

## BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

*Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [9.16] in moving the second reading said: In view of the fact that it is not intended this year that a tax shall be levied on the unimproved value of improved agricultural land, it is necessary to amend the Vermin Act to enable the Commissioner of Taxation to levy the vermin rate in the easiest and most economical way possible. Since Section 100A was inserted in the Vermin Act in 1925 the assessments have always been arrived at on the unimproved land values and the values arrived at under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act have been used for that purpose. Although the Land Tax assessments will not be available on which to levy the tax, still the vermin tax must be collected so that the Central Fund may continue its good work of providing bonuses for the destruction of dingoes, foxes and eaglehawks throughout the State.

Those honourable members who are possessed of agricultural land and on whom the vermin rate is levied, will remember that usually their assessments are issued concurrently with the land tax assessments. From now on those assessments will not be issued in respect to improved land within the meaning of Section 9 of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act if the lands are used solely or principally for agricultural, horticultural, pastoral, or grazing purposes, and it is therefore necessary that some other means of levying the vermin tax should be provided. To overcome the difficulty it is proposed that the Commissioner of Taxation shall be empowered to determine the unimproved value and to issue assessments in respect to the Central Fund vermin tax accordingly. That officer is already in possession of valuations which have been arrived at on a scientific and equitable basis and it is proposed, for the purposes of the Vermin Act, that he shall use those valuations, after making due allowance for the drop in values to the existing financial depression.

To permit of this arrangement it is necessary that Subsection 6 of Section 100A should be deleted. The deletion of that subsection is important, otherwise the Commissioner would be required to make assessments on the valuations fixed by the road

boards for the purposes of the Road Districts Act. Honourable members know that the unimproved values which are placed on land by the various local authorities throughout the State are in many instances fixed in a haphazard manner, without any regard being given to the value of land in the adjoining district. It often happens that one local authority has a scientific valuation placed on its land, while the adjoining board has an altogether different basis of valuation. For instance, a man owning a property in two districts and only separated by a road, is frequently assessed by one board at 30s. per acre and by the other Board at 10s. per acre. Therefore it would be unsatisfactory for the Central Fund vermin rate to be collected on the bases of valuation as fixed by the local authorities. If the Bill becomes law it will mean that the bases will be altered, and the Commissioner of Taxation will be entitled to collect the rate on an unimproved value as determined by him. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

*House adjourned at 9.25 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 4th November, 1931.*

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

**ASSENT TO BILLS.**

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

- 1, Firearms and Guns Act Amendment.
- 2, Interstate Destitute Persons' Relief Act Amendment.
- 3, Licensing Act Amendment (No. 4).
- 4, Poor Persons Legal Assistance Act Amendment.

**QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT.***Farm Labour Subsidy.*

Mr. J. I. MANN (for Mr. Piesse) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, In view of the announced discontinuance of the farm subsidy scheme for unemployed as from the 14th instant, will he consider the continuation of the scheme in the case of necessitous farmers during the present harvesting operations? 2, In view of the fact that a large proportion of the 2,000 persons at present employed under this scheme will be thrown out of work on the 14th instant, by what means do the Government propose to find employment for them upon reproductive work?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The need for assistance to necessitous farmers is not a matter for the Minister for Unemployment to determine. The farm subsidy scheme was introduced to enable farmers to absorb additional labour beyond their normal requirements; harvest operations could not therefore be considered as coming within the scope of the scheme. 2, A large proportion of the 2,000 persons under this scheme should be absorbed in ordinary harvesting operations on farms and elsewhere. The balance, if any, will be treated in the same manner as other unemployed on relief work.

**QUESTION—FLOUR AND BREAD PRICES.**

Mr. J. I. MANN asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that since September millers are charging an additional £2 per ton for flour, thus increasing the price of bread? 2, Will he have investigations made with a view to stopping profiteering?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes—from £8 5s. at 1st September, 1931, to £10 10s. at 2nd November, 1931. The price of wheat has also increased. 2, Investigation is unnecessary.

**QUESTION—INSTITUTE FOR BLIND, SUBSIDY.**

Mr. PANTON asked the Treasurer: 1, Has he given further consideration to the question of the reduction of the subsidy to the Institute for the Blind? 2, If so, what is his decision?

The TREASURER replied: 1, Yes. 2, I regret that the reduction must stand, but if it is found that the grant can be restored later and the institute is in need, the matter will be reconsidered.

**BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 5).**

Introduced by Hon. J. C. Willcock, and read a first time.

**BILL—SALVATION ARMY (WESTERN AUSTRALIA) PROPERTY TRUST.**

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

**BILL—DRIED FRUITS ACT CONTINUANCE.***Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of two amendments made by the Council now considered.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Richardson in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Insert after the word "thereof" in line ten the words "as amended by the Dried Fruits Act Continuance Act, 1929."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

This corrects the inadvertent omission of the words which the Council's amendment inserts. The original Act was passed in 1926, and amended in 1929. The Bill proposes its further continuance. In the meas-

ure, as it appeared here, the words inserted by the Council's amendment were omitted.

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

No. 2. Add to the word "thirty" in line eleven the word "two."

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:**  
I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

This amendment is consequential on the Council's first amendment. The operation of the Act was previously continued until 1932.

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

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

## **BILL—LAND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth) [443] in moving the second reading said: In 1922 Parliament passed the Land Agents Act, and in it provided for the first time for some security or guarantee that land agents would be honest in their dealings with their clients. The form which the security or guarantee took was a bond in a prescribed form, supported by sureties, almost invariably insurance companies. The form of the bond is that the guarantor binds himself in the sum of £200. The bond remains unenforced as long as the land agent is of good behaviour and does not make away with any of the money of his clients. Ever since the Act came into operation, there has been a kind of running argument as to what the rights, if any, were of the victim of a defaulting land agent. The money appeared to be quite clearly forfeitable to the Crown; but it seems that the intention of Parliament was that the money should be some sort of guarantee of recoup to the victim. Therefore there has been a certain amount of wrangling as to just how much of the sum of £200 should be paid to the victim, and, if so, when and how and so forth. This came to a head a few months ago when one insurance company which had entered into a bond claimed that the only money

payable to the Crown was the actual amount proved to have been stolen from a person who was a client of a defaulting land agent. The Crown said no, that the whole of the money was forfeited. The insurance company took proceedings, and the court upheld the Crown's contention. Various companies were very much surprised at the finding, and they felt they were not able to continue to do this business until the matter was cleared up. This measure purports to put into very definite language the destination of the sum of money represented by the bond. The Bill provides that where a land agent makes default the money is forfeited to the Crown, who at the end of six months will distribute the money amongst all the victims who prove they have been victimised by the defaulting land agent. Members will agree that it is desirable that a proper procedure should be definitely laid down. This is all the Bill proposes to do in that regard. In addition it appeared to me the sum of £200 was very insufficient, and so it is proposed to increase the amount of the bond from £200 to £500. Most land agents will agree that £500 is little enough. The added cost of the extra amount will be comparatively little, for I understand the premiums for this kind of insurance are quite small, something like 10s. or 15s. per £100. So the burden is a comparatively slight one. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. C. Willecock, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—SWANBOURNE RESERVE.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [448] in moving the second reading said: The principles of this Bill are the same as those in Clause 7 of the Reserves Bill No. 2 which was submitted to the House in 1929. When, after passing this House, that Bill reached another place it was submitted to a select committee, whose report was presented to the Council on the 31st October, 1929. In consequence of that report Clause 7, dealing with this Swanbourne reserve, was struck out of the Bill on the grounds (1) that the whole of the proposals in regard to these Class A re-

serves are complicated and should be dealt with by a separate Bill, (2) that there is apparently no urgency. I think the Bill will comply with the objections raised by another place, and certainly we have given them three years for further consideration. The object of the Bill is to amend the boundaries of Class A reserve 7804 at Swanbourne, now vested in the Claremont Road Board for recreation and park lands, whereby certain portions will be eliminated and other land will be added. The proposals date back to 1922, when a deputation waited on the Premier of the day, asking for a loan from the Crown to enable the Claremont Road Board to purchase land adjoining this reserve with the object of adding it to the reserve. It was understood at the time that when such land was purchased it would be surrendered to the Crown in consideration of other land being granted to the board, so that the board could sell the land so granted and repay the loan of £2,500 to the Crown. The board had borrowed that money from the Crown to purchase certain land, and after the land was bought it was to be exchanged with the Crown for other land. The land which is being eliminated from the reserve is unsuitable for recreation purposes such as football, cricket, etc., and is more suitable for residential purposes, while the land which has been purchased by the board is low-lying and has been the subject of advice from the Crown to restrict building operations on this account. It lends itself admirably to recreation purposes, and since it has been secured by the board it has been laid out in football grounds, cricket pitches and tennis courts, while fencing and dressing sheds have been erected, water supply provided and certain drainage carried out. Members who have been down there will know there are the coast hills or dunes, and that immediately behind those dunes is the land which has been laid out for recreation purposes. This land we have exchanged with them for some higher land. Between Reserve 7804 and the coast there is a one-chain road, and then a strip of land from one to three chains wide, which is reserved for recreation, and vested in the road board. So the question which previously concerned the members of the select committee, that the frontage to the coast was being given away, is not correct. Actually the foreshore

is being reserved to the Crown entirely, and so the objection raised by another place is now removed. I propose to lay on the Table a plan of the whole area. The entire proposition has been exclusively investigated by the department. It has been the subject of some misunderstanding between the local authorities concerned, which is due almost entirely to the fact that alongside this land is a sanitary reserve which is used by some of the local authorities, and they thought this exchange would mean some interference with that right. However, after investigation, I think all those local authorities are now satisfied that it will not interfere at all. The Bill deals with Class A Reserve 7804, containing 38 acres 3 roods 9 perches. The portion cut out for the purpose of effecting an exchange with the Education Endowment Trustees is six acres, while the portion proposed to be granted to the Claremont Road Board embraces an area of about 14 acres. Equivalent areas are being secured from the trustees and from the board. At the time of the rejection of the Bill by the Council there seemed to be an impression in the minds of some members that the Crown was granting land to the road board merely to enable the board to sell and reimburse itself for money which it had spent and which it was under an obligation to repay to the Crown. However, that was not the case at all. First of all they borrowed the money from us to buy certain land, and then exchanged that land with us for other lands, and it is now proposed to hand over the land to them. So they have to repay to us that £2,500. With the money which the board obtained from the Crown it has purchased about 14 acres of land, which is to be surrendered to the Crown and added to existing reserves, and in exchange for which an equivalent area is to be granted in fee simple to the board so that it may subdivide and sell the land as opportunity offers, and recoup the Government for the money which has been loaned to it, and on which it is at present paying interest. The whole proposal is therefore a quid pro quo so far as the board is concerned. In regard to the Education Endowment Trustees it is considered advisable to include a portion of the present endowment reserve and to give the trustees in lieu thereof an equivalent area out of the existing Class A Reserve, 7804. To this proposal the Education Endowment Trustees

have agreed. It will also be noticed that certain proposed roads are provided. In this respect the boundaries of the land to be given to the Education Endowment Trustees and the road board are slightly different from those dealt with in Clause 7 of the 1929 Reserves Bill, but the result, so far as area is concerned, will be the same. The reserve when finally adjusted will be of practically the same area, and will, as already pointed out, contain land which will lend itself better to the purposes for which it was declared. Since the clause was struck out of the 1929 Reserves Bill, other local governing bodies in the vicinity, namely, the Claremont Municipal Council, the Peppermint Grove Road Board, and the Cottesloe Municipal Council have been very much concerned that the sanitary reserves to the north of Class A Reserve 7804, which are at present in use, were being interfered with by the proposed Bill. However, the matter has been fully explained to those local authorities, and they are now satisfied that there is nothing in the Bill to which exception can be taken, in that the reserves referred to are not mentioned. I will be quite candid and say we are anxious that this Bill should go through, because it will enable the local authorities who have acquired this land to subdivide it and repay to the Crown the money they have borrowed. Up to date they have paid interest on the money, but it was on the understanding that the exchange would be effected and they would be able to subdivide the land and from the proceeds of that subdivision repay to the Crown the money they have borrowed. The plan, which I propose to lay on the Table, will more particularly explain the exact position. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. MacCallum, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE (No. 2).**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. DONEY** (Williams-Narrogin) [4.56]: This is generally regarded as a more or less formal Bill, but I want to take advantage of its submission this year to say a few

words in regard to a body of men, merchants of this city to wit, whose connection with the Industries Assistance Board since the original Act was passed has been a very close and profitable thing. The stand taken by the merchants during the past year and a half has a very definite bearing on the question whether the Industries Assistance Act should be continued in its present form, or in some variation of that form. I know the merchants have not been enjoying an unduly rosy time lately, but I feel constrained to say nevertheless, that their attitude towards their clients in the industry has been extremely unsatisfactory. There are, of course, good merchants and bad merchants; those merchants whose outlook is broad enough to embrace consideration of the best interests of the State, and on the other hand those selfish merchants whose minds are unable to travel very far beyond the question of the immediate profit on their undertakings. It is these latter people who to-day are constantly complaining of the iniquity of the farmer, in threatening to hold up his wheat. I ask whether the iniquity of the merchant in holding up cornsacks and seeding, is not equally culpable, particularly having regard to the fact that he has not the same excuse for his attitude as the farmers have. I have been surprised that the inconsistency of the merchants in this country has not been noticed by the Press, but I make bold to predict that in the future their attitude in regard to the matters to which I am referring will not pass unnoticed. They hold up seeding and they hold up harvesting by withholding—to the extent that they control these things—the means to sow and the means to harvest it. They take that action in regard to seeding and harvesting, and then marvel at the farmer, stung to desperation by the rotten one-sidedness of things, when he talks about holding up his wheat. We need to remember that the wheat and wool men are not making salt these days. When we give consideration to any of their actions, that fact should always be recalled. It has come to this, as members will appreciate, that the more extensive the farmers' operations, the bigger are their liabilities likely to be. I see no commonsense in any threat or attempt to withhold the delivery of wheat.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** That cannot be discussed under this Bill.

Mr. DONEY: My intention, if I may explain, is to show that the attitude of merchants towards the farmers might lead to the Government so amending this measure as possibly to take over those branches of trade in which the merchants are now engaged. May I proceed along those lines?

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well.

Mr. DONEY: Judging by what we read in the Press, and by what we hear and know, the merchants have apparently decided to do no business with the farmers other than absolutely guaranteed safe business. I have always understood that risk was one of the normal elements of business, but it seems to me merchants are of opinion that they should not be called upon to take the normal risks. I consider it is fit and proper that those who were prepared to take the profits should be prepared also to carry the risk. In that regard I may point out that a month or two ago cornsacks could have been bought by merchants at about 6s. 8d. a dozen. It happened that that would have necessitated merchants taking a certain amount of risk. They declined to take the risk. It was a proper risk for them to take—the ordinary normal risk—and in consequence of their refusing to take it, the farmers at present are being mulct to the extent of about 9s. 9d. a dozen for bags. We know that the farmer, in respect of his seeding and harvesting in the national interest, as well as in his own interest, has given very freely of every phase of his substance. I do not think anyone is likely to deny that statement. The people, too—in the shape of the Treasury and the transport services—have put the whole of their available strength to the task of handling and financing the industry. Of the storekeepers, it can be said they have impoverished themselves—I am referring to the country storekeepers—in order to keep the industry afloat. Merchants, for their part, have supplied bags, machinery parts, etc. I am not denying that, although I have a right to assert that they supplied them very grudgingly indeed. Willingly or unwillingly, every section of the community seems to have performed its allotted task. Consequently, I ask, "What is wrong with an equitable pro rata distribution of the proceeds?" I say there is nothing wrong with it. I know that the Government desire it; I know that the farmers are quite willing to adopt that

method, and I know that storekeepers are willing to share in any method that is as fair as this method is. But it does not suit the merchants. They must be fully guaranteed the payment of their accounts; otherwise they do not wish to supply and will not supply. As I heard it phrased the other day, the merchants must have the cream or they insist on capsizing the basin. Machinery parts, super, cornsacks, and tractor fuel fall into precisely the same category. Because it happens that those goods are indispensable, purveyors of them insist on dictating terms to the Government, and those terms are that the Government must forego their right under their statutory liens, in order to ensure payment of the claims of the merchants. If this means anything at all, it means that unless the Government are prepared to back some 80 per cent. of the bills of the farmers of this State, practically all the crops of those farmers run the risk of remaining in the paddocks. Most members will agree that the merchants, by adopting that attitude, are taking a very mean advantage of their strength. Absolutely nothing is being said about recouping the outlay of country storekeepers by a first charge upon the crop. You, Mr. Speaker, will agree, I am sure, that country storekeepers are amongst the most loyal friends that the farmers have during these very bad times. You know that the country storekeepers, by the generous measure of help afforded by them to the man on the land, have been brought right down to poverty point, and it looks as if they will need to continue, at least for another year along the same losing lines. If I thought the merchants were down on their uppers, so to speak, I certainly would not be a party to condemning them, but I can hardly believe that they are in anything like such a sorry plight. By reason of the existence of the I.A.B., they have had some 10 or 12 years of guaranteed profitable trade.

Member: So has the farmer.

Mr. DONEY: But it is not very hard to point out several material differences between the two positions. Further, there have been 15 years of good prices, and it is a remarkable thing if, after that long period and considering the especially healthy conditions to which I have been referring, the merchants have not been able to accumulate ample reserves, sufficient at any rate to tide them over the period through which we are now passing. I do not think the merchants

realise the risks they are running by the arbitrary attitude they are adopting at this juncture. They should be brought to see that if they persist in their present outlook, it may be necessary for the Industries Assistance Board, in self-defence and in order to maintain the continuity of the industry upon which the State vitally depends, so to extend its functions as to include trading in machinery, cornsacks, super, etc., not because it is desirable to do so, but because the attitude of the merchants will have made it absolutely inevitable. I do not think it would be too far-fetched to suggest that that might be the first step in Sovietisation of the industry, a consummation to be most earnestly avoided by all sound-thinking men, anyhow. I see no reason whatever why, from out of the public purse, merchants should receive more favoured terms than any other section of the community. To say they have been passing through bad times, even if that were true, is an altogether insufficient excuse. No matter to which section of the community we belong, every one of us has equally been experiencing bad times. Whatever the result of the present upheaval, it is certainly not hard to foresee that when we settle down once more to normality, the major part of the profit from the primary industries will go to those who have actually produced and have actually handled the produce, and certainly a very much smaller share will pour into the pockets of those who have stood aside and merely watched and calculated. Work upon the land now is not yielding its just and natural reward to those so engaged. Altogether too much of the profit from wheat and wool has been sidetracked during recent years into bricks and mortar, not so much in the country but certainly in Perth—there can be no disputing that fact—to house a body of men who seem to have formed the very unhealthy habit of demanding far bigger profits than their service to the farmer entitles them to. I do not wish to infer that the merchant is a redundant factor in trade with the farmer. Far from it. As a matter of fact the interests of both sections are so interwoven as to be largely identical. The partnership between the two is quite a proper one. Each is a necessary complement of the other. But I always think it is highly necessary, nevertheless, to maintain a correct balance between the two, that is, if we are to depend

upon the continued prosperity of either. I consider it a fair deduction to draw that unless merchants are prepared to stand in with other sections in the State, that is to say with Government departments, with the farmers, and with the general public, in pooling not only the winnings of the State but the losses as well, it may be necessary, in the public interest, so to widen the scope of the I.A.B. as to embrace the buying and selling of requirements, and the products of the man on the land. If that unfortunate contingency should arise, I do not think the merchants would have too much room for complaint. The point to reflect on is that we are experiencing an undoubted national emergency. The merchant, instead of co-operating with other sections to the national advantage, has aped the meaner points of the Yankee character, to the extent that he is just playing for safety for himself without any regard for what has happened or is happening to those who have been doing battle with him. I favour the Bill. I admit that I have not said very much about it, but I must plead that I have been sidetracked on to quite different though relevant issues. I suggest that the Bill is necessary to conserve the legal machinery to control accounts that still remain with the board. It seems necessary, therefore, that the Industries Assistance Board should live for yet another year.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

Bill passed through committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

## **BILL—TENANTS PROTECTION.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 13th October.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth) [5.17]: I regret I do not feel disposed to recommend the House to pass this measure. I recognise that the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) is actuated by the best motives in bringing it forward, but I think he has looked at it too much from one side.

Mr. Marshall: You looked at it from one side in your Bill.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The very essence of what the hon. member refers to as my Bill was to help one set of people.

Mr. Marshall: They were very few in number.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That measure has served a very useful purpose and assisted a great many people. There must be a limit to the extent to which the distress of one portion of the community shall be piled upon the shoulders of another portion. The legislation which has already been placed upon the statute-book has been responsible for much good being done.

Mr. Raphael: There are loopholes in it; that is the trouble.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is a definite transference of the hardships of some people on to the shoulders of others. The member for Fremantle would readily agree that even under the measure which is already law, a great many persons have been unjustly loaded with the responsibilities and troubles of others, which responsibilities and troubles should rather have been borne by the whole community. I do not feel prepared to carry that injustice any further. If this Bill became law it would practically mean that everyone who was out of work, or was not earning the basic wage, would live rent free so long as the measure operated. The Minister for Railways pointed out by interjection that it might pay a man to accept 1s. a week less than the basic wage if he could do so by virtue of his not being governed by any award, and in that way get his house rent free. That would be an impossible situation to create. I do not think the member for Fremantle could have looked at the matter from that angle. The member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael) says there are too many loopholes in the Act. The better way surely to attack the problem would be to endeavour to stop those loopholes instead of bringing down an entirely new Bill. The member for Fremantle might address himself to the task of improving existing legislation rather than attempting to break entirely fresh ground. I am sorry to find myself opposed to legislation which is intended by the mover to help distressed people. We are not, however, going to get over our troubles by shifting the burdens of one por-

tion of the community on to another, who are in just as distressed circumstances as are the persons we are trying to relieve. I propose to vote against the second reading.

**MR. PARKER** (North-East Fremantle) [5.22]: This Bill appears to me to defeat its own objects. If it went through there is no doubt that a landlord would be very reluctant to allow any man into his houses as a tenant until he was perfectly well assured that the man was getting the basic wage, and not only getting it, but was able to continue to get it. The Bill would mean that a great number of people would not be able to go into a house until they could prove that the business they were engaged in was a profitable one. Many people today are not employed under any Arbitration Court awards, and in the business they are conducting are not earning the basic wage. Many are living on investments the proceeds from which are less than equivalent to the basic wage. The Bill would mean that no person would attempt to invest money in building operations for some considerable time, and the result of this would be a greater shortage of buildings and dwellings than there was a little while ago. If a person had a little money available he would not buy the equity in any dwelling if such legislation as this were on the statute-book. I agree with the Attorney General that it is very unfortunate we should have to oppose a Bill that is intended to relieve distress.

Mr. Raphael: You do that on every occasion.

Mr. PARKER: The Bill will not meet the object aimed at. I do not see why one class should have to bear the brunt of the present conditions. An individual may have put a few hundred pounds or £50 or £60 into the equity of a dwelling. Another person may have put his money into some business, or a safe investment, or into bonds, and will get his interest upon it, even at the reduced rate. I am not speaking of the individual who invests in a speculative business. There are men, women and girls who have put their all into house properties in order to provide an income for themselves. The Bill will hit those people very hard. It will not hit the big landlord who owns large office buildings. It will hit the small owner who has one or two cottages, and who may



have inherited them. Those owners will be very hard hit by the Bill. The evil it is intended to remedy will, by the Bill, be rendered worse than it otherwise would be. I shall oppose the Bill.

**HON. W. D. JOHNSON** (Guildford-Midland) [5.27]: I appreciate the point that the Bill is a drastic one when viewed in the light of ordinary circumstances. The conditions of residence for the unemployed, however, are of a kind that have to be met by some protective form of legislation. Members living in industrial and thickly populated parts of the metropolitan area are daily brought into contact with people who are being evicted from their homes, and forced to live under conditions which are not generally endorsed within the British community. In my own district only this morning a lady came to me and unfolded a very pitiable tale. She has all the protection she can get from the existing law but it is insufficient. Mr. Moseley has been most sympathetic and has extended quite a lot of consideration to people of this kind. He has done remarkably well, but his powers are limited. He cannot go on indefinitely. We want something more than the existing legislation. Deputation after deputation has waited upon the Government in respect to evictions, and the grave necessity for thousands of people being able to maintain a home for themselves and their families. The Government are sympathetic and the Minister has expressed sympathy over and over again, but nothing has been done. The evictions continue. As members of Parliament we are called upon to do something to relieve the situation. If houses are available, they should be occupied. The Act was brought down to meet special circumstances which existed at the time. These circumstances still exist, and are in a more aggravated form. I am glad to know that the outlook to-day is decidedly brighter than it was a few months ago. I do not wish to suggest that I believe the need for legislation of this kind is not great to-day, but I merely wish to imply that the outlook for the workers and the State generally is brighter now than it has been. Nevertheless, we have to appreciate the fact that the workers to-day are called upon to shoulder anxieties regarding the maintenance of their homes. The fact that they

have to approach the Government to secure relief is evidence of their distress. The further fact that the Government recognise their responsibility and grant relief in order that the workers may secure the necessities of life, is also an admission that the State has a responsibility towards its people. I admit it may be rather drastic to say that evictions should not take place under certain circumstances. I do not think the Bill altogether provides for what the Attorney General suggested when he said that the man in receipt of the basic wage would be entitled to relief.

The Attorney General: No, the man in receipt of anything less.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The outstanding fact will be that the man is unemployed.

The Attorney General: That is so.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: A man in receipt of the basic wage would not be unemployed.

The Attorney General: No, but the Bill goes further than that.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is a matter that can be considered in Committee. After all, it merely amounts to a question of modification. The principle underlying the Bill is the granting of relief along the lines outlined by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) to people who are unemployed and who are liable to eviction. Whether the Bill shall go further than that, is a matter for consideration at the Committee stage. I commend the member for Fremantle for his persistency in trying to compel Parliament to deal with this vexed question. We have talked too long without any relief being forthcoming. I would quote the disabilities under which the farmers are labouring to-day as a further illustration of the fact that we recognise our duty to people who are in distress. At the same time, when we consider the farmers' position, we must realise that we go on talking about the position and allow distress to be carried by a section of the community only. We have no right to say to the man who owns property that he shall have the right to empty his property, that the property shall not be used for the purpose for which it was erected, that while it was provided for housing human beings, those human beings, now unable to pay rent, are not to be allowed to occupy such premises. Are we to allow the owners of properties to lock up their buildings and allow

our fellow citizens to remain unhoused merely because the latter are unable to pay rent owing to unemployment troubles of to-day? The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Parker) describes the Bill as drastic and likely to cause injustices. There are injustices evident in our midst to-day. People who can afford to let their houses be occupied, although not in receipt of rent for them, are evicting tenants who, over a period of years past, in many instances, have paid their rent regularly to their landlord.

Mr. Parker: Those people can get protection under another Act.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, that is the sad side of it. On some occasions, the persistency of the landlord has resulted in Mr. Moseley being influenced to the extent that he has declared that the position cannot go on indefinitely and that there must be a limit.

The Attorney General: There is no statutory limit, so long as the magistrate thinks it just that another person may be asked to shoulder the burden.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is so, but I think Mr. Moseley has, in effect, established a limit and there certainly is no question that a limit does exist in the administration of the Act referred to. In my electorate there is a terrace of houses owned by a man whose circumstances are such that he is by no means in distress. He could afford to carry on without evicting the tenants from his terrace of houses. He has drawn considerable sums of money from them, in rent in the past, but now he is denying those people the right to occupy his premises. He has bought other properties and has actually canvassed people to get them to occupy his premises. I admit that the occupation carried with it the responsibility to pay a rental, but to-day, owing to the economic position of many of our citizens, they cannot pay. In this instance, the landlord has cancelled the undertaking and put the tenants out into the street. I submit there is no justice in the laws of the State that will permit a man who has a house built for the purpose of accommodating people, to empty out his tenants because the prevailing distress prevents them from fulfilling all their obligations.

Mr. Parker: Does that not apply also to clothes and so on?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No. There are thousands of people who are short-supplied with clothes. They are using bags and sacks with which to cover themselves. When it comes to buildings, it must be recognised that the occupancy is shared with somebody else. There is a man who is in occupation, but there is also the owner who has to be considered. What I want the member for North-East Fremantle to realise is that society calls upon all of us to help our fellow man. We must all accept the responsibility of seeing that undue distress is not suffered by others. So far as it is humanly possible, we must protect and assist others.

Mr. Parker: At our own expense, yes; not at someone else's expense.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is wrong to say that people shall not have any protection against the weather. We have thousands of houses that are vacant and at the same time there are thousands of people without a roof over their heads. That is not humane. Why should Parliament sit idly by and say that there shall be thousands of empty houses and at the same time thousands of homeless people? I am prepared to admit that under normal conditions we would not take so much notice of the prevailing conditions. We would say that the position would rectify itself. This is not the way by which the position will rectify itself. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) has tackled the problem by the introduction of the Bill. He is testing Parliament. We shall have the right to alter its provisions during the Committee stage, but if we defeat it on the motion for the second reading, we shall have to accept the responsibility of our attitude which will amount to asserting that while thousands of people are in distress and without homes, huddled in single rooms under disgraceful sanitary and hygienic conditions, thousands of houses may remain empty—and we cannot, and will not, do anything. We must recognise exactly the conditions under which we are living to-day. Parliament must call upon the landlords to extend some further consideration for the time being so that people will have an opportunity to live under decent conditions until employment is once more obtained for them. I support the Bill, and am prepared to assist in putting it into shape in Committee.

**MR. WELLS** (Canning) [5.42]: While I applaud the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) for the motive that has prompted him to introduce the measure for the relief of persons in distressed circumstances, I cannot follow him regarding his legislation. I am afraid that the Bill will have a boomerang effect upon those whom it is desired to assist. In the end it will be adverse to their interests. I know a number of thrifty people who have worked for 15 or 20 years and have been able to save money. They built a house and paid for it. They mortgaged the premises to erect another building. Some of them have erected two additional houses. They have had tenants in possession for some time, but now the owners themselves are out of work, with tenants in a similar position in their houses. Those tenants can go to the Government and secure sustenance and other assistance, but the owners of the premises themselves are being pushed by creditors and are unable to meet their liabilities. They are in a far worse position than the tenants. Because they own property, they are unable to get any assistance from the Government.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Suppose such an owner gets rid of his tenants, in what better position is he through having empty houses on his hands?

**MR. WELLS**: The owner may then be able to get tenants who will be able to pay their rent. On the other hand, if the Bill is passed as it stands, there will be no chance whatever of the owner securing the eviction of the tenant who is unable to pay rent.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We can meet that position when we deal with the Bill in Committee.

**MR. WELLS**: I am afraid that if the Bill is agreed to as it stands, its boomerang effect will place a lot of people in a much worse position than they occupy at present. I appreciate the desire of the member for Fremantle and I am willing to do all I possibly can to assist those who are in misfortune, but any such assistance must be along fair and equitable lines. The Bill cannot be regarded as equitable at all. We should not seek to assist some people along certain lines to the absolute injury of others.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Will you agree that empty houses should be unoccupied, while people are out in the streets now, without covering over their heads?

**MR. WELLS**: That is another phase of the question.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is the difficulty.

**MR. WELLS**: The man who has been thrifty and has saved his money and built house property, has to meet his responsibilities.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is so, but his empty house does not assist him.

**MR. WELLS**: He has to pay rates and taxes. Then again, that man has been thrifty in the past whereas his tenant, who is now unable to pay him any rent, may not have been thrifty and may have wasted his money while in employment. I do not think it is fair to penalise thrifty people to the extent indicated in the Bill. I will do all I can to assist those tenants who are not able to pay rent to keep a roof over their heads, but I want it done on better lines than are proposed by the Bill. I know that there are many people who are hard up against it. Only a few weeks ago a couple came to me; they had put their life's savings into small cottages—

**MR. SLEEMAN**: The Bill will provide for such as those.

**MR. WELLS**: I do not think it will. There are many people, too, occupying houses and are unable to pay rent. Many of those have made efforts to do something for themselves, and I admit also that there are many drawing sustenance who, so long as they can remain in the houses without paying rent, will make little or no effort to earn anything. A case came under my notice the other day of a man who had been out of work for a considerable time. He had paid a deposit on a block of land in the outer metropolitan area, and decided to get together some timber, hessian and iron with which to build a shack for himself and his wife and three children. His intention is to grow seedlings to sell to nurserymen.

**MR. PANTON**: He will make a fortune at that!

**MR. WELLS**: I do not suppose he will, but he is attempting to do something for himself. The Bill, in my opinion, will encourage people to remain in houses, and if they can escape paying rent they will

do so. I am convinced that if the Bill be passed the number that will suffer will be greater than the number the member for Fremantle desires to assist.

**MR. RAPHAEL** (Victoria Park) [5.48]: I appeal to the Attorney General to allow the Bill to reach the Committee stage. While I congratulate the member for Fremantle on bringing forward the Bill I am not altogether in accord with its provisions. The member for Fremantle is taking from the Government the responsibility that should be theirs, and placing it on the people. It should be the Government's duty to take the responsibility of providing accommodation for the unemployed. The measure that was put through by the Attorney General was full of loopholes, but whether it was intentional that they should be there, or whether the flaws were accidental, I am not prepared to say.

The Attorney General: You ought to know.

**Mr. RAPHAEL:** The fact remains that many of those who are entitled to protection under the Act as it exists are not able to get it. There is one gentleman in my electorate—

**Mr. Parker:** Only one?

**Mr. RAPHAEL:** As a matter of fact he is a member of this Chamber, and he owns between 30 and 40 houses. He is a man of considerable wealth. As a member of the city council I was able to find out this man's position. What I wish to tell the House is that a man with a tuberculous wife and five children occupied one of the houses owned by that gentleman. The tenant went before the court and the commissioner granted him one term of relief for six weeks. At the end of that time he applied for further protection, but he was definitely turned down and given 14 days in which to get out. If the Act could be made to apply, as the Attorney General intended when he introduced it, and as it was thought by all that it would, the unfortunate man would have been entitled to relief for a further lengthy period. Numerous other such instances have been brought under my notice, and one of them relates to one of the wealthiest firms in the State. There is the case of an old man, 64 years of age, with a wife and three children who in the middle of winter was turned out into the street. The few goods and chattels he had were taken away and sold. A bailiff.

a solicitor and four or five policemen came along and threw the whole family out into the street, in spite of the fact that the old man said that he had no shelter for his wife and family. Perhaps members opposite do not represent the poverty-stricken section of the community.

Members: We do.

**Mr. RAPHAEL:** No; members opposite misrepresent them. We on this side of the House represent the working community, and the workers look to us to secure for them some measure of protection, and we are now attempting to convince the Government of the position as it really is. The Bill submitted by the member for Fremantle could be altered and improved, and the Government should assist it to reach the Committee stage and help us to improve it. But members opposite are not prepared to give us a hearing in any shape or form, and they are not prepared to consider in any way the advisability of helping us to make the measure a workable one. In Victoria Park at the present time, no matter in which street one walks, he will find dozens of empty houses, and having that in mind, for the Government to state that the housing of the unemployed is not their affair is to say the least of it most callous. I am not quite in favour of the Bill, because it takes the responsibility from the Government and places it on private people. The member for Fremantle told us that the Bill was 12 months late, but it is my opinion that if the matter is not dealt with immediately the outlook will be very gloomy for the women and children whose husbands have been sent to the country on a small wage, a wage that will not enable them to make provision for the payment of rent by the family remaining behind. The time was never so pressing for the consideration of the Bill, and if something is not done we shall have the spectacle of dozens of people being emptied out into the streets. The fact that this has not been done to any great extent up to the present time is due to the presence of the husbands who have been able to defend their homes. If the Government had taken into consideration the reduced earning power of the workers, they would have agreed to make provision for the payment of an equitable rent by those working part time, and that, to some extent, would have solved the problem. The Attorney General has admitted that there are loopholes in the Act.

The Attorney General: I have done nothing of the sort.

Mr. Panton: Then you should have done so.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I claim that the loopholes are there, and the Attorney General said that if that was the case he would be prepared to close those loopholes.

The Attorney General: I did not say anything of the kind.

Mr. RAPHAEL: If the Attorney General did not say it here, he said it outside, which amounts to the same thing. In any case he should consider the advisableness of closing those loopholes. I hope that instead of amending the Act which has not worked at all satisfactorily for the people of the State, the Attorney General will assist us to amend the Bill now before the House, so as to make it conform to the ideas of what should prevail, and so that protection may be afforded at least to those whose husbands are away working in the country. I hope the Attorney General will help us to put the Bill through.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	25
Noes	..	..	..	13
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	12
				—

#### AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Parker
Mr. Brown	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Davy	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Doney	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Thorn
Mr. H. W. Mann	Mr. Wells
Mr. J. I. Mann	Mr. North
Mr. McLarty	

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Troy
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Munsie	

(Teller.)

#### PAIR.

AYR.	No.
Mr. Teesdale	Mr. Kennecally

Motion thus passed.

## BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

### Second Reading.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [6.3] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill dealing with a difficulty existing to-day, and I do not think hon. members will take exception to the measure when the special circumstances have been explained. Section 43 of the principal Act deals directly with temporary licenses. This Bill also deals with them, and proposes to amend Section 43. The temporary license which I ask the House to assist me in putting on a better basis is that existing to-day in connection with the saleyards at Midland Junction. That temporary license has been in existence for 15 or 16 years. It is practically a continuous license, but week by week a temporary certificate has to be obtained. My only desire is to remove a special disability in connection with that particular temporary license, a difficulty which I think the House will agree is unfair. Undoubtedly the provisions outlined in the Act for the obtaining of a temporary license are all right; but in the ordinary acceptance of the term this is not a temporary license. It has continued, as I say, for 15 or 16 years. The difficulty connected with it is that the temporary licensee must have a permanent license. Under the Act as it stands, one can get a temporary license for, say, a race meeting or a sports gathering; but the temporary license can be obtained only by the holder of a publican's general license.

Members: No, not for an agricultural society.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not wish to argue the point; but I know that the Bruce Rock Agricultural Society, in order to conduct a booth on the recreation ground, must get the assistance of a licensed man.

The Minister for Lands: Not now. That used to be the case.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Evidently the Act has been amended in that respect, but the amendment does not apply to the saleyards at Midland Junction. I may be wrong as regards agricultural societies and race clubs, but I am perfectly right as regards the Midland Junction saleyards. I know what I am speaking about in regard

to Bruce Rock, because I was a member of the committee of the agricultural society there for some time. The committee had to get a license to agree to let them use his license, so that they might run the booth. A similar state of things has obtained in connection with the Midland Junction saleyards for 15 or 16 years. The licensee at the saleyards has to be approved by the Minister for Agriculture. He has to be a person whom the Minister for Agriculture, being in charge of the saleyards, considers a fit and proper person to hold a license. The Minister accepts a fee from the licensee, but unfortunately that licensee has to avail himself of the holder of a publican's general license in order to get the temporary license. That is the point I want put right. I consider that a man who has been continuously approved by Ministers should be able to obtain a temporary license. I do not suggest that it should be made anything but a temporary license. I quite agree that it should continue as a temporary license, and that the holder should be subject to all the conditions applying to holders of temporary licenses, other than that of having to get the temporary license through a middleman. I contend that he should be able to get it directly. For part of the year there are sales at Midland Junction on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. During the busiest part of the year, the total number of hours during which the temporary license operates in a week is 13½. The holder can use the license only during the period that a sale is in progress. The licensing authorities have gone to the extent of allowing him to get the license for the two days once a week. During the rest of the year, when there is a sale only on Wednesdays, he has to go to the court each week to obtain a temporary license for the Wednesday only. If there was a special sale on Friday, he would, under the agreement with the Minister, have to provide accommodation and refreshments for those attending that sale.

The Minister for Agriculture: He has to go to all that trouble?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes. The responsibility of the temporary licensee is not limited to the supply of liquor. He does supply liquor, of course. If he did not, this Bill would not be necessary. But the supplying of liquor is only part of his re-

sponsibility. He has to provide food for those who have to arrange for the sale and conduct the sale, and also for clients attending the sale, from early morning until late at night. For example, stock arrives at Midland Junction as early as two or three o'clock in the morning, and sometimes overnight. Attendants have to be there to unload the stock and get it distributed into the various pens, and also to draft it so that it may be presented to the public in the correct form. Under the agreement with the Minister the licensee is obliged to provide food for those who start work at the Midland Junction saleyards early in the morning. He supplies breakfast, and also food during the period when the public are present. As soon as the sale ceases, he closes down his operations, and has no right to open again until another sale occurs. He has no right to open his bar and sell liquor until 9 o'clock in the morning. The Bill does not propose any alteration in that respect. Although the licensee must begin providing the meals very early in the morning, he cannot open his bar and does not provide liquor until 9 o'clock. If a sale extended beyond 6 p.m., he would have to close down at that hour.

Mr. H. W. Mann: At the Newmarket saleyards in Melbourne the hotel has special permission to open at 6 o'clock in the morning.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There has been a suggestion of lengthening the hours in this case, but I do not agree with that proposal. Generally speaking, the public has been satisfied with the conduct of these temporarily licensed premises during the past 15 or 16 years. There has been no complaint of any kind regarding them. Personally I do not think any alteration in regard to hours necessary. The present licensee is quite satisfied with existing conditions as to hours of trade. The special difficulty is as regards obtaining the right of applying to the court. He cannot now obtain the right to apply without paying toll for it. I gather that he pays £1 per week for the right of using another licensee's license, and that is what I want to avoid. I have no wish to interfere with the Minister's rights. Under the Bill the Minister will still be able to make any terms he likes. Neither do I wish to interfere in any way with the amount

paid for the temporary license. That should be a matter for the court to determine, or to be fixed by the Act. At present the licensee pays a license fee of £76 per annum, a rent of £52 per annum, and in addition £50 a year to the holder of a general publican's license who plays no part in the business, but simply authorises the use of his license for the operation of the premises. The Bill proposes to remove that middleman by providing that the temporary licensee shall have the right to apply to the court without the concurrence or approval of others. That is the main alteration proposed. It was suggested to me that the temporary licensee, instead of having the trouble of going to the court every week for the purpose of securing a license, should get it quarterly; but I doubt the wisdom of that proposal. My suggestion is that he should get the license once a month, or rather every five weeks. There are five weeks in some months, and that is why I specify that number. Under existing conditions, nine applications have to be made in the one month if there is a double sale. The Bill provides, accordingly, that instead of his applying once a week, it shall be sufficient if he applies once a month. He must notify the police as hitherto, and must continue to conduct the premises as he does to-day. I may be told, "You are doing this for Midland Junction. Why not do it for all saleyards?" But Midland Junction is the only saleyard where a license operates. It has operated there for 15 or 16 years, and I do not agree that all saleyards should have licenses. I think the House will agree that the Bill may reasonably be enacted, so that the man who operates under the direction of the Minister for Agriculture may be relieved of interference from another licensee and from the payment of a toll to that licensee.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [7.30]: I do not propose to offer any opposition to the measure, but it does seem to me we are for ever altering the Licensing Act to suit the wishes of probably one person. Three times this session have we been asked to consider amendments to the Act. In this latest instance the hon. member who is sponsoring the Bill has stated the position correctly. Liquor has

been sold in the refreshment room by the licensee's dummy. It has been agreed that the license shall be used, and although we collect the fees we have no control. I think it is very dangerous to give that right to some other person. Of course, the saleyards at Midland Junction are totally different from any other saleyards in this State, and it is said that the great number of stock taken there results in considerable business at the bar of the refreshment room. I do not know about that, for I have not had that experience myself. However, there has been no alteration made in the license, and the applicants must comply with all the provisions of the Licensing Act. The only difference is:—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That the middleman goes out.

**The PREMIER**: The licensee will disappear, the premises probably will be improved, we shall get a little more profit, and the people will get the same service. Of course, this will not mean any addition to the conveniences for selling liquor. But I think it is a pity that people who have some objection to the Licensing Act should go to members of this House and ask for some amendment to suit themselves. Only with great reluctance ought the Act to be amended. Three times this session have we been asked to consider amendments to the Act. I do not propose to offer any objection to the amendment now before us; in fact, I will support the hon. member.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

## **BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

*Second Reading.*

**MR. H. W. MANN** (Perth) [7.36] in moving the second reading said: The Bill might very well be considered amongst the temporary financial emergency measures. A number of persons applied for provisional certificates for four hotels, three in the metropolitan area, and one in a country district. Their applications were made in

keeping with the Act, the usual petitions were obtained, presented to the court, and investigated, the court heard the evidence as to the usefulness of the proposed hotels and granted provisional certificates, giving a period within which the building had to be completed.

Mr. Marshall: In what time?

Mr. H. W. MANN: The point is that the time has expired. The bench has power to fix a period, but once it is fixed there is no power to extend it. In each case the applicant was a reputable man who had been connected with the liquor trade for many years, carrying on licensed houses in various parts of the State. All had made their financial arrangements before putting in their applications. In one instance a period of over five months elapsed from the time the financial arrangements were made until the court granted the certificate. Then when the applicant moved to complete his financial arrangements, the financial institution which was to grant the money said the money was not available. This occurred in each case. One was an hotel at Mt. Hawthorn, one at Wembley Park, one at Victoria Park, and one at Milng. In this Milng instance the Licensing Court was influenced by the fact that there was not an hotel between Bullsbrook and Pithara. The applicant went so far as to get some of his material on the ground, but then was unable to complete the financial arrangements, notwithstanding that he is a man in a good position, interested in several hotels, and by no means a man of straw, speculating with a view to building an hotel and hawking it around. He proposed to put up a substantial building that would be a credit to him and of great service to the community. In that instance the application has been abandoned, and the time for the construction of the building has expired. Coming back to the applications in the metropolitan area, in every instance the applicant was a sound business man, with a thorough knowledge of the trade and who had been connected with it for upwards of a quarter of a century. Each of the applicants is still in the trade to-day. In respect of none of them could it be suggested that he was a man of straw making an application with a view to hawking the licence in order to dispose of it. Each of the applicants was putting his life savings into the proposition. As a mat-

ter of fact, one will lose his all if the Bill be not passed. I have nothing to hide in bringing down this Bill, nor have the gentlemen concerned anything to hide, and so I shall give the particulars of each case. In respect of the licence that was granted at Mt. Hawthorn, the applicant paid £950 for the land, £200 deposit on the tender, £212 legal fees, £54 for advertising £100 to the architect, £12 16s. to the Electoral Department for checking the petition, £5 5s. for the provisional certificate, and £150 for incidental expenses, or a total of £1,585 money expended. In addition to that, two sureties for £1,800 were given to the Government. So it will be seen what a substantial loss that gentleman will sustain if no amendment be made to the Act.

Mr. Sampson: What were the sureties for?

Mr. H. W. MANN: That the building would be completed in the specified time.

Mr. Marshall: Seeing that the Treasurer is short of funds, I hope he will confiscate the sureties.

Mr. H. W. MANN: That gentleman had made genuine arrangements for the financing of the building, but five months had elapsed from the time of his application until the certificate was granted, and in the intervening period finance became tight and the institution that was to have advanced the money for the construction of the building was not prepared to grant it, although the same security was available. Surely such a man is entitled to relief equal to that which has been given to other persons and organisations under the legislation we have passed during the past few months. Mr. Cranley, a well-known licensee, who has been conducting and managing hotels in this State for many years, applied for a provisional certificate to build a hotel at Wembley. The usual procedure was followed; a petition was prepared, presented to the Licensing Bench and checked, and the bench sat and heard evidence and decided that a hotel was necessary. A provisional certificate was granted Mr. Cranley to build a hotel. Mr. Cranley actually paid a premium of £1,500 to the Government.

Mr. Marshall: What have the Government done with all that money?

The Premier: Given it back.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The cost of canvassing and legal expenses was £204.



Mr. Panton: Which was the greater, the legal costs or the canvassing costs?

Mr. H. W. MANN: The cost of canvassing was £150 and the legal costs £54. The land cost £1,100, other expenses amounted to £50, and the preparation of plans and specifications, etc., £358, a total of £3,212. Probably Mr. Cranley is known to almost every member of the House as a man of business principles, and there has never been any suggestion of anything shady or sharp against him. He has always conducted his business on good clean lines. He has been connected with the liquor trade practically all his life and has put his life's savings into it. The third applicant was Mr. J. J. Ryan, at present conducting the Club Hotel at Geraldton. He applied for a provisional certificate to erect a hotel at Victoria Park. A petition was prepared and presented to the Licensing Bench, and the case was eventually heard. After listening to evidence for and against the application, the bench granted a provisional certificate and stated a period in which the building was to be completed. Mr. Ryan found himself in the same position as Mr. Monaghan. He had made arrangements which he considered sound for financing the construction of the building. After the certificate was granted, the parties who had been prepared to provide the funds were disinclined to proceed, although the same security was available. Money had tightened and financial institutions required it for other purposes. It was not a speculative application; it was a genuine application to construct a hotel and conduct it on proper business lines. Mr. Ryan will be £2,850 out of pocket unless provision is made to meet his case. He paid for land £627, for the petition and the checking of it £152, licensing court fee £5, solicitor's fee £50, and deposit on tender £200. In each case the Licensing Bench fixed a premium of £2,000 to be paid to the Government, and the applicant had to deposit 10 per cent. and find sureties for the balance. Mr. Cranley paid £1,500; the other two applicants put up £200 and sureties were found for the buildings being completed within the specified time, failing which the premiums were forfeitable to the Crown. Surely no one would suggest that, in view of the stringent period through which we have passed, those gentlemen should be held liable to that extent.

Hon. A. McCallum: Has not the time for that license expired?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Yes, but the Bill provides for the Licensing Bench, at their discretion, extending the period, even though the time has expired.

Mr. Coverley: Why did not you do something of the kind for the worker under a fair rents Bill?

Mr. H. W. MANN: I will deal with the fair rents Bill when it comes before us in the same manner as I trust the hon. member will deal with this measure.

Mr. Panton: I think you can be sure of that. How long is it since the time ran out?

Mr. H. W. MANN: The time had not elapsed when I gave notice of my intention to introduce the Bill. In one instance the time elapsed last month.

Mr. Panton: Your Bill proposes to make it retrospective.

Mr. H. W. MANN: That is not the correct way to put it.

Mr. Raphael: It will not pass the Upper House; members there will not tolerate retrospective legislation.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Lack of activity in the building trade is responsible for much of the unemployment now existing. Forty per cent. of the working population of the metropolitan area are engaged in the building trade.

Mr. Sleeman: A lot of them have homes of their own, and you did not trouble much about them.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Forty per cent. of the boys of Australia leave school every year, and 50 per cent. of them enter into the building trade. I am not submitting that as a reason why the Bill should be passed, but it is a reason. If those hotels were constructed within reasonable time, considerable work would be provided.

Mr. Panton: What would you say was reasonable time?

Mr. H. W. MANN: I should say that, in existing circumstances, the Licensing Bench would be the best judges of that.

Mr. Panton: That is no answer to the question. You spoke of finding work for the unemployed. What is reasonable time?

Mr. H. W. MANN: The Licensing Bench would be in the best position to determine what was a reasonable period.

Mr. Marshall: The bench already have too much power.

Mr. H. W. MANN: A provision similar to that in the Bill should have been included in the original Act. The bench should always have had authority to exercise the discretion which I now ask should be given them. Anything may occur to delay the construction of a building, but if a hotel is not constructed within the specified time, the bench have no power to extend the time.

Mr. Wansbrough: Have any of the buildings been commenced?

Mr. H. W. MANN: No, but in one instance some material is on the ground.

Mr. Raphael: Do you mean in the yard from which it is to be bought? There is none at Victoria Park.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I made it clear that the financial arrangements broke down after the provisional certificates had been granted. The man who proposed to construct a hotel at Milng had taken the risk and had put some material on the ground.

Mr. Raphael: Is it still there?

The Minister for Lands: He cannot answer that question.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The facts are clear, and I submit the Bill with confidence that members will realise the need for it.

Mr. Marshall: Cannot the applicants apply to the bench for a further provisional certificate?

Mr. H. W. MANN: No. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Pantou, debate adjourned.

## BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading—Amendment six months.*

MR. KEENAN (Nedlands) [7.56] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short measure.

Mr. Marshall: Nevertheless dangerous.

Mr. KEENAN: It has been passed in another place and is not in the least dangerous. The object of the Bill is to amend Section 70 of the Electoral Act, which provides that the date to be fixed for the polling shall not be less than seven days or more than 30 days after the date of nomination. The Bill provides for the deletion of the word "seven"

and the insertion of the word "fourteen" in lieu. Section 70 would then read that the date fixed for the polling shall not be less than fourteen days or more than thirty days after the date of nomination. The reason for the amendment is that the period of seven days is far too short, especially in the case of the provinces. It is quite true that in the smaller electorates seven days may not be any great disadvantage, but in the large electorates and in the provinces, it is not anything like sufficient to allow the candidate, after nomination and before polling, to put his views before the electors with a view to gaining their support.

Mr. Raphael: The absentee votes are the main thing.

Mr. KEENAN: Also postal votes because, under the provisions of the Act, no postal vote can be taken until after nominations. All who have had experience of the short period between the date of nomination and the date of polling have complained of it, Mr. Drew amongst the number. It is utterly impossible for a candidate to traverse the large area which it is necessary to traverse in that short space of time in order to place his views before the electors. I do not think any member of this House will raise any objection to the measure, the more so as its object is to obtain the true verdict of the electors. That is the only object—that the electors might have a better opportunity than they have under the existing law of expressing their views and returning the candidate of their choice. In the circumstances I think it unnecessary to say anything more and I ask the House to accept the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	..	24

Majority against .. .. 8

AYES	
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Troy
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

## NOMS.

Mr. Angelo  
Mr. Barnard  
Mr. Brown  
Mr. Collier  
Mr. Doney  
Mr. Ferguson  
Mr. Griffiths  
Mr. Keenan  
Mr. Latham  
Mr. H. W. Mann  
Mr. J. I. Mann  
Mr. McLarty

Sir James Mitchell  
Mr. Parker  
Mr. Patrick  
Mr. Piesse  
Mr. Richardson  
Mr. Sampson  
Mr. Scaddan  
Mr. J. H. Smith  
Mr. J. M. Smith  
Mr. Thorn  
Mr. Wells  
Mr. North

(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

**HON. A. McCALLUM** (South Fremantle) [8.4]: In my eleven years' experience of Parliamentary life I do not recall any occasion when an adjournment of the debate upon a Bill which has just been introduced, and for which there is no urgency, has been refused. If an election were taking place within the next week or two, and it was necessary that this Bill should become law, there might be some excuse for asking the House to pass it. What argument can be advanced for refusing an adjournment of the debate? The proposition certainly appears a plain and simple one, but it needs to be considered. The Act has been in operation for a long time, but no instance has been cited where it has worked hardship or injustice, such as to warrant the introduction of this measure. The Bill is thrown at us, and we are simply told that because it will not interfere with the free choice of the electors nothing can be said against it. This may be said of 90 per cent. of the measures that come down. It is the custom to grant adjournments so that Bills may be looked into. That right has never been refused until this evening. It is most necessary that Bills of this nature should be examined, to see how far-reaching they are before Parliament agrees to pass them. The Bill may be simple and clear enough on the surface, but if it is looked into there may be many arguments against it. I cannot understand the attitude of the House in refusing a reasonable request. It is a most extraordinary decision. The member for Nedlands (Mr. Keenan) has put up no case at all for the Bill. He merely said the time was not long enough between nomination day and polling day to enable a candidate to get round his electorate. No one waits until the nominations close to conduct his campaign. He is at it long before then if he wants to be elected. It does not matter whether nominations close two days or a month before the election. The hon. member did

not even refer to postal votes. These are matters of importance in a big province. He did not present any case that might be accepted in connection with postal votes. I know all about these things, particularly as they apply in the North. Members on this side who represent large electorates should be given an opportunity to examine the Bill, but this has been denied them. The member for Nedlands merely said that seven days was not sufficient time for a man to conduct his campaign.

Mr. Raphael: Postal votes were not referred to by him.

Mr. Keenan: They were mentioned in reply to an interjection. The hon. member was not listening.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I think I have an idea what is behind the Bill. If any hardship has been worked we have not been told of it. The Bill has come down from another place, where it was introduced by a private member. If the Government had brought it down as a result of representations put up by the department, it might have been a different matter. This is merely a private measure, although the Government are supporting it and endeavouring to get it through without consideration. I take strong exception to that sort of thing. Some urgency for the Bill should have been established. There will be no election until next May. Why are we denied the right to examine the Bill? Why is it to be bludgeoned through in this manner?

Mr. Marshall: With a brutal majority behind it.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: When one realises the source from which this Bill emanates, one cannot help but view it with suspicion.

Mr. Patrick: The Opposition in another place supported it.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I did not know there was an Opposition there. We are told it is a non-party House.

Mr. Raphael: Non-party so far as we are concerned.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Because the Bill came from there I view it with suspicion. I want to know all about it, and to understand how it will affect the electorates of the Legislative Assembly. I hope even now it will be possible to have the debate adjourned so that some better case for the Bill may be presented to us.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [8.12]: I am amazed at the opposition which has been raised to so simple a measure as this, comprising as it does scarcely more than a line. Notwithstanding the vote which has just been taken, the House is asked to agree to an adjournment of the debate. We continually read in the Press of the delays that take place in passing legislation.

**Mr. Panton**: They must have been referring to your long speeches.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: What advantage can accrue by postponing this matter for a week, a fortnight, or a month?

**Mr. Raphael**: It is just as well some of the legislation you tried to put up was delayed.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: No reason for delay has been advanced by the member for South Fremantle. Surely he understands the Bill and could have spoken upon it had he so desired. He knows the amendment is a desirable one, in the interests of the electors for another place.

**Mr. Coverley**: Why another place?

**Mr. SAMPSON**: Because it refers to it. No justification has been established for any delay in the passing of this Bill. It has been on the Notice Paper for several sittings.

**Mr. Marshall**: The second reading has only just been moved.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: It came from another place, and I hope it will be passed without delay. There is no justification for deferring the consideration of the Bill.

The Minister for Railways: It is essentially a Committee Bill.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: Of course it is.

**Mr. Panton**: Who is delaying the Bill now?

**Mr. SAMPSON**: The member for Leederville, who is continually interjecting! Here we have a Deputy Chairman of Committees breaking the Standing Orders of the Chamber, disturbing me and preventing me from putting forth my reasons why the Bill should be passed without unnecessary delay.

**Mr. Panton**: That is a reflection upon the Speaker!

**Mr. SAMPSON**: None is intended.

**Mr. SPEAKER**: Order! It would be better if the hon. member were to stick to the provisions of the Bill. It is my job to pull up hon. members.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: I do not want you to resort to that action regarding the member for Leederville.

**Mr. SPEAKER**: If the hon. member will address the Chair, and not take so much notice of interjections, he will get on better.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: That is rather difficult in the circumstances. We should throw aside the habit of deferring simple measures from sitting to sitting, when there is no reason why they should not be passed straight away. I have no hesitation in supporting the Bill, and our thanks are due to the hon. member responsible for its introduction.

**Mr. SLEEMAN**: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	23

Majority against .. 7

#### AYES.

Mr. Corboy  
Mr. Coverley  
Mr. Cunningham  
Mr. Hegney  
Mr. Johnson  
Mr. Marshall  
Mr. McCallum  
Mr. Millington  
Mr. Munsie

Mr. Panton  
Mr. Raphael  
Mr. Sleeman  
Mr. Troy  
Mr. Wansbrough  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angelo  
Mr. Barnard  
Mr. Brown  
Mr. Doney  
Mr. Ferguson  
Mr. Griffiths  
Mr. Keenan  
Mr. Latham  
Mr. Lindsay  
Mr. J. I. Mann  
Mr. McLarty  
Sir James Mitchell

Mr. Parker  
Mr. Patrick  
Mr. Piesse  
Mr. Richardson  
Mr. Sampson  
Mr. Scaddan  
Mr. J. H. Smith  
Mr. J. M. Smith  
Mr. Thorn  
Mr. Wells  
Mr. North

(Teller.)

#### PAIRS.

AYES.  
Mr. Kenneally  
Mr. Collier

NOES.  
Mr. Teeddale  
Mr. Davy

Motion thus negatived.

**HON. J. C. WILLCOCK** (Geraldton) [8.22] The Electoral Act has been the law of the land for many years. The particular provision under discussion was originally inserted in the Act in 1907. We have had experience, extending over nearly a quarter of a century, of the operations of the law, and now someone has found out that it might be a little more convenient if that law were altered. Good reasons should be advanced before altering a law that has been found workable over so long a period. I do not desire to reflect upon the hon. member who introduced the Bill here or the

hon. member who presented it in another place, but no good reason has been advanced to warrant its approval. The provision was included in the original Act, and has proved satisfactory at a time of urgency. An election had been held, and the several Ministers had to seek re-election after receiving their portfolios. The House was in session and there was no Minister, apart from an Honorary Minister, to take charge of the parliamentary work. The delay, owing to the necessity for Ministers going to the country, meant holding up the business of the country when urgent matters required attention. None of the Ministers was opposed and the provision for seven days was inserted in the Act and the writs were returned in accordance with the shorter period, instead of taking 14 days, as was necessary previously. The result was that the Ministers were allowed to take their seats on the floor of the House in the shorter period, and the business of the country proceeded. No reason has been advanced why the procedure that has been found satisfactory over so long a period, should be departed from. I had the privilege, as Minister, to be in charge of the Electoral Department for six years. During that time general elections, Legislative Council elections, and by-elections took place. During my time, there were two Chief Electoral Officers and neither of them suggested that the provision in the Act was other than beneficial to the interests of the State. By interjection, one hon. member referred to the effect it would have on postal votes. Apparently some people think the time is opportune for them to be able to send all over Western Australia to get postal votes in the event of certain things happening. That is no reason for passing the Bill. An organisation may have plenty of money, and may be prepared to spend a considerable amount communicating with people in the outback areas, inviting them to exercise their postal votes. That may apply with some force to the Legislative Council elections, and I am certainly not anxious to increase the facilities at the disposal of the absentee property owner, who, although absent from the State or perhaps in a far-distant part, may be able, under our inequitable laws, to exercise his vote, by means of the postal sections, in eight or ten provinces. That is one of the flaws of our electoral system. A man may

live in the far north of the State, and by means of postal votes, exercise the franchise in every single province, because of the appreciable time that elapses between nomination day and election day. It is a most undemocratic provision. I have advocated alterations of the law, but have not been successful. I am, therefore, not prepared to approve of any additional facilities regarding the exercise of postal votes. We have at least three political organisations in this State. I will give the National Party the credit for having an organisation of some strength; the Country Party has considerable strength throughout the country areas; and the Labour Party has many political branches. Not one of those political parties has approached the Minister in charge with a request that the law should be amended in accordance with the provisions of the Bill. Had it operated to the detriment of any section of the community, some step would have been taken to secure an alteration. But nothing of the sort has happened. A quarter of a century has had to elapse before a private member, without exhortation from any other member or any political party, has seen fit to introduce the amending Bill. So far as I can gather, it has been introduced for personal reasons. We should not alter such laws unnecessarily, and no good reason has been advanced in support of the proposed alteration. It will do no good, though it may do no harm. We should not waste our time in considering such trivial alterations unless really tangible reasons are advanced. The present procedure is adequate to allow the elections to be carried out satisfactorily. I have already stressed the position regarding Ministers who have to seek re-election. If it is necessary to have a long interval, as suggested in the Bill, the work of the country may be held up unnecessarily. A new Government may have received the full endorsement of the country, yet there may be a delay in giving effect to their policy, because of this alteration in the law, extending over six or seven weeks. If three members of the Government were representing two districts of the far North-West, instead of being able to put the policy of the department into effect, they might find it necessary to proceed to the electorate to carry out an election campaign. They might not be able to get down for three or four weeks, and the policy they were elected to give effect to

would have to remain in abeyance. There was much wisdom in the original provision set out in the existing law. It has worked advantageously, it has saved expense in the past and has been of much benefit to the country, and therefore it should not be altered without substantially good reasons. I object to tinkering with the statute-book without good cause. I cannot find it possible to support the second reading of the Bill.

**MR. PANTON** (Leederville) [8.33]: I regret that a Bill of this description has been brought down. There are certain Acts of Parliament that should not be amended except after very careful consideration, and then only by the Government in regard to a policy. The Electoral Act is one of them; the Licensing Act is another. We have no fewer than four Bills introduced by private members the purpose for which is to amend one of our Acts of Parliament which members will agree caused more discussion in this House than perhaps did the Trotting Bill.

The Minister for Lands: The Dog Act generally causes a lot of discussion.

**MR. PANTON**: Yes, but that was brought down by a private member. When the Government introduce a Bill it is given the fullest consideration, and after it has been debated at length and passed it should not be lightly amended by a private member in this or the other House. The member for Swan to-night gets up—

Hon. J. C. Willcock: In a maze.

**MR. PANTON**: No, but in a dramatic fashion, and pretends to be amazed at the waste of time caused by debating little Bills of this description. "We should put these Bills through," he declared; and only two hours ago when a small Bill of great importance, its object being to protect the poor people of this country, was before us, the adjournment of the debate was moved and the member for Swan could not cross the floor of the House quickly enough to vote for the adjournment. Now, with the Bill we are discussing, which has only just made its appearance, he says, "Let us get on with it." Inconsistency, they name is the member for Swan. I do not care whether the Bill be a small one or a big one, we have the right to see what effect it is going to have. There are altogether too many

alterations to Acts of Parliament, Acts that stand for broad principles, and I am going to take every opportunity to try to defeat those Bills. The Government seem to be allowing every Tom, Dick and Harry to propose whatever amendments they please. I say this with all due respect to members, but the fact remains that it is becoming a common occurrence to amend Acts of Parliament that have been put on the statute-book after hours and days of debate. Such statutes should not be lightly amended. The Bill before us is just the whim of one man.

**MR. SAMPSON**: There was no opposition to it in another place.

**MR. PANTON**: Because another place likes to let things slip through, that is no reason why we should do the same thing.

The Minister for Lands: That is the House of review.

**MR. PANTON**: If it is the House of review, that is no reason why we should not do our duty. As a matter of fact, this House now seems to be the House of review, and it is our duty to postpone the further consideration of the Bill.

**MR. SPEAKER**: The hon. member must not reflect on another place.

**MR. PANTON**: I am not doing so; I came from there.

**MR. SPEAKER**: The hon. member might refrain from criticising another place.

**MR. PANTON**: All I wish to add is that I hope we shall not have too many of these tiddlywinking alterations to statutes, which stand for big broad principles.

**MR. SLEEMAN**: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	..	22
Majority against					8

#### AYES.

Mr. Corboy	Mr. Munlo
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Troy
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Parker
Mr. Brown	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Davy	Mr. Piessie
Mr. Doney	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. J. I. Mann	Mr. Wells
Mr. McLarty	Mr. North

(Teller.)

## PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Collier	Mr. Griffiths
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Teesdale

Motion thus negatived.

**MR. RAPHAEL** (Victoria Park) [8.42]:

I have recollections of a most important Bill earlier in the afternoon, which the House did not appear to be in a hurry to agree to. The Bill was of far more importance to the people of the State than the measure before us, which seeks to protect politicians by allowing them longer periods in which to get around their electorates. When the ex-Chief Secretary introduced the Bill there was not sufficient argument advanced to lead one to support it. Until I interjected that the purpose of the Bill was to allow a longer period for the collection of postal votes, the hon. member did not touch on that aspect. He said the object was to allow a longer period for candidates to get around the electorate and seek the favour of the people. I have recollections of seeing the hon. gentleman's name placarded about the Nedlands electorate many days before the date of the election. And it is the same with all aspirants for political honours. The Bill has nothing to do with anything except the organising of postal votes. The ex-Chief Secretary tried to dim our vision. We can only regard this small measure with grave suspicion. Is there some underlying motive? What is the reason why the mover wants to bludgeon the Bill through in a few minutes? In my mind suspicion was strengthened when the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) supported the Bill.

Mr. Sampson: That convinced you!

Mr. RAPHAEL: There is another viewpoint. The object of the Bill may be to allow the Press to obtain more remuneration from candidates by way of payment for advertisements. The Press may be pushing the measure for that purpose. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition would not oppose the Bill if he did not view it with suspicion. One can

only agree with his suggestion that there should be adequate time to consider the Bill before it becomes law. The Act has stood for 25 years, and an amending measure should not be hurried through in five minutes. If the Government regard this as desirable legislation, I tell them that they had an opportunity to advance desirable legislation when the Bill of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) was before the House. The passing of that measure would advantage the community greatly. I hope the ex-Chief Secretary will agree that we ought to have time to consider this Bill, and that he will allow the debate to be adjourned. The ex-Chief Secretary can collect the postal votes for his electorate in one week, but members for such constituencies as Gascoyne, Pilbarra and Kimberley require a longer period. As a matter of courtesy, the ex-Chief Secretary should allow consideration of the measure to be deferred.

**MR. HEGNEY** (Middle Swan) [8.49]:

When I entered this Chamber eighteen months ago I was amazed at the procedure through which Bills have to go before becoming law. As a new member I thought the forms could be done away with, but older members impressed on me that it was absolutely essential that Bills should pass through the forms provided by the Standing Orders. In the light of what has occurred this evening I am convinced that adherence to those forms is absolutely necessary. Therefore I suggest that this debate be adjourned. We shall then have time to consider the measure. It is frequently stated that this House passes legislation too hastily and that therefore a Chamber of review is necessary. The present Bill emanates from another place, and we should give it the same deliberate and mature consideration as another place is alleged to give to our measures. The longer this Bill is considered here, the more certain shall we be that the proposed change is desirable and that loopholes and redundancies are being avoided. We are dealing with the electoral law in piecemeal fashion. Why is electoral reform not dealt with in a comprehensive Bill? Redistribution of the seats in another place could be effected in a measure such as this. The question of postal voting, which was raised at the general election, could have been disposed of at the same opportunity. There is no real need to push this Bill through to-night.

The onus is on the Government to include other reforms in the measure. Here we have a small Bill providing for a single amendment; but a principle is involved, and the forms of the House should be observed as in the case of other measures. If there were real urgency for passing the Bill to-night, I could understand the pressure that is being brought to bear. The second reading was only moved this evening. I do not think the member for Nedlands desires to force the Bill through at once. The Government should even now agree to the adjournment of the debate, and let us get on with other measures which are of far greater importance. Consideration of the Estimates is not yet completed. I enter my protest against the course proposed. The Government should reconsider the position.

The Minister for Railways: This is not a Government measure.

**HON. M. F. TROY** (Mt. Magnet) [8.55]: I do not see anything particularly wrong with the Bill, although I am surprised that the Government, instead of introducing the measure, have left it to be brought forward by a member of the Upper House. If the Bill is necessary, why did not the Government introduce it?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Because they did not think it was required.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Why was the measure left to a private member of another place? What did Mr. Cornell have in his mind when he introduced the Bill? The provision that elections may be held within seven days of nomination day has not resulted in any disadvantage. That provision has obtained here so long as I can remember; and there has been neither protest against it, nor complaint about it.

The Minister for Railways: I am not so sure that there would not be complaints if this measure were put into operation.

Hon. M. F. TROY: When Governments go to the country, they have some respect for the opinion of the electors. Otherwise, they know, there will be a reaction against them.

The Minister for Railways: The seven days represent the minimum.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It is a vital amendment of the electoral law, and it is proposed by a private member. The member

for Nedlands (Mr. Keenan) would have been well advised to explain, in introducing the measure, what is behind it. Is its object to allow more time to candidates for another place to scour the country for postal votes? If so, the hon. member might have stated that. The absentee vote in Upper House elections is frequently a majority of the vote. In the Central Province the absentee vote amounts to 35 per cent. In the South Province it is also a big vote. It is possible to collect hundreds of votes for the Central Province in Perth. Thus an election for a Legislative Council seat may not represent the views of the electors at all. There is an Upper House election next May, and I have no doubt that Mr. Cornell is acting on behalf of some candidate. There must be some reason for the measure. The member for Nedlands, in moving the second reading here, has given no reason at all. The Bill is not urgent in the slightest degree; it could stand over for weeks and weeks. There is much more urgent business on the Notice Paper. For example, there is the notice of motion given by the member for Sussex (Mr. Barnard), which is vitally urgent. Here is a Bill of no importance whatever being pushed on as vital and urgent, but in the main I see nothing wrong with the purpose of the measure.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	23

Majority against .. 8

#### AYES.

Mr. Collier  
Mr. Covertley  
Mr. Cunningham  
Mr. Hegney  
Mr. Marshall  
Mr. McCallum  
Mr. Millington  
Mr. Munsie

Mr. Panton  
Mr. Raphael  
Mr. Sleeman  
Mr. Troy  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Wilson  
Mr. Corboy

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angelo  
Mr. Barnard  
Mr. Brown  
Mr. Davy  
Mr. Doney  
Mr. Ferguson  
Mr. Keenan  
Mr. Latham  
Mr. Lindsay  
Mr. H. W. Mann  
Mr. J. I. Mann  
Mr. McLarty

Sir James Mitchell  
Mr. Parker  
Mr. Patrick  
Mr. Piessie  
Mr. Richardson  
Mr. Sampson  
Mr. Scudlan  
Mr. J. H. Smith  
Mr. J. M. Smith  
Mr. Wells  
Mr. North

(Teller.)



PAIRS.			NOES.
AYES.			
Mr. Johnson		Mr. Thorn	
Mr. Lamond		Mr. Griffiths	
Mr. Kennelly		Mr. Teesdale	

Motion thus negatived.

**HON. S. W. MUNSIE** (Hannans) [9.5] If there is one thing that would make one suspicious of the Bill it is the attitude of the Government cross benches. I am not blaming the Government for refusing the adjournment. They did not refuse it. In the first two divisions I do not think one member of the Government voted against the adjournment on the voices. But the Government cross benches have taken control of the business to-night. There may not be much in the Bill, but on the other hand there may be a lot. Probably what is making us suspicious is the refusal of the adjournment, particularly when we remember that it is a private member's Bill. I have been here for 20 years, and I can say that unless it has been by arrangement between the Government and the Opposition, I have never known an instance of an adjournment being refused; certainly never have I known of one refused on a Bill introduced by a private member. Yet on this occasion the Government cross benches are determined to put the Bill through to-night.

The Minister for Lands: They are not.

**Hon. S. W. MUNSIE:** I am sure the Opposition have strength enough to say that the Government cross-benches will not succeed in getting this Bill through to-night, although they may get it through some time to-morrow morning. I do not wish to be obstreperous, but I say that no other Opposition has ever shown as much consideration for the Government as we have.

The Minister for Railways: This is not a Government measure.

**Hon. S. W. MUNSIE:** Well, why are we refused an adjournment of the debate? If the Government are looking for trouble they will get it. They have had good support from the Opposition right through the session, which has lasted about 18 months. It is nearly time the session was finished. If the Government are going to adopt such tactics, they will get some opposition. I admit that in given circumstances if the Government in a by-election were to fix the dates at seven days they might cause inconvenience, but I do not believe any Government would do anything to cause inconven-

ience at such a time. The range between the seven days and the 30 days provided in the Act is quite sufficient to avoid all inconvenience. The Bill, if it becomes law, might do considerable harm. It might be essential in the interests of the country to get an election over as quickly as possible, but if the Bill became law the election would have to occupy 14 days after the date of nominations. I want to know what is behind that. I am not accusing the member for Neilds, who is sponsoring the Bill, but I have read the discussion in another place, where the Bill originated, and no reason was given for it there, other than the convenience of candidates. In my view we require to keep our electoral laws rather for the benefit of the electors than for that of the candidates. The Government cross-benches have been very foolish in consistently voting against the adjournment of the debate. They are setting up a precedent by refusing the adjournment even against the wishes of the Government; for on the first two divisions not one member of the Government voted on the voices. But now the cross-benches are taking control of the business.

Mr. Marshall: The spring onion crowd.

**Hon. S. W. MUNSIE:** After due consideration I propose to vote against the second reading. It is not wise that we should make the 14 days compulsory, for any reasonable Government could fix a period suitable to the electors between the seven days and the 30 days. So there is no necessity for the Bill. It is just to suit some individual who has discovered that it might be inconvenient for him if the period were fixed at less than 14 days. I will vote against the second reading.

**MR. MILLINGTON** (Mt. Hawthorn) [9.11]: I am at a loss to understand why the hon. member in charge of the Bill should be in such a hurry to rush it through. I would have expected a gentleman of his judicial training to have a greater regard for tradition and for the advantage of having time for consideration. All his life he has insisted that before passing an opinion he shall have ample time to consider the facts, consult authorities, and make up his mind. Yet he comes down here and upsets the traditions of the House. If this were a party measure I could understand the attitude of members opposite led by the member in charge of the Bill, but in the circum-

tances I want to know why this undue haste. I have never before seen the same attitude adopted towards a private member's Bill. The Bill, as compared with the Act it proposes to amend, is of distinct disadvantage. The Act provides that there shall be a minimum of seven days and a maximum of 30 days between nomination day and election day. That is an advantage which is availed of in the case of an extraordinary election, where a Minister has been appointed and in consequence has to face the electors. But under the Bill a period of 14 days would have to elapse. If the member in charge of the Bill were consulted, he would have to admit that this is a disadvantage. So the Bill would not make for the better working of the Electoral Department. The existing electoral law was deliberately thought out, but this Bill is placed before us without any reasons whatever in support of it. I have read the speech of the hon. member who introduced it in another place, and I can say he gave no reasons for it. I do not think anybody can say it is a matter of urgency, or that the amendment would make for the better working of the existing Act. If that is so, why is there any desperate haste for the amendment? There are many more serious measures demanding consideration, and the country is of opinion that attention should be given to those measures. The session is dragging on, and the Government have an opportunity to proceed with business that matters, but this apple of discord has been thrown in by a private member. Though Government business is piling up, the Government are evidently standing behind this hold-up measure. The Premier and the Attorney General would have to admit that the existing law is better without the amendment than it would be with it. I do not think that anyone experienced in the administration of the electoral law would attempt to defend the alteration. Why the desperate hurry? Surely there should be opportunity to consider the question. The member for Nedlands has given no reason to justify the Bill, and an adjournment would give him opportunity to consider the reasons. He should not throw the Bill into the House as he has done. If he wishes to alter a law that has stood for years, he should advance good and valid reasons. I cannot understand this attempt to foist the measure on the House without opportunity for proper consideration. We are justified in protesting. Why ruffle the feelings of

members by attempting to force such a Bill through in record time? No one has shown that there is any urgency for the measure. The Government have taken it upon themselves to back the Bill. Had the Government been vitally interested in the matter they would have introduced the Bill as a Government measure.

The Premier: Do you oppose the measure?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes.

The Premier: Why?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Because we should not amend the Act without good reasons being advanced. The Premier has always shown a decided objection to what he termed twopenny-halfpenny Bills. When I had to introduce small measures, the present Premier took strong exception to tinkering Bills, as he termed them, and I came to the conclusion that if a Bill was introduced, no matter how small it might be, its advantages must be demonstrated before one could hope to get it passed.

Mr. Parker: You learnt something.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The amendment proposed in the Bill would not improve the electoral law. I defy any member on the Government side to show that it would. The existing law meets the needs of the hour, but the Bill will restrict it and cause serious inconvenience. In future, when members are sworn in as Ministers, they will have to loaf around for a fortnight, not knowing where they stand.

Mr. Parker: Why?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Because 14 days will have to elapse between nomination day and polling day. At present the period can be restricted to seven days.

The Minister for Railways: And there is a period that must expire between the issuing of the writ and nomination day.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes. I defy the member for Nedlands to show that the amendment will be of any advantage. Rather it will be a disadvantage. Since that is arguable, why try to force the Bill through to-night? I am surprised at this attempt by a man who never hurried in his life when he had to consider a question and furnish reasons for his opinion. Simple proposals often create suspicion, and it is an accepted tradition of the House that time should be given to consider every question. Evidently,

members of the Government do not agree that the amendment would be advantageous. Consequently we have what the Premier would term a tinkering Bill holding up the business of the House. Without reflecting on another place, I can say that very little consideration was given to the Bill there.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not reflect upon another place.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I have no wish to do so. I am simply recounting what took place there, and if the manner in which the Bill passed another place is a reflection on that place, I must absolve myself from all responsibility. Had another place referred the Bill to a select committee, a course that it has adopted with many Bills, there would have been great difficulty to furnish reasons for passing it. The responsibility for closely scrutinising the measure is ours. On reflection, I think the member for Nedlands will agree that he made a tactical error in attempting to rush the Bill through this House. Consequently, we are doing him a favour by preventing this rash act. Fancy the hon. member being accused of anything like rashness! We make mistakes enough when we do things deliberately, but if we rush legislation through, serious mistakes must occur. We desire time to examine the Bill and the reasons for it, if any. The member for Nedlands should welcome an adjournment to give him an opportunity to invent reasons, if there are none. This can be considered a non-party measure. Let us endeavour to agree upon what is the best period that should elapse between the issue of writs, nomination day, and election day. If we were given time we could probably agree upon these points. As it is, a certain amount of ill-feeling has been engendered by the attempt to rush the Bill through. If we alter the existing law we should do so in a way that will improve the Act. I should like more time in which to examine the question.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	22
				—
Majority against	..			7
				—

# AYES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Troy
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Munzie	Mr. Corboy
Mr. Pantou	(Teller.)

# NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Barnard	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Parker
Mr. Davy	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Doney	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. H. W. Mann	Mr. Wells
Mr. J. I. Mann	Mr. North
	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

**HON. J. CUNNINGHAM** (Kalgoorlie) [9.35]: I thought the good sense of the House would have seen to it that sufficient time was given to members generally to enable them to arrive at a mature judgment concerning this Bill. I also thought the member for Nedlands (Mr. Keenan) would have been reasonable in the matter of granting an adjournment of the debate. I think I understand the principle underlying this measure. Some months ago there was an election when people resented the short time allowed between nominations and the election. Evidence should be afforded before we alter the electoral laws. The member for Nedlands did not advance one reason why the Bill should be passed. He used a number of words, but these contained no argument of any consequence. The hon. member is quite capable of advancing reasons why the Bill should be passed, but he strung together a number of words which conveyed no real understanding of the Bill. I do think we should be given an extension of time in which thoroughly to understand it. I am doubtful whether the hon. member himself knows what he has presented to the House. I will support every effort to secure an adjournment of the debate.

**MR. COVERLEY** (Kimberley) [9.40]: I, too, must enter my protest against the Bill being put through in so hurried a manner. I have not wasted time in speaking for the sake of speaking and obtaining publicity through the Press. I have shown every consideration to the Government by refraining from speaking when I might have done so, in order to assist in effecting the econ-

omies the Government think necessary. In a matter of this kind, which seriously affects the district I have the honour to represent, we might have been shown common courtesy by the member for Nedlands, and might have had the debate adjourned for at least a week. We do not know what will happen if the Bill becomes law. It may or may not be advantageous to the back country. I find the Bill was brought down merely at the whim of a member in another place. I have even gone to the trouble of reading his speech in "Hansard." The measure is not of great importance and has no bearing upon any election that is pending. It has not been asked for by the department, and apparently has not the support of many members of this Chamber. Every time the House has divided, members on the Government side have sat silent. We have wasted the whole of the evening sitting on this Bill, merely because of a desire on the part of some members to force the measure through to-night, without allowing this side an opportunity to peruse the Bill and decide how, for example, it will affect the outlying districts. I have some knowledge of electioneering in the outskirts of Western Australia. The North-West Province is well catered for, as it has only a very small number of electors. In another place the province has three representatives, and the major part of their support comes from St. George's-terrace pastoralists, absentee voters. The absentee votes can reach Carnarvon by aerial mail. There is an argument in favour of extending the interval between nomination and election, namely, to allow ample time for getting the votes of genuine electors to the polling booth. I agree with a previous speaker that instead of tinkering about with a short amending Bill like this, the Government themselves should have taken the matter in hand and brought down a well-thought-out amending Bill. Such a measure, in my opinion, is highly necessary, particularly as regards Upper House elections. The Government should give consideration to the franchise for another place. That matter might have been included in the pre cut Bill. The Government could have taken the advice of officers of the Electoral Department with regard to it. Moreover, those officers could put up other good amendments. The Government have changed

their attitude with regard to private members' Bills. One such Bill was given short shrift to-night. Its sponsor desired that it should pass this Chamber as quickly as convenient. On the present Bill, which is much less important than that of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman), the Government do not support the adjournment of the debate. If Ministers allow cross-bench members to take the business out of their hands, they must accept the onus of depriving members on this side of the opportunity to consider the Bill. I again enter my protest against the Government's attitude on this measure. That attitude is quite inconsistent with the one they adopted towards the measure introduced by the member for Fremantle, the passing of which would have resulted in great benefit to the workless people of this country.

MR. SLEEMAN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	..	21
					—
Majority against	..	..	..	..	7
					—

#### AYES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Troy
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Munsie	Mr. Corboy

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Barnard	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Davy	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Doney	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Wells
Mr. H. W. Mann	Mr. North
Mr. J. I. Mann	

(Teller.)

#### PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Griffiths
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Thorn
Miss Holman	Mr. Piosse
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Parker

Motion thus negatived.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [9.56]: I do not know whether that was the fourth or fifth lap across the floor of the Chamber. Irrespective of their number, I think those laps are justified. Personally I am pre-

pared to remain here till breakfast time for the purpose of voicing my protest against the attitude of the Chamber during the last few weeks.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid that is not the subject before the Chair.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Very well, Sir; then I will compare the attitude of the House on this Bill with its attitude on another Bill. The debate on another Bill was resumed after the tea adjournment. I was in charge of the measure; and the business was taken out of my hands, and the debate adjourned. Common courtesy required that the desire for adjournment of the debate should have been mentioned to me. I myself did not desire an adjournment. The measure is most important, and I wanted a quick decision as to whether the House would do something for people evicted from their homes. The Government majority decided against proceeding further with the Bill. My measure was introduced on the 13th October, like another private member's Bill, the object of which was to allow a Masonic lodge to have beer on the premises. This latter Bill went through in—

Mr. SPEAKER: The Bill before the House is the one moved by the member for Nedlands. That is the Bill under discussion—not any Bill dating back a month or six weeks. The House has finished with the latter Bill.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I take strong exception to the manner in which I was treated with regard to my Bill. The measure now under discussion vitally affects the people of this country, and I personally see no reason why it should be passed. During my eight years here I have never yet known a Bill to be passed on the same day as the second reading was moved, except in one case, where members of the Opposition were fully consulted, and none of them raised any objection. If the present Bill urgently needs to be passed to-night, why were we not consulted on the subject? It is not a measure that should go through at one sitting. To refuse the adjournment of the debate, as Ministerial members to a man have done, is most unfair. I have nothing whatever against the mover of the Bill. If I could, I would support him. As regards altering the period between nomination and election from seven days to 14, that is only a matter of tweedledum and tweedledee. If

six candidates start out on an election under either the seven-days or the 14-days arrangement, they all have the same opportunity. I am at a loss to understand why this alteration should be proposed after the provision has stood the test of so many years. I shall adopt another line of attack on the Bill by moving an amendment—

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

Personally, I do not think it matters whether the Bill is read six months or sixteen months hence. There is no necessity for it at all. The least we can do is to attempt to defeat it by agreeing to my amendment.

HON. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle—on amendment) [10.2]: I support the amendment as a protest against hasty legislation. If it were dealt with in six months' time, it would be quite early enough. I have read the debate that took place on the Bill in the Legislative Council, and I find that from the time the Bill was introduced until the second reading had been carried, the Committee stage completed and the report adopted, less than half an hour elapsed. In connection with the bi-cameral system of parliamentary Government, the argument has always been advanced that the second House is necessary to prevent hasty legislation. On this occasion, the Legislative Assembly is to be the House of review.

Mr. Millington: The position is being reversed.

Mr. Corboy: As a matter of fact, it took exactly 18 minutes to put the Bill through in the Council.

HON. A. McCALLUM: Seeing that the Legislative Council passed the measure through all its stages in such a brief period, it is reasonable that we should act as a House of review, and consider how the measure will affect Parliament and the electors. I do not want to reflect upon the member for Nedlands (Mr. Keenan), who was responsible for the introduction of the Bill in this Chamber. He has been led innocently into it, and it would have been interesting if we could have listened in to his first conversation with the hon. member who introduced the Bill in another place. I am sure the member for Nedlands realises

he has landed himself into a debate that he did not expect such a measure would entail. Parliament must be careful in dealing with the electoral laws, which represent the safeguard of the people. Under the provisions of the Electoral Act, Parliaments are formed and Governments are created. The electoral laws represent the one safety valve that democracy possesses. Under their provisions Governments function, whether it be to impose taxation or pass legislation. Our electoral laws are the outstanding vital issue of importance in our political life. Every move, however innocent or trivial it may appear on the surface, should be examined minutely by Parliament, but to-night we have been denied information, and we have not been given any arguments in support of the measure. No reasons have been advanced as to why it should be enacted. No suggestion of urgency has been made. No evidence has been forthcoming to indicate that the existing law has operated with hardship to any section of the community. We have not been told why the seven days should be altered to 14 days as a greater measure of justice to the electors. We have not been told that it will safeguard any section of the community, and no instance has been quoted to show that, during the many years the Act has been in force, this provision has operated unfairly. We are entitled to look upon such a move as suspect. The adjournment of the debate has been refused, and we have been denied the opportunity to inquire into the Bill and its possible effect. The question before the Chair has to be decided at the moment. We are not allowed to exchange views with others; the Bill must be passed "now." To ask Parliament to agree to such legislation is positively objectionable. I take further exception to the Bill because it has obviously been brought forward to suit the convenience of members of the Legislative Council, not to safeguard the interests of the electors or to preserve their rights. It is to serve the personal interests of members of the Legislative Council, so that they will be able to retain their seats, and not permit the decisions of the people to function in the manner possible under the existing law. The object of the Bill is to make the position of members of the Legislative Council more secure, and to prevent opposition. It is to suit them, not the people. Yet in less than half an hour the branch of the Legisla-

ture that is supposed to be the House of review, could pass a Bill of this description to meet the personal convenience and advantage of members of that Chamber!

The Premier: Who said that?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: They said so, quite openly, too. In the few words that were uttered in support of the Bill, there were all sorts of innuendoes. We know that in May next there will be a Legislative Council election, and evidently it was thought that it was time to pass the legislation because certain members will have to face their masters then. I strenuously object to laws being framed to suit members of Parliament, not the electors. It is a most reprehensible, repulsive idea, which should not be sanctioned by Parliament at all. One would have expected that the hon. member responsible for bringing the Bill into this Chamber would have given us an outline of how the existing law affects his own electorate, and demonstrated to the House the advantage to Nedlands in this proposed alteration. Since he speaks here on behalf of the people of Nedlands, he should have explained to us just how this alteration would advantage the people of that electorate. I can imagine the case the hon. member would have put up had he not been so sure that a majority in the House, voting at the crack of the whip, would flock wherever the lead was given.

The Minister for Lands: You have a new leader to-night.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am speaking for myself, and I was the first on this side to raise my protest. From the position I hold on this side I am entitled to do it.

The Minister for Lands: If you had asked for an adjournment you might have got it.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I do not know. The adjournment has been repeatedly asked for and refused.

Mr. Corboy: The Minister for Lands ought not to talk about leaders, for to-night he has adopted one whom he previously threw out.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The House has a right to expect that the member for Nedlands would explain just what the Bill means to his constituents. Had he done so his recital would have been somewhat on these lines: That he represents an electorate that has such huge areas, separated by such wide spaces that parts of it are inaccessible and away out in the wilds, where

the means of communication are so inadequate that it is impossible for the electors to get the information that would allow them to cast their votes within the specified time, or allow him to collect those votes. He would have gone on to say it is possible for certain parts of his electorate to be campaigned for weeks while other parts know nothing about it. He would have said that Nedlands is so isolated that candidates can address meetings for weeks while electors in other parts of Nedlands do not even know there is an election on. He would have said it was unreasonable to expect voters there to cast their votes within seven days of the day of nominations. He might have gone on to say that even after they had been campaigning in Nedlands for weeks, and just as nominations were about to close, if one candidate declined to nominate and another candidate was brought in, with so little time provided it would be impossible for the news to get round that a different man was in the field, and so if the electors voted on the earlier information their ballot papers would be informal. The hon. member might have gone on to tell us that even after nominations had closed, it would be impossible within seven days for the full information to percolate through the wide areas where communications were so bad that he as a candidate would not be able to let his supporters know who his opponents were; that they were so isolated that there was no opportunity to get polling booths out there and so in consequence all the voting had to be done by post. He would have told us that there are huge tropical rivers flowing through Nedlands, and that if they were in flood it might be weeks before they could be crossed and the postal votes brought in. We would have listened with great interest to that information if the hon. member had given it to us. He would have said there were no telephones in Nedlands, no telegraph, that wireless is unknown to the oldest inhabitant out there, notwithstanding which they bring in regulations to stop the running of taxis and buses. We are left to imagine that to get the votes over the swollen tropical rivers and through the dense jungles where white men have never been seen before, the only means of communication is by pack horse or camel, and that it might be weeks before the hon. member could get through. Fancy the hon. member going through the back blocks of Ned-

lands on camels and crossing swollen rivers to bring in postal votes, passing over immense dry areas without knowing whether he would be able to get water for himself and his beasts. And all this effort to collect a few postal votes! No doubt if the case had been properly presented and all this knowledge and information given to us the House would have been in a far better position to judge of the merits of the Bill. But the information is denied us and we have to imagine all these things for ourselves. Of course it is within the power of the hon. member immediately nominations close to despatch special messengers; but he could argue that it would take the whole of the 14 days to get out for the postal votes, to say nothing of returning with them.

Mr. Keenan: If I travelled by tram it would.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The hon. member has not given the House the information to which it is entitled. He must be in great fear that postal votes will not reach their destination in time, and that a large number of electors will be disfranchised. We are entitled to know the reasons for the Bill. The hon. member should have cited concrete instances demonstrating in what respect the present law was defective in the interests of the electors. The Bill was passed by another place in 18 minutes. That House was constituted to prevent hasty legislation, but its function has become ours to-night. This House has ceased to be a deliberative Chamber. Questions are decided before members come here, and so we have become merely a recording House. That is what happened in another place with this Bill. To ask us to deal with the Bill now, without time to consider it, is unreasonable. The votes that control the provinces are to be obtained in St. George's-terrace. The member for Pilbara and the member for Kimberley know the disadvantages of the men who live in the backblocks. The big difficulty is to get the votes at Assembly elections, and yet the two members most vitally affected are denied opportunity to consider the Bill or refer it to their electors. It is the first time since I have been in the Chamber that an adjournment has been denied, unless it was a matter of urgency on which the Opposition were previously consulted,

and the Opposition have always facilitated the passage of urgent legislation. We have not been consulted in regard to this Bill, but have been thrust aside. We are not going to be treated like that. There are enough of us here to air our views and to see that the rights of the people are protected. No one suggests that there is any necessity for this Bill. If members opposite are planning and scheming because of some impending election, we know nothing about it.

The Minister for Lands: We can take 14 days now if we like.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That is what puzzles me. What is behind the whole thing? Why this attempt to rush the Bill through? If the matter had been important why was not the Opposition consulted and asked to assist the Government to put the measure through?

The Minister for Lands: If you had asked for the adjournment you would have got it, I think.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The member for Fremantle asked for it, and I told him he could move the motion. The Leader of the Opposition does not take all the adjournments. The attitude adopted to-night must create suspicion in our minds. The Bill appears to be simple enough, but we have had no opportunity to determine whether it is so or not. We do need at least one night in which to look into it.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Do you want to refer the Bill to a select committee?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That may come yet. We have many ideas in our minds which will develop as we go along. The matter is one that will require time, though I promise not to delay. I think I can undertake to complete my investigations within the period of six months suggested in the amendment. Then I shall be able to arrive at the true reasons for the Bill, and to communicate them to the Chamber. At present, however, I consider hon. members justified in declining to deal with the measure.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 5th November, 1931.*

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

### BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX (No. 2).

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [4.34]: I am sorry the debate that took place yesterday did not take place to-day, which is the anniversary of Guy Fawkes Day. Yesterday's debate demonstrated the non-party character of the House, for the president of the Nationalist Association, the ex-president of that organisation and the ex-president of the Consultative Council took the Nationalist Premier to task for having carried out his election pledge to assist the man on the land by the removal of the land tax. At any future elections in this State the "Hansard" published this week will be referred to as indicating that this is really a non-party House. I wish to congratulate Mr. Williams on his speech. He took a broad view of this measure. Let me quote one remark by Mr. Fraser, who is reported in to-day's paper as follows:—

He (Mr. Fraser) was not prepared to give what the Bill offered the farmers, who were not deserving of that consideration.

Another quotation I would make is a statement by Sir Charles Nathan, who said—

Every honest worker in the community is doing just as much as the farmer for the country, no more and no less.

I say these statements are not correct. We have 50 per cent. of the State's population in the city. The country is carrying too many in the city, and 65 per cent. of the value of the last harvest was taken by the people of the city to enable them to live. Am I to be told that the shop assistant who works seven or eight hours a day, or the