all, our men only get the right to live.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is recruited labour there.

Hon. R. G. Moore: We cannot compete with them.

Hon. T. MOORE: We cannot cut off the Japanese factories to-day.

Hon. A. Thomson: We are not legislating against the Japanese by this Bill.

Hon. T. MOORE: We are legislating to give our small factories that are already established the right to get upon their feet. That is what the Bill proposes to do. I have expressed my honest opinions. I want to see our factories grow, so that our children may get jobs. Unless we make a start, we shall never have factories. At no time have I said that Australia should compete with Japanese bicycles at 28s., but we can produce all Australian requirements in Australia.

Hon. G. W. Miles: At a price, which the poor farmer will have to pay!

Hon. T. MOORE: We propose to regulate the manufacturer employing fewer than four persons. It is unfair not to regulate him as well. We should aim at producing in Australia all that Australians need, for only in that way can Australia become a nation. Our little factories should

be allowed to get a move on, instead of being forced out of existence by smaller factories.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I move—

That the Chairman do now leave the Chair.

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

Ayes	14
Noes	11

Majority for 3

AYES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. H. S. W. Parker

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. A. M. Clydesdale	Hon. R. G. Moore
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon. C. G. Elliott	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. J. T. Franklin
Hon. E. H. Gray	

(Teller.)

Motion thus passed.

The Chairman accordingly left the Chair, and the Bill lapsed.

House adjourned at 11.8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 12th December, 1934.

	PAGE
Assent to Bills	1966
Questions: Licensing Act, instructions to police ..	1966
"Hansard" Accommodation	1966
Electricity supply, country plants	1967
Bills: Geraldton Sailors and Soldiers' Memorial In-	
stitute Enabling, 2r., etc.	1967
Roads Closure, 2r., etc.	1967
Financial Emergency Tax Assessment Act Amend-	
ment, Council's message	1969
Financial Emergency Tax, Council's requested	
amendment	1969
Financial Emergency Act Amendment, Council's	
message	1969
Reserves, 2r., etc.	1969
King's Park and University Land Exchange,	
Com., 3r.	1969
Metropolitan Market Act Amendment, 2a., etc.	1969
Plant Diseases Act, Amendment, message, 2a., etc.	1978
Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment, 1r., 2r.	1987
Geraldton Sailors and Soldiers' Memorial In-	
stitute Enabling, Com., 3a.	1992

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 2, Gold Mining Profits Tax Assessment.

QUESTION—LICENSING ACT,

Instructions to Police.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Justice: Will the Government see that similar instructions to those issued to Sergt. Clements at Kalgoorlie in regard to the administration of the licensing laws there, are issued to the officer administering the licensing laws on the Murchison and each Murchison district, especially Wiluna?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: No instructions were issued to Sergeant Clements by the Government.

QUESTION—"HANSARD" STAFF.

Accommodation.

Mr. NORTH asked the Acting Minister for Works: 1, Is it a fact that the "Hansard" staff are accommodated in a structure that was erected originally 30 years ago to serve