

so stated? As it is worded, the Standing Order is most confusing. However, that is the interpretation I put on it.

Hon. P. Collier: In view of the fact everybody claims they want the matter cleared up, why the need for all this difference of opinion?

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): There is a matter of principle involved.

Mr. PIESSE: Surely I have as much right to express my opinion and to place my interpretation on the Standing Order as the hon. member? I say that according to the reading I place on the Standing Order it is intended that Mr. Speaker shall have power to expunge or amend any motion.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [9:8]: I should like to draw the attention of the House to the marginal note against Standing Order 106. From this it appears to me clear that there must be unbecoming expressions before any motion may be expunged. As one of those, Sir, who helped to place you in the Chair I take it we must endeavour to uphold you in your position. My conscience, however, will not permit me to vote for this motion, although as I have said it is clear to me there must be unbecoming expressions before a motion may be expunged. As a young member of this Chamber I have heard Standing Orders 149, 126, and many others quoted, and it has struck me as a splitting of straws. As the comic song says, "I dunno where I are." It is plain to me from the marginal note that before a motion may be expunged, either by yourself or by the House, it must contain something of an unbecoming nature. I have no more to say, but I do feel that members have not taken that notice they should of the marginal note. I can place no other interpretation on the Standing Order.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	17
Noes	..	..	..	11
Majority for	..	..	..	6

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Foley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Green	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Hudson	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Connolly	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. George	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Piesse	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED FROM THE COUNCIL.

- 1, Sale of Liquor and Tobacco.
 - 2, Footwear Regulation.
- Without amendment.

House adjourned at 9.15 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 1st March, 1917.

	Page
Bills: Health Act Amendment, 1R.	2098
Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, 3R.	2007
Friendly Societies Act Amendment, report	2007
Kingia Grass Tree Concession, sel. com. report	2007
Enemy Subjects Employment, 2R.	2009
Mental Treatment, 2R.	2010
Industries Assistance Act Amendment, 2R.	2016
Apprentices, 2R.	2016

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

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Colonial Secretary and read a first time.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Report adopted.

BILL—KINGIA GRASS TREE CONCESSION.

Consideration of Select Committee's Report.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan) [440]: In moving, more or less formally on this occasion, that the report of the select committee be adopted, I do not intend to take up the time of the House at all. Mr. Ewing has on the Notice Paper an amendment to the motion to which I have not the least objection. In order that everybody may be treated fairly, and the evidence which was not available when the committee reported, although ample time was accorded to those who wished to give evidence before the committee to do so, may be forthcoming, I am prepared—and I think my fellow committeemen are also prepared—to accept the amendment that this Bill should, so to speak, be recommitted to the select committee. On this occasion, therefore, although I shall have a good deal more to say when this evidence is taken, I beg formally to move—

That the report of the select committee be adopted.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [441]: I am pleased to hear the remarks of Mr. Kingsmill, who is chairman of this select committee, and I do not think any remarks from me are required at this stage except to move the amendment standing in my name. I am satisfied that there is certain information which may, or may not, be of value to the select committee. When that information has been placed before the committee, their report will either remain as it is now, or perhaps be amended. I therefore move an amendment—

That the report be referred back to the select committee for the purpose of their taking further evidence which is now available, and reporting thereon on or before the 7th of March next to the

House, the committee for this purpose having all the powers previously conferred upon them when originally appointed.

With regard to this amendment, however, I am afraid that the date for reporting to the House, namely the 7th March, is rather too soon, and perhaps I had better alter it to a later date.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [442]: I second the amendment.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan—on amendment) [443]: I do not think it is necessary to alter the date. We have at least one more witness to examine and possibly two. We also have certain premises and plant to inspect which were not available for our inspection previously. It is quite possible that we may not be able to report by the 7th March. If that is so, as chairman of the select committee, I promise that I will not apply for any unnecessary extension of time.

Amendment put and passed; report referred back to the select committee.

BILL—ENEMY SUBJECTS EMPLOYMENT.

Second Reading.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [445] in moving the second reading said: I do not intend to delay the House long. I have to thank the leader of the House for giving me, a private member, an opportunity of moving the second reading of this Bill so soon after I had announced my intention of introducing it. I trust that the kindness which has been extended to me by the leader of the House will also be extended to me by other hon. members. The Bill is one to prohibit the employment of enemy subjects, and we have a precedent for it. In the last session of Parliament, or the session before, the Seaddan Government so amended the Act relating to public servants as to provide that, should necessity arise, the services of any person who at that time was or had at any time been the subject of an enemy country should be dispensed with. There is no need for me to go into the intricacies of the

methods that would have had to be adopted for getting rid of public servants if that amending Act had not been passed. I believe I am correct in saying that on one occasion the Seaddan Government put that amending Act into operation. With the advent of the present Government it was clearly laid down as part of their policy that they would give effect to that statute, and that they would go further by asserting their rights as common employers to decide whether or not enemy subjects should be employed in the Government service. It has been decreed by the Government that a public servant who is, or at any time has been, the subject of an enemy country shall not be employed by the State. I am not in accord with the Government in all their intentions; I think that in regard to a person who has taken the oath of naturalisation and thereby has become a citizen of the Commonwealth and incidentally of the United Kingdom, there should be a good and valid reason advanced before dispensing with his services. I think a naturalised person, who is a citizen of the Commonwealth, should be given an opportunity to prove that he has not done anything detrimental to Great Britain or to the Allies. However, the policy of the Government is what we know it to be, and they must stand or fall by it. All I can do is to venture to express a different opinion which I have done on two occasions. To use an old phrase, it will be their own funeral if they are defeated at the elections on this question. I congratulate the Government, however, in this respect, that they are carrying out what they said they would do. Hardships have been inflicted, and as a member of this House I have on one or two occasions protested, but it being the policy of the Government not to employ this class of person, I do not think any member will charge me with inconsistency when I say that since my advent into this Chamber I have always advocated that the Government should be a model employer. The Government, having declared that these people are not desirable as employees, the result will be that other people will have to employ them or else they must, in many instances, face starvation. When a Government declare by the introduction of

a law that such people shall not be employed, it is logical that it should be clearly set forth in the same statute that no other person shall employ them. If my logic is at fault I will stand correction, but as it appears to me I can see no other outcome. To ensure this we must pass the necessary law, and provide as well for penalties for any breaches of it. The Bill which I am submitting provides that no person shall employ anyone who is a subject of a country now at war with the United Kingdom. A subject of an enemy country is a person who has no law in this State. He is not a citizen and there are no laws under which he can appeal; he is really a man without law. All our laws can be enforced against him, and I think Mr. Sanderson will bear me out when I say that if an enemy subject attempts to put our laws into motion he can immediately be put out of court because he is not a subject of this country. I have stated that probably some of these enemy subjects would, by the action of the Government, be brought face to face with starvation. Not long ago Mr. Holmes said that all enemy subjects should be interned. There are many of these people in the electorate which I represent, and overtures have been made time and again to the Federal authorities that these people shall be prohibited from being employed on the mines, and that the Federal authorities should take them under their care and protection. This, however, has not been done, and I claim, therefore, that Western Australia can constitutionally move, if it desires. I venture to say that the passing of this Bill will meet with general commendation, I should say from at least 80 per cent. of the citizens of the State. It will not be the first time that the State has had to move to compel the Federal authorities to act. There is another aspect, and a vital one, which appeals to me in this matter. The position is that to-day we are fighting the greatest war in history. We have the spectacle in the Homeland of every man almost stripped and fighting to a finish. Appeals are being made throughout the length and breadth of the land for reinforcements. I say it, and without egotism, that I have done as much in the way of recruiting as any man, and it is generally recognised that the Golden Mile has done better on a

population basis than any part of the Commonwealth, and is still doing better at the present time in the way of providing reinforcements than any other part of the State. We have had to work under great disadvantages, for, right there in our midst there are no fewer than 250 enemy subjects employed on the mines of the Golden Mile.

The Colonial Secretary: Not naturalised?

Hon. J. CORNELL: No. The position is that we are asking the men to reinforce our soldiers at the Front. Thousands have gone and left their wives and families behind, and yet we find the spectacle of so many people of enemy origin, not naturalised, engaged at work and in some cases British subjects walking about. What can we say to a man when we ask him to enlist and he replies, "If I enlist an enemy subject who is not naturalised will get my job."

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: I thought there was a shortage of labour on the gold-fields.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There is a shortage of labour throughout the Commonwealth, but I claim to have taken as much interest in this war, and taken it as seriously as any man in the community. In fact I have taken it so seriously that I have enlisted myself. Hon. members must get it out of their minds, if they want to see this war fought to a successful conclusion, that it is possible to carry on business as usual. It cannot be done. The first essential now is—and this is on the authority of the Army Council of Great Britain—that reinforcements are required, the definite quota having been laid down. I have heard the specious cry that our industries must be kept going, but the sooner Australia realises, as Great Britain has done, that if it comes to a question of closing down certain industries for the purpose of allowing men to go to the war, the better it will be for everyone. I am convinced that there are only two logical aspects on which hon. members can attack this Bill. One is that enemy subjects have a right to live and a right to work. The other is that by the passing of this Bill we will bring about a dislocation in industry. So far as the enemy subjects now employed keeping industries going their number is infinitesimal. I recognise that despite the iniquity prevailing to-day, the manhood of

the State will come forward and supply Western Australia's necessary reinforcements. By doing that they will dislocate industry, which will mean, in turn, that some of those left behind will be thrown out of work. It is detrimental to recruiting that enemy subjects should be allowed to take the positions of men who have gone to the Front, and keep out of work Britishers who for one or another reason cannot go to the Front. The House will realise the necessity for the Bill. If it be passed, the State will thus indicate to the Commonwealth that it must step in and treat enemy subjects in accordance with the rules of international warfare.

Hon. J. Duffell: Does this include naturalised subjects?

Hon. J. CORNELL: No, the Bill provides that one month after the passing of the Act no person shall employ any enemy subjects in any capacity whatever. The definition given of enemy subjects is "Subject of a country with which the United Kingdom is at war." That definition was drawn up by the Crown Solicitor, and is on all fours with that in the Public Service Act. The onus of proof that an employee is a naturalised person is thrown upon the employer. The penalty for breaches of the law is £100. It may be argued that this is a war-time measure, but I submit there is no need to insert a special clause limiting its operation to the period of the war. The very definition given is sufficient to limit the operation of the measure to the period of the war. Immediately peace is declared, although the Act will continue to remain on the statute-book it will automatically cease to be operative. If another war were to break out in a few years time the Act would automatically apply again. I have pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary debate adjourned.

BILL—MENTAL TREATMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.5] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short

but very necessary measure which we have been requested by the Commonwealth military authorities to enact. Towards the end of last month the Prime Minister, at the instance of the Treasurer of the Commonwealth, wrote drawing the attention of the State authorities to the advisability of making special arrangements for the treatment of returned soldiers suffering mentally. The Prime Minister said—

I have the honour, at the instance of my colleague the Treasurer, to draw your attention to the advisability of making special arrangements for the treatment of returned soldiers who are suffering mentally. It is understood that in each State except Victoria it is necessary that a certificate of lunacy be obtained before any person can be admitted into a mental hospital. This is undesirable, and I shall be glad if action can be taken in your State similar to that which is carried out in Victoria.

The Bill has been drafted on the Victorian Act. It has no other object than to permit the treatment of mentally afflicted soldiers without their having to be certified to as being lunatics. As hon. members will see by a perusal of the Bill, there is ample protection for the persons treated. I think the Bill will in every way meet requirements. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. W. Kirwan, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. M. DREW (Central) [5.5]: I have examined the Bill, and I find in it little to object to from a farmer's point of view. If the measure is acceptable to the business community it may safely be passed into law. But I would very much like to know what the traders of Western Australia think of the measure. I presume it has been submitted to the Chamber of Commerce. It has been the custom in the past to con-

sult the Chamber of Commerce in connection with the introduction of measures of this description. Clause 4 gives the Government a unique privilege. Any advance made or deemed to be made is a first charge on the land, crops, goods and chattels connected with the farm, and becomes a first charge automatically, without any further exertion, as soon as the advance is made. In the principal Act provision is made for a contract or acknowledgment between the applicant and the board. When I introduced that Bill with such a provision in it strong opposition was offered to the proposal. It was contended that the Government like everyone else in the community, should register either at the Bills of Sale office in the Supreme Court or in the Lands Transfer office, so as to let the merchants know the position. After a long struggle I succeeded in getting the House to agree to that provision. But then there was a provision that there should be an acknowledgment as to the amount owed by the successful claimant for assistance. That is dispensed with in this Bill. The amounts lent can be charged simply by reason of the fact that there is an entry for a certain amount against the applicant on the books of the Industries Assistance Board, and so far as I can discover there is no provision whatever for an appeal. Whatever amount appears in the books is a legal charge against the estate.

Hon. J. Duffell: It is always registered in the Supreme Court.

Hon. J. M. DREW: No. In the Department of Agriculture a ledger is kept which contains the names of all those who have received assistance, and on payment of a shilling fee anyone can make an inspection. It has been said by the Colonial Secretary that delay in getting these acknowledgments from the claimants is responsible for this amendment, but it seems to me that the officers of the Railway Department could see that those contracts are signed and the acknowledgments made. The farmers take delivery from the different railway stations, and at those stations the station-master could see that the contract was properly filed, in order that there might be an exact record of the indebtedness of the farmer.

Of course, there are unattended sidings, but we have been informed by the Colonial Secretary that there are no fewer than 21 inspectors employed in connection with the administration of the principal Act. It should be the duty of those inspectors to see that before the goods are supplied to the farmer he gives the necessary acknowledgment. Clause 6 gives the board unlimited power to advance to the applicant money for any purpose whatever. No limit at all is placed on the purposes for which money may be loaned to any applicant for assistance who comes under this measure. This clause, it seems to me, takes the control of the finances out of the hands of Parliament altogether. In the principal Act, the purposes, although comprehensive, were specified, and the necessities of the farmers were carefully considered. Of course, I am ready to believe that the board will exercise a wise discretion, but at any rate this gives them and the Minister a tremendous power. Under Clause 11 no one who has been assisted by the board can be successfully sued for debt while he owes money to the Government, which in law may continue for at least five years. And during that time he cannot be successfully sued for debt. I admit there is some necessity for a safeguard to be adopted which would prevent a cantankerous Treasurer from harassing these unfortunate farmers; but I want to point out that there is a Statute of Limitations. Under that statute, if amounts due to storekeepers and other traders are not paid by those who have received assistance from the board, if an account has not been reduced in any way, if there has been no formal and definite acknowledgment of the debt, at the expiration of six years the debt is wiped out. It is well known that a large number of farmers have owed money to storekeepers for two years before getting assistance from the Industries Assistance Board. They are then protected; and in addition there is also protection for them under the Postponement of Debts Act. It seems to me that there should be in both those measures a provision suspending the operation of the Statute of Limitations in regard to those receiving assistance from the board. We are told that the Index of Debtors hitherto kept by

the board is to be dispensed with. I really cannot understand what is in the Minister's mind. I understood the Colonial Secretary to say that there was some difficulty in preparing the interest, but so far as I can see there should be no difficulty whatever. If a record were kept in the ledger in alphabetical order it would cover the purpose, and loose leaf ledgers, or even cards, would supply all that is required. It seems to me that where there are only 2,000 men receiving help from the board, and where a record is kept for the convenience of traders, every facility should be provided in order that there might be the least possible trouble in securing the required information. I understand from the Colonial Secretary that many farmers have robbed the Government. He said that a number of farmers who had received assistance to the extent of over £100,000 had made returns of £63,000 only. That is certainly an alarming state of affairs, and it is a pity we were not furnished with a little more information in connection with the matter. I should like to know whether those men who have defrauded the Government are still on their holdings and whether they are still receiving help from the Industries Assistance Board. The Minister has boasted of the success of the new system; but it seems to me premature to indulge in any boasting regarding the success of the system at present. Nearly a million of money has been loaned in connection with the harvest, and we must await further developments before we shall be in a position to judge whether the new system has worked well or not. With regard to the subject of inspectors. Inspectors were employed by the old Board, true, not especially for their work. There were Agricultural Bank inspectors and land inspectors who reported and made recommendations to the Board. Yet in spite of that we find there occurred what appears to be a very heavy loss, for we are told that in respect of over £100,000 advanced to a large section of the farming community only £63,000 was returned. That is alarming, and the House is entitled to as much information in connection with it as possible. The present Government is not responsible. Who is responsible? I do not suppose anyone really

is to blame; but this House should have the fullest possible information as to whether that is a dead loss to the State, whether there is any hope of recovering the money or some portion of it, and finally as to what has been done to those farmers who defrauded the State, whether any attempt has been made to bring them to justice, or whether it is possible to do so; and if not, whether the Government continue to assist them. Clause 13 deals with the disposal of products and chattels, and provides what seems to me a very mild penalty indeed. I have the utmost sympathy for the genuine selector battling along and endeavouring to establish himself on the land, but I have no consideration whatever for those who defraud the taxpayer of the State. Clause 13 reads as follows:—

It shall be lawful for any person indebted to the Colonial Treasurer or the Board for advances made under the principal Act or its amendments to sell or otherwise dispose of the product of his crops or any chattels charged with the repayment of such advances without the consent in writing of the Board. Any such person as aforesaid who sells or otherwise disposes of the product or his crops or any such chattels as aforesaid, and any person who receives the same knowing that such person as aforesaid is indebted for advances under the principal Act or its amendments, shall be guilty of an offence. Penalty: One hundred pounds, or imprisonment for six months.

Which might mean a £2 fine or perhaps seven days imprisonment. Under the Bills of Sale Act a man guilty of disposing of chattels secured under a bill of sale is liable to two years imprisonment with hard labour. Why should there be this distinction between the two? As a matter of fact, if anything, the penalty in this case should be the more severe; because the State provides assistance in some cases without much security, trusting to the honour and honesty of the applicant. If that applicant deliberately defrauds the Government there should be a heavy penalty provided in order that he might be adequately punished. But while the Bills of Sale Act provides a pen-

alty as high as two years imprisonment with hard labour, this Bill proposes a penalty with imprisonment for not exceeding six months.

Hon. J. A. GREIG (South-East) [5.23]: It appears to me that under this amending Bill the Board is to be given power to take as security the goods and chattels of a client and also any increases in stock. Apparently such security will become automatically assigned to the Industries Assistance Board from all farmers under the Board whether they are considered good or bad marks, and whether the Board considers it has already an ample security. Clause 4 in the fifth line says—

It shall not be essential for an acknowledgment and contract to be signed by the applicant; but the provisions of section fifteen of the principal Act shall apply, and the charge upon the lands, crops, and chattels of the applicant to secure repayment of all advances with interest shall have effect, and the powers of a mortgagee of such lands, crops, and chattels shall be conferred on the Colonial Treasurer and the board, to all intents and purposes as if an acknowledgment and contract had been signed by the applicant, and a mortgage of the lands and a bill of sale of the crops and chattels of the applicant had been executed by him and duly registered. From this it is apparent that this Bill does what I claim, automatically takes as security the goods and chattels of clients. I would point out that those men at present under the board surrendered their security under specified conditions; and if this Bill passes into law it will practically compel them, since they are under the board and cannot get out, to give a bill of sale over the whole of their goods and chattels, which are private property, including goods taken on to the farm and goods held from storekeepers on what is sometimes termed "personal security." I think it right that the board should take security over stock or goods and chattels a settler might buy through the board, but not over private stock, except with the concurrence of the farmer. Those farmers went on to the land in all good faith and in some cases have worked there for six or seven years, and it must be remembered that in doing that they

have been doing something for Western Australia. My experience and my knowledge of the industry tell me that when a man has been on the land six or seven years he is in about his worst position. He has spent all his capital; has borrowed as much as he can; has got as far as possible into debt, and his heart is broken. In most cases if those men can hang on they make good, but I am afraid if anything is done in the direction which this Bill suggests the result will be to force them off the land. They have lost heart and now look upon their position as hopeless. They themselves do not think they can pull through, though personally I believe they can; but they will not if they have to give a mortgage over those few goods and chattels which remain to them. That is their view of the position, though personally I think it is a pessimistic view. I have more faith in Western Australia than that. At the same time, this question demands serious consideration. I agree the board should have the right of refusing further loans unless further security is available, in those cases in which they consider a man is not a good mark. But in the case of those farmers whose security at present is sufficient, if this Bill becomes law it will mean that their goods and chattels will become automatically part of the security held by the board without the signing of any agreement whatever; that is to say, the security will include such goods and chattels as pianos and sewing machines.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Whether they want further assistance or not?

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Yes; whether they want further assistance or not.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Has the farmer not already given everything he has by way of security?

Hon. J. A. GREIG: No. He has given only a mortgage over his crop.

The Colonial Secretary: Farmers at present under the board are protected under Section 19 of the Act.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I am not conversant with the principal Act. I asked to be supplied with it yesterday. I have drawn attention to this phase of the question, and that is all I desire to do. In Canada there is a law preventing anyone from taking a mortgage over a farmer's chattels. The

Government there regard the farmer's chattels as his tools of trade. They prevent any person taking a mortgage over such goods and chattels, because they realise that if the storekeeper or merchant takes these things from him he can no longer be a farmer, but is reduced to work with his hands. They realise that the wheat grower or the primary producer is of such value to the people of Canada that they protect him in this way in the hope that he will still continue farming. We have heard it stated to-day that there are 515 farms in this State in the hands of the Agricultural Bank. I should be very sorry to see any more farms thrown up. Our endeavour should be to keep these men on the land as long as we can. I know they are down-hearted and heart-broken, but the majority of them will pull through if they will only keep pegging away.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.30]: The Bill that we have before us is, I feel, dangerous to a certain extent in its present form, and seeing that this House is the protector of the rights of the people who have vested interests in this State it is just as well for us to deal with it carefully. We have been told that one of the objects of the Bill is to deal with securities. That seems to be the gist of the whole matter, as far as the amendments of the original measure are concerned. I think Mr. Drew recognised the fact that there were certain improvements made to the original measure in this Chamber, all by way of looking after the securities of those who have lent money to many people on the land. We have been told that the State anticipates advancing this year, through the board, something like £928,000, and there are outside creditors of these farmers who are on the books of the board to the extent of something like half a million of money. It is in regard to these outside creditors that we require to be careful lest we overlap the securities. There is a danger that the Bill in its present form will have this effect: that those people would fear that by, say, my going to the Industries Board over their heads and getting an advance the board would immediately become the first claimant, and have the right as first mortgagee without there being any record of it. As a matter of fact, I have been able to go to my banker and get certain financial

assistance to enable me to put in my crop. At present we have about one-third of those who are settled on the land receiving assistance from the Government, whilst two-thirds are trading on their own account or through some financial institution. There is, I say, this danger.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: They do not have to register.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Without registration. That which we safeguarded before we are now asked to give away. The effect would be to bring about almost a financial calamity from one end of the State to the other if we rashly adopt the Bill as it stands. It would undoubtedly prevent a great many of the farmers from getting the credit that they could so readily get in many cases to-day. Not all the farmers are under the Industries Assistance Board. A great many of them get credit from the merchants or grocers, and other people with whom they trade. That credit would almost immediately be stopped. There is a record, and that record should appear in the form of a caveat, as has always been the system in the past. There need not necessarily be a definite mortgage entered into on every occasion, but there should be some record in the form of a caveat that would enable any of these people who are ready to give financial assistance to see at once whether the debtor was going behind them and getting assistance elsewhere. I have given notice of an amendment which I propose to move to Clause 4. Unfortunately, however, the amendment appears on the Notice Paper under the heading of the Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Bill. This was evidently a printer's error. The amendment that I propose to move I wish to be regarded as appearing under the Industries Assistance Act Amendment Bill. I believe that my amendment will have the effect of retaining that greater security which is absolutely essential in order to preserve the credit of a great many people who do not come under the board at the present time. Clause 4, as it now stands, would really prevent any record being made of encumbrances in favour of the board on the land of applicants appearing at the Titles Office. A person may have made an advance to a farmer relying upon

an encumbered title to the land, and the effect of Clause 4, taken in conjunction with Clause 16, would be that although a bona fide loan may have been made upon what appears to have been a clear title, yet the board could come in and claim that the mere fact of money being lent without there being any record of it gives it a charge on the farmer's land in priority over any registered encumbrance that might be in existence.

The Colonial Secretary: I do not think that is the case. They only come under Section 15 of the existing Act.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: That is being altered. This section gave the Bank certain power to advance under provisos "A" and "B" only on certain articles or definite things. As pointed out by Mr. Greig, this Bill is giving very much wider powers. It enables an advance to be made upon every conceivable thing the board can think of. There are no reservations whatever. These powers will have the effect of scaring off financial institutions who at the present time are giving very satisfactory credit to two-thirds of the farming community of the State. We must, therefore, be careful what we do in order to protect the further credit of those two-thirds of our farming community.

Hon. J. Duffell: Clause 8 is only an amendment to section 15. It is a proviso to that section.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I am dealing with Clause 4. We should be careful that we do nothing to discredit the principle of registration that has always been recognised. This Bill will make it appear that there will be no necessity for registration. Section 15 of the original Act provided for an acknowledgment of contract, that it should be registered against the farmer's land. It practically had the effect of a mortgage. I understand that the Board has neglected to make these records from time to time, and wishes to cover up some of its deficiencies by putting in this new clause. It looks as if that was so, and that the officials were trying now to dodge the responsibility of making those records. Members of the public undoubtedly want to see the records of advances made by the board from time to time so that they may know whether they

are safe in making advances. Clause 4 does not make it incumbent upon the board to lodge this caveat, and that is why I should like the words added to the clause. There is a danger that unless we add the proviso of which I have given notice to Clause 16, the Act will be retrospective. It is dangerous to pass Clause 16 in its present form, and I think the proviso suggested will get over the difficulty, and that the Bill would then be very much safer than it is at the present time. We should be careful not to do anything that might interfere with the securities which have always been looked upon as sound and good. I have always held that it is a good thing for the Government to embark upon assistance to settlers. We realise that until an immense amount of development has been done by them on their holdings the securities are not of very great value. It is the work that they do and the money that they spend on their properties—whether it be Government money or money advanced by financial institutions—that increase the value of the security. When that work has been done, and the security appears to be bona fide, it is only right that the board should follow the ordinary channels, just as other financial institutions have to do, and make its records in a proper manner so that individuals who are lending money to the settlers will be able to see that they are not making advances only to find the board stepping in and superseding their claims. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [5.49]: I would like to preface the few remarks I have to make by asking the Colonial Secretary whether Clause 8 is reciting what is in the other Act or whether it is new?

The Colonial Secretary: It is new.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: After having heard the leader of the House, I have given this matter some thought. We have heard a great deal about the trading concerns, and also about the industrial concerns, and if we come to analyse the position we are in in connection with this Bill, I think it will be admitted that this is about the largest industrial concern that the Government have on their hands. Looking at it from a practical point of view, I consider that the Government are the farmers

of Western Australia; they are financing a certain number of people who are on the land to carry out this work, but instead of carrying it out under the supervision of their own inspectors and according to their own views, they have placed a large number of families and people on these lands and advanced them the money to carry on the work from their own particular points of view. No conditions have been imposed as to how farming should be carried on, and so far as I can judge when the money which is being advanced to them is exhausted, in many cases these people walk out. The Colonial Secretary in reply to a question of mine only yesterday stated that there were quite a number of farms without any tenants. We find that in this huge industrial concern there are something like 6,000 farmers, who owe roughly a million of money. This is a very large sum indeed, and under these circumstances the question arises as to whether this industrial concern pays. Is it fair or is it just for the country to carry on a concern of this kind if it does not pay? I have had a little experience of farming; I have a farm or two of my own, and I know exactly what it means, and I can say that in numbers of cases farming cannot be made to pay. Another question I would like to ask is whether the 20 million bushels of wheat returned this year was grown at a profit. How much of it was financed either by the board or by the Government, or worse still, by the unfortunate storekeepers and merchants? I know perfectly well that unless the surrounding circumstances are of the very best, it is impossible to grow wheat at a profit, and unless the conditions in the way of carting and railage are good. Therefore, it behoves us to carefully consider this matter from all points of view. Is it any good producing wheat if we are losing by it? Are we producing it at a profit? I am not condemning any Government past or present, but I think it is well to consider the exact position. We find that an immense amount of money has been embarked in the industry, and the leader of the House tells us that between 500 and 600 farms have been deserted. I have been told that numbers of men are taking money and re-

ceiving assistance from the Industries Assistance Board, and spending that money in any way they like. Of course I recognise the difficulties of being able to provide against that sort of thing, but I am told that in many cases this money has been spent in a manner quite foreign to that which was originally intended. Some of these men have said that they accepted the money because whilst they had it they were their own masters, and as soon as it was spent they could leave their farms and work for wages.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: They are liable to six months imprisonment under the original Act for that sort of thing. Have there been any prosecutions?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Not being associated with the Government, and being absolutely apart from the Labour party, I am not in a position to answer the hon. member's question. I can only say that if the inspections were carefully carried out there would not be much trouble in landing those gentlemen where they ought to be.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: There would be a large number.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: This is a very serious question, because it involves an immense amount of money, and involves a policy as well. Is it good policy to keep on helping men when it does not pay to do it? I have only a knowledge of the farming arrangements in my small arena, but I should say that inspectors should be in the position to know whether it is paying an individual to farm or not. If it is not paying that individual and there are no prospects of the farm being made to pay, what is the use of spending any further money on it? I smile to myself when I hear and read about the repatriation scheme for the returned soldiers, because I have a good idea as to what the poor devils will do when they go on the land, especially those who have not had any experience of farming. I am sure they will never be able to make farming pay. Mr. Hamersley has dealt with the proposed amendments to the Bill so carefully that I do not propose to waste any time discussing them, except to say that they will receive my support. I am entirely in favour

of those who advanced money on priorities being protected. With the Government being able to advance money, I will not say clandestinely, but secretly, I do not think the clause is fair to those people who register, and therefore the suggestion of a caveat would make it safe. I am fully in accord with the idea that the mortgagee should get some notice. There is one thing that must be considered in the interests of the whole State, and it is that those who have control of these farms, and the management of them, should never allow them to be idle, if it is possible to avoid it, even at some little cost, because land that has been cleared and neglected for a couple of years will cost between 10s. and 15s. an acre to clear again. The undergrowth springs up so rapidly that it is far better to employ men to keep it down. With these few remarks I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill, reserving to myself the right to support the amendments which have been suggested.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Clarke debate adjourned.

BILL—APPRENTICES.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.57] in moving the second reading said: This Bill which I desire to commend to the consideration of hon. members is a very short one. It has been rendered necessary by the present war conditions, and similar legislation has been passed by the Parliaments of New South Wales and South Australia. The Bill before hon. members is almost, if not entirely, identical with the Bill passed by the Parliament of New South Wales. It is well known that a large number of apprentices in different trades have enlisted for active service, and in a great many instances—I hope I may safely say in practically all—the employers have undertaken to keep the positions open for the apprentices. There are certain features of the Apprentices Act which they cannot comply with unless a Bill of this description is passed. The Bill has a two-fold object. The first is to protect the right of the apprentices whilst they are away, so that when they

return they may resume an apprenticeship without suffering any undue hardship or penalty. The second object of the Bill—and I confess at once it is an object which, in certain quarters, some small exception may be taken to it, but it is taken from the Act of New South Wales—is to permit the indenturing of apprentices in the place of those who have gone. The position now is that under different Arbitration Court awards employers are restricted in the number of apprentices they may employ. They may employ only a certain number of apprentices to so many journeymen. Their apprentices have gone away, but they are still keeping their places open for them. Hence, should the employers approach the Arbitration Court with a request to put on additional apprentices, they will be told they cannot do it as they already have the full number on their books, and that although the apprentices have gone away, the employers cannot be permitted to put any more on. I think that an undesirable condition of affairs, both from the point of view of an employer and of the industry he is endeavouring to carry on, and also from the point of view of those young men who desire to learn trades. From a trades union point of view it may be urged that the result of passing this Bill might be that when the whole of the apprentices return, possibly for a year or two, employers may have a larger number of apprentices than they are entitled to under the Arbitration Court award. That is the only direction in which the passing of this Bill might possibly interfere with trades union ideals; but against that it must be remembered that unfortunately many of those young men will not return. It must also be remembered that many of those who do return will not be inclined or able to continue in the trade or calling they previously followed. Therefore, those who argue that this Bill would be opposed to union principles must choose between two evils, whether we should run the risk of training one or two more apprentices in different callings than the Arbitration Court awards permit, or take the certainty of preventing the training of even a limited number of apprentices. To my mind it will be

a serious matter if some provision of this kind is not made, because it will mean that in the case of every apprentice who goes away, and whose position may be permanently vacant, there will be no one learning the trade in his place. That can have but one effect, to largely decrease the number of efficient tradesmen in the immediate future. As I have said, the Bill is a simple one and has only the two objects I have stated, namely, the protection of the rights of apprentices themselves while they are away, and secondly, to enable an employer to put on an apprentice in place of those who go away. I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [6.5]: I support the second reading of the Bill, and I do so for the purpose of calling attention to the fact that this is another instance of the wasteful, extravagant, and ridiculous way in which business is conducted in this country. We are to have six or seven Bills in six or seven different Parliaments to deal with one subject, which is after all purely a Federal matter, and which, as the leader of the House has told us, has been copied from the Act of New South Wales verbatim.

The Colonial Secretary: Not exactly that; I said the principles are the same.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Yes, I understand that. But what will the country say? It is a waste of time and money our doing business on these lines. There is no need for me to say much with regard to the difficulties the Bill seeks to remove. The leader of the House has pointed them out. A matter of trades unionism is involved, and any matter of trades unionism is a difficult one. Trades unionists have rights and they must be treated fairly; and at the same time the interests of the employer and also the interests of the public—which latter are very often forgotten in the wrangle between the unions and the masters—must be protected. Would it not be infinitely better in matters of this kind for the Federal Parliament to introduce one Bill for the whole of Australia if they have the power?

Hon. J. Ewing: Have they not the power?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I say if they have the power, and I think they have. I

rose only for the purpose of calling attention of hon. members and the public to the absurdity of introducing seven Bills in seven Parliaments on a matter which could be dealt with by one Bill for the whole of Australia. I should also like some information from the leader of the House as to the total number of apprentices. I trust also that some approach has been made to the unions to obtain their opinions on the subject. They are certainly fully entitled to have opinions on such a subject, and it might serve to expedite the passage of the Bill if the assistance of the unions were sought. I ask the Colonial Secretary to tell the House whether any communication has passed between the Government and the trades unions on this matter.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES (North) [6.7]: I desire to support the second reading of the Bill, which I look upon as a most important measure indeed. The Arbitration Act limits the number of apprentices who may be employed, and the position now is that many of those apprentices have gone away to the war, and some of them will never return. Their places cannot be filled until their indentures have expired, whether they are killed on the battlefield or not. Mr. Sanderson, in his concluding remarks, suggested that this was a Federal matter; but I think it will be found that the Federal Parliament has no power of amendment in the case of local legislation dealing with matters which come within the province of the State Chambers. While it might be desirable that the Federal authorities in many instances should legislate for the whole of the States, arbitration is a State matter and this measure has been introduced for the purpose of getting over a difficulty created under the State Arbitration Act. I hope members will support the Bill and push it through as quickly as possible. There is a number of young men in this State who are not qualified to enlist and who are awaiting an opportunity for learning a trade. This amending Bill will provide that opportunity.

On motion by Hon. J. M. Drew debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

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The House met at 4.30 p.m.

RESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER.

The Clerk (Mr. A. R. Grant): It is my duty to announce to hon. members that I have received the following letter from His Honour the Speaker—

Perth, 1st March, 1917.

Dear Mr. Grant,—The vote of the Assembly last night expressing dissatisfaction with an action of mine as Speaker, coupled with the incidents of the night before, satisfies me that I cannot usefully continue to hold the position of Speaker under existing circumstances. Although the vote referred to could easily be reversed in a full House, I feel that a purely party vote would in such circumstances be inconsistent with the best traditions of the Chair, as making the office of Speaker too much a party one. I have therefore decided to resign my position as Speaker. I wish to tender to you and to the other officials of the House my appreciation of your and their courtesy during my brief but not uneventful tenure of office. Yours truly E. B. Johnston.