that in a State with only one Legislative Chamber there was nearly a revolution not so long ago. I am astonished to find a legislator threatening this Chamber with a revolution from the people represented by him unless we do certain things.

Members: He did not say that.

Mr. LINDSAY: The member for East Perth said he had lived amongst those people and knew them. Seemingly he was just giving us a warning, not a threat, as to what we might expect. I do not believe there has been any great demand for the proposed change except from certain annual conferences; neither do I believe that the people of Western Australia desire the change. I am quite prepared to agree with the Premier, provided he will give a guarantee not to do as the Queensland Government have done, but to abide by the wish of the people. If the hon. gentleman does take a referendum, he will discover that there is no demand on the part of the people for the abolition of the Upper House.

The Premier: You say that the people do not want the Upper House abolished, but that it will be abolished if what the Bill proposes is done.

Mr. LINDSAY: It will be done not by referendum, but by the party the hon. gentleman leads, because abolition of the Upper House is a plank of the Labour platform. "If the franchise is so altered as to admit a number of Labour representatives to the Upper House, that Chamber will be abolished," is the argument. Just fancy a lot of hon. members elected for six years carrying a resolution to put themselves out of existence!

Mr. Kenneally. And in order to prevent that, the hon. member is prepared to allow a Chinese or a Japanese with £50 to have a vote.

Mr. LINDSAY: I am not prepared to allow that. If the present Government will bring down a Bill to prevent it, I will vote for the measure. I, as a private member, cannot introduce such a Bill. Again I ask, why should we of this party be twitted on that score? Why should the public be told that members of this party are more disposed to give the Legislative Council franchise to Asiatics than to Australians?

Mr. Kenneally: So you are.

Mr. LINDSAY: The passing of this Bill would not stop Asiatics from voting. I shall not support the measure; but I again state that when a Redistribution of Seats Bill on reasonable lines is brought down, I will vote for it provided I am still in the House.

On motion by Mr. Panton, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.25 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 27th September, 1927.

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

BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.

As to Reinstatement; President's ruling.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.31]: I give notice of my intention to move that the Order of the Day for the second reading of the Bread Act Amendment Bill be reinstated on the Notice Paper for this day week.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.32]: I ask for a ruling as to whether that notice of motion is in order.

THE PRESIDENT [4.33]: Mr. Gray last week asked me if it were possible to restore the Bread Act Amendment Bill to the Notice Paper. I am therefore prepared to answer Mr. Lovekin's question as to whether the notice given by Mr. Gray is permissible. The query I have to answer is whether a motion, which provides for the reinstatement as an Order of the Day of

the question, "That the Bread Act Amendment Bill be now read a second time," is in order. The matter was discussed, and on the 20th September the House divided, the question being negatived by eleven votes to eight. I have carefully studied the contention that the Bill has not been disposed of finally, and that the House, in effect, then decided only that the Bill should not be read a second time on that particular day, and that it is open to reinstate it as an Order of the Day at a future date. In order to arrive at a decision on this point, it is necessary to consider the Standing Orders of this House and the procedure of the House of Commons, as set out in "May's Parliamentary Practice." Our Standing Order No. 120 provides as follows:—

> Subject to Standing Order No. 178, no question or amendment shall be proposed which is the same in substance as any question or amendment which, during the same session, has been resolved in the affirmative or negative, unless the order, resolution or vote on such question or amendment has been rescinded. This Standing Order shall not be suspended.

It is unnecessary to refer to Standing Order No. 178 therein mentioned, as it does not, in any way, affect the question now under discussion. The question may be asked, "Is the reinstatement, as an Order of the Day, of the second reading of the Bread Act Amendment Bill, the reinstatement of a question that is the same in substance as a question which, during the present session, has been decided by the House in the negative?" It will be observed that the question previously discussed and decided was that the Bill should be now read a second time, which, in effect, means that it should not be read a second time on that particular day. Recognised authorities—May and Blackmore particularly—clearly lay it down that a negative vote on the question, "That the Bill be now read a second time," does not finally dispose of the Bill. May, 13th edition, page 390, says—

> The opponents of the Bill may vote against the question "That the Bill be now read a second time," but this course is rarely adopted because it still remains to be decided on what other day it "shall" be read a second time, or whether it shall be read at all; and the Bill therefore is still before the House, and may afterwards be proceeded with.

In Denison and Brand's "Decisions," page 40, it is stated—

> A Bill is not disposed of by the House declining to "now" read a Bill a second time . . . . . ,but it is competent to ask the House to name another day for the second reading thereof.

Blackmore's "Practice of the Legislative Council," page 134, reads—

> The opponents of the Bill may simply vote against the question for "now" reading the Bill a second time. But this course, even if successful, is less commonly adopted. For it still remains to be decided on what other day the second reading shall be taken, or whether it shall be read at all, and the Bill is still, therefore, before the Council.

Blackmore's "Practice of the House of Assembly," page 239, reads —

> The question "That the Bill be now read a second time" may be simply negatived. This course, however, does not settle the fate of the Bill, as it still remains to be settled on what other day the Bill shall be read, or whether it shall be read at all. Notice of motion may be given for the second reading on a subsequent day.

All the authorities are in accord that if the House desires to finally determine the fate of a Bill, the word "now" must be deleted, and "three months" or "six months" added. Our Standing Order 183 provides for "six months." The distinction between the practice and the Standing Orders (that no question shall be offered twice) lies in whether it is the same question. Going to the genesis of the matter, the House, after the first reading, "orders" that the Bill be made an Order of the Day for a subsequent sitting. It is, therefore, not a "question" (in the ordinary interpretation of the word) which is propounded from the Chair. It is the carrying out of the previous order, namely, that the second reading of the Bill shall be placed upon the Notice Paper for a particular day. The House may not be disposed to read the Bill on that particular day. In practice this frequently occurs, as debates are adjourned and Bills are not read on the days on which they are set down for various readings. The House impliedly decides that on some other day the Bill shall be read. If this can be, why may not the House say that the Bill shall not now be read a second time, but shall be read on some future date? May, 13th edition, page 390, states—

> The ordinary practice (to finalise the riddance of a Bill) is to move an amendment to the question by leaving out the word "now,"

and adding the words "three months," "six months," or any other term beyond the probable duration of the session. The postponement of a Bill in this manner is regarded as the most courteous method of dismissing a Bill from further consideration, as the House has already ordered that the Bill shall be read a second time, and the amendment, instead of reversing that order, merely appoints a more distant day for the second reading. The acceptance by the House of such an amendment, being tantamount to the rejection of the Bill if the session extended beyond the period of postponement, a Bill which has been ordered to be read a second time on that day three months is not replaced upon the Notice Paper of the House.

The order of the House to read a Bill is an order, not a resolution, nor a question, and is not capable of being rescinded except by an absolute majority and after seven days' notice. I would refer hon. members to Standing Order 121. It will, of course, be suggested that the proceedings would be interminable if members, time after time, could move in respect to a Bill on which a negative vote had already been cast. Such, however, could not happen. At any time the matter could be finalised by adding the words "six months." On the other hand, the practice laid down by May and Blackmore provides a remedy if, through some error, an important Bill be negatived on its second reading on a particular day without its being possible to restore it, except after a week's notice and an absolute majority vote. The possibility of a second or even a third attempt to carry a second reading would appear to be a lesser evil than the inconvenience that might jeopardise the passing of an urgent and far-reaching measure. If the House were being trifled with, short shrift would be given by a "this day six months" motion. On the other hand, important business might be facilitated by allowing a negatived Bill in such circumstances to be restored to the Notice Paper. Having regard to the phrasing "That the Bill be 'now' read a second time," there is a clear implication that if not "now," some other time is contemplated. Having in mind that the "this day six months" procedure for finalisation forms part of "Parliamentary Practice," I am convinced that a member is within his rights if the House negatived the second reading on a particular day—that is "now"—to substitute another day that might commend itself to the House. I rule that the motion is in order.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Hon. A. Lovekin and read a first time.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 21st September.

HON. E. ROSE (South-West) [4.49]: This Bill might be termed a hardy annual because almost every year a measure of the kind is brought before us. Under a previous Act the land tax was increased, but on top of that valuations in some instances have been doubled or even trebled. I wish to point out to the Government how heavily taxation bears upon the small farmers. A tax of 2d. in the pound does not sound very great, but when we consider it in conjunction with other taxes on the land, especially when the valuations have been so greatly increased, the burden is indeed a heavy one for the small landowners. Apart from the land tax of 2d. in the pound, the farmers in my district have to pay a vermin tax of ½d. to the Government. Then there are the road board rates amounting to 4d. in the pound, road board vermin rate of ¼d. and an additional tax for drainage wherever there is a drainage board. The multiplication of taxes makes the aggregate burden exceedingly heavy for small landholders. It is all very well for the Government to say that they have reduced income tax by 33⅓ per cent., but how many of the small farmers have any income at all? They do not benefit from that reduction. If we want men to remain on the land and develop it, the Government should assist them more than they are doing.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Do away with the land tax.

Hon. E. ROSE: I agree with the hon. member. I do not believe in the imposition of a land tax except on unimproved land. When a man is devoting his time and money to developing the land it is not right that he should be taxed on his energy. We are asking our people to settle on the land and we are bringing out migrants and asking them to develop the land, and yet taxation is imposed upon them before they receive any revenue from their holdings. That is a mistaken policy. The Government should review the incidence of taxation. Unfortunately we cannot amend this Bill. If it

were possible, I should like to have the Bill sent back to another place with a request that the land tax provisions be reconsidered with a view to affording relief to the small farmers. The Land and Income Tax Assessment Act was assented to on the 31st December, 1924, or nearly three years ago. This Bill has reached us very early in the session. I have no objection to that, but there should be no need to hasten the passing of the Bill, because we have all the requisite machinery for collecting the tax. The Act of 1924 provided for "a land tax at the rate of 2d. per every pound sterling of the unimproved value, as assessed by or under the said Acts, of all land chargeable with such tax." Previous to that we were paying only 1d. in the pound, and our valuations were considerably lower than they are to-day. I impress upon the Government the need for reconsidering this tax. If they cannot afford us some relief this year, I hope that next year they will endeavour to reduce the tax by 50 per cent., or better still, wipe out the tax on improved land.

HON. A. BURVILL (South-East) [4.53]: I am aware that it is impossible to amend this Bill in any way, but I wish to protest against the action of the Government in having refused to allow the Bill to be amended in another place. My chief objection is that previous to 1924 holdings valued up to £250 were exempt from land tax. That exemption has been abolished. There was also a provision that from whichever of the two taxes was the greater, the other should be deducted. That provision has also been cut out, with the result that the smaller settlers are severely handicapped. I realise that the small sums extracted from each landholder amount to a considerable total, but there are so many small sums that have to be paid by landholders. They have to pay road board taxes, wheel taxes, and vermin taxes. Apart from the halfpenny vermin tax imposed by the Government, many road boards also impose a halfpenny vermin tax, making the total one penny. At the time the land tax was imposed we were informed that the primary producers would receive the benefit in the shape of a reduction of railway freights. I asked the Leader of the House at the time whether that was so, and he replied that it was, but so far as I can ascertain there has been no reduction in the freights on produce. There has been a reduction of freight on merchandise, but that does not help the primary producer. Mr. Holmes has observed that the freight on cigarettes was reduced by 5s. per ton. That does not benefit primary production.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Primary producers smoke.

Hon. A. BURVILL: But the price of each cigarette would not amount to much. If freights on produce had been reduced to the extent of £45,000 there would not be so much objection to the tax. The increased land tax is a severe and unfair tax on primary production. When a man has 160, 200 or even 500 acres, his land stands to him in the same position as tools of trade stand to a blacksmith or a carpenter. The land constitutes his tools of trade. Yet he has to pay a tax on his land as well as the tariff charges on the implements with which he works the land. The multiplication of taxes is one of the reasons why people, especially the small settlers, are going off the land. The reduction of railway freights should have been applied in such a way as to help the small landholder. If the freight on superphosphate had been reduced, the benefit would have been felt by every farmer who was producing. It has been alleged that the reduction of freights on merchandise represented £45,000 a year. Had that amount been applied to reducing the freight on superphosphate, the Railway Department would have reaped the benefit, because more superphosphate would have been used and greater quantities of produce would have been raised for the railways to carry. Although it is impossible for us to amend this Bill, I hope the Government at an early date will afford us relief by putting us on the previous footing and reinstating the £250 exemption, especially in view of the fact that the country lands have appreciated 80 per cent., whereas the town lands have increased in value only to the extent of a little over 40 per cent. I trust that before the end of the session the Government will do something to relieve the small landholder who at present is so heavily taxed.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.2]: No person who has any consideration for his country will object to pay reasonable and necessary taxation. I take exception to people paying fairly heavy income tax and then being told by the Government, that that tax has been reduced by 33⅓ per cent. The words may be correct, but in practice there is a good deal of myth about it. To the small

man, that 33⅓ per cent. reduction is so infinitesimal that it is practically no concession at all.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Ninety per cent of the people do not pay any taxation at all.

Hon. W. J. MANN: That is quite true. To a big percentage of people it is no concession whatever. It is a concession perhaps to some of the wealthier men. I have not much to say in that regard, but I do think that when so much is made of the 33⅓ per cent. reduction, it sounds quite a big thing. The country expects a little more from the Government. Regarding the land tax, my opinion is that it is quite wrong in a young country like ours, where all the energies of the people are being directed towards bringing the lands from a state of nature into a condition of productivity, that as soon as a man improves his property, his taxation should be increased. I have nothing to say against an unimproved land tax. I believe it to be correct and quite the proper thing to impose such a tax in some instances. I would favour an increased tax on unimproved land —land that is being held up so that it cannot be used, as the result of which the owners are retarding the progress of the country. In a young country like this it is wrong that we should have an improved land tax, and I hope before the taxation measure is considered next year the Government will revise the whole of their taxation proposals and submit something that will be a little more in keeping with our particular position.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [5.5]: Mr. Lovekin was quite right when he said that this Bill should not be held over until the fate of the Federal financial proposals had been decided. The Estimates are in course of preparation and the Budget will be delivered very shortly by the Treasurer who will then know where he stands. It must not be forgotten that the Federal financial proposals are still in the air. They have to be agreed to by the Federal Parliament and all the States, and if any of the parties fail to agree the whole scheme will tumble to the ground. Mr. Lovekin said that Clauses 5 and 6 should be removed from the Bill, and I understand that he proposes to take action in that direction. Let me read the Solicitor General's view of the matter.

Clause 5 has been a provision of the Tax Acts since the Act of 1918. In 1922 it was made a permanent provision of the Assessment Act, No. 40, of 1922, Section 2. It has, however, been continued annually as a provision of the Tax Act, and its omission would lead to an inference that Section 2 of No. 40 of 1922 (Assessment Act Amendment) did not apply. By the Tax Acts of 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, and 1925 super tax was imposed. Therefore it was enacted in those Acts that for the purpose of Section 5 regard was not to be had to the super tax. In the Tax Act for 1926, and in this Bill, super tax is not payable. Therefore the reference to super tax is omitted from Clause 5. The reference to super tax relates to "income chargeable," that is to say, the taxpayer receives credit for the whole of the duty payable under the Dividend Duties Act.

In view of the antiquity of the section, is it worth while removing it? It is doing no harm where it is, and if it is wrongly there, it can have no effect. In the Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1921, Section 46 reads:—

Bills imposing taxation shall deal only with taxation, and any provision therein dealing with any other matter shall have no effect.

If Clause 5 should not be in the Bill—and we have been a long time finding that out—it is simply so much padding, but if it should be excised from the Bill after a lapse of several years, the implication may be that it should not operate in the Assessment Act.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You mean for the recovery of arrears.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: For every purpose. With regard to Clause 6, that appears to be in order. The collection of the tax is incidental to its imposition, and Clause 2 of the Bill sets forth that the measure provides for the taxation to be charged, levied and collected. Clause 6 therefore is in harmony with the principles of the Bill and one of the principles of the Bill is the collection of the tax. Mr. Lovekin wishes the figures prepared by the Under Treasurer in connection with the Federal financial proposals placed on the Table of the House. The Treasurer prefers that the presentation of the figures or other particulars connected with the agreement shall be delayed until the whole question is submitted to Parliament. That will be as soon as we get copies of the Agreement from the Federal Government. Mr. Glasheen complained about the increase of the rate of the land tax and the abolition of the exemption on agricultural lands. The matter was decided deliberately in 1924. A conference of managers, appointed by both Houses, was held on the Land and Income Tax Bill and a compromise was arrived at.

The Government agreed to abolish the super tax on land and incomes if the remainder of the Bill was accepted. The report of the managers was adopted by both Houses of Parliament, and although there is now criticism of what was done in 1924, I am not aware that on that occasion any member of this Chamber raised his voice in protest.

Hon. V. Hamersley: I did.

Hon. A. Burvill: We were promised a reduction of rates on produce.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The point is that your Government are taking credit for the 15 per cent. reduction.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We deserve credit. It could not have been done unless we consented. It was the result of a compromise. Mr. Glasheen said, "The reduction in railway freight did not reach the people who paid the increased tax." To a large extent, that is true. The metropolitan area pays 42.78 per cent. of the tax and is relieved only to the extent of £2,000. The people of the metropolitan area therefore, did not receive much benefit from the reduction of railway freights. I do not think that was the direction in which Mr. Glasheen's speech was trending. The re-valuations have added increased burdens. These burdens are due to appreciation in value of the farmer's land, and the prosperity of the wheat growing industry. I do not know why Mr. Glasheen should complain about that. The abolition of the super tax on land and incomes benefited farmers substantially. If the receipts were no more than they were in 1924, the Treasury would lose £80,000 a year by the abolition of the super tax. Mr. Glasheen states that the Premier promised that the equivalent to the increased land tax would be written back by way of reduced railway freights. What the Premier promised was that the increased revenue due to the increased rate would be so treated. Mr. Glasheen gives the figures used by the Premier, namely £45,000, and these figures clearly show that there was no deception. If the increase in the land tax, due to a revaluation, was taken into account, the figures would be greatly in excess of £45,000; they would be more like £145,000. Mr. Glasheen also mentioned the big exemption in connection with agricultural land in Queensland and he said that that was granted in spite of a terrible Labour Government. I will read to the House the actual position of the land tax in question—

Queensland Land Tax.

Exemption £300.

If taxable value is less than £500, 1d. in £.
£500 to £1,000—1½d. in £.
£1,000 to £2,000—1¾d. in £.
£2,000 to £2,500—2d. in £.
£2,500 to £3,000—2¼d. in £.
£3,000 to £4,000—2½d. in £.
£4,000 to £5,000—2¾d. in £.
£5,000 to £10,000—3d. in £.
£10,000 to £20,000—3½d. in £.
£20,000 to £30,000—4d. in £.
£30,000 to £50,000—4½d. in £.
£50,000 to £60,000—5d. in £.
£60,000 to £75,000—5½d. in £.
Over £75,000—6d. in £.

And in addition, on all undeveloped land, 2d. in £, and not subject to any exemption.

Super tax.—On taxable value up to £2,500, nil; £2,500 to £3,000, 1d. in £; £3,000 to £4,000, 1½d. in £; £4,000 and over, 2d. in £.

When land is used for agricultural, dairying or grazing purposes by the owner personally, the exemption in lieu of £300 will be—

Up to £1,500—all exempt.
„ £1,501—exemption £1,499.
„ £1,502—exemption £1,498.
„ £1,503—exemption £1,497.
„ £1,504—exemption £1,496.
„ £1,505—exemption £1,494.

And the exemption decreases so that for each £5 by which the unimproved capital value exceeds £1,500, the exemption is reduced by £6 until £2,500 is reached, after which no further exemption will be allowed.

Note.—15,606 land tax assessments were issued on land owned at the 30th June, 1926, and on which a tax of £404,488 was levied, made up of—

	£
Primary tax	272,927
Super tax	114,247
Undeveloped tax ..	17,314
	£404,488

In Western Australia about 45,000 taxpayers paid land tax totalling £146,851.

Mr. Seddon contends that the Government should make available each year portion of the money received from the Federal Government and set aside for assistance to mining. Mr. Seddon holds that we should extend relief to that industry without delay. Apparently he postulates handing out largess indiscriminately. At present, and for some time past the Government, in conjunction with the Federal Government, have been earnestly endeavouring to get some of these mining companies to formulate a scheme whereby they may save their own existence and bring about a resuscitation of their properties. Despite the efforts made

by the Government, the chief desire of these mining companies has been to seize all help offered, but to accept no responsibility whatever for their own salvation. When this attitude is dropped and a proper appreciation shown of the companies' responsibilities, as well as those of the Government, it will not be a difficult matter to allocate the balance now remaining in such directions as will, I trust, lead to a successful revival of the goldmining industry in Western Australia. Mr. Burvill referred to the exemption of £250 on agricultural land. That exemption was cut out in 1924 without very much opposition from this House.

Hon. A. Burvill: We were promised a reduction in produce freights.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Burvill said that a further reduction in the freight on superphosphates would be of assistance to the farmers. Let me tell the hon. member that the Railway Department is now suffering a loss of £120,000 per annum from the carrying of super at a reduced rate.

Hon. A. Lovekin: But it brings an increased yield, with consequent increased traffic for the railways.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is the lowest superphosphate rate in the Commonwealth. Several members questioned whether the farmers would derive any benefit from the reduction in railway freights. As the result of my consultation with the Railway Department about twelve months ago, I find that the agricultural industries have benefited directly to the extent of £15,000, the mining industry to the extent of £11,000, and the community generally to the extent of £17,000, while the metropolitan area has benefited to the extent of £2,000 by the reduction in freights between Fremantle and Midland Junction. Mr. Burvill must know that the substantial reduction is limited to certain articles, such as agricultural machinery, mining machinery, petrol, kerosene, flour for export, drapery, groceries, lubricating oil and farming and mining requisites. Tobacco and cigarettes may be regarded as groceries, but I do not think they come within the list. If they did it is doubtful whether anybody would derive any benefit from the reduced freight, because nobody orders a ton of tobacco at a time. However, that is the position. The farmer has derived a direct benefit of £15,000, and in addition shares in the £17,000 advantage enjoyed by the general community. Hon. members will find that information for themselves if they care to look up the report of the Commissioner for Railways. So it is altogether unfair to say that no benefit is being derived from the reduction in railway freights. Would those who contend that no benefit has resulted offer any objection to a return to the old level of rates? On their reasoning the farmer would still get his goods as cheaply as he is getting them now. Certainly the Government have derived no advantage through imposing that increased rate of taxation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—CLOSER SETTLEMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 20th September.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.25]: Probably I shall be repeating remarks I have made when similar Bills were brought down. On seeing a measure like this I am tempted to ask what is in the minds of those who are so anxious for this legislation. Already we have several Acts of Parliament under which properties can be acquired. Yet, in the course of a great many years, very few have been so acquired by the Government and cut up for closer settlement purposes. When travelling on the railways one often hears it asked why this or that piece of country seen from the windows is not brought under cultivation. I have frequently observed that the apparently neglected patches of country are either Government reserves or lands unsuitable for cultivation. In the Avon Valley are many areas not suitable for bringing under the plough. People rushing past those areas in a railway train do not realise that those who have held them for many years have a perfectly good knowledge of the best purpose to which to put those areas. Many of them are too rocky or too rough for cultivation and much better suited to the carrying of stock. When such lands are acquired with the idea of cutting them up for closer settlement, it is found that the bills for machinery repairs, and the slow work of putting machinery through those areas, render the cultivation of the land altogether too expensive. As I say, those who have held those lands for many years know what is best to be

done with them. It is claimed by many that the earlier settlers are holding up large areas, and that those lands should be acquired for closer settlement. My impression is that if there were buyers for those lands they could readily be acquired. I should prefer to see the Government, instead of bringing down a Bill like this, advertising in the newspapers, offering to purchase the so-called idle lands along the railways. It would have a much better effect than the Bill is likely to have. Nobody cares about holding property when there is a danger of Government interference with that property. I can foresee a certain amount of danger if we pass the Bill. I know of persons who are disinclined to put their capital into our lands because of the fear that the Government would be able to interfere with their operations. When a person takes up land with the idea of developing it, he generally has to utilise his own capital or persuade some financial institution to back him. He, therefore, wants to make preparations for 10 or 20 years ahead. He does not want it hanging over his head that his operations are likely to be interfered with, and his capital placed in jeopardy. The one idea uppermost in the minds of those who deal in country lands is that they shall be able to establish a home for themselves during their lifetime, and for those who come after them. These people represent the best asset Western Australia could have, and we should be very careful not to interfere with them in any way. If the Government feel they have not enough land available for settlement and require some of these properties, they can, under Acts already on the statute-book, acquire these properties, or there is nothing to prevent them from advertising their desire to purchase them. When the Government have a list of these properties they can send their board or inspectors to examine them. Such a policy would serve a better purpose than passing into law a Bill of this nature, with its atmosphere of compulsion and its interference with the operations of people who already know their own job very well. Many acres have already been offered to the Government. Within 70 miles of Perth it is possible to buy land at £1 an acre. Several properties have at times been purchased by the Government under different Acts. The names of these properties will be familiar to most members. They were cut up and settlers were placed upon them. The Government advanced considerable sums of money, but in some cases the areas are reverting to but a few holders. There are fewer people settled upon them to-day than when they were acquired by the Government. In one case the number of settlers has dwindled down from 15 or 20 to three. The same thing applies practically throughout the repurchased estates. If this Bill becomes law I presume the same thing will occur with the new properties that might be purchased and cut up. At the invitation of the Midland Railway Company some of us recently travelled through some very fine country along the Midland line. We visited one property that had been cut up and sold to returned soldiers. Many of the blocks are of only 600 acres in extent. These areas are too small for the men to hold. They cannot carry stock upon them. As I travelled through the country I remarked upon the absence of stock. The department insist that the settlers shall fallow their land, but that is useless work, because the settlers cannot feed off the rubbish and wild oats and other vegetation that ruin their crops. When these properties are cut up into small areas, the settlers cannot make a success of them. Another important point to bear in mind is in regard to the investment of capital in machinery. When the areas are small this constitutes a big handicap. A man is only wasting his time and money when on the one hand he is using a 5ft. or 6ft. harvester and he should be using a 10ft. harvester. On the other hand it is only waste of capital for him to buy a large machine with which to work a small area. Difficulties like that are constantly cropping up amongst those who are settled on small areas. It makes one sceptical about passing a Bill that is designed to burst up estates into small holdings. I know there is a clamour from various centres that properties should be purchased by the Government and subdivided for closer settlement. That clamour frequently comes from the local storekeepers and publicans. These people are very anxious to see more settlers in their centre, because they believe that increasing numbers will bring about more trade for them.

Hon. J. Nicholson: If the settlers do not make money, there will not be much trade for them.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: That factor does not influence these people. All they are looking to is that the Government shall finance the proposition, and advance money to the settlers for the improvement of their

holdings. By this means they think more money will be distributed in their centres, and that, temporarily at any rate, they will do more business. I do not think they are looking very much further ahead than that, or considering the actual results of the settlement or the welfare of the newcomers. We know that many of the properties that were purchased are falling into the hands of a few who know how to work larger areas on a more successful basis, and can derive greater advantage from them than other people. More experienced farmers know how to get a better return from larger areas and how to conduct their operations with profit to themselves. The Government have available enormous areas of land. There is a lack of the old pioneering spirit on the part of many young people. They claim that they want land, but are not prepared to take any of the risks or endure any of the hardships that the earlier settlers experienced. To-day the opportunities are far greater for those who take up Government land than existed in the early days, or even only a few years ago. The early settlers had not the same railway facilities or the same ports as the new settlers have. The steamers that come to our shores were not equipped with freezing chambers for the carrying of produce as is the case to-day, and the markets of the old world were not so readily open to Australian producers as they are now. To-day a very kindly feeling is exhibited by England and European countries towards Australian produce. The earlier settlers lost a large sum of money in opening up these markets, but they were paving the way for those who were to follow and have now firmly established Australian produce on the world's market. It is for that reason I claim that anyone taking up Government land to-day has an infinitely better opportunity to make a success of it than the earlier settlers had. Those who are taking up Government land to-day are doing so in large areas. I am inclined to think that more land is being held up from development by the new settlers than by the old. Within the last few months holdings ranging in area from 5,000 to 10,000 acres have been acquired. Anyone taking up Crown land to-day gets a 25-years lease. For the first five years he pays nothing except the survey fees. These facilities were not offering in the old days. Many people take up land to-day because they have to spend nothing during the first five years.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do you suggest limiting the scope of the Bill to such people?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: No. Very probably these people are taking up land for speculative purposes, and are doing more to hold it up than any other section of the community is doing. Through their inspectors the Government should be very watchful as to what is being done in this direction. Those people who are not actually entering upon their properties and developing them should be strictly dealt with. They should not be allowed to hold up land for five years and do nothing with it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Under this Bill the Government would be able to take it back immediately.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: There is an anomaly in the Government being able to hand out large areas to different people, who need spend nothing upon those areas for the first few years. It is in that direction, probably, that more land is being held up from actual development. Many of such holders have no backing, and are compelled to look to the Government for funds to develop the lands. On the other hand, landowners who wish to find buyers—and those are the people aimed at by this Bill, people who have held properties for years and have worked them, though probably not to the best advantage in the board's opinion—cannot sell their properties, for the simple reason that there are not enough buyers to go round. Some of those landowners may obtain relief from a measure of this nature. I fully anticipate that the holders of large areas who are desirous of selling will be quite ready to accept relief under this measure. To-day they are not advertising their properties for sale, because so much land is offering. Had the Government used ordinary business acumen all those lands would have been freely offered to them: and this, I claim, would be a much better proposition than putting a scare on the business community and on those who want absolute security as to property and investments before embarking upon land development. We know that the Government bought the Woongundy estate quite recently with the idea of cutting it up and the Mendel estate is another case in point. Indeed, these are only two out of many instances. For the

life of me I cannot perceive any urgent necessity for passing this measure. If the Bill passes the second reading, I shall move an amendment to provide for the right of appeal. I am glad to see that certain amendments made by this House in earlier Bills have been recognised by the Government and are incorporated, wholly or partly, in the present measure. The board under the Bill will include two officials who probably have never had to work land. They may have ideals as to land development, but they have no practical experience of the best method of working certain classes of country. Certainly they will have the assistance of a practical man with local experience. When the board report to the Minister, a copy of the report should be immediately furnished to the landowner affected. The Bill provides that on application the owner may obtain a copy of the report; but he does not know when the report is submitted. Therefore, the moment it is sent in, a copy should be mailed to him. Within 30 days of his receiving that copy he should have the right to appeal, and to put up his side of the case as against the report. He may see in the report various mistakes, and may be able to advance reasons in opposition that will be satisfactory to an independent tribunal. Britishers generally recognise the principle that a man should not be condemned unheard. Under the Bill the owner is entitled to go before the board, but he ought to have the right of appealing from a board possibly impressed or obsessed by the clamours of some local coterie who desire the expenditure of large amounts of Government money in the district irrespective of whether the expenditure will repay the State or not. We must recognise that under this measure a considerable amount of public money may be placed in jeopardy; and there is the risk that later on we shall be asked to enact further taxation measures in order to relieve a strained condition of the country's finances. I personally see no necessity whatever for the Bill. I regret that it has been introduced, and I shall oppose the second reading.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I desire to move the adjournment of the debate, and ask permission to make an explanation. I am quite prepared to go on—I have no desire to hold up any business—but I understand it is the wish of the Leader of the House, who is not well, that the discussion should not proceed further to-day. Accordingly I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and passed.

BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 5.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 27th September, 1927.

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

BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HOSPITALS.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Minister for Health, Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering clauses 2, 8, 27, 33 and 38; Mr. Lutey in the Chair, the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move an amendment—

That a new subclause be added as follows:—"'Hospital fund' shall mean a fund intended for the provision of hospital service for its contributors, and established and main-