

sincerely hope that the Government will do their utmost, as far as their means allow, to give effect to the Royal Commission's recommendations.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1. Dividend Duties Act Amendment.
2. Stamp Act Amendment (No. 4).
With amendments.

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [10.18]: I welcome the provision in this Bill to enable taxpayers in future to pay their income tax by monthly or other periodical instalments. This, I consider, will be of great advantage to taxpayers, especially in these times, when it is so difficult to find money to meet one's obligations in that direction. I do not, however, support the second proposal of the Bill, enabling the Commissioner of Taxation to instruct an employer to deduct from the wages or salary of the employee the amount that may be owing for income tax.

The Premier: I will agree to the deletion of that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If that provision is to be deleted, I have nothing further to say.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Pantou in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 55:

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 5 be struck out.

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

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Premier, so much of the Standing Orders were suspended to enable the Bill to pass through its remaining stages at this sitting.

Remaining Stages.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 10.26 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 19th November, 1931.

	PAGE
Papers: Irwin coal deposits	5328
State forests, revocations	5329
Bills: Swanbourne Reserve, 3R., passed	5329
Land Act Amendment (No. 2), 2R.	5329
Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment (No. 3) 1R.	5335
Electoral Act Amendment, Assembly's amendment	5335
Industries Assistance Act Continuance (No. 2), 2R.	5335
Forests Act Amendment (No. 2), 2R.	5339
Dividend Duties Act Amendment, Assembly's Message	5340
Stamp Act Amendment, Assembly's Message	5340
Electric Lighting Act Amendment, 2R.	5340

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

PAPERS—IRWIN COAL DEPOSITS.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.32]: At the request of Mr. Hall, I desire to lay on the Table the papers relative to the Irwin coal deposits. I move—

That these papers do lie upon the Table of the House.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—STATE FORESTS, REVOCATIONS.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.33]: I desire to lay upon the Table of the House papers relative to certain partial revocations of State forests under the Forests Act, 1918. In doing this I am departing from the practice that has previously been followed. When dealing with revocation motions I have explained the reasons why each of the revocations is made. As this would not in the present instance be sufficiently clear to enable members to judge of the merits of each, instead of following the usual practice, with these papers I am also laying on the Table full information about each revocation, so that between now and next week members will have the opportunity to give consideration to each case, and understand the reason for the excision in each case. I move—

That these papers do lie upon the Table of the House.

Question put and passed.

BILL—SWANBOURNE RESERVE.

Third Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.35]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. SIR CHARLES NATHAN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.36]: Circumstances have arisen that should be explained to the House, if only for the purpose of having them recorded. Since the Bill passed the second reading, certain representations have been made to me. I was approached this morning by a gentleman, who called himself the president of the progress association of the particular ward interested in this matter. He said that his association strongly protested against the alteration in the boundary of this reserve. I pointed out that this Bill had been before the House on two occasions within the last year, and that the association had ample opportunity to place its views before the road board and members of this House. I also said that as there had been considerable negotiations between the representatives of the four wards concerned, all of whom had agreed amongst themselves, I thought that at this time it was rather late

to enter any protest against the Bill. The claim of this gentleman's association was that a certain portion of the ocean had been unnecessarily cut off. I pointed out that certain blocks were still facing the ocean, and that there still remained means of negotiating with their own board as to whether or not that local authority should eventually sell the blocks. I merely make this statement by way of explanation, for I still propose to support the third reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and *passed*.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [4.40]: I desire to compliment Mr. Holmes on the excellent speech he made the other day. He put the case for the Kimberley settlers so clearly and sympathetically that it is not only unanswerable, but in my opinion undeniable. At the outset there are two matters to which I should like to refer. I think I am expressing the views of all members when I say, Mr. President, that your courtesy yesterday in inviting Sir Newton Moore to take a seat upon the floor of the House was greatly appreciated. We ought always to recognise a man who has done so much for our State, especially when he is a Western Australian born. When you extended to him the courtesy of asking him to take a seat on the floor of the House, we were all very pleased, and I am sure that he, too, was very pleased. The other point to which I will refer is that of the necessity for an assistant Minister in this House. I know of no circumstance that has ever arisen better than the present one to show how necessary it is to have such an assistant. This Bill was brought down by the Leader of the House, and an admirable speech was made by Mr. Holmes, but we find that the Chief Secretary is in such a position that he cannot answer the hon. member.

The Chief Secretary: I will answer him when I have the opportunity.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM: The Chief Secretary has not had the oppor-

tunity to answer Mr. Holmes. Instead of the Leader of the House being put in such a position that he cannot answer anything, we should have an assistant Minister here, who would give the answer himself, and by that means save a great deal of debate. I extend to the Chief Secretary my heartfelt sympathy.

The Chief Secretary: I do not want it.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Without an assistant Minister he is unable to do anything. We all have to make our speeches irrespective of what may be the opinion of the Government or the Leader of the House. I only wish to emphasise that some time ago I stated that we ought to have an assistant Minister in this House. Apparently it is now the universal practice for members to speak from voluminous notes. My memory is not quite as good as it was, and my eloquence is to some extent impaired. Between the two circumstances I am driven to make use of copious notes. So far as I can understand the position, the East Kimberley settlers are entirely dependent upon the Wyndham Meat Works. If anything happened to prevent them from working, the position of those people would be deplorable, and it would mean either absolute ruin for them, or the Government buying them out. The latter course would, I fear, be impossible. Next comes the question: How long can the Wyndham Meat Works continue in existence? According to the Auditor General's report, the indebtedness charged against the works amounts to £1,259,259. A practically unfinancial Government, as I think we can describe the present one, cannot long shoulder the burden of interest on that amount, together with the annual loss incurred on working expenses. Therefore, it behoves us to consider the future outlook very carefully. With regard to the Bill and the amendment to be proposed by Mr. Holmes, I find myself in a dilemma, and therefore I ask for the sympathy of both sections of thought in the House. I am opposed to expanding the deficit, and if the Government say they have no more money in hand and will have to swell the deficit in order to extend this extra consideration to the pastoralists, I am afraid I shall have to oppose any such step. The Government say they cannot afford any further relief. In that event, if I support Mr. Holmes in the action he proposes to take, I shall be voting

against my oft-repeated dictum that the deficit is too large and uncalled for, and that it should be largely reduced, if not cleared off. Therefore, I could not vote for the amendment Mr. Holmes is to propose. The other day I read an article by a banker, from which I shall quote the following brief extract:—

There is no surer way to national financial disaster than failure to balance the Budget. Invariably where a nation's credit has gone, you will find a record of Budget deficits. A country cannot live beyond its means.

That extract was taken from an article written by an eminent London banker in the best of English papers, "The Sphere." The Government say they cannot afford this extra relief. I am in a position to say that the Government can afford to assist the pastoralists. No better illustration of the value of my recent suggestions—all of which the Government have turned down and completely disregarded—could have been obtained in relation to the present situation. Who is the more worthy of support, the plucky pioneers in the pastoral areas, or an already highly endowed University to which £20,000 is to be given? Who is the more deserving of assistance, the men who are living in the tropics and suffering all sorts of discomforts, or a large number of well-educated, well-provided-for young men who are attending the secondary schools? Those schools should be suspended, thus making available £100,000 for the benefit of the pastoralists, the unemployed and the starving farmers. Then again, the Agent General should be retired, which would provide another £8,000 a year. That amount also could be utilised in helping the people I have referred to. Thus, want of funds is no reasonable excuse for the Government to advance. I reiterate my statement that the circumstances are so exceptional and of such a drastic nature that emergency action, however severe on some, should be taken for the assistance of those most deserving. I have been told—I hope it is not true—that the Premier has said that if the amendments suggested by Mr. Holmes are agreed to and that the reduction of rentals shall apply as from the 1st July last, the Bill will be laid aside. From what I have ascertained this morning, I can assure the Leader of the House that if that is the position, the Premier's reputation will be as good as lost.

These people require every consideration in view of their special circumstances. I have made my position quite clear. I intend not only to support the second reading of the Bill, but also the amendment to be proposed by Mr. Holmes. I trust that, with his usual ability, the Leader of the House will appreciate the strong feelings that exist in favour of the Government granting the assistance we seek. He cannot make the excuse that the Government have not the money. I have indicated where they can get it, but they are not game enough to endeavour to utilise the money available from those sources. They are too afraid of the next election. If the Government want money for this purpose, they can get it. Who are the more deserving, the struggling pastoralists or the well-endowed University? If the Government do not choose to act as I have indicated in the interests of the pastoralists, then they will deserve everything they get in the future. As to the Wyndham Meat Works, it is just a question as to how long the State will be able to continue operations. It is an expensive proposition, and on top of that I have been told that the stock available are not of such a good quality as will enable the meat, when frozen, to command what I would term good payable prices.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: You would not urge that as a fault of the Government!

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: No. Unless we can continue the operations of the Wyndham Meat Works, I do not know what will happen to the unfortunate pastoralists; on the other hand, unless we can secure good quality bullocks, I do not see how the works can be made a commercial success.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The cattle are there all right.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I am glad to hear that. I have been told that there are three conditions operating that make it almost impossible to get good cattle. I do not know whether that is correct.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is not true.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: If the meat works can be carried on at a profit, well and good, but if that is not possible and they cannot continue operating, then I am afraid the position of the East Kimberley growers will be hopeless.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [4.53]: I do not desire to detain the House for long in dealing with the Bill, but I congratulate the Government on introducing such a measure, which has been necessary for so many years past. The object is to help pastoralists, not only in the Kimberley divisions, but in other parts of the pastoral areas where the squatters have been experiencing most difficult times. Reference has been made to the remark sometimes heard that people have no time for the pastoralists who, in good periods, did not make provision to enable them to cope with the difficulties of adverse years. In my opinion, the squatters in the North have been in difficulties for many years. The man in the street does not appreciate the enormous difficulties that the pastoralists are faced with from time to time, and, for that matter, at all times. During prosperous periods, enormous sums of money can be borrowed for developmental purposes and for expenditure upon various public works. At such a time, the demand for cattle, due to the opening up of new stations, provided a means of ready relief to many pastoralists. There was a market for their surplus stock. What applied to the cattle stations applied also to the sheep stations. Nowadays that demand is not present. Owing to high costs and heavy tariff imposts on wire, windmills, galvanised iron and other requisites of pastoral propositions, people cannot afford to embark upon new station holdings, and therefore that outlet is not available for those who are now in possession of pastoral leases. The man in the street hears of wonderful prices being paid for wool and stock and imagines that the pastoralists must secure huge returns that are extremely profitable to them. The difficulties that confront the pastoralists are forgotten by the man in the street. With the turn of the tide, the expenditure of public money has ceased. It is not possible to borrow in order to embark upon station propositions. There is not now the outlet for surplus stock, for the demand has ceased. A large proportion of the stock on stations at present cannot be brought to market and the problem of successful running is a serious one both for cattle and sheep men. It will be pleasing to the squatters to know that they are to have some relief, not only in the Bill before us, which relates to rentals, but in connection with taxation, a Bill for that

purpose having been before us quite recently. I cannot quite understand the reason for the differentiation between the 40 per cent. in respect of East Kimberley and the 20 per cent. for West Kimberley.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Neither can I.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It may be said that East Kimberley has certain drawbacks compared with West Kimberley, but on the other hand, East Kimberley possesses certain advantages and that should compensate. I know of a number of pastoralists who have sent their cattle to the metropolitan market only to find that the depleted resources of the community here have not enabled prices to be paid to prevent losses being made on the consignments. If there is to be no outlet for surplus stock, then the condition of the pastoralists will indeed be serious. Pastoralists in East Kimberley can at least get rid of their stock, whereas it would not pay them to ship the animals out of the district. They can put them through the Wyndham Meat Works and convert them into a profitable marketable commodity. Balancing the advantages as against the disadvantages, I fail to see why there should be any discrimination between the two divisions of the Kimberley district. I hope as time goes on the Government will be able to see their way to make the same reduction for West Kimberley as has been made for East Kimberley. Some people claim that many of the holders of pastoral leases in the far North are absentees, but we are also aware that nothing has taken place in that part of the State for a number of years which has induced others to acquire properties there, and that should be a guide to the community as a whole that there is something pretty sad and serious in the state of affairs of those who are engaged in pastoral pursuits, realising also that there is no ready market, and that there has not been any for a number of years for the products of those stations. With regard to the rentals, they are to be arranged in future according to the price of wool. The rents of pastoral leases shall rise or fall at the rate of 6 per cent. for every penny increase, or decrease above, or below, 1s. per lb. in the price of greasy wool for the preceding season, the maximum increase or decrease being 30 per cent. That will apply readily enough to sheep stations, but I do not see how it will work out in respect of cattle stations south of the Kimberleys. The Bill

does not seem to take into consideration the cattle in those areas other than the Kimberleys, and I presume there will be some ready means of calculating the carrying capacity of the stations. I do not know how that is going to be worked out. We are aware that there are quite large areas in the southern part of the State where cattle are being run, and there may be some confusion even now. Some of the stations, I understand, are seriously affected by pleuro, and are finding great difficulty in realising on their cattle, by not being permitted to remove them from the station properties. If the holders of those areas do not receive some redress in regard to their rentals, their position will be extremely serious. Of course there may be something in the Bill that I have overlooked, and I would like the Minister to explain what the effect of the measure will be upon those stations running cattle south of the Kimberleys.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The price of cattle may come down and the price of wool may go up.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Exactly. Many cattle stations have been converted to sheep propositions, and it may also be that the price of cattle will rise. Cattle may then be better than sheep. There are times when it is difficult to dispose of cattle, and the rentals of the stations may have to come down. But we all sincerely hope that prices of both cattle and wool will go up and that the adjustments will be made on a satisfactory basis. The increase in the price of wool will relieve the position of the States to a far greater extent than will the proposal contained in the Bill. In the meantime, however, the station owners will be only too glad to get the suggested benefit. The other part of the Bill deals with an increase, at the pleasure of the Minister, in the area of the homestead farms, which at present is 160 acres. I have no quarrel with that: I understand there are cases where an increase from 160 acres to 200 or 500 acres might be permissible, and might prove a good thing indeed. But so far as I see there is no limit placed upon the area which may be granted, and it would be wise to fix a limit. There is a definite limit in the Act which fixes the area at 160 acres in the case of a homestead farm, but now we are giving an open charter to the Minister, and the area may be increased to 1,600 acres or 16,000 acres or even 160,000 acres. There

is absolutely no limit to the area, and it might not be wise to leave it open. The Minister smiles, but sometimes very big concessions have been granted just because of the absence of means to apply the brake. It will be too late when we discover that a mistake has been made. Some years ago this House had to adopt a very firm stand on this very question of fixing a limit—I refer to the Agricultural Bank Act—otherwise a very few would have acquired the whole of the moneys available. It would have been a difficult matter for the manager of the bank to combat all the claims that would have been put forward by bodies and individuals who would have advanced good reasons why large sums should have been granted to them. Exactly the same claims will be put up to the Minister for these lands, and he should have the protection afforded by a limit.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Why not double the 160 acres?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: There should be a limit, and I call attention to it because it is a serious matter. I shall support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.10]: The only part of the Bill on which I can congratulate the Government is the title. It says distinctly that it is an Act to provide for the adjustment of, and otherwise relating to, rental of pastoral leases. The proposal in the Bill does not go far enough. I congratulate my two colleagues, and particularly Mr. Holmes, on the splendid case they put up. They covered the whole ground. The pastoralists are entitled to more relief than it is proposed to give them under the Bill. All other sections of the community have been given relief under emergency legislation since last August, and the pastoralists have been asking the Government practically for a year past for some adjustment of their rents, and there is no reason why the Government should not have brought the Bill forward at an earlier stage of the session, and dated its operation from the beginning of the financial year, instead of the 1st January next. I have been told that in another place a member there moved for the insertion of this retrospective provision, and he was threatened that if the amendment was carried the Government would drop the Bill. That is a nice attitude for the Government

to take up! The suggested adjustment relating to the 12d. per lb. for wool is altogether too low. I cannot understand how the Government arrived at that value. When the leases were appraised the average price of wool was over 15d., and 15d. is the basis on which the adjustment should be made. Then there should be a 5 per cent. reduction for each penny decrease, and a 5 per cent. advance for each penny increase. That would be equitable. The Government started off on a wrong basis. It should have begun with the price at least 25 per cent. higher than the 12d. If wool increases in price, as we all hope it will do—and the Government are living in hopes that wool and wheat prices will rise—there will be no concession to the pastoralists at all, as the Government will be getting the benefit. For the past two years the pastoralists have been living on their capital and their credit.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You mean their debts.

Hon. G. W. MILES: No, on their credit. Their creditors have stuck to a lot of the pastoralists. As a matter of fact, a number of the pastoralists are to-day merely shepherds for the financial institutions and the banks. Therefore more relief should be given to them than is proposed by the Bill. Regarding the Kimberleys, both East and West should have the 40 per cent. reduction. We are told that the Government arrived at the basis set out in the Bill because West Kimberley is nearer a local market. The House knows what has happened to the West Kimberley cattle growers. They cannot get on the local market under present conditions, though they hope that those conditions will be altered. All their culls and old stock die on the runs, whereas in East Kimberley there is a chance to put them into the boiling-down section of the Wyndham Meat Works. A comparison of the rent paid on one side of the border with that paid on the other—15s. as against 3s. 10d.—shows the absurdity of the position. The pioneers of the North should be given more consideration. Those who govern Western Australia treat it as a South-Western question. They have no idea of the North, and no sympathy with the people there. The Government are out to get all they can from those people, who are given no relief whatever. As regards the tenure of the leases, relief might have been afforded

by a measure extending the period, as was done some years ago. Each year the asset represented by the lease depreciates, getting nearer the end of the term. It would have been far better to extend the leases than to grant the reduction of rents. I hope the Government will see that extension is granted before this Parliament expires. That would mean additional hundreds of thousands of pounds spent in the development of the North. I am indeed pleased to see that since the British general election anti-dumping legislation has been introduced in the Old Country, and that we shall have preference within the Empire. If Australians realise the position and modify their tariff, the top end of Australia may have a chance to develop. But unless something more than the present paltry proposal is put forward, we shall be pushed out of the North-West. As I have said here many times, we cannot hold it and keep it empty, as is the tendency of our legislation. Nothing is done to assist in the development of the North-West. As regards appraisal of pastoral leases, there are numerous anomalies. We are told that there is to be no reappraisal for 10 years, except as regards the Kimberleys in 1933. Let me point out that in the Kimberleys the pindan, or rough country off river frontages is appraised at the same rate as the better-class land on river frontages. These things have been brought to the attention of the Government, but Ministers do not seem to care a tinker's curse. They take no notice of people who know the country, but do take notice of the departmental officers. The fact that the representatives of the North have never been consulted by the present Government as regards the effect of legislation on the North, constitutes an insult. For stock leaving the stations in first-class condition there should be provided two or three additional bores or wells to enable cattle to reach the Wyndham Meat Works in decent condition. Neither the previous Government nor the present Government have been able to find money for that purpose, but £20,000 has been found to recondition the Canning stock route for the benefit of one station only. What is the opinion of the electors in the North? They say, "We are here, and we are being pushed out." And slowly they are. I know of pioneers who have been in the North for 40 years and have had to walk off their runs and abandon their cattle owing to the legis-

lation of south-western Governments. Here we have a proposal to grant a paltry relief of 20 per cent. in rents! In other parts of the State the Industries Assistance Board spend millions of pounds. Millions of money have been spent on group settlement. Glancing at the board's report, I see one of the methods in which the money of the State is squandered--

Many of the estates are in the position of having received advances against stored wheat considerably in excess of later market values, and the liability in that connection is bound seriously to militate against the department's as well as other creditors' prospects of account reductions from the coming harvest.

The taxpayers have to foot the bill, while Government departments allow the debtors of those taxpayers to speculate with their wheat. A private concern would compel farmers in that position to sell the wheat. The Government cannot run anything, and the sooner they get out of these affairs the better. They squander what money they get hold of, and for people whom they should assist they bring in a Bill of this kind. The pastoralists are treated like beggars picking up the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Who is the rich man?

Hon. G. W. MILES: The Treasurer, who says "Take it or leave it." If he had had the courage to act up to our opinions, this country would be millions of pounds better off than it is to-day. I reluctantly support the Bill on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread. Sir Edward Wittenoom has pointed out where economies can be effected, in reply to the plea that the Government cannot finance any further assistance. I may quote the views of another pastoralist on this Bill--

The plea that funds are so scarce that the Government could not grant this relief is discounted by the fact that the Government are sending men to the Eastern States to buy bulls, cows, pigs, etc., and carrying on far too many experimental farms. Pastoralists, farmers, and graziers have spent enormous sums in improving their herds; and it is far better for the individual to continue to do so, than that the Government should pander to the whims of their agricultural experts.

The Chief Secretary: The Federal Government made a special grant for those stock purchases.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The business could have been much better handled. We are told that this is a Government consisting of men with business acumen. I saw a Press statement recently regarding the ability of Ministers. There was a reference to the business experience of the Leader of this House. However, the Government advertise to the Eastern States that such-and-such an officer is going over there to buy special bulls for dairying purposes; and at once the prices go up. A private firm would handle the purchase in a businesslike way through stock agents, without letting sellers know that the Government are coming along with the money of the taxpayers to buy stock. However, this is the way the present Government of business men carry on the affairs of the country. I support the second reading reluctantly because I consider that the Bill will not give the relief that is needed by the pioneers of the cattle and sheep industry. In the fixing of the price of wool consideration has not been given to the fact that there is practically no market for surplus sheep in the North, and that there is not likely to be one for some years—until the sugar embargo is broken down. In that case there would be reciprocity of trade with the Far East. Do we find our Government taking any steps to urge the Commonwealth to relieve us of the sugar incubus? Trade reciprocity with the Far East is the only relief that can be given to the North. Numbers of pastoralists there have sent sheep south for sale, and have had to send cheques to pay expenses. To-day the poultry farmer growing roosters is better off than a sheep man. A dressed rooster to-day brings as much as one gets for a decent sheep. The relief proposed by the Government for a country as big as Queensland is a paltry £30,000! Yet we are threatened that if the relief is increased, the Bill will be dropped.

On motion by Hon. H. J. Yelland, debate adjourned.

**BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX
ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT
(No 3).**

Received from the Assembly, and read a first time.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Assembly now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Nicholson in the Chair; Hon. J. Cornell in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2.—Add the following words at the end of the clause: "and by adding to the said section a proviso, as follows: 'Provided that in the case of an election to fill a vacancy caused by the acceptance by a member of any of the principal offices of the Government liable to be vacated on political grounds, the date fixed for the polling may be less than fourteen, but not less than seven days after the date of nomination.'"

Hon. J. CORNELL. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Electoral Act provides that not less than seven days nor more than 30 days shall elapse between the close of nominations and the date of polling. The amending Bill, as it left this House, proposed to extend the minimum to 14 days. That has been agreed to by the Assembly, subject to this proviso.

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

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

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

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [5.35]: Although the Act has been in existence for many years, this is only the second occasion on which Mr. Seddon has seriously criticised the measure and the board. If there were any substance in the criticism offered by Mr. Seddon in opposition to the continuance of this legislation, surely it would find some manifestation in another place. I have looked up the discussions in another place on this Bill and the Bill of last year, that is to say, during the time the present Government have been in office. Parenthetically I have yet to learn that Mr. Seddon seri-

ously opposed the continuance of the Act while the late Government were in office. Last year the Premier introduced this Bill and the Leader of the Opposition, a very astute gentleman who loses no advantage, did not speak to it at all. Mr. Troy, an ex-Minister for Lands, spoke to it for about three minutes. That was the whole of the discussion in the Assembly on the Bill of last year. This session the Premier again introduced it, but neither the Leader of the Opposition nor Mr. Troy saw fit to offer any comment whatever. The only member of the Assembly to speak on this Bill was Mr. Doney, who contented himself with saying a few words. And on neither of those occasions did the man who was responsible for the inauguration of the legislation, Mr. Johnson, who was Minister for Lands when the Act was passed, offer any comments whatever. I am aware that at times Mr. Seddon has given the House some useful information on questions of finance, but I submit that on this occasion he was most unwise in his choice of subjects. I have gone to some trouble in endeavouring to determine the actual position of the Industries Assistance Board. Mr. Seddon last night said the Board had outlived its usefulness, and asked why it should be further continued, since the Agricultural Bank could do all the work undertaken by the board. I am told by the bank trustees that they would wipe out the Industries Assistance Board to-morrow if that were possible. But they say the continuance of the Act is essential.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is what they say every year.

Hon. J. CORNELL: They say it is essential in order to protect the 388 clients of the board.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Then why not let the Act go on for ever? Why bring up this Bill every year?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am told that one of the main difficulties in the way of funding those 388 clients is the fact that many of their creditors demand settlement in full. I am also told that there are many second mortgages to be considered as well, and that these two factors seriously militate against the funding of the clients of the board. The Industries Assistance Board have the handling and disposal of a client's proceeds, but when they fund a client he comes under the Agricultural Bank, and the board ceases to handle and distribute his

proceeds. All the security the bank then holds is that which has been given by statute. I am told that this funding has not taken place, because the position does not warrant the funding of 388 clients, which would give them the same deal as other clients have had. That is one of the reasons, but not the sole reason, why this Act must be continued. Certain things can be done under the Industries Assistance Act which cannot be done under the Agricultural Bank Act. The position of a client of the board is totally different from that of a client of the bank. Until the last session of Parliament, the Agricultural Bank had power to advance up to £2,000 in the No. 1 zone and £1,500 in the No. 2 zone. They were advances for fixed improvements. Then there was an advance of £150 for stock and machinery. There was a first mortgage for the main advance for fixed improvements, and a stock and machinery mortgage for the £150. The Industries Assistance Board went much farther than that. To say that what can be done under the Industries Assistance Act can be done under the Agricultural Bank Act is not correct, for it cannot be done. Until last session only first mortgages, and stock and machinery mortgages, constituted the protection of the Agricultural Bank. Last year priority was given to the bank over other creditors for advances for fallowing, for super and cornsacks, and insurance, and for one year's current interest. I am told that this year practically no fallowing loans have been repaid out of last year's crop, and that very little interest, current or otherwise, has been repaid. Why? Because the whole of the finances of the Agricultural Bank have been strained in order to carry on the great agricultural industry. I have already pointed out that the primary function of the Agricultural Bank is to secure improvements against its advances. Additional activities have fallen to the lot of the bank this year. The bank was called upon to find £160,000 in cash for super for farmers. Heretofore that was hardly a charge on the bank.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: And it will be made a first charge against this year's proceeds.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But that money had to be found and the industry would not have been able to carry on. On top of that 1,200 clients of the Agricultural Bank have been assisted this year by way of susten-

ance to keep them on their farms. That has involved an expenditure of over £30,000. The Agricultural Bank has no statutory claim for the £30,000. In addition, money for extra horses, even where a stock and machinery loan had been granted in full and for a hundred other odd things, had to be found. The Agricultural Bank has a statutory claim for the super, but not for the sustenance. But though the bank has a statutory claim, it has agreed to waive that claim in respect of fuel costs to the extent of 2s. per acre; it has agreed to waive its claim in respect of spare parts to the value of £10 per client; it has agreed to waive its claim in respect of cornsacks and allow merchants preference. I am only mentioning those things to show that the Agricultural Bank, owing to the exigencies of existing conditions, has practically extended the ramifications of the Industries Assistance Board in an endeavour to help its clients and to try to set the industry on an even keel. Merchants or firms who supplied the requisites I have mentioned are being given priority by the bank. If we contend that the I.A.B. should be wound up and that the assistance being granted to clients still on the board should be discontinued, we should be logical and say that the Agricultural Bank, in endeavouring to carry on the industry, has exceeded its powers and jurisdiction and should be closed up, and the industry with it. Let me remind Mr. Seddon what the position of the miners' settlement at Southern Cross would be if the I.A.B. were wound up. Owing to the exceptional circumstances and to the special assistance granted them, almost every one is up to or over the limit of advances allowed under the Agricultural Bank Act. There are only three ways of dealing with the situation. The Agricultural Bank trustees have taken advantage of the Industries Assistance Act and are continuing to help those miners. If they had not done so, they would have had to come to Parliament and ask for an amendment of the Agricultural Bank Act to bring their legislation into line with the Industries Assistance Act, so that the miners could be assisted. The other alternative would have been to say to the miners, "You are up to the amount allowed under the Agricultural Bank Act, and there is only one thing for you to do—walk off your

holdings." On those grounds there is justification for the continuance of the Industries Assistance Board. Now I wish to deal with the question of control. Mr. Seddon said that so long as the Act was continued, so long would the expense entailed in its administration and supervision continue. To-day I made a special request to the people charged with the administration of both Acts. I asked them to give me authoritative information of the actual position and the actual cost. From what I was told, the statement of Mr. Seddon is without substance. The trustees who administer the Agricultural Bank Act administer the Industries Assistance Act, and the inspectors who supervise under the Agricultural Bank Act supervise under the Industries Assistance Act. If the Industries Assistance Act were repealed, clients under it would have to come under the Agricultural Bank Act or go out of the industry altogether. If they were brought under the Agricultural Bank Act, the same trustees would administer their affairs and the same set of inspectors would make the inspections. I am informed that the repeal of the Industries Assistance Act would not add one penny to or take away one penny from the cost of administration or the cost of supervision. Consequently, we can dismiss that argument.

Hon. H. Seddon: That is not in accordance with their report.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I sympathise with the hon. member, but before he launched out as he did, he should have obtained information of the actual position from the men who could have supplied it. They would have been only too pleased to give him or any other member any information he required.

Hon. H. Seddon: Why do not they stand to their report?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member will agree that reports are sometimes capable of bearing half a dozen constructions. I am sorry if the hon. member put a wrong construction on the report. There is another phase. I have already mentioned that the Agricultural Bank trustees had either to let 1,200 clients of the bank walk off their holdings and starve, or break through the Act and give them £30,000 by way of sustenance. That is where the Industries Assistance Act has come in. The Finance and Development Board Act provides that cash

advances may be made to Agricultural Bank clients under the Industries Assistance Act or under the Agricultural Bank Act. As regards the 1,200 settlers who have drawn sustenance from the Agricultural Bank, the trustees signed the certificates, because the Industries Assistance Act gives the Agricultural Bank trustees the right to handle the whole of the proceeds of any client, whereas the Agricultural Bank Act does not. If ever the time was inopportune for suggesting the repeal of the Industries Assistance Act, it is the present. Not a member will dispute that the men engaged in the agricultural industry and the men engaged in the pastoral industry are faring worse to-day than they did in 1915 when the original measure was passed. When the Industries Assistance Act was passed, the war was in progress. There was no shortage of money, but drought was the main reason for passing the measure. Commodity prices were not in the balance. Last year we had the most bountiful crops that the State has ever harvested, and we received for the produce the lowest price in money values experienced in the history of the industry. Failure of crops was responsible for the introduction of the Industries Assistance Act; failure to secure adequate prices for our produce has made the position of the producers worse than it was in 1915. Another point to be borne in mind—and mercantile members will bear me out in this—is that we are not yet out of the wood by a long way. It is quite on the cards that the financial strain of seeding for the next harvest may be cast much more heavily upon the Government and the community than it was this year. If things go back instead of ahead the mercantile people cannot give the accommodation next year that they gave this year. I am satisfied Sir Charles Nathan will endorse that statement. Consequently if we are to carry on the agricultural industry we shall have to pool the individual credit of the State. What would that mean? It would necessitate falling back on the Industries Assistance Act, as it operates to-day, with some modification, or amending the Agricultural Bank Act accordingly. We could not give settlers adequate credit unless we had some institution to handle the proceeds and make the distribution. Mr. Seddon wanted to know why a large number of farmers should be carried on under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act, while others were

carried on by the board. Wherever possible the bank has signified its aversion from clients going under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act. The bank is not responsible for their coming under that Act. Other creditors have forced clients of the bank to come under the Act and the responsibility is on those creditors, not on the Agricultural Bank. Why was the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act passed? My impression is it was passed for the attainment of two objects. In the first place it was designed to prevent more people, mainly Agricultural Bank clients, from being forced into a mess by being brought under the Commonwealth Bankruptcy Act. That was the fundamental reason for the passing of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act in these exceptional times. People who did not know the nigger in the woodpile as contained in the Federal Bankruptcy Act, holus bolus put men, who were not under the Industries Assistance Board, under the Commonwealth Bankruptcy Act, and appointed trustees in Perth to manage their properties. Merchants who have had experience of the broad and of trustees appointed under the Commonwealth Bankruptcy Act will have only one verdict to offer, namely, a preference for the Industries Assistance Board as against the trustees.

Hon. Sir Charles Nathan: Not before the director.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I mean before any trustees appointed under the Commonwealth Bankruptcy Act. If the merchants desired to go the whole hog they could upset the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act. They have, however, considered it the lesser of two evils. They have no other course than to put the settler into No Man's Land, for under the Federal Bankruptcy Act and trustees appointed thereunder he could not escape from his position. He might as well walk off his property. The other reason for passing the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act was an endeavour to get all creditors mutually to agree to assist the settlers to carry on in the hope that they will get out of the wood. These are the two fundamentals behind the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act. I do not think it was intended by the framers of that legislation that any client of the Industries Assistance Board should be taken away and brought under the Act. If that were done it would add greatly to the expense. The cost of administering the

Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank conjointly would be in no way reduced if the Industries Assistance Act were not continued. I would not suggest that the passing of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act has not added to the expense from the point of view of the national exchequer, because a new department has been created, and some of the officers of the Agricultural Bank have been transferred to that department to run it. Every client who is taken away from the Industries Assistance Board and brought under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act must add to the administrative costs under that Act. I see no advantage in taking men away from the board and bringing them under the Act. I come almost into daily contact with the officials responsible for the Industries Assistance Board, the Soldiers' Settlement Scheme, and the Agricultural Bank. None of these officials wants the Industries Assistance Board; none of them wants to make advances outside the original purpose of the Agricultural Bank, or outside the original purpose of the Soldier Settlement Scheme. All are as anxious, as administrative officers who are charged with the duty of running these concerns, to take the minimum amount of risk and incur the minimum amount of expenditure as are any members of Parliament. They are victims of circumstances. Very few people realise either the value or the importance of the work these officials are doing. I know that in the course of his remarks Mr. Seddon had no desire to reflect upon the integrity, honour or capacity of those who are undoubtedly faced with a difficult task. I am not going into a long analysis of figures. I have, however, taken from the last report, under the heading of "Annual expenditure in the matter of assistance to settlers," figures covering the years 1916 to 1931 inclusive. The total amount representing assistance afforded under the Industries Assistance Act is £3,037,393. I now come to the losses. I find that the accumulated losses amount to £748,472. When we regard the losses that have been incurred under the group settlement scheme, and compare these with the accumulated losses under the Industries Assistance Act, we can only marvel that the loss under the latter scheme has been so small. Over a period of five or six years, 3½ to 4 million pounds have been

written off group settlements. The whole purpose of the Industries Assistance Act was to help the agricultural industry in its infancy as a wheat-growing industry, to exist and carry on until better days arrived. No set of figures can adequately set out the big indirect gain which has accrued to the agricultural industry from the Industries Assistance Act, and as has been shown, the loss incurred is not more than £748,472. It is from that point of view alone that we should regard the whole situation. I venture to say that had there not been an Industries Assistance Board, or an Agricultural Bank, and had no measure of assistance been extended to farmers such as has been extended, Western Australia would not have been in the proud position of having produced 52 million bushels of wheat last year. Whilst I would welcome the day when everybody would have paid his just debts under the Industries Assistance Act and the Agricultural Bank Act, I think I have made out a case for the passing of this Bill. Not only is it necessary that it should be passed, but imperative.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Nathan, debate adjourned.

BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [6.9] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to amend Section 41 of the Forests Act, 1919, as amended, to permit the Treasurer to make use of certain moneys coming to hand in this financial year for the regrowth of sandalwood. Under Section 41, three-fifths of the net revenue of the department must be placed to the credit of a fund for the improvement of the forests, and that direction applies also to revenue derived from the taking of sandalwood.

In the 1924 session an amendment was put through deleting the provision so far as it related to sandalwood, and a special provision was inserted setting aside 10 per cent. of the net revenue from sandalwood or £5,000, whichever was the greater, to be applied to the regrowth of sandalwood. Subsequently and for some time experiments were carried out in the regrowth of sandalwood. Although the department was very successful in the growing of

seedlings it had to suspend the experiments because it was found that rabbits were destroying the young plants. Last year Parliament decided that the fund was to receive no contribution for the regrowth of sandalwood, and that the moneys coming to hand for that purpose should be diverted to general revenue. That direction was to apply for one year only and it expired on the 30th June last.

The Government now desire to continue that procedure for another year, because, for the time being, work in connection with the regeneration of sandalwood has been suspended. The sandalwood fund is already in credit to the amount of £4,857 14s. 10d., and that amount is quite sufficient for the immediate purposes of the fund should it be decided to continue the experiments in the regeneration of sandalwood. In the circumstances there is no need to place more moneys to the credit of the sandalwood fund, and it is considered that the Treasurer should have the use of the further revenue from sandalwood to meet the difficulties of finance.

The amount collected from sandalwood last year totalled £5,380, and the Treasurer had the use of it for general purposes. The balance of £4,857 14s. 10d. in the sandalwood fund will remain in the fund for sandalwood work during the year, and it is proposed that only the additional revenue coming to hand should go to the Treasurer until the 30th June next.

As distinct from the sandalwood fund, there is a general fund for forest improvement and re-forestation, to which three-fifths of the revenue from forests generally is still being placed and used from time to time in re-forestation work. The moneys in that fund are being utilised as contemplated by the Act, and this Bill in no way seeks to appropriate them for other purposes. It is now apparent that, if sandalwood is to be grown, it will have to be protected from the ravages of rabbits, and that cannot be done in the areas suitable for its re-growth except at great expense for fencing. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—DIVIDEND DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read, notifying that it had agreed to Amendment No. 2 made by the Council, but had disagreed to Amendment No. 1 for the reason set forth.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read, notifying that it had agreed to Amendments Nos. 1, 2, 5-12, 14-20 made by the Legislative Council, but had disagreed to Amendments Nos. 3, 4, and 13 for the reasons set forth.

BILL—ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [6.14] in moving the second reading said: The object of this Bill is to amend the Electric Lighting Act, so that local authorities will have power to permit the carrying of mains through their districts to other districts for the supply of electric light. Under "The Electric Lighting Act of 1892," local authorities have power to make contracts with persons or companies for the supply and reticulation of electric light to the citizens of their districts, but they have no power to allow persons or companies to carry mains through their territories for the supply of electric light to the citizens in the districts of other local authorities. To overcome that absence of authority, the Bill proposes to allow local authorities to make contracts for the supply of light under the original Act, and to enable way-leave to be given for electric light mains to another district, up to a period of 50 years, with the consent of the Governor in Executive Council. An example of the position proposed to be met is furnished by the desire of some local authorities situated at considerable distances from Collie to obtain current for their ratepayers from the Collie Power Company.

At present, unless such local authorities are contiguous to the Collie Municipality, it is impossible for them to make a contract with the company referred to. The Bill, if passed, will remove that difficulty, and will

enable the intervening local authorities to grant way-leave to the Collie Power Company for 21 years, and up to 50 years with the approval of the Governor in Council. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir William Lathlain, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 19th November, 1931.

	PAGE
Leave of absence	5341
Bills: Tenants, Purchasers, and Mortgagors' Relief Act Amendment, IR.	5341
Licensing Act Amendment (No. 6)—leave to introduce, IR.	5341
Industrial Arbitration Act (1930) Amendment, IR.	5342
Dividend Duties Act Amendment, Council's amendments	5342
Stamp Act Amendment (No. 4), Council's amendments	5343
Companies Act Amendment, Com.	5347
Debt Conversion Agreement (No. 2) 2R.	5349
Swanbourne Reserve, returned	5350
Secession Referendum, Message, 2R.	5350
Motion: Agricultural Bank clients, to inquire by Royal Commission	5360

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Panton, leave of absence granted to Miss Holman (Forrest), Mr. Lutey (Brownhill-Ivanhoe), and Hon. T. Walker (Kanowna) for three weeks on account of ill-health.

BILL—TENANTS, PURCHASERS, AND MORTGAGORS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Attorney General, and read a first time.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 6).

Leave to introduce.

MR. H. W. MANN (Perth) [4.37]: I move—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend Section 62 of the Licensing Act, 1911.

MR. PANTON (Leederville) [4.38]: I oppose the motion. The time has arrived when this House should take a stand in the matter. The proposed Bill is to amend Section 62 of the Licensing Act, a short section reading—

(1) On the application of the holder of a provisional certificate, or any other fit and proper person, at any quarterly sitting of the Licensing Court made within the time specified in such certificate, and on proof of the performance of such conditions, if any, as are imposed by the certificate, the applicant shall be entitled to the license. (2) The application shall be made in the same manner as provided in the case of applications for new licenses, and the like procedure shall be observed.

Last Thursday night this Chamber in no uncertain manner decided against the principle of increasing the time for provisional certificates. In Committee, only the short title of the Bill remained—a happening unique, I believe, in the history of this Chamber. Surely Parliament should not be asked to stultify itself after a lapse of three or four days by agreeing to a principle so emphatically disagreed to previously. The hon. member is no doubt within his constitutional rights in introducing practically the same Bill twice in one session. However, it is making a farce of the procedure to introduce this Bill empowering the Licenses Reduction Board to grant unlimited time in respect of provisional certificates, seeing that the House has already decisively rejected the principle. The time of the Chamber should not be wasted on this further Bill. I hope hon. members will stand to their guns.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: We do not yet know what this proposal is.

Mr. PANTON: The nature of the proposal was well known at the time the previous Bill was dealt with. The language of the section now proposed to be amended deals with the same matter. I shall certainly divide the House on the question.