

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 8th December, 1932.

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

QUESTION—MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

Doctors and Subsidies.

MR. J. H. SMITH asked the Minister for Health: 1, How many doctors are subsidised by the State? 2, In what districts do they reside and what are the amounts of the subsidies?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: 1, (a) Number of district medical officers, 26; (b) number of subsidised doctors (not district medical officers), 26; (c) number of doctors whose incomes are guaranteed by arrangement with local governing bodies and the State, 9. 2, The districts and amounts of subsidies to doctors other than district medical officers are shown on attached return.

BILL—NARROGIN HOSPITAL.

Introduced by the Minister for Health and read a first time.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Leave to introduce.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [4.34]: I move—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the provisions of the Land Act, 1898, relating to pastoral leases.

HON. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.35]: This motion is further evidence of the breach of faith by the Premier with me. I have no desire to repeat the statements I

made last evening, but it is a fact that the Premier, in consultation with me about three weeks ago when discussing the business for the remainder of the season, gave me to understand—in fact he stated clearly—that there would not be any Bill of a controversial nature introduced. The Premier gave me that understanding and has broken it. I do not know what the Bill contains, but I have reason to believe it proposes to extend the term of the pastoral leases in the North-West. Am I correct in that assumption?

The Minister for Lands: Perfectly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Very well, starting from those premises, this is the most improper act of which the Government could be guilty. All through the session we have been engaged in considering Bills of more or less minor importance, but any member will admit that the question of extending the term of the pastoral leases is of supreme importance to the people of the country. Yet a Bill of this kind has been withheld from the consideration of the House until the last fortnight of the session. I do not like to make charges against the Government, but I think I would be almost justified in saying that this Bill has been deliberately withheld. It was not owing to pressure of business that the Government were unable to introduce it earlier; it has been deliberately withheld. I have no doubt whatever the Government have intended since the session began to introduce a Bill of this kind, but purposely and deliberately have withheld it until the last moment. Do the Government imagine that they are justified in introducing a Bill of this kind in the dying days of the session? Only Bills of a formal character, not controversial measures, should be introduced at this stage, and I go further and say that the Premier gave me his solemn word that no Bills of a controversial nature would be introduced. That was three weeks ago. Now, without consulting me, without being even courteous enough to let me know of the new Bills to be introduced or the nature of them, the Government bring down a measure of this kind. In view of that, what sort of consideration do the Government expect from the Opposition? I have had a fairly long experience in this House, but never have I known of such discourtesy as has been extended to me by the Government during the last few days through their action in introducing Bills of

this kind. What has the Premier to say? Where does the Premier stand? Three weeks ago, in consultation with me, he indicated the Bills he desired to get through, and he did not mention this Bill, although he knew at the moment that it was intended to introduce it. What kind of honest dealing is this? What kind of shuffling is it? It is an utterly unfair attitude adopted by a discredited Government. It is in keeping with the manner in which they conducted the last elections, and no doubt will be in keeping with the manner in which they will conduct the coming elections also. The Government ought to be ashamed of themselves. If they have any sense of shame, if they have any principle or policy, they ought to be ashamed to bring down at this stage of the session a Bill to extend the term of the pastoral leases in all that North-Western country and force it through in the dying hours of the session. What have the Government to say for themselves? There may be justification for extending the term of the pastoral leases. I am not saying there is not: I am not committing myself one way or the other. It may be that a case can be made out for the extension, but is this the manner in which it should be introduced to the House? What shuffling, evasion, insincerity and dishonesty on the part of the Government to delay the introduction of the Bill until this stage of the session! I only wish I had realised earlier in the session that the Government would be capable of descending to the tactics to which they have descended during the last day or two. My attitude would have been quite different; I would not have been so fair and generous to them as I have been had I known they would be capable of playing such a dirty trick on the House. If they are capable of introducing a Bill of this kind at this stage of the session, they are capable of doing and saying anything when the elections come on. What justification is there for bringing down the Bill? Surely the Minister for Lands knows that the question of extending the term of the pastoral leases is of the utmost importance and has always been so viewed by members of this House. Rightly so, for members are the guardians of the people and of the Crown lands. I have heard whispers of what might be expected. There was the wretched board that the Government appointed to consider the position of the North-West. The board was a hypocritical board. There was not a

scrap of honesty in the mind of any member of the Government when that board was appointed. It was said that the board was appointed to consider the problems affecting the North-West, but it was appointed really for one purpose only. The Government desired to pass a Bill this session to extend the term of the pastoral leases, and they appointed the board as a means to help them along the road to their desire. The Government knew perfectly well that the board could do nothing and could make no suggestion that would be of any value to the North-West. But the Government knew that the board would recommend an amendment of the Act to extend the term of the pastoral leases in the North. They knew that, before the board were appointed. In fact the board were appointed for that, and no other reason. They were appointed to make a recommendation to the Government in the direction that the Government desired them to do, in the belief that it would help them, if they had the recommendation of the board—that wretched, paltry board! To bring in a Bill of this description within a fortnight of the conclusion of the session, for the purpose of extending the term of the leases, without the Government giving the slightest indication of their intention to the House or to the country, is wrong. In the Governor's Speech mention was made of Bills likely to be introduced. They were Bills of tin-pot importance, in fact, of no importance whatever. Now, within a fortnight of the probable conclusion of the session, we find this important Bill is to be placed before Parliament. It has been deliberately withheld until this late hour so that the voice of the people shall not be heard. It is a low-down, dirty, contemptible action on the part of the Government. Only a wretched Government lacking the courage to stand up to their policy, would introduce a Bill of this description in the closing days of the session. It is a low-down, wretched attempt on the part of the Government to placate their own friends and to do something that will suit those who are supporting them. The Bill will not go through this House. I can certainly vouch that it will not go through before Christmas: at any rate, it will be fought so long as our physical powers will enable us to resist it. There may be much to be said in support of the measure, but why has its in-

introduction been delayed until this late hour? The member for Roebourne (Mr. Church) knows all about it. He was able to assure some of his electors that the extension of the term of the leases would be granted this session. Can the Minister for Lands honestly justify the introduction of the Bill at this stage? Even assuming it to be justified, why has its introduction been delayed? It is a Bill that does not involve difficulty in drafting, in which respect it is unlike the Bill under the charge of the Minister for Mines, that was before this House last night. That was a most difficult Bill to draft. It represented the consolidation of three existing Acts and, therefore, I quite understood why the Minister was late in presenting that measure. But the Bill before the House now involves no complicated drafting. I have not seen it, but I imagine it would require one or two slight amendments only to effect the alterations to the existing Land Act. There can be nothing complicated at all in the drafting. The only thing involved in the Bill is a question of principle as to whether the term of the pastoral leases in the North-West should, or should not, be extended. I do not know how long the existing leases have to run, but perhaps the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley) can tell me.

Mr. Coverley: For 16 years.

Hon. P. COLLIER: For 16 years! I do not know what is in the Bill. I understand it proposes to extend the terms of the leases, and perhaps the Minister for Lands will be good enough to inform me regarding the period for which it is proposed to extend the leases. The Minister has asked for leave to introduce the Bill, and he should give me that information.

The Minister for Lands: I will tell you as soon as you give me a chance.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think the Minister should be courteous enough to tell me now.

The Minister for Lands: By way of interjection?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: It is proposed to extend the term of the leases for 50 years from this year.

Mr. Kennelly: Good heavens!

Hon. P. COLLIER: The leases have 16 years to run, and it is proposed to extend the term for 50 years!

The Minister for Lands: I think the Bill will extend them until 1980 or thereabouts.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then where is the urgency about this Bill? If the leases were to expire next year, or even within five years, I could understand the necessity for legislation of this description, but inasmuch as the leaseholders are secure for another 16 years, where is the urgency for the Bill?

The Minister for Lands: It is a question of financial assistance.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We have had that bogey of financial assistance put up to us for years past. It is a good old bogey that is trotted out from time to time, and will be trotted out during this debate. The fact remains that the holders of the pastoral leases are safe and secure for another 16 years, and cannot be dispossessed. Although they have that long period to run, the Government propose to extend the term of the leases for 50 years. Why? I am well aware of the clap-trap sort of arguments that will be used in support of the proposal. The arguments advanced will be of a clap-trap description. We will hear talk of the necessity for security of tenure, of the necessity to raise capital, and so forth. Is this Bill so urgent that it could not be left over until next session? Assuming the Bill is important to the holders of the pastoral leases, we shall be told that they should have security of tenure and that the extended term will assist them, and consequently the whole State, from the standpoint of raising the necessary capital to enable the pastoralists to develop their lease—that is the sort of talk we will hear regarding the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: And it will be a very good argument, too.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No doubt very good arguments that could be advanced along those lines at the beginning of the session, but not at this late hour, and not to justify the betrayal on the part of the Premier—that is what it amounts to—regarding his conversation with me. I have been in this House for many years, both as Premier and Leader of the Opposition, and I have always approached this subject with every degree of confidence with regard to the arrangements for the concluding stages of sessional work. Whether as Premier or Leader of the Opposition, I have always been willing to assist in bringing the ses-

sional work to a conclusion and facilitating the passage of Bills that were necessary. Three weeks ago the Premier invited me to discuss with him the programme for the rest of the session. He said the Government desired to secure the passage of certain Bills that were on the Notice Paper and asked me how far I could co-operate to that end. I told him that with regard to such and such Bills I could help him, but I could not vouch for other measures. We then discussed the question of the suspension of the Standing Orders, and I told him the whole matter hinged upon what new legislation the Government were likely to bring down. The Premier said, "Oh, there are not going to be any new Bills; there may be a few, but they will be of no consequence."

The Minister for Lands: Like the Narrogin Hospital Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. He said to me, "You know that Bills come down to you from departments at the last moment, but they are not controversial." I said, "I do not mind that." I would not mind measures of that description being brought down at the last moment, but the Premier did not give me any indication that a Bill of this importance would be introduced. It was not honest, and the Premier deceived me. The Government are not justified in bringing down a Bill of this importance, having regard to the undertaking the Premier gave me. The Premier's undertaking was that no Bills of importance would be brought down. Is a Premier's word worth nothing? Where do the Government stand? Am I to be tricked and fooled in this way?

The Minister for Lands: If I explain it—

Hon. P. COLLIER: There can be no explanation.

The Minister for Lands: If I explain it, I think you will agree it is not as bad as you suggest.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is certainly as bad as I say.

Mr. Kenneally: It is worse.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no question about it; the Premier misled me into the belief that no new business of importance was to be placed before Parliament, so that my co-operation might be enlisted to facilitate the business to be transacted during the remaining few weeks of the session. Then by bringing down a Bill of this

description he absolutely deceived me and the Opposition. I reported to members of my party what the business of the Government was likely to be for the remainder of the session, and our action with regard to Bills was governed by what I said regarding the undertaking I had been given. Now the Government introduce this kind of Bill. I would not mind if it represented an eleventh hour thought. If it had come to the mind of the Government only yesterday or the day before that this matter should receive attention—

Hon. A. McCallum: Even then you should have been consulted.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. If the Premier had said to us that the Government had not thought the position was such and such, but they found now, at the last moment, that it was desirable to introduce legislation of this description, I might have understood it. If he were able to say that before the next Parliament met, the leases would have run out, I could understand the attitude of the Government. But even then, as the member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum) has interjected, common courtesy would dictate that I should have been informed. The Premier has played a low-down trick on me. Whether he intended it or not, I do not care. He promised me that no Bills of any importance would be introduced during the remainder of the session. He knew yesterday that this Bill was to be introduced, because the Minister for Lands gave notice of it. Yet the Premier did not mention it. He did not come to see me. He did not do so, because he knew he could not justify its introduction. He did not consult me about it because he knew in his heart that its introduction at this stage of the session could not be justified in view of the conversation we had had regarding the business for the remainder of the session. In all my long experience I have never before known such an attitude to be adopted by any Government as that adopted by the present Government, during the last fortnight of a session. It is a low-down, dirty, contemptible attitude. It is dishonest in the extreme, and the man who is mainly responsible is the Premier of the State. Why does he not treat me fairly? I have treated him more than fairly. There is not a man in the House, or in the country, who has been more generous to the Premier than I have been. I could have attacked him on innumerable occasions, but I refrained from

doing so because I felt that if I did I might be damaging the interests of the State. On many occasions during the past three years I have sat silent in the House when I could have effectively attacked the Premier. Particularly during the present session have I been silent, when I could have made effective attacks upon the Premier and the Government. This is my reward! This is the Government's generosity to me! Under the lap, in the closing weeks of the session, they bring down a Bill of this kind. Why the urgency? The leases have 16 years to run. The only urgency in the mind of the Government is that they may not be in office after the next general elections, and they want to do the job for their friends before they go out. That is the only reason for the introduction of the Bill. They want to meet the wishes of the particular section of the community who support them, and who no doubt will support their party financially when the elections take place. I have been 28 years in Parliament and have always, whether in opposition or in office, discussed matters with the Leader on the other side. I have accepted his word and relied upon what he has told me. I repeat, three weeks ago I discussed the programme for the session with the Premier and he did not give me the slightest indication that the Bill was to be brought down. Yesterday, when notice was given of the Bill, he did not come to me and say, "This Bill concerns so-and-so." No leader of a party has treated the leader of another party in the way the Premier has treated me in regard to the Bill. I have no doubt whatever the Government knew months ago that the Bill was to be introduced, and I charge the Government again with deliberately withholding the Bill until the dying hours of the session. Their mind was made up with regard to it months ago.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: If that is so, it is a public scandal.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is a scandal. It is the truth, too.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Then they ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Ashamed! Can a Government which has acted in this way be ashamed of anything?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: This kind of thing was done once before.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Their mind was made up months ago with regard to the Bill, but

I have no doubt that some plausible, paltry explanation will be made for the delay in bringing it down. They will probably say they were waiting for the report of the committee. That will not avail, because I think I am right in saying that among the first of the committee's reports was the Bill. The committee was appointed for no other purpose but to help the Government, and now, at this late stage of the session, the Government bring the Bill forward. Will it affect the pastoralists of the North-West if the Bill is not passed this session? I want an answer to that question, and no side-stepping about it. Will it make any difference to the pastoralists if the Bill is passed now or passed 12 months hence? Will one year make any difference?

Mr. Kennecally: A difference to the Government, perhaps.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Will any pastoralist say to-day that he cannot raise money with 16 years' tenure, or next year with 15 years' tenure? The Government are doing the job for their friends. In the last few weeks of the session they are showing the cloven hoof. This side of the House is no longer to be heard, but we are paying attention to what the Government are doing in the closing weeks of the session. I have no doubt at all what the Government will do when the session ends and what they will say. They will carry on an unscrupulous campaign of misrepresentation so far as my party are concerned. If I cared to do so, I could write up the speeches which nearly every member on the Government side of the House will make during the election campaign. There will be misrepresentation and distortion of facts. Notwithstanding that the people are trusting and willing to believe a lot, there is a limit. The Government will overstep the mark. There is no doubt whatever where the member for Carnarvon and the member for Gascoyne will stand. There are other members on the Government side of the House, however, who are not associated politically or otherwise with the pastoral industry of the North-West. Will they remain silent on this matter? They have been very silent during the session. Are they going to be dummies and rubber stamps to register the decrees, right or wrong, of the Government, without having the courage to say why they are supporting them? The party whip will be cracked and they will fall into line, but

they will be betraying the people of the State. It is a base betrayal of our people to pass legislation during the last couple of weeks of the session which will dispose of the great pastoral areas in the North-West for the ensuing 50 years, without the people having the time or opportunity to learn anything about the matter. That is the baseness of the Government's action. Whatever Parliament may decide to do in its wisdom or unwisdom, at least time should be afforded the people to learn what we are doing. Are we entitled to spring something upon the people that was not mentioned at the last election? It was not even mentioned in the Governor's Speech. The people have had no opportunity of considering it. The heritage of future generations is to be given away for 50 years by the Bill, without the people having the opportunity of saying whether it is right or wrong. Assuming for a moment that every member on the Government side of the House believes this policy to be wise and right, are they justified in ignoring the people of the country? Are they right in saying, "I am the judge and I shall decide: you, the people, do not count. I am not going to give you an opportunity to consider the matter." If the Bill had been introduced a month or two ago then I could have understood the Government's action. In that case the public would have had a chance of learning what the Government were proposing to do with these vast areas in the North-West. The matter could have been ventilated in the Press, and then members would have been in a position to say that public opinion was on one side or on the other. But public opinion in this matter is treated with contempt, it does not count. The men and women of this country who own this territory in the North-West just as much as anybody else owns it, are not to be considered, nor are their sons and daughters of the next generation to be considered. The territory is to be tied up for 50 years. This is another evidence that the Government have purposely played a dirty trick, a low-down dirty trick: if the Government had a good case, if there was justification for the Bill, it would have been introduced months ago, and they would have allowed it to run the gauntlet of public discussion and consideration by the people. The very fact that the Bill has

been withheld until the last minute is *prima facie* evidence that the Government are sponsoring it with a guilty mind. Men honest in public affairs would have launched the Bill long ago, and let the public decide. But it has been deliberately withheld until this last moment, and is now launched to be passed in the course of a few days, before the people of the country know anything about it. That connotes a guilty mind, and is evidence upon which any jury of impartial men would find the Government guilty of delaying the Bill until this moment. And a further proof that there is a guilty mind behind it, that is to say, behind the attempt to sneak it through before people have an opportunity to discuss it, is the fact that although the Premier has discussed with me and considered with me many Bills and the work of the session, he never once mentioned this Bill. He is the only Premier, the only leader of any party in this House, that has ever acted in that way. Most certainly the Bill will never get through this House this session while I can stand on my feet to resist it.

HON. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [5.18]: An outstanding feature of the public life of this State has been the amount of confidence displayed between the leaders on both sides of the House. It has tended to the conducting of public business in the Parliament of this State on a higher plane than is attained in any other Parliament in Australia. And whenever the two leaders, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, have arrived at a clear understanding, the parties respectively behind them have stood up to it. We have not always liked it, but whenever our leader has given his word, and has then come to us and said he had made an arrangement with the Premier as to the programme, and had given an undertaking to help with this or that, there has been no fault found by this party. But now we have come to this stage, a fortnight before Parliament finishes, and the complaint is made by the Leader of the Opposition that he has been betrayed. Only two nights ago this same attitude was adopted, and a complaint was made by the Leader of the Opposition: and now we find that even though last night the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition discussed the pro-

gramme of work, this Bill was not mentioned then.

The Premier: I gave you an indication.
Hon. P. Collier: No.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Leader of the Opposition says he does not know the Bill. He had to ask the Minister for Lands its contents and what it proposes, and the Minister for Lands had to advise him across the floor of the House. If this Parliament is to work in the sympathetic manner in which it has worked up to date—when there has been an admirable confidence displayed between the two leaders—without party feeling running high, as it does in other Parliaments of Australia, that confidence between the two leaders, allowing the parties to work together in the public interest, should be continued. But it cannot be expected to continue if there are to be breaches of confidence, as the Leader of the Opposition claims has happened on this occasion. I should have thought the stand the Leader of the Opposition took the night before last would have been sufficient for the Premier to see to it that the breach complained of did not occur again. But following hot-heeled on that, this has happened again to-night. I do not know whether or not there is anything objectionable in the Bill: we have the right to know its contents and the reasons to be given for them; but everybody knows that every time the renewal of the pastoral leases comes up for discussion before Parliament, it is regarded in a very serious light, and all agree that serious consideration and thought have to be given to the question. The pastoral industry means so much to Western Australia that its continuance is the very foundation of the economic life of the State. If anything were to happen to that industry the whole economic fabric of Western Australia would be challenged. Everyone knows that, and when a renewal of the leases has been put up by either party, a period before the time of their expiry has been necessary to allow the pastoralists to finance, and after examination and thought and consideration by the Government and Parliament the renewal has been readily agreed to. But here is a new method: in the dying hours, not only of a session but of a Parliament, something new is suggested. There may be grounds for this innovation, for a 50 years extension of the leases 16 years before they

expire, but there cannot be sound grounds for the Government keeping quiet about it for three months.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: For three years.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: No, but they had the proposal of the committee before them for three months.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the dirty part of it.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Ever since the session started they have had the recommendations of this committee and have kept quiet about it until this very hour.

Hon. P. Collier: With their minds made up all the time.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: If the position is so serious, and if it means so much to the pastoralists, prompt action should have been taken when the recommendations of the committee came to Cabinet. If there is a move on behalf of the pastoralists to get finance to carry on the development of their stations, and if evidence of that can be produced, the pastoralists need not fear that Parliament may not agree to it. When we were in office a proposition came from overseas for a huge development plan for the North-West and the Kimberleys, and it was put to us that there would be substantial funds provided if security of tenure of the leases could be obtained. We were asked for our opinion, and we said there would be no doubt about the security of tenure if a definite proposition for the development of that country could be made, for we felt confident that Parliament would give the necessary tenure. We never had any objection whatever to extending the security if the country was to be developed. The pastoralist would get as good a deal from us as from members opposite. But both sides of the House require to consider it. It means so much to Western Australia, for all that huge territory, the Minister tells us, would be beyond the reach of Parliament for 50 years.

The Minister for Lands: Not beyond the reach of Parliament.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister said the leases were to be extended for 50 years.

The Minister for Lands: But Parliament can make resumptions at any time.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes, but only for agricultural purposes; that is the only valid reason. We do not want to adopt subterfuges for interfering with the leases. If there is to be any interference, it must be on sub-

stantial, straightforward lines. It may be a good thing for Western Australia to give this 50 years' extension. I do not know. We want to know the reasons for it. We are entitled to have the whole of the case put to us. But here, with a long list of business before the House, no fewer than 37 items, without including motions, and only six more sitting days, we are asked to give serious consideration to a proposition such as this on top of all this business on the Notice Paper. And the Government have had notice of it ever since this session started, but have sat down upon it. So there can be no explanation in that respect. It is the Government's fault alone that the Bill has been brought down at this late stage. I am sincerely anxious to hear the explanation of the Premier. I am sorry the Leader of the Opposition had to make his complaint during the Premier's absence, but no doubt the Premier knows what was said. The complaint is that there has been a breach of confidence, and I think the whole House is sorry to know that it has occurred. The confidence previously existing between the two leaders has facilitated business here and allowed Parliament to function in the public interest to an extent unknown in any other Parliament of this continent.

The Premier: Since 1919.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That means 13 years, a pretty good record, the period during which the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have succeeded each other in office. That being so, to have this complaint to-day on top of the complaint made only two nights ago is the more incredible. Is there any reason why the Leader of the Opposition should not have the confidence of the Premier on a Bill such as this? The Premier knows that two of the representatives of the North sit on this side of the House, two members whose electors this decision vitally affects. Those two members should have known that the Government had decided to bring down the Bill, and should have had opportunity to exchange ideas with the Leader of the Opposition so that they might let him have the advantage of their opinions, in order that he might give consideration to any viewpoint those members expressed to him. One has been called home to his electorate, and we shall not know what is in his mind. Altogether it is a most regrettable incident, particularly as there has been so much frankness displayed by the leaders of both sides of the House

up to now. This is an important matter, involving a great deal, and the procedure is all the more regrettable, because of those factors. A good case will require to be established for this Bill to be considered or all the business on the Notice Paper to be put through. We have helped the Government all along the line. The Premier has not charged us with not living up to the arrangement that was made. Every time the Leader of the Opposition has given his word we have stood by it. We feel this business as much as he does, and are just as regretful as he is that there has been a breach.

The Premier: I do not admit there has been.

Hon. P. Collier: You know there has.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I have never known the Leader of the Opposition to speak as he did this afternoon, without having substantial grounds for so doing. He is not a man to make statements of any kind without foundation, particularly in the strain that he made them this afternoon. His reputation in the public life of this State will place him beyond challenge on that score. Some explanation is due from the Premier. The Government should reconsider their attitude, seeing that the end of the session is so close and this Parliament is about to come to an end. The people have not been consulted with regard to this Bill. No candidate at the last elections dreamed of such a thing. No party has had an opportunity to consider it. So far as we know, no case has been put up to warrant this legislation. We are entitled to know all the facts before we are asked to deal with it. The Government should not press the Bill at this stage.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [5.33]: I desire to register my protest against Bills of this nature being brought down so close to the end of the session: more especially after the promises that have been made that private members' business would be discussed. As things are, very little if any time will be available for the discussion of private members' business. History will repeat itself. Bills that are dealt with henceforward up to the end of the session may well be thrown out in another place, because so little time will be left in which to discuss them. Members on this side of the House have Bills and motions that have been on the Notice Paper for weeks, and we are most anxious to deal with them. One

is of particular importance to tenants, and another of equal importance to the workers. Before bringing new measures down the business of private members should have been debated. There are about 18 items on the Notice Paper dealing with private members' business, and some of them have been before the House since the session opened. Weeks ago the Government assured us that these matters would be dealt with, but notwithstanding that promise a controversial Bill like this is submitted. I hope the Government will reconsider their action. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, the pastoralists still have 16 years to run, and there can be no hurry about a measure of this kind.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [5.35]: I wish to enter my emphatic protest against new business being put on the Notice Paper at this stage of the session. In the "Daily News" to-night there is a heading to a sub-leader "End of Session Rush." This is a comment on the protest of the Leader of the Opposition made yesterday. The Leader of the Opposition indicated that this session had only a short time to run, that a lot of work yet remained to be done, but that apparently a good deal of it would remain undone. The sub-leader says—

This Parliament will expire with the session, and there is yet much work to be done, and some work that should be done, but which seemingly will not be attempted. For one thing there is small likelihood of the men on the land receiving those assurances for their future which they expected, and the withholding of which they will resent.

I sought to move a motion for the adjournment of the House to discuss the problems of the man on the land. You, Sir, refused to allow that motion on the ground that it was not a matter of urgency. I take it you had in mind that we were getting towards the end of the session, and that it was not meet for members to delay the business of the House. I maintain there are far more important matters than the extension of pastoral leases, which still have 16 years to run. Men engaged in the wheat-growing industry are clamouring for some assurance regarding their future. Their case requires attention at the hands of the House, and they stand in need of something of a definite character being done for them. We have to restore the morale of those people, because it has been shattered owing to the fact that they are carrying on

at a loss. I hear there is to be a motion for the adjournment of the House so that the report of the Commission on the South-West may be discussed. My motion was just as important as that one. The time is getting very short, and soon we shall have no opportunity to debate this important question. Country members very much desire to discuss the wheat-growing industry. I protest against the introduction of the Bill at this late hour.

MR. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [5.40]: I agree with the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition in his castigation of the Government. I may be better placed than other members on this side of the House, because I am a member of the committee that was so harshly referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. There will be other clauses in the Bill that are of importance to the industry I represent, and for that reason I shall support it. If it were only a matter of extending the pastoral leases, I should oppose its introduction at this stage of the session, as the leases still have 16 years to run. An extension of the leases now will not help the industry. Members of the committee to which I have referred have given much valuable time to the drafting of the report that was presented to the Government. I hope the work of that committee will result in some advantage to the industry in which I am so deeply interested. I am sorry the Leader of the Opposition was so harsh in his comments concerning that body.

Hon. P. Collier: I made mental reservations.

Mr. COVERLEY: I know the Leader of the Opposition must have made mental reservations. I imagine he had in mind members of the committee who were not members of this Chamber. To bring down legislation dealing with the North-West at this late hour of the session is in keeping with the attitude of the Government towards the North-West. I fancy the pastoralists will not accept the Bill as a sop coming to them just before the elections. The whole attitude of the Government has been one of neglect towards the North-West. Had they been sincere in their desires to do something for the industry, they could have done it months ago. This Bill could have been introduced months before. Apparently in the opinion of the Government any old time will do for the North-West.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.43]: I do not propose to deal with the Bill referred to by the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley). In reply to the protest which has been made by the Leader of the Opposition, I wish to state that we did discuss the legislation to be passed this session; at that time a Bill was mentioned that included this provision, and it was put on the Notice Paper. I think I said it would not be gone on with as a consolidating measure. I am sorry there has been any misunderstanding. Each year, since 1919, we have met and discussed the legislation to be brought down at the closing hours of the session, and we have up to date managed to get through without much unpleasantness. Apparently the member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum) has accused me of a breach of confidence.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That was hardly the word. Deception was the word used.

The PREMIER: I am sorry that word was used. I have never broken faith with the Leader of the Opposition, but it is possible to have misunderstandings in the best of regulated families. I know the session is drawing to a close, and that not many days are left to us in which to consider any business. We have not much legislation of an important character left to consider. There was no intention to do other than was arranged at the meeting which took place in my room. These meetings are usually held every year. Possibly it will be found on reference to the records that on other occasions something has cropped up which has not been considered at these meetings. I regret the misunderstanding has arisen.

HON. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [5.45]: The protest made by the Leader of the Opposition against the introduction of this Bill at the eleventh hour of the session is well founded. I do not know what the Bill provides, but I understand its object is to extend the term of the pastoral leases in the North-West. One proposal is that the leases in the North-West should be extended for 50 years. The term of the existing leases will not expire until 1948, sixteen years hence, and yet we have this haste in the last hours of the session to extend the term. If a Bill had been brought down earlier in the session, it would have been a different matter. The Minister did give notice of his intention to intro-

duce a Land Act Consolidation Bill, and under that we could have dealt with the whole matter, giving justice where justice was due and equity where equity was due. I do not know how far the proposed Bill will affect pastoral leases in my electorate. I represent a great many pastoralists and they have never mentioned to me any such thing as an extension of the term. Surely the pastoralists of this State do not have to depend upon the present Government in their last days to give them justice! They have always received justice from this side of the House. I have been assured by pastoralists that they considered the Collier Government the best Government the State had had. The Collier Government considered the pastoralists' necessities and gave a fair deal to everybody. Why the need to rush through this Bill at the last moment? If we should be returned to power after the elections, we have a sense of justice and we know the needs of the pastoralists. All this trouble has been fomented because the Government will insist upon bringing in such an important measure at the last moment of the session. My constituents have never mentioned a word about the extension of their leases, and if an extension is not secured for them by the present Government, they know they will get justice and equity from another Government. Not for another 16 years will any extension of the term of the leases be necessary. Legislation of this kind should not be introduced at such a late stage of the session. Adequate time should be given Parliament thoroughly to consider the whole position.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [5.48]: I join with other members on this side of the House in protesting against the introduction of such an important Bill in the last days of the session. It is quite wrong for the Government to attempt to interfere with one of the main assets of the State just before a general election. In the North-West we have a huge territory. The Minister for Lands told us through the Press the other day that he was really concerned about the welfare of that part of the State. He was concerned because the population was diminishing. The number of white people domiciled there is diminishing each year. Now the Minister proposes to introduce a Bill

that will render the position worse. The object of the Bill, I am told, is to extend the term of the existing pastoral leases for 50 years. The outstanding need is a review of the land position generally, the areas held, the conditions under which they are held, the labour employed on their development, the kind of development undertaken, development along the rivers, monopoly of the land at the back of their rivers, the land held along the rivers. Before I entered Parliament we were crying out to Parliament to protect the people against the rotten monopoly of land in that part of the State. As we were approaching the period when a review was due by Parliament in a considered manner, the Government of the day again tried to jockey Parliament into doing the same thing that the present Government are seeking to do to-day. In 1916 the Government introduced a Bill similar to this one and Parliament protested vigorously against it. We had a debate similar to this one, and we appealed to Parliament not to permit it.

Thé Premier: Do you remember the meeting in the clerks' room?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes I do, and I have no hesitation in saying we were misled on that occasion. The present Premier misunderstood the position just as much as I did. We were promised definitely that the huge areas held by individual pastoralists could no longer be held. We were told definitely that there would have to be a reduction of areas held by individuals. The Attorney General of the day seemed to be honest in that statement and we accepted it. The Premier knows what happened. One does not like to speak ill of the dead, but we know that Parliament was misled by one who later assisted the pastoralists to evade the Act and to continue to hold huge areas by forming themselves into companies. There was a flaw in the Act. Instead of Parliament being informed of the loophole, instead of the Attorney General advising that the measure would not give the protection that we were seeking and that the people were expecting, he led us to believe that we would be safe in passing the measure. After a conference that lasted for some time—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I wish to differ; I am not out of order. The question is the introduction of a Bill, and the Minister has told us the object is to extend the term of the pastoral leases. I am protesting against the introduction of the Bill and am giving my reasons. Under the Standing Orders I have a right to give reasons. What is the use of making a speech unless I can give reasons for opposing the Bill? We have been jockeyed out of our rights before, and I do not want to have that experience repeated. I am going to exercise my right to give the history of what occurred previously, so that we shall not be misled into authorising the introduction of a Bill in similar circumstances. On the occasion to which I have been referring, we had a lot of trouble. A conference was held and ultimately the Bill was passed, much against the wishes of the Opposition of the day. Many Government supporters doubted the wisdom of passing the Bill, but they were misled by a guarantee given by the Minister in charge and by the Attorney General that the measure would enable a review to be made of the land monopoly in the North-West and bring the monopoly within reasonable limits. In other words, we were assured that the perpetuation of the huge grants along the river frontages could not be continued under the measure. The pastoralists, however, immediately took advantage of a defect in the measure to form companies. The companies continued to monopolise the land, and that state of affairs exists to-day. A time limit was stipulated within which the pastoralists could bring themselves within the scope of the measure. They had difficulty in forming their companies within the stipulated time, and again, in the dying hours of a session, the same gentleman introduced a Bill to extend the period of 12 months so that the pastoralists would have additional time in which to form companies and thus defeat the desires of Parliament and the wishes of the people. Again we had a fight. Exactly the same kind of debate took place in 1918 as we are having to-night. The question of land monopoly, control and development in the North-West, affects the welfare and prosperity of the State. If the proposal is honest, why is it not faced in an honest manner? What is the use of bringing it down at this stage

and expecting us to deal with it in a proper manner. It is a big question, and there is no time for us to deal with it if we are to rise before Christmas. Certainly there is no prospect whatever of another place giving it proper consideration. I should like to know why the Premier wishes to extend the term of the pastoral leases on the eve of an appeal to the people. Surely he realises that an important question of this kind should be submitted to the people. At the last election no suggestion was made of any proposal to extend the term of this land monopoly. It was never mentioned, and it has never been mentioned since, so far as I know. The first indication I had of it was when I walked into the Chamber to-day and heard the Leader of the Opposition explaining the object of the Bill. Then he exposed the fact that the Government had been thinking the matter over for months and yet had refrained from telling the public. There was no declaration that a Bill of the kind was to be introduced, and it has only been introduced in the last hours of the session. I wish to finish my remarks as I started. This question has never been faced honestly by Parliament. I do not know how the original leases came to be granted. That was before my time as a member, but from the day I entered Parliament, as far back as 1901, members in this House have complained of the system of land tenure and the lack of proper development of that valuable asset in the North. For years we looked forward to an opportunity to review the whole question, to have the land reclassified, surveyed and settled in reasonable areas and in a manner that would permit of proper development, instead of allowing the water frontages to be monopolised by the few. We have been trying for years to get such a review, and on the last occasion when a Bill of this kind was introduced, we were assured that that was what the Government of the day had in mind. They said they would not permit those areas to be held in the future as they had been held in the past. So the pastoralists formed themselves into companies, thus driving the proverbial carriage and pair through the Act and defeating the intentions of Parliament. Later on amending legislation was introduced, and I think it was in 1918 that

a Government of the same political thought as the present—Sir James Mitchell was a member of the Government—extended the period of the leases for a further 12 months so that the work of forming companies could be continued, thereby defeating the ends of Parliament. I hope the Government will realise the unfairness of this procedure. It is cheating the people. They are denying the people the right to voice their opinions. The public have not been consulted, but during the next few months, we shall have an opportunity to consult them. Are the Government afraid of the people? Are the pastoralists afraid to submit this particular question to the people, who, they think, may desire to do them an injustice? Obviously justice will be done to the pioneers of the North. Everyone admires the work they have done in the past and are continuing to do to-day. But there is a lot of work that is not being done, and cannot be done under the land tenure system under which huge areas are held by certain individuals or so-called companies. There should be no fear of the people doing an injustice to the pastoralists of the North, but, in my opinion, the people intend to see that the land in the North is developed in the best possible way by limiting the holdings to reasonable areas, so that they can be developed by the employment of white men. It is a pity the Government have seen fit to introduce such legislation at the tail end of a session. It would have been bad enough to introduce the Bill at an earlier stage, but to do so at this juncture is a public outrage. I hope the Premier will reconsider the matter.

MR. MILLINGTON (Mt. Hawthorn) [6.4]: The part I take exception to in this matter is that although the leases have 16 years to run, the Government assume that at this stage of the session, with a comparatively few days during which Parliament will sit, they are called upon to pose as the champions of the pastoralists of the North, and as the only people who can be trusted to look after the interests of those who are pioneering the outer areas. Underlying the Government's action is the innuendo or suspicion that if those sitting on the Opposition side of the House were to be entrusted with the formation of the Government after next general elections, they would deal unjustly with the pastoralists. If the Government desire to pose as the friends of the

pastoralists, I can assure them that the pastoralists themselves do not view the members who are now sitting in Opposition with any degree of suspicion.

The Premier: Who said they did?

Mr. MILLINGTON: I am sure they would not be a party to rushing through legislation such as this in the dying hours of a session. The pastoralists are not as suspicious as the Government evidently are. I was in the Legislative Council when this matter was dealt with before, and I know that in that House, the Bill was by no means dealt with as a formal matter. Although the best legal advice had been obtained regarding its provisions, a most dangerous clause was allowed to remain in that Bill. It will be seen, therefore, that the Bill before us is one that requires deep consideration, and at this late hour there is no possible prospect of giving it the attention it is entitled to. In view of the number of years the pastoral leases have yet to run, the Government cannot claim that the Bill is urgent, unless they assume that they are the only party who will grant the extension. It may be that their action serves as a forecast for the future and indicates that the Government realise that the reputation they have built up during the last three years means that they will not be here when the next session of Parliament is convened. Probably, therefore, they consider it will not be possible to trust those who will be in charge of the Treasury bench next year to do justice to the pastoralists. If the matter were urgent and important, no objection would be taken by the Opposition. I realise that the matter is important, but it cannot be regarded as urgent. So I endorse the objection that has been raised to the introduction of the Bill at this stage. Another point I wish to make refers to the treatment meted out to pastoralists by the Labour Government, in which the Leader of the Opposition was Premier. For a few months I was at the Lands Department, and I know that instead of the pastoralists viewing the Labour Government and the Minister with suspicion, they had the utmost confidence in them. Not only justice, but generous treatment, was extended to the pastoralists. That was undeniably the policy of the Labour Government. They had just as keen an appreciation of the difficulties of the pastoralists as the present Government have, and I am

satisfied, if a census were taken, it would be found that the pastoralists entertain no feelings of suspicion regarding a Labour Government. If the measure is not rushed through at this late hour of the session, it will be left for another Government to deal with, and the pastoralists will be assured of fair and just treatment. They need that consideration. That is appreciated equally by the Labour Party as by members sitting on the Government side of the House. There are many items appearing on the Notice Paper of sufficient importance to warrant due consideration by the House. I assume that some of those measures of comparative importance will have to be dropped because there will not be sufficient time to consider them, yet we have a highly controversial Bill introduced at this stage, without any previous notice to the House. The consideration of the Bill will take a good deal of time here, and also in another place. In fact, it is in the Legislative Council that the Bill will be discussed at the greatest length. I have been a member of that Chamber, and I know from experience what happened when a Bill was introduced to extend the term of pastoral leases from 1928 to 1948. I assume that the Minister for Lands will have an opportunity to indicate to the House the great urgency of this measure, and will tell us why some of those Bills we have already discussed at some length should be set aside so that we may give attention to something newly before us. The Bill will mean the reviewing of most important legislation, and I fail to see why there should be evidenced on the part of the Government such suspicion as to warrant undue haste in pushing the Bill through at this stage. The leasehold system is the recognised policy of the Labour Government, and there should be no suspicion on that score. I have risen to point out that the Government need not assume that they are the only champions of the pastoralists, and to point out that on other occasions members at present sitting on the Opposition side of the House when they had the opportunity, extended generous consideration to the interests of the pastoralists. I believe the holders of pastoral leases themselves have confidence in those representing the Labour Party, and realise that we will give them just as fair and adequate treatment as they can expect from the present Government.

HON. J. C. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [6.10]: I shall not have much to say at this stage, but I want the Premier to understand thoroughly that a point made by the Leader of the Opposition was that in this Parliament we have always, as the result of any conferences between him and the Leader of the Opposition, had implicit faith in what the Premier has said. While I know that the Premier has indicated that, in his opinion, a misunderstanding has cropped up with regard to the conversation between himself and the Leader of the Opposition a few weeks back, I am sorry the Premier was not present when the Leader of the Opposition dealt with the motion now before the House. The member for Boulder deliberately accused the Premier of absolute deception, and he also dealt with a phase of our Parliamentary life with regard to which I am extremely jealous. Every member of Parliament who has been on a visit to the Eastern States and has discussed Parliamentary matters with members of the Legislatures there, has probably been asked, "How is it that there is such a good understanding and such good feeling between the Government and the Opposition in Western Australia? You seem to get on so well with each other with regard to legislation that is submitted, and with the proceedings in Parliament generally. How do you explain it?" Of course, we know it is because the political game has always been played fairly. The Leader of the Opposition has pointed out that, in regard to this particular matter, the game has not been played fairly. I hope that to restore the good feeling and harmony that has existed for so many years past, and which I trust will continue in the future, the Premier, even though it may involve a climb-down with regard to the Bill, will do everything possible to restore those feelings of harmony and goodwill to which I have alluded. I trust the Premier will say that if this is to be the effect of introducing the Bill at this late hour, he will let the Bill go rather than disturb the good feelings that have existed for 30 years or more on the floor of the House. Personally I object to the Bill being introduced at this late hour, and in the way it has been placed before Parliament. I have previously experienced the passage of Bills of this nature. I remember that in 1918

there was a most important discussion, and at that stage the leases had 10 years to run before expiry. Grave objection was taken to the legislation on that score, and public interest was aroused in the debates that ensued. Between 1918 and 1928 we had to amend the original Act at least three times before those leases expired. Now, when the leases have 16 years to run, we are asked to pass legislation to which strong exception can be taken. If a proposal to extend the leases at a time when they had 10 years to run could cause trouble, surely now when the leases have 16 years to run, greater opposition can be expected. In view of our past experience, it is probable that the Act will be amended half a dozen times between now and when the leases will ultimately expire. In the circumstances, I do not think the Government are justified in going on with the Bill. Pastoralists can rest assured that whatever Government should be in power, irrespective of the political brand, those who are doing such noble work in the out-back areas and producing wealth that is so necessary for the prosperity of the State, will receive a fair deal. In fact, they have always got it. If they have had no reason to say that they have had an unfair deal in the past, they will have no reason to say it in the future. To attempt to extend the leases for 50 years at a time when they have still 16 years to run, must be regarded as objectionable. It would be different if the leases had but two or three years to run. The present Minister for Lands was not a member of Parliament in the earlier days when such a strenuous fight took place on this very question of the extension of the pastoral leases, but presumably he knows something of the history of the Act and knows that the Bill cannot go through without a repetition of that experience. I hope that the Premier, in order to preserve the harmony that has hitherto existed between the political parties in this Chamber, will even at this stage withdraw the Bill.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MISS HOLMAN (Forrest) [7.30]: I am very much concerned to see so many new Bills coming down. It is not so much that I object to this measure because I do not know what it contains, but I feel it is too

late in the session to bring such legislation before the House. Particularly am I concerned about the fate of my own Bill, although it is now standing as No. 10 on the Notice Paper. Only a few days remain before Christmas, and the Legislative Council will not be anxious during those few days to consider private members' business on its merits. As a rule, a good deal of legislation is sent by another place to join the slaughtered innocents at the end of the session. The Premier said there was not much important legislation on the Notice Paper. I take exception to that remark.

The Premier: I was not referring to your Bill.

Miss HOLMAN: As the Premier did not mention my Bill, I presume he does not think it is of any importance. The measure was read a first time on the 7th September—three months ago. It is a great shame that the timber workers cannot have their wrongs redressed by Parliament. The second reading was moved on the 28th September—ten weeks ago. On one or two occasions the Bill has been reached, but the debate has been adjourned to suit the convenience of the Government. Apparently the timber workers are not going to receive consideration, unless of a hurried nature. On the 16th November, on a question of privilege, I asked the Minister for Lands when we were to be given an opportunity to discuss this matter. He replied that much of the legislation that stood ahead of private members' business would be disposed of during the next day or two. Nearly another month has since elapsed. Not only has the legislation that was ahead of private members' business not been disposed of, but the Government have placed still more legislation ahead of private members' business. We were assured that our Bills would be considered in time to be passed through another place. As time goes on, I feel more and more hopeless about getting any help for the timber workers. The pastoralists leases have 16 years to run before they expire, but the timber workers have been waiting ever so long to get justice. They have failed to get it from the court and now desire to appeal for it to Parliament. They have a just cause for complaint in that their case has not been given adequate consideration. We have tried to find ways and means of helping those men to get what they have earned, and to help them in their claims against the sub-contractors.

Unfortunately, the courts have said that the only way they can have their wrongs redressed is by means of new legislation. I am justified in my protest against the action of the Government in misleading private members, and encouraging them to think that their business would receive consideration in time for it to be dealt with by the Legislative Council. We are just as far off getting that consideration as ever we were. I support the Leader of the Opposition in every particular. When it was said that he and the Premier had consulted together regarding the late-hour legislation that had to be brought down, we were satisfied that our private Bills and motions would be dealt with. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. Our hopes have been deferred so long that our hearts are very sick. Justice is being withheld from the timber workers, and the Government do not seem anxious to allow them to get it. I protest strongly against new legislation being put ahead of private members' business.

MR. ANGELO (Gaseoyne) [7.40]: I regret that the Bill has been brought down at this late hour, but feel sure that if the Minister for Lands were given an opportunity to state his reasons, members would change their views. This Bill is important not only to the pastoralists, but to the workers in the industry. Hundreds in my electorate have been retrenched from stations, and many of them are in the South on the dole. They can no longer get a living in their old occupations, because the pastoralists cannot afford to pay their wages, and cannot borrow money with which to do so. Fully 95 per cent. of the pastoralists in the North are being financed by the banks and other institutions. The depression has created a doubt as to the value of pastoral securities. True, the leases have 16 years to run. A few years ago, when the industry was in a flourishing condition, the banks did not hesitate to lend money, knowing that in the natural course of events it would be repaid in five or 10 years. It was a good business risk. The position has now changed. No one knows how soon an advance will be paid off now. The banks and other financial institutions desire to make their securities more assured. Many of the firms which would have lent money a few years ago on a 10-years tenure will not do so to-day on a 16-years' tenure, but if Parliament will extend the 16 years

to 30 or 40 years, the banks will have a better chance of getting their money back.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is the position all over the world.

Mr. ANGELO: Nevertheless, it is the true position.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It has been going on for a hundred years.

Mr. ANGELO: For seven years I managed one of the Associated Banks.

Mr. Marshall: No, you mismanaged it.

Mr. ANGELO: That may be funny but it is not true. That particular bank spent millions of pounds in the North-West for the development of the pastoral industry. Later on I was associated with that industry as a stock and station agent and in other directions. For 15 years I have represented the Gascoyne electorate, so should speak with some knowledge. The first thing a bank or financial institution looks at is the length of the tenure. It is impossible at the present time even to borrow money to carry on the stations unless the banks and firms are satisfied that the pastoralists have a tenure long enough to permit of their repaying the banks' advances when the good times come again. At present lenders are not prepared to take the risk. Anyone who knows anything at all about the pastoral industry must know that, unfortunately, improvements on stations have been deteriorating for some time. Windmills require new parts, tanks need renewing, fences require repairing. The pastoralist knows that at present he cannot carry out the work necessary to put all those things in order; but he has been told by the financial institutions that if he can offer them better security they will lend him the money to put his fences in repair, renew his tanks and provide new parts for his windmills. It is absolutely necessary for the pastoralist to keep his improvements in such a state of preservation as will enable him to carry on his station in a proper way. If the Bill passes, I am sure money will be made available for the purposes I have mentioned.

Mr. Marshall: You told us that about the Carnarvon Meat Works, yet £60,000 was wasted upon them.

Mr. ANGELO: These loud speakers do give one a headache.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. ANGELO: If the Bill passes, I feel quite sure that within six months the pastoralists will be able to re-engage hundreds

of their employees who are at present out of work. I urge members to consider those men as well as the pastoralists, and lose no time in passing the Bill. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the North-West Advisory Committee. He said it was a hypocritical body and had been appointed simply to make this recommendation in connection with pastoral leases. I think it only fair to the committee to say that our report, which was submitted only about three or four weeks ago, consists of 18 pages of typewritten foolscap, of which less than one third of a page refers to pastoral leases. That committee, which consisted not only of the four North-West members of this House, but of the three North-West members of the Upper House, together with many of our leading business men and a representative of the pastoralists, spent many weeks—we had 30 meetings—in going into various matters. We made recommendations not only on this particular subject, but on 50 or 60 other matters.

Mr. Marshall: Will they also be contained in the Bill?

Mr. ANGELO: I hope not. I have not seen the Bill, but I understand it refers only to the one subject.

Mr. Marshall: Then why are you referring to the whole of the report?

Mr. ANGELO. I am saying how wrong the suggestion is which was put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. Knowing him as I do, I feel sure that when he has had an opportunity of perusing the report, he will be sorry he treated us in such a cavalier manner. I hope the Bill will receive the early attention which its importance demands.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York—in reply) [7.50]: I am very sorry that my introduction of this measure should have caused the debate which has taken place; but may I, at the outset, make it perfectly clear that what is proposed was previously included in a Bill introduced into the House for the consolidation of the Land Act? When the Premier made the arrangement he did with the Leader of the Opposition, the major portion of that Bill was dropped in order to curtail the work of the House, and it will be ready for whatever party happens to be in power next session. Of course, there may be

changes, but I assure members there was no breach of faith on the part of the Premier. The Bill was already on the Notice Paper, but, in order to meet the desires of the Opposition, we dropped the major portion of it.

Mr. Marshall: Why cannot it wait until next session?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I suggest to the hon. member that he waits until he peruses the Bill. The pastoralists, like every other section of the primary producers not only in Western Australia but in Australia generally, are suffering a very serious financial set-back, and I know members opposite would like to assist them in these trying times. I shall leave the discussion of the Bill until it is before members. The Bill has not been withheld. I can assure members that is so. The Bill which we withdrew from the Notice Paper was the comprehensive measure, which took a great deal of time to frame. After all, the Bills which have been introduced by my colleague, the Minister for Mines, have taken up a tremendous amount of the time of the Parliamentary draftsmen. They have been working for weeks on those Bills, trying to perfect them and, as the Minister told the House, we have not a great number of idle Parliamentary draftsmen on the staff. We have had to take our turn. There was no intention on the part of the Government to foist on the House in the dying hours of the session an important measure without giving members ample opportunity of discussing it. I am not going to discuss the position of the pastoralists, because we shall have plenty of time to do that when the Bill is before the House. The Premier has given me the privilege of telling the House that the Bill will not take priority over other measures now on the Notice Paper. Private members will have an opportunity of discussing their measures before the Bill is brought forward. They must give us an opportunity to expedite the business of the House as much as possible. I have no desire to deprive members of the opportunity of discussing private Bills. Having expressed the opinions they hold, I do hope they will accept my statement that there is no desire on the part of the Government to break down the good feeling which has existed for so long between the two Leaders of the House simply because of what has happened on this occasion.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	25
Noes	..	..	..	18
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	7
				—

AYES.

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

NOES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Panton
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Sleeman
Miss Holman	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Willcock
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Withers
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Leave given.

First Reading.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, Bill read a first time.

BILLS (4)—RETURNED.

- 1, Mining Act Amendment.
With amendments.
- 2, Rockingham Road District (Loan Rate Exemption).
- 3, Collie Recreation and Park Lands Act Amendment.
- 4, Roads Closure.
Without amendment.

BILL—MINE WORKERS' RELIEF.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clauses 5, 37, 38, 42, 48, 49 and 53.

In Committee.

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

Clause 5—Interpretation:

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move an amendment—

That there be added to the definition of "Mine worker" a paragraph, as follows:—

"Subject to the approval of the Governor in each case, the term also includes a person who whilst employed as a mine worker, either before or after the commencement of this Act, left or leaves such employment in order to be employed in another class of employment directly or indirectly connected with the mining industry in Western Australia, and whilst so employed contributes to the fund as a mine worker under this Act."

This is to meet the point raised by the member for Hannans last night.

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

Clause 37—Vice-Chairman:

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move an amendment—

That this clause be deleted and that there be inserted in lieu thereof a clause as follows:—

37. (1.) The Governor may appoint any person, other than a person for the time being acting as an ordinary member of the Board, to be deputy chairman of the Board to act in the place of the chairman at any time during his absence or inability of the chairman to act.

(2.) The deputy chairman shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor.

(3.) In the absence of, or during the inability of the chairman to act, the deputy chairman shall act in his stead, and whilst so acting shall have the same powers and duties as the chairman if present would have.

Clause 37 as printed in the Bill provides that at the first meeting of the board the members shall elect from amongst their numbers a vice-chairman to act in the absence of the chairman. But that would disturb the voting power of the two parties, and so it was suggested by the members of the board themselves that we should have such a clause as I now propose.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause 38—Meetings:

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move an amendment—

That Subclause (1) be deleted and there be inserted in lieu a subclause as follows:—

(1.) The chairman, or, in his absence or during his inability to act, the deputy chairman, shall preside at all meetings of the Board, and shall have a deliberative vote only.

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

Clause 42—Powers of board:

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move an amendment—

That there be added at the end of paragraph (g) of Clause 42 the words "including the payment of allowances to persons acting as legal guardians of and maintaining infant dependants of a mine worker."

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

Clause 48—Benefit in respect of a mine worker prohibited as suffering from tuberculosis and silicosis:

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move an amendment—

That there be added to Subclause (1) a proviso as follows:—

"Provided further, that where a mine worker referred to in Subsection (1) of this section is receiving his worker's compensation by weekly payments in accordance with the said Act and, if working as a mine worker, would be entitled in accordance with the ruling basic wage to receive wages weekly in excess of the amount of weekly compensation which he is receiving, then, notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this section or in any other section of this Act, such mine worker, whilst he continues to receive weekly payments of worker's compensation, shall be entitled to receive from the Board out of the fund weekly the amount of the difference between the amount of the weekly payment of worker's compensation and the amount of weekly wages aforesaid."

It means that we are making provision for the board to make up the difference between the maximum amount the worker can receive under the Workers' Compensation Act, and the basic wage, if he is entitled to it. Under the Workers' Compensation Act he receives only half the ruling rate of wage and 7s. 6d. for each dependant, with a maximum of £3 10s. per week. This will allow him to draw up to the maximum wage.

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

Clause 49—Benefit in respect of a mine worker prohibited as suffering from tuberculosis without silicosis:

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move an amendment—

That there be inserted in Subclause (1) after the word "work," in line 10, the words "or that prior to such prohibition and to the medical examination next preceding such

prohibition he had been examined by the laboratory, and then found not to be suffering from tuberculosis."

In the Bill it is provided that if a man be found to be suffering from T.B. and has not been in the industry for at least two years, he shall not be entitled to any compensation. But I agreed last evening that if he had been previously examined by the department and was passed as being free from T.B., and was afterwards found to be suffering from T.B., it would be accepted as being a result of his employment.

Mr. MARSHALL: This is the point I raised last evening. I want to know how the miners in the North-West are going to fare under the amendment. Those miners cannot possibly be examined. The Minister has struck out the provision which covered those men.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, I have not struck out anything. Quite a number of men enter the industry in localities where they cannot be examined at the laboratory at Kalgoorlie, but can only be admitted on a medical certificate. If they have worked in a mine for two years, whether examined or not, and are found to be suffering from T.B., they get these benefits, but if they have not been at least two years in the industry it is accepted that they were suffering from T.B. before they entered the industry, and so are not entitled to compensation. If, on the other hand, they were previously examined by a doctor, it is taken as evidence that they contracted the disease in the industry.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (a) the words "three pounds ten shillings per week" be struck out and the words "the basic wage from time to time ruling in the district in which the mine worker was employed when prohibited, and which would be applicable to him if he had continued to be so employed" inserted in lieu.

This will have the same effect as the longer amendment made to the other clause.

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

Clause 53—Benefit in respect of a mine worker referred to in Sections 50 and 52 of this Act:

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move—

That the following proviso be added to Sub-clause (1):—

"Provided further, that where a mine worker referred to in Subsection (1) of this section is receiving his worker's compensation by weekly payments in accordance with the said Act, and, if working as a mine worker would be entitled in accordance with the ruling basic wage to receive wages weekly in excess of the amount of weekly compensation which he is receiving, then, notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this section or in any other section of this Act, such mine worker, whilst he continues to receive weekly payments of worker's compensation, shall be entitled to receive from the board out of the fund weekly the amount of the difference between the amount of the weekly payment of worker's compensation and the amount of weekly wages aforesaid."

This is similar to the amendment made to Clause 48.

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

Bill again reported with further amendments.

As to Standing Orders Suspension.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Bill to be passed through its remaining stages at this sitting.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Why the need for suspending the Standing Orders for this Bill? I cannot see that anything can be gained by such haste. In view of the fact that new legislation is being introduced, it would appear that the session is not going to end speedily.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not particular; members can have the Bill or leave it.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: We do not want it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am prepared to withdraw the motion.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I said that we do not want this Bill. We never asked for it. Irrespective of what the Leader of the Opposition might say, we do not want it.

Mr. Panton: Who are "we," anyhow?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I for one, and there are others.

Mr. Marshall: Quite right, we do not want it.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I cannot see that there is any need for haste or any

need to suspend the Standing Orders. I intend to oppose the third reading of the Bill. The people of the goldfields do not desire it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I ask leave to withdraw the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WHOLE MILK.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. S. W. MUNSIE (Hannans) [8.21]: If the Minister will introduce a Bill that will assist the producers of milk, I am prepared to support it. The wheatgrowers are in a bad way, but bad and all as their position is, I believe that the men producing milk, particularly whole milk for the metropolitan area, are in a worse position, and that is saying a good deal. I do not believe this Bill will benefit those men at all; on the contrary, if it be passed, it will do considerable harm to the whole of the population of the metropolitan area. I am not prepared to vote for the second reading of a Bill that provides for a board to be constituted as proposed. I have never known such a lopsided board to be suggested. That is my first objection to the Bill. The marginal note to Clause 2 of the Bill is, "Saving provisions." I have read the clause half a dozen times, but have been unable to understand it. I showed it to a solicitor and asked him whether he could understand it, and his reply was, "Yes, it is a point blank contradiction of itself."

Mr. Marshall: You should have taken it to the Salvation Army; they are always saving.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I agree with the solicitor; it is a point blank contradiction of itself. First of all it sets forth that the measure shall not be deemed to repeal any other Act or any regulations made under any other Act. That is quite clear, but it goes on to say that if any other Act or regulations conflict with this measure or the regulations made under it, this measure shall prevail.

The Minister for Agriculture: That does not repeal any other Act.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: But it nullifies any other Act or regulations that may conflict with this measure. That is ridiculous and absurd. I have two objections to the Bill.

My first objection is to the constitution of the board. My second objection is to Clause 17. That clause empowers the board to appoint officers, including inspectors, as considered necessary to carry out its duties and functions. I have no objection to the board appointing officers, but I object to the board having power to appoint inspectors. If the Government wish to finish the session before Christmas, they will have to remove those two words from the Bill.

The Premier: Why?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The Committee stage has yet to come, and if the words are not deleted, members will be kept here for a long time. It is proposed that there shall be four milk producers on the board. The board would elect a chairman, and naturally one of the four producers would be elected. The chairman is to have two votes, and consequently the four producers would command five votes out of eight. Such a board is to be empowered to appoint inspectors. What will be the duty of the inspectors? To inspect the dairies and the milk sent to the metropolitan area. The result will be that the inspectors appointed by the board will be inspecting the dairies owned by and the milk produced by their employers. If the Government think I am going to agree to that, they are mistaken. In the interests of the health of the people, the inspection of milk, the chief food of the people, should be the responsibility of the Health Department. The board could appoint as an inspector anybody it liked. From the first page of the Bill to the last, there is nothing to require the inspectors to possess any qualifications. Particular friends of the board may be appointed inspectors and they need not possess any qualifications. Does the Minister realise that that provision will override Section 30 of the Health Act, which provides for the qualifications of health inspectors? I do not want to see those qualifications reduced. If there is to be any alteration, let us make the standard higher, and not wipe it out. The proposal in the Bill is ridiculous. It is highly desirable that an alteration be made to the conditions governing the milk industry. I do not know how a dairyman can produce milk profitably, particularly for the metropolitan area, unless he has a dairy close to Perth, is milking his own cows, and has a milk round of his own. Probably such a man could make a decent living under existing conditions.

The man who has a dairy ten or 12 miles out of the city and has to send his milk to a depot, which passes it on to the retailer, who delivers it to the public, has no hope of making a success of his business. He is probably getting about 5½d. a gallon for his milk, and that is all he would get as a result of this Bill. He cannot make ends meet under such conditions. We require legislation that will control the distribution of milk in the metropolitan area. Many metropolitan dairymen have either to pay high rentals for their land, or have had to put up a considerable amount of capital if they have bought their land. They have also had to buy their herds, and have to keep those herds healthy. When they lose a beast as a result of disease, they have to replace it.

The Minister for Agriculture: They get compensation up to 90 per cent.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: But they still lose 10 per cent. They have to go to all this expense before they supply any milk whatever. Why should men like that receive only between 5½d. and 7½d. per gallon, while the consumer in the metropolitan area is called upon to pay from 2s. 4d. to 2s. 8d. a gallon? What becomes of the difference between the two prices? It goes first of all to the depot-keeper, and then to the man who delivers the milk. How can we expect to benefit the producer if we allow the system of distribution to remain as it is? I live in Fitzgerald-street, North Perth. On six days in the week, 60 milk carts pass my door.

Mr. Panton: Six come into my street, which contains seven houses.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I know of a milkman who supplies a customer three-quarters of a mile from my place, and also supplies a customer at the other end of the tramway terminus in Victoria Park. We must control the distribution. This Bill will not affect that position one jot. The producer, through the Press, is asking for a Bill that will give him a fairer price for his product. If this Bill becomes law, he may get a better price, but only at the expense of an increase in price to the consumer. If for no other reason than that it will increase the cost of living, I will vote against the Bill. Even if I thought it would mean a better price to the producer, and a lower price to the consumer, I would oppose the Bill unless the Minister agreed to allow the Health Department to control the inspection

of dairies and the delivery of milk in the metropolitan area. I am not prepared to hand over the inspections to anyone in private employment.

The Premier: Has there ever been a thorough inspection of dairy farms?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Within a given radius of the metropolitan area there has been an efficient inspection by the Health Department of all dairies. This Bill will take that work out of the hands of the department. Of course, the Minister for Agriculture will say he is not taking the work away from the Health Department, because it will still control the standard of milk. Is that all he is thinking about?

The Minister for Agriculture: They will control the milk in the metropolitan area but not on the farm.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I want to see the control begin before the cow is milked.

Mr. Thorn: That is the work of a veterinary officer.

Mr. Panton: Will the milk improve on its way from the farm to the metropolitan area?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: For health reasons I want to see dairies properly inspected. The Minister will probably tell us that much of the milk which comes to the metropolitan area is not inspected by health officers. That is true. Supplies come from Brunswick, where there is no inspection by the Health Department.

Mr. Sampson: A health inspector is employed by the Harvey Road Board.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: If I can get it my way, road boards and municipalities will not employ their own health inspectors. Those men should all be under the control of the Department of Public Health.

Mr. Sampson: They must hold certain certificates.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes, but not under this Bill. In certain areas close to the metropolitan area some of the local authorities have their own health inspectors. I know of one case in the metropolitan area of a local health board which employed a health inspector. There were seven members on the board, and six of them were dairymen. They were the employers of the inspector. How can fair inspection be made under such conditions? Six of the members of the board were in the business the man was called upon to inspect. He would naturally want to keep his job, and would feel that he would have to keep his

tongue quiet and close his eyes to what he saw. In other words he would be told to mind his own business. I want to see these inspections carried out by Government employees, men who are fully qualified for the work. I know that some of the inspectors employed by local authorities are fully qualified men. The Bill that I brought down to deal with this matter would have been efficacious, had it not been severely mutilated in another place. I know of another case in the metropolitan area where the secretary of the health board was the health inspector. Within that area there were nine noxious trades and 21 dairies. I secured the monthly reports of this health inspector, for three months in succession. They showed he had not visited one dairy or one of these establishments where a noxious trade was being carried on. Can that be called health inspection? How can the public get a fair deal under such conditions?

The Minister for Agriculture: We want to alter that.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I did try to alter it. I put a Government inspector over this man's head, and made the local authority pay his salary. I did my best to make milk inspections all they ought to be. I will not vote for any Bill that will take away the little we have succeeded in gaining in the matter of milk inspection. We shall only revert to the old position when we had no control over milk in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Angelo: Then help to amend this Bill.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I will help to amend it by trying to get the words I have referred to struck out. I would talk for hours rather than allow a board such as is constituted under the Bill to have the right to employ their own health inspectors. I never heard anything more ridiculous or absurd. I will not submit to a Bill like this becoming law if it possible to prevent it.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.45]: Although there are many features about the Bill that I dislike, I intend to support the second reading. In Committee many amendments will require to be made if the measure is to become workable. The dairying industry is in a precarious position, more especially as regards the whole milk section.

I do not see how the Bill will assist them one iota.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Nor do I.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Nevertheless, we can discuss ways and means of getting over the difficulties, and it is our duty to do so. Some few months ago, a board was appointed to fix prices and to ascertain whether it was not possible to bring the producers and the consumers closer together. The operations of that board broke down because there was no statutory authority to enable them to do anything. A strike of producers followed in which a well-known gentleman was highly interested. He belongs to an organisation established for political purposes, and he was prominent in the trouble, possibly for the purpose of becoming chairman of the board when the projected legislation became law.

Mr. Sampson: He did some very effective work.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have heard the hon. member on many occasions belittle the organisation with which that gentleman is connected. He has spoken very detrimentally about that particular individual.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The producers had a good case, but their efforts were badly organised.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The milk that will be controlled by the board to be set up will be drawn from as far as Muchea in the east to Brunswick in the south, and if any hon. member can tell me how the proposed board will be able to regulate the business and control the contracts that will be entered into, then I am a Dutchman. Throughout that area, sufficient milk will be produced to supply the metropolitan area a dozen or 15 times over. Although the producers said they could not make a living with milk at 11½d. a gallon—that was the price when the strike took place—they are supplying milk to-day at about 5½d. a gallon on the basis of butter fat prices at present. What increase will those producers get over butter fat prices? We shall have to fix a margin. If we fix it at 3d. a gallon, that will make the price 8d., or 3½d. a gallon less than the producers were getting when the strike was precipitated. If we allow 6d. a gallon extra, so as to give them a semblance of a living out of the product, it will mean 11d. a gallon to everyone who contributes towards the milk supply of the metropolitan

area. What will be the result? There will be chaos. If the board were to tell Jones that they would register him and that he could supply milk at 5d. over butter fat prices, and at the same time debar Smith from enjoying the same privileges because he had not made a contract, will it get us anywhere? Obviously too much power is to be given to the board. All the producers will desire to supply milk. We will have to draw a line somewhere, and when we do so, it will mean that the man beyond the line will be compelled to supply his milk to the creamery or to the butter factory at 5d., while a man on the other side of the line will be able to sell his milk at 11d. a gallon.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Are they not all entitled to the margin?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Of course they are, and I cannot see how the Minister will get over that difficulty. I hope he will explain to the House just what he intends to do, and how he hopes to overcome that difficulty. Dairies are distributed all over the metropolitan area, and they will possibly be put out of existence. No provision is made in the Bill for compensation. Many dairymen have been established for years. Will the board have power to say to a man that although he has been operating for a number of years, he must cease operations the next day because the board have decided to draw the milk supplies of the metropolitan area from the Peel Estate, from Harvey or from Osborne Park, where there is sufficient milk produced to supply everyone in the metropolitan area? I do not see how that can be done. I hope the Minister will give us some explanation under that heading. I am only too anxious to support the second reading of the Bill with the object of seeing whether we cannot do something to improve the measure at the Committee stage. There will also be the difficulty with regard to the inspections to which reference has been made by several members. To-day there is supposed to be a system of inspection of the dairies, and the owners are supposed to be compelled to keep them clean. Now the Minister proposes to establish another authority over the heads of the present inspectors, but that cannot be done unless we amend the Health Act. The whole problem bristles with difficulties. I understand many amendments are to be moved. I shall await the Committee stage with interest.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. P. D. Ferguson—Irwin-Moore—in reply) [8.50]: I have listened with interest to the debate. In view of the fact that the contemplated legislation is experimental in this State, it is merely natural that considerable attention should be devoted to the proposals. I have been rather pleased with the debate that has taken place, because it has evidenced the interest of members generally. Certainly it is apparent there is a great deal of misconception regarding the measure, and much has been imported into the debate that has very little connection with the Bill itself. I desire to refer to the remarks of several members, particularly those who have gone to a great deal of trouble to place before the House considered views born of experience, that were calculated to be of considerable benefit in making the measure more workable. The member for Mt. Hawthorn (Mr. Millington), in the course of a long speech, made some remarks that were not quite justified. He said that unless the producer was from outside the metropolitan area, he was of no interest to the Government. That was not a fair statement, because not only the producers from outside the metropolitan area but those within who are members of the Metropolitan Dairymen and Cattle Owners' Association, have been in conference with the Deputy Premier and myself on more than one occasion, and their views have been accorded serious consideration. So the hon. member's suggestion that unless a producer was operating outside the metropolitan area the Government would not give him any consideration, has no foundation in fact. The hon. member also referred sarcastically to the milk advisory board that I established a year or so ago in an endeavour to straighten out the difficulties of those engaged in supplying whole milk to the metropolitan area pending the passage of legislation to provide the statutory power they considered necessary to enable them to place the industry on a firm basis. The hon. member said that with the exception of Mr. Sutton and Mr. Baron-Hay, each member had some official standing or was in some way associated with the Primary Producers' Association. He asserted that the advisory board was purely and simply a P.P.A. organisation. In refutation of that suggestion I will give the House the names of

those who constituted the advisory board. They were as follows:— the Director of Agriculture (Mr. Sutton), (Chairman); the Superintendent of Dairying (Mr. Baron-Hay); the late Mr. Robinson, who was a member of a road board in the hon. member's own electorate and president of the Osborne Park Agricultural Society; Mr. Russell, a dairyman of Serpentine; Mr. Taylor, of Mundijong, a dairyman and stud cattle breeder; Mr. Shaw, a dairyman at Harvey; Mr. Pickering, the chairman of the Whole Milk Section of the P.P.A.; Mr. Brown, of Browns Ltd., a depot keeper; Mr. Roberts, a depot keeper and retailer; Dr. Boyd, the chairman of directors of Pascomi Ltd., and Mr. McRobbie, chairman of the Retail Milk Vendors' Association. Apart from Mr. W. G. Pickering, whom I knew to be associated with the Primary Producers' Association, not one of those men, so far as I knew when I appointed them, was connected in any way with the P.P.A. I have been given to understand that Mr. Taylor was a member, or may have been a member, at the time I appointed him to the board, but I was not aware of the political views of any of those members, apart from Mr. Pickering, when I appointed them to the board. The statement, therefore, that they were officers or associated with the P.P.A., was not in accordance with the facts. The member for Mt. Hawthorn also stated that on the proposed board, the P.P.A. would have four representatives. There is no suggestion that the four producers to be appointed to the board shall be members of the P.P.A. He also said that he did not feel disposed to leave too much to any elected board, and that, in his opinion, the board was wrongly constituted. On the other hand, the hon. member made no suggestion as to what he considered would be a properly constituted board, so he did not provide us with much helpful criticism.

Mr. Sampson: Membership of the Primary Producers' Association has no significance at all.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: At any rate, it does not condemn a man. The member for Mt. Hawthorn also stated that only those associated with the Primary Producers' Association could get the ear of the Minister. That is not so. As I have previously pointed out, those associated with all sections of the industry

have on numerous occasions discussed this problem with Ministers. As a matter of fact the deputation that waited on the Deputy Premier, in the absence of the Premier, who was in the Eastern States, made an urgent and influential request that this legislation should be placed before Parliament. That deputation consisted of Messrs. Macfarlane, M.L.C., Pickering, Abernethy and Taylor, representing the producers, and Brown, Wilson, Gillam, McRobbie and Roberts, representing the distributors. At least six out of the nine had no association with the P.P.A. or the producers, and those representative men, on behalf of the various sections of the trade, urged upon the Deputy Premier the necessity to do something along the lines indicated in the Bill. Various deputations have waited upon Ministers pointing out different phases of the difficulties they were up against, and the last deputation that waited on me consisted wholly of distributors, without a single representative of the producers or of the Primary Producers' Association. So far as I was able to, I informed them what the Bill would contain. It is natural that every section should desire to secure increased representation on any board set up to control the industry. The producers contend that they are the most vitally concerned, and should have all the representation. The distributors consider themselves an important section of the community, and urge that they should have increased representation. While hon. members opposite have stressed the position of the consumer, I do not think the consumers have raised any great complaint against the Bill. Apparently they are satisfied that under the measure they will get a better deal than they have to-day.

Mr. Panton: What makes you think that?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Because of the opportunities I have had to get in touch with the consumers throughout the metropolitan area.

Mr. Panton: I think members of the Opposition get in touch with more consumers than the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am satisfied that not many of those with whom the hon. member has been in touch have made complaints regarding the Bill.

Miss Holman: Many of them want to know where the difference goes.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I believe most of the complaints have been

raised by the distributors, not by the consumers. Seeing they are the section which have been making the most money in the industry in the past, it is but natural that they should protest when they see some of their profits slipping away. As the member for Hannans pointed out, self-preservation is the first law of nature. They realise they will not be playing as important a part in the distribution of this very necessary commodity in the future as they have done in the past.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Some of them are not making enough to pay for the repairs to their milk carts and the shoeing of their horses.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The member for Mt. Hawthorn also stated it would be wrong to give the producers a majority representation on the board. I am not of that opinion. Those who produce a particular commodity should have majority representation on any board established for the organisation and marketing of that commodity. Surely, no one is more vitally interested in a commodity than the person who actually produces it. In these times, when the producer in many instances is receiving less than the actual cost of production, he is anxious to see that his commodity is marketed in the most economical and efficient manner possible. Naturally, he wants some say in the marketing of it. My view is that he should have absolute control.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: But your Bill gives him not only control, but the right to fix the price as well. That is a bit too much.

Miss Holman: That is absolute control.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will come to that point directly.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I wonder if you would allow a board of workers, sitting as an arbitration court, to fix their wages without an employer on the board at all.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The member for Guildford wanted to know how the board would arrive at the butter-fat price. To-day a board exists which represents the butter factories of Western Australia. That board fixes month by month the price of the butter-fat that is supplied to the various butter factories. There cannot be very much difficulty in ascertaining the value of butter fat in Western Australia. To-day it is almost governed by the prices that prevail in the Eastern States and London. Seeing we have got to

the export stage so far as butter is concerned, there need be no great difficulty in fixing the price of butter fat. The member for Guildford has no need to worry about that matter. The present butter fat price is the amount that the dairyman can get for all his butter fat or for all his milk, if he wishes to sell it to the butter factories. If there is over-production of whole milk, he can always fall back on the butter fat price which is obtainable at the various butter factories in the State. There need be no doubt as to the actual butter fat price, which is the basis of the price to be fixed for whole milk.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Plus what?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will come to that directly.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: All right.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Much discussion has taken place upon the constitution of the proposed board. As I have said, I think it but fair and equitable that those who produce the commodity should have control. When members on the other side of the House were in office, they introduced a measure to control the marketing of all primary products. That measure would have included whole milk. Yet to-day the Opposition condemn the Government because they introduce a measure which will give four-sevenths of the control to the producers, two-sevenths to the distributors and one-seventh to the consumer. When the Opposition were in office, however, they were prepared to place upon the statute-book a measure, which passed through this House, establishing a board to control all primary products. Only producers were to have any representation on that board. If that was desirable in those days, why is it not desirable now? I have not gone nearly so far as the Minister for Agriculture in the Collier Government went when he introduced that measure.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You have not got anything like the same clauses in your Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have not gone half as far.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Not half as far to curtail them at the other end.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mt. Magnet criticised the constitution of the proposed board, but my Bill, as I say, does not go half as far as

their Bill went, and it must be remembered that they gave no representation to anyone except the producers. Here are some of the things which their Bill contained. The board had power to appoint and employ agents, officers and servants, and to enter into any agreement which the board might consider expedient. The Leader of the Opposition waxed very eloquent last night in his condemnation of the Bill now before the House, because the board proposed to be established under it would have power to appoint servants, inspectors, agents and others; yet under the Bill which he sponsored, and which every member on the other side of the House supported (excluding, of course, those who have been elected to Parliament since; the member for Kanowna and some others were not here then) the board had power to impose or charge any levies or commissions, to pay any claims against the board and all the expenses of the board, to arrange for financial accommodation with any bank, with power to charge the produce acquired with repayment of any advances and bank or other charges. My board has not the power to do anything half as drastic as that. The other board was empowered to purchase or otherwise acquire and hold any land or personal property which might be acquired; to erect or otherwise provide any buildings; to sell or otherwise dispose of any real or personal property; to acquire the whole of any controlled product and no person would be allowed to sell any product controlled, except to the board. The other board also had power to declare void any contract of sale, except a contract of sale to the board, and the board's decision on all these matters was to be final. Yet members opposite complain about the Bill I have introduced. In comparison with theirs, it is mild. Except that it is entitled a Whole Milk Bill, I should say it was a milk and water Bill compared with theirs. Reference has been made to the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act and to what will happen to that Act if this Bill is passed. Under the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act, dairymen within a radius of, I think, 15 miles of the metropolitan area pay a certain sum for the insurance of their cattle. If a cow is condemned by a veterinary officer, the dairyman is compensated for it. If this Bill becomes law, it is my intention to amend the regulations under the Dairy

Cattle Compensation Act by providing that every cow belonging to a registered dairyman shall automatically come under the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act. The cattle owned by those who supply whole milk outside the area I have mentioned are not subject to veterinary inspection and the owners are therefore under no expense in that regard. I think it fair and equitable to extend the boundaries at present defined under the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act to include any area which may be declared under this Bill. A clause in the Bill provides that when the Minister sets up the first board he shall consult other associations or bodies in connection with the appointment of members of the board. In view of the fact that approximately 90 per cent. of the milk suppliers in the metropolitan area to-day are members of either the Primary Producers' Association or the Metropolitan Stockowners' Association, those two bodies should be consulted before any appointments are made. There are very few suppliers of milk to the metropolitan area to-day who are not members of either one or other of those associations, so that no great difficulty will be experienced in making appointments to the first board. I have received from producers in the area referred to by the member for Nelson, namely, from Muchea to Brunswick, resolutions carried by meetings of producers expressing approval of the Bill. I doubt if there is a producer of whole milk in that area who does not heartily approve of its provisions.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That is from those supplying now; but what about the hundreds not supplying?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In the course of discussion it was stated that it was not right for group settlers on the Peel estate and in districts not very far distant from it, to supply whole milk to the metropolitan area in competition with producers nearer in who had been established for years. In my opinion, that is an entirely erroneous view to take. The people who supply milk to the metropolitan area and who are in the vicinity of Perth have no exclusive right to the trade. Every man who settles on the land in Western Australia has an equal right to supply milk with the suppliers in Osborne Park and Wanneroo who have been engaged in the trade for some time.

Member: What were the groupers settled on the Peel estate for?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: To establish and develop the dairying industry. There was no suggestion that they should be debarred from embarking on any particular section of the dairying industry. Groupers, in my opinion, have as much right to sell whole milk to the metropolitan area as the suppliers who reside at Wanneroo or elsewhere.

Mr. McLarty: And the groupers have the right to produce what they like.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There has been a great deal of misconception in the minds of some members regarding the licensing of producers in the proposed dairy areas, and it has been suggested that licenses will automatically be confined to a few suppliers. That is not so. The intention is to license every dairyman who wishes to be licensed, provided he conducts a dairy up to the standard set by the board.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Where have you that in the Bill? You are giving the board the absolute right to license whom they like, and no one else.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have on the Notice Paper an amendment which was inadvertently omitted from the Bill. It makes provision for appeal. Every dairyman who is refused a license will have the right to appeal to the Minister. It would be my intention to allow every dairyman a license, so long as he conducts his dairy in compliance with the standard set by the board. There is no intention to restrict licenses.

Mr. Panton: Is the Minister, not the board, to issue the licenses?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, the board will issue licenses, and any man who is refused a license will have the right of appeal to the Minister. One member wanted to know how all these dairymen are to dispose of their milk. That will be a matter between the dairymen and the distributors in Perth, and any distributor who wants to make a contract with a licensed dairyman will have the right to do so and will not be compelled to take milk from a dairyman whom he does not favour.

Mr. Panton: Of course the contract will be subject to the approval of the board?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, because in the past unfair contracts have been entered into. As evidence of the necessity for some reasonable organisation

of this trade, I refer members to a paragraph in the "West Australian" of the 1st December, giving details of the distribution of milk at Subiaco. It is a report supplied to the Subiaco council by the health inspector, Mr. A. C. Higgs, who could not be accused of being biased in anything except his opposition to this measure. In that report Mr. Higgs says that about 1,500 gallons of milk are distributed daily in Subiaco by 91 licensed shops and 100 distributing carts.

Mr. Panton: Are they all within the Subiaco municipality?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, and they are licensed in Subiaco.

Mr. Panton: There are nearly as many carts coming into Subiaco from other suburbs.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But I am referring to those licensed in Subiaco, the 91 shops and the 100 distributing carts. I am stressing the necessity for doing something to reduce the cost of production, which is so absurdly high. It costs those people 1s. 8d. per gallon for the distribution of their milk, whereas the producer gets between 5d. and 6d. per gallon. Suppose we say the 91 licensed shops in Subiaco do not sell milk at all, that the whole of the 1,500 gallons is sold by the 100 carts. That would mean that each cart distributes 15 gallons per day, and I have been told by a well-known dairyman that it costs him £6 per week to run his cart. That works out at no less than 1s. 1.68d. per gallon. But if we take it that the 91 licensed shops do sell some milk, say one-third of the total quantity, while the carts distribute two-thirds, it would mean that the carts are distributing 10 gallons per day at a distributing cost of 1s. 8d. per gallon. Surely if any further proof of the necessity for some form of organisation with the idea of cutting high costs is needed, we have it in those figures supplied by the health inspector.

Mr. Panton: To reduce the costs, which would you limit—the shops or the carts?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know.

Mr. Millington: But they deliver more than 10 gallons per day, you can be sure of that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There has been in the daily Press a great deal of correspondence regarding this measure, and I have noticed that the great bulk

of it has come from interested parties, mainly those who have been engaged in the distribution of milk for many years past. The complaints have been mostly against the constitution of the board and the powers the board is to be given. Many have complained that there is to be no appeal from the decision of the board. That criticism is answered by the amendment I have placed on the Notice Paper to set right that difficulty. There is not very much else in the way of criticism calling for an answer, but I notice that the local authorities and their health inspectors have taken some exception to the measure, and I understand they consider they would be the losers of revenue which they receive to-day in the form of license fees. But for the whole of the local authorities in the areas supplying whole milk to the metropolitan area, the amount would be only £343 per annum. Evidently those who have complained have not realised that fact. The member for Mt. Magnet asked me to let him know the significance of Clause 31.

Hon. M. F. Troy: We can get that in Committee.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Very well. The same hon. member said that people who had put all their life's work into the industry would be pushed out of it. I do not think so. I think they will still be vendors of milk.

Hon. A. McCallum: That will rest with the board.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, with the right of appeal to the Minister. It will naturally follow that the object of this board will be, not to restrict consumption, but to increase it. Their very livelihood will depend on an increased consumption of milk, and it will be their object to do everything they can to cheapen milk to the consumer and get the consumer to consume it in larger quantities. The consumer will not pay any more for his milk than he is paying at present, and in due course he will get it a lot cheaper. The margin to-day between the milk from the time it leaves the farm till it reaches the consumer in Perth is greater than in any other capital city in the world. Wherever there are milk boards operating, they have reduced very considerably the margin between the price the producer gets and that which the consumer pays. I gave those details to the House when moving the second reading. The member for Hannans, who

was Minister for Health in the previous Government, made a thoughtful contribution to the debate. He has devoted a lot of attention to everything that pertains to the health of the community, and I appreciate that he is anxious to help the Government to put a workable measure on the statute-book. But I think he is wholly wrong in regard to the question of inspection. To-day the inspection of dairies is done in a very haphazard way, is carried out by some local authorities in a very perfunctory way, while some others are scarcely doing it at all. I want to end that state of affairs and have uniform inspection in every dairy in the metropolitan area. If the board has its own inspectors, that will be done. In my opinion the great bulk of the inspection of dairies should be done by veterinary officers, who will see to it that the milk supply comes from healthy animals. There is no reason why the veterinary officers appointed by the board should not do the dairy inspection. It is not my object to interfere with the inspection of milk once it arrives in the metropolitan area; the Health Department can still look after milk when it arrives for consumption; but to say that the officers of the local authorities should make inspections of dairies, mainly of a veterinary nature on the dairy farm, would be to set up ineffective and unsatisfactory inspection. A qualified veterinary officer is more likely to keep the milk clean while it is on the farm than is a qualified health inspector likely to be a good veterinary inspector. It would be absurd to duplicate the inspection and have it carried out both by a veterinary officer and by a health inspector. As I say, when the milk comes into the city, it will be under the Health Department.

Mr. Sleeman: What if an inspector were to condemn the dairy of one of the members of the board?

Mr. Panton: You do not think he would be foolish enough to do that, do you?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: To suggest that the inspector would not dare to report one of the members of the board, is absurd. I frequently come into contact with inspectors in country districts, and I know that officers of local authorities are continually reporting members of road boards for not carrying out their instructions in connection with certain things.

Hon. A. McCallum: It is well known that in country districts hundreds of road board

members have not paid their vehicular license fees. The police have reported that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That has nothing to do with the Bill. However, we know that thousands of farmers in Western Australia are not in a position to pay license fees for their vehicles, and have been granted exemption by the local authorities. The hon. member ought to know that.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Perhaps you could give those inspectors some security in their jobs.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think I need say much more. If any defects are pointed out in Committee, we should be able to put the Bill into shape. The Bill represents an honest and genuine attempt to place this unfortunate section of the agricultural industry on a better basis. Throughout the history of Western Australia the dairymen supplying milk to the metropolitan area have been in the hands of the distributors. The producers are down and out, and the distributors are not on a bad wicket at all. Let us try to alter the position. Give the producers a look in for a while, and endeavour to cut out some of the middlemen's costs, so that both producer and consumer may get the benefit.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—Short Title and commencement:

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:—
“Provided that Subsection (3) of Section 8 shall come into operation on the passing of this Act.”

The Minister proposes to nominate the first board, the argument being that there are no means by which a vote representative of all the dairymen may be obtained. However that may apply further afield, it does not apply to the area within a radius of 17 miles of the Town Hall. The dairymen there come under the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act, and the Department of Agriculture have a complete list of the dairymen within that radius. Hence there is no reason

why those dairymen should not elect the representatives. If there are to be four producers on the board, I intend to propose that three shall come from within that radius of Perth. That number would be roughly proportionate to the quantity of milk supplied within the area. They supply about three-fourths of the quantity consumed in the metropolis, and should have three-fourths of the representation of the producers on the board. Consequently, I shall have to move amendments also to Clauses 6 and 8, but the proviso to Clause 1 will be the test.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is an exaggeration to say that those dairymen supply three-fourths of the milk.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: It is no exaggeration.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The dairymen have supplied me with the figures.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Where did the Minister get his information? The department have not the figures.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I cannot see that the Minister's figures can be more accurate than those supplied by the dairymen of the own deliveries.

The Minister for Agriculture: Based on the number of cows.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: But the Minister does not know the quantity of milk supplied. The dairymen contend that they are supplying three-fourths of the quantity and that they are entitled to proportionate representation on the board. Only recently has milk for the metropolitan area been drawn from beyond that radius.

The Premier: It has been drawn from the South-West for a long time.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Only since the outbreak of rinderpest has any large quantity been drawn from the South-West.

The Premier: I meant that it had been supplied for a few years.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That is so. There was a shortage on account of the rinderpest outbreak.

The Minister for Agriculture: That was when they started to bring milk from the South-West.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope the amendment will not be accepted. I do not like it, and it is not right that three members of the board should be representative of the area within a 17-mile radius.]

we are going to have four representatives of the producers on the board, a fair and equitable line of demarcation would be the eastern railway from Fremantle to Northam. Two representatives could be drawn from the northern side and two from the southern side. That would give approximately an equal division.

Hon. A. McCallum: You would put my district and Spearwood in with Bunbury?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Hon. A. McCallum: That would be nice!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no reason why a Spearwood dairyman should not be appointed to the board. The bulk of the Metropolitan Cattle Owners' Association are situated north of the line, and the bulk of the Primary Producers' Association members are situated south of the line. It is my intention to consult the two associations before appointing the members, and I would be influenced to a considerable extent by their representations. The Government Statistician has supplied figures showing that a certain quantity of milk is delivered in the metropolitan area. We know that that is the produce of about 12,000 cows, and that about half the number are in the metropolitan area. Consequently the figures quoted by the member for South Fremantle are not quite correct. I cannot give the definite figures.

Hon. A. McCallum: I have the figures.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The amendment will not improve the position; on the other hand, it will make matters worse.

Mr. McLARTY: I am opposed to the amendment. I can scarcely credit that half the milk consumed in the metropolitan area comes from within the 17-mile radius. Six thousand cows are being milked on the Mundijong, Serpentine and Byford areas for whole milk purposes. Further south there must be another 6,000 cows that are being milked for the same purpose. That makes a total of 12,000 cows whose milk is going into the whole milk market. The supply from these sources is likely to increase. The bulk of the milk must come from outside the metropolitan area. It would be unjust to elect three representatives of the board for the area suggested by the member for South Fremantle.

Hon. A. McCallum: I have the figures which have been supplied by the dairymen

to whom I have referred. There are 6,500 cows registered within the 17-mile radius. Within the metropolitan area 10,000 gallons of milk are consumed daily. If we take $1\frac{1}{4}$ gallons as the average for each cow, we find that 8,122 out of the 10,000 gallons of milk are supplied from within the area I am speaking of.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are a long way out.

Hon. A. McCallum: The $1\frac{1}{4}$ gallons is the average for these dairy cows. The milk referred to by the member for Murray-Wellington is not all being sold as whole milk.

Mr. McLarty: Yes, it is.

Hon. A. McCallum: No such thing. It is nonsense to talk of making the railway line the point of division. That would only divide the metropolis where the interests are all identical. What do the dairymen in the country know about the position of the men in the metropolitan area? The two sections could not be linked together. The natural boundary is along the circumference of the 17-mile radius. That is the radius set out in the Dairy Compensation Act. The Minister wants the dairymen in the metropolitan area to be dominated by those who have no interest in it, or who are merely "blow-ins." The representation on the board should be according to the quantity of milk supplied.

Mr. McLarty: What happens to all the milk that comes from the country?

Hon. A. McCallum: All that comes into the metropolitan area is not sold as whole milk.

Mr. McLarty: I know that.

Hon. A. McCallum: Then why ask the question? If the Minister's suggestion is followed there will be a cleavage on the board between the two sections of the metropolitan area, which should have its own representation apart from the representation of the country dairymen. According to the Bill, the owners of half the cows within the 17-mile radius will be represented on the board by two members, and the other half will have to go in with the herd owners outside that radius.

The Minister for Agriculture: The radius is only an imaginary line.

Hon. A. McCallum: It is a properly constituted 17-mile radius.

The Minister for Agriculture: The one section will go in with the people out as far as Muchea, and the other section with the people out as far as Brunswick.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: What an absurd arrangement! The only logical representation to provide for is to give the people within the 17-mile radius their representatives, and those outside it theirs.

Mr. ANGELO: I suggest that further consideration of this clause be postponed. If Clause 6 is amended, as some of us desire, this clause will not be necessary.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The figures quoted by the member for South Fremantle cannot be taken seriously. He has tried to prove that 75 per cent. of the milk consumed in the metropolitan area comes from within the 17-mile radius. What becomes of the milk from the 12,000 cows referred to by the member for Murray-Wellington? On butter-fat values the milk would be worth about 5d. a gallon. No milk is being sold for less than that, and only in one case is it being sold for 5d. A lot of it is sold at 6d., and it must therefore be consumed as whole milk. The hon. member's figures are exaggerated. The cows are not producing that quantity of milk. The figures supplied by the Government Statistician are more reliable than those supplied by the dairymen. No case has been made out for the amendment.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The Minister says there are no conflicting interests. It was the conflict of interests which brought the industry into its present condition. The only reliable record of the number of cows in the metropolitan area—that is to say, within a radius of 17 miles—is the registration under the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act and that number is 6,500. I do not know where the member for Murray-Wellington got his figures when he said there were another 6,000 elsewhere. The production of those cows can be estimated, and when the Minister suggests that they cannot produce the quantity of milk indicated by the member for South Fremantle, I would inform him that in the past the dairymen in the metropolitan area have not been able to get rid of all their milk on the basis of recognised contract prices. They had to guarantee their contract supplies all the year round, and during the lean periods they had difficulty in

maintaining those supplies. I am suspicious about the method of appointing the board because of the attitude adopted by the Minister to the deputation representative of the metropolitan milk producers some time ago. Although at least two-thirds of the milk consumed in the metropolitan area has been supplied from dairies within that area, the metropolitan dairymen had one representative only on the board set up by the Minister. The dairymen outside the metropolitan area, who supplied one-third of the milk, were allowed three representatives. When I suggested political influence had something to do with the position, the Minister said it was nonsense. If he was not aware of it, the Minister was the only one who did not know that political influence had been brought to bear. I have the original notice dealing with the appointment of the members of the advisory board and despite what the Minister has said, he knew they were prominent members of the P.P.A. When the suggestion was made at a deputation that the Deputy Premier should discuss the principles of the Bill, he said it was unheard of, but nevertheless we know the Bill was prepared and discussed by the members of the P.P.A. and Mr. Pickering said that the measure met with his approval. It does not meet with the approval of local producers.

The Minister for Agriculture: They passed a resolution unanimously in favour of it.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I have already explained that, owing to outside competition, the metropolitan producers are not in a position to dictate terms but have to accept anything that is thrown to them. The outside milk producers have ruined those in the metropolitan area and now find themselves, in turn, ruined. Despite what the member for Murray-Wellington says, they pay no one and so can undercut those who have established themselves legitimately in the business.

Mr. McLarty: They will never pay on these prices.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Of course not. The industry is no good to anyone under the existing conditions, and naturally all the producers desire some measure of control. Unless something is done along those lines, those who are endeavouring to produce whole milk will find themselves in an impossible position. As the Minister insists upon vested

interests having representation, I desire vested interests in given districts to have representation. Then there is the difficulty regarding inspections. When a rigid inspection was not carried out, then when milk had to be secured to make up the deficiency in lean periods, filthy milk was brought in and it had to be pasteurised. The results provided a fine exhibit. There is no need for the pasteurisation of milk that is drawn under proper conditions.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I am suspicious regarding the Bill because of the Minister's attitude in the appointment of his advisory board. We want those who own the cattle to have proper representation on the board. Some regard must be had to the number of stock owned by the producers when it comes to considering representation on the board. What the member for South Fremantle said is true: cows are registered and can be identified. We ought to ensure that the men who own the stock and have vested interests are not ruined, and to prevent them from being ruined we should see that they get fair representation on the board. I certainly support the amendment moved by the member for South Fremantle.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I cannot accept any of the views expressed by members on this clause. I do not favour the idea of dividing the producers up into districts. The producers should have only one representative. It is not right to say that because milk comes from Harvey, Osborne Park or some other place, representation should be given to the producers in each of those districts, although the producers' interests should be given fair consideration. The main thing is to guarantee a whole milk supply to the people of the metropolitan area at a reasonable price. What is required is a board consisting of one representative of the producers and one representative of the consumers, with an impartial chairman, some man of standing.

Mr. Thorn: Why not have two representatives of the producers and two representatives of the consumers?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No. Why have duplication? It will only result in conflict of opinion. I am inclined to support the amendment, but I shall move the amendment of

which I have given notice, namely, that the board shall consist of three members.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Quite a lot of the milk that is sent up from the country to the metropolitan area comes over the railways at concession rates, as not to be sold as whole milk. The railways are being defrauded, as that milk should not come at concession rates, since tons of butter are made from it, and much of that butter is supplied to the Government.

The Minister for Agriculture: I will have to put the Commissioner of Railway on to that.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Railway Department knows all about it, for other dairymen have complained of it. It is on the shoulders of the dairymen in the metropolitan area that the responsibility falls for a consistent supply of milk the year round. Plenty of milk comes from the country in the flush season, but not in the lean periods, and so the responsibility for supplying the metropolis all the year round falls on the dairymen in the metropolitan area.

Mr. McLarty: Country dairymen are sending milk to the metropolitan area all the year round.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: But only in the flush season do they send up a reasonable quantity: for the remainder of the year the supply from that quarter is infinitesimal. I want the man whose responsibility it is to supply the metropolitan area with milk all the year round to have fair representation on the board. Those who supply milk should govern the industry in the proportion in which they supply that milk.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I will support the amendment. Logically, the producer who produces 80 per cent. of the milk consumed in the metropolitan area should have full representation on the board. Nothing could be sounder than to give that representation to those people to whom metropolitan consumers look for their milk supplies. Those men have built up the industry by their own efforts, without assistance from the Government or anyone else. Are they to be sacrificed to those other dairymen who, at tremendous cost, have been supplied by the Government with homes and properties, and even stock? If so, we are entirely astray in our standards. Under the Bill someone has to be sacrificed, for a number of dairymen will not be able to get licenses. Who is to be sacrificed? Those who have built up the industry without cost to the State,

or those on whom the State has spent millions, and who are not paying even their interest?

Mr. J. H. Smith: You do not expect those men to pay interest at the present time, do you?

Hon. M. F. TROY: I do not know why they should not.

Mr. McLarty: They cannot pay interest under the ruling prices.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Then is it on behalf of the settlers who cannot pay after so much money has been spent upon them that the Minister has introduced the Bill? If, after a lapse of 10 years and the expenditure of millions of money on them they cannot pay, why bother about them?

Mr. J. H. Smith: Does that apply to the wheatgrowers as well?

Hon. M. F. TROY: There is no measure to deal with wheatgrowers. The State is carrying £4,000,000 of group settlement losses—a gift to the group settlers—and is it intended to give them representation against the men who have cost the State nothing? Eighty per cent. of the milk supplied to the metropolitan area is produced by men who have cost the State nothing. Are they to be sacrificed for people who will not pay?

Mr. McLarty: Who cannot pay.

Hon. M. F. TROY: There is always a class who cannot pay. What is the use of bothering about them? If the dairymen around Perth who have had to build up their business with their own money and industry can pay, why not the group settlers? The valuation of properties on the Peel and Bateman Estates has been reduced by two-thirds, and we are told the settlers cannot pay.

Mr. Millington: And they are ruining the men who have paid.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes, the men who are an asset to the State. That is where all the agitation occurred. That is where the Primary Producers' Association has been most active. Those settlers could pay no interest to the State, but they could pay a contribution to the Primary Producers' Association to set up the agitation. Mr. Pickering is the leader of the section who cannot pay.

Hon. A. McCallum: He would be on the board.

Mr. Millington: He says he is satisfied with the Bill.

Hon. M. F. TROY: That is the section that dominates the Minister. Primary Producers' Association organisers have been to the South-West and promised that they would get this legislation passed if the settlers joined the Primary Producers' Association.

Mr. Millington: Mr. Joe Davies, another dairyman from Midland, wants it.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes. The price of the Bill is their joining the Primary Producers' Association. The Primary Producers' Association organiser Davies said, "Join us and we will get you this legislation." That is what is actuating the Minister. The dairymen in the metropolitan area who have built up the industry will not be sacrificed by me. Let us give the representation to men who are an asset to the State, men who now supply 80 per cent. of the milk to the metropolitan area, men upon whom the industry depends. If the other people get the representation the metropolitan dairymen may not even be granted licenses. I stand for the men who have cost the country nothing and who are an asset to the State.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I shall support the amendment, not in the hope that the proposed new subclause to Clause 8 will be passed, but because that amendment will be infinitely better than the provision in the Bill. The only way to make the measure acceptable is to provide a board such as we had when attempts were made to deal with price-fixing. During the second reading one member interjected that the employees could go to the Arbitration Court. If we attempted to constitute the Arbitration Court of four representatives of the workers and one representative of the employers, there would be considerable opposition from members on the Government side. Yet to constitute a board as proposed in the Bill would be equally unfair. Anything I can do to alter the constitution of the board will be done. If the producers are given complete control over the industry the arrangement must soon fall down of its own weight. We want the producer to get a reasonable return for his product, but we also want to ensure that the consumer shall get an equally fair deal. The best kind of board would be one consisting of a representative of the producers, one of the consumers, and an independent man to be chairman.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	23
Majority against ..				4

AYES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Sleeman
Miss Holman	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Troy
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Willcock
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Withers
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Munsie	

(Teller.)

NOES.

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

(Teller.)

PAIR.

Aye.	No.
Mr. Leonard	Mr. Barnard

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—Saving provisions:

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Will the Minister explain this clause? It says that this measure will not repeal any other legislation that was passed prior to its commencement. It then goes on to say that where it is inconsistent with any other Act, "the provisions made therein shall prevail." Does that mean that "this Act" shall prevail? If the clause had been drafted to say that if any other Act was in opposition to this one, this one would prevail, we would know where we were.

The Attorney General: That is what the clause says.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Then why does it say that this Bill will not repeal any other Act? Clause 17 will provide the board with power to appoint inspectors. There is not a word in the Bill to indicate what qualifications those inspectors must have. If the Bill be agreed to, Section 30 of the Health Act, which prescribes the qualifications of health inspectors, will go by the board. I do not want John Jones, merely because he is a friend of John Smith, who is a dairyman and is a member of the board, to be appointed an inspector unless he has the

necessary qualifications. The Bill will override the Health Act and the regulations.

The Attorney General: Only so far as they are in conflict with the Bill.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The Bill will override Section 30 of the Health Act, which deals with the qualifications of inspectors.

The Attorney General: No. What conflict is there between Clause 17 and Section 30 of the Health Act?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The clause deals with the appointment of inspectors. I want the clause amended so that the inspectors to be appointed shall have the qualifications set out in Section 30 of the Health Act.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

I think the hon. member has settled the question satisfactorily for himself. The Bill does not override any Act or regulations made under it, but where the Bill conflicts with any other Act or regulations, the Bill shall prevail.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Well, that is not very much.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

No, but it is quite sufficient. The object of Clause 17 is to enable the board to appoint veterinary inspectors.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It does not say so.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

No, because those inspectors will have to do other work as well. The main task of the inspectors will be the inspection of cows on the dairy farm, but I wish to avoid the duplication of inspectors and inspections and therefore the veterinary inspectors, who will quickly become qualified for the work, will undertake the inspection of milk and so prevent the necessity for the health inspectors carrying out that work on the farms.

Hon. M. F. TROY: This is a new idea. Veterinary officers are to carry out the inspection of milk on the farms. We can understand what the position will be. There is already a paucity of veterinary officers in the department, and many complaints have been received because their services are not available in the country areas.

The Minister for Agriculture: But the inspectors referred to are those appointed by the board, not the departmental inspectors.

Hon. M. F. TROY: And the Minister spoke about effecting economies. Now he intends to duplicate the inspectors. I am satisfied that our theories are correct and that the inspections will not amount to much. The board, which will be so largely representative of dairymen, will see that

there are not too many inspections, otherwise they themselves will become unpopular and will lose their jobs, because they will not be re-elected. The whole thing is stupid.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The Minister will not deny the necessity for a pure milk supply to the metropolitan area. That being the case, I ask the Minister whether he consulted the officials of the Health Department with regard to the provisions in the Bill for inspecting milk.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, I did not.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I was Minister for Health for six years and during my term of office I found there was great conflict between the Agricultural Department and the Health Department.

The Minister for Agriculture: There has been no conflict during the past three years.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The admission by the Minister is a serious one. The Bill will over-ride the Health Act, yet the Minister did not consult the Health Department. That is a scandal. I hope members will not agree to take away from the Health Department the duty of inspecting dairies and milk.

The Attorney General: Is there anything in the Bill to suggest that the present functions of the Health Department will be interfered with?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes. The inspectors to be appointed by the proposed board will inspect dairies situated within the area from which milk is supplied to the metropolitan area. They will also inspect the dairies at Osborne Park and other places. We already have qualified health inspectors inspecting those dairies, but if the Bill becomes law, the duty of inspecting those dairies will be taken from them.

The Attorney General: No.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: If not, then there will be a duplication of the service. I hope before we proceed further, the Minister will report progress and give the Committee an undertaking that he will, before Tuesday next, consult the Health Department with regard to the Bill.

Mr. PANTON: If the Minister's version is correct, and if veterinary surgeons are to be appointed to inspect herds and also milk before it is delivered to the metropolitan area, then they will have nothing more to do with the milk. It will then be inspected by

the officers of the Health Department, and it seems to me that a clash between the proposed board and the Health Department is inevitable. The Perth Hospital at present receives over 120 gallons of milk per day. In addition, there are the Children's Hospital, St. John of God Hospital, and other private hospitals in the metropolitan area all receiving milk. At the Perth Hospital the milk is inspected twice and sometimes three times a day by the officers of the Health Department. Those inspections are necessary, in view of the fact that there are 450 odd patients at the hospital. If the officers of the Health Department condemn milk which has been passed by the board's inspectors, who is to be supreme, the inspectors appointed by the board under the Bill, or the officers of the Health Department who condemn the milk? Are the officers of the Health Department going to allow milk which they have condemned to go into consumption at the Perth Hospital because some other officer appointed under the Bill is supreme? This is a very important matter, one of the most important to come up for discussion on the Bill. There are hundreds of sick people in metropolitan hospitals to be taken care of, and we want a definite understanding that the qualified men in the Health Department are going to be supreme in the inspection of the milk supply.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I was asked if I had consulted the Health Department in the drafting of the Bill, and I said I had not. But when the Bill was drafted I submitted it to the Health Department, and they raised but one question, which was sent on to the Crown Law Department, who returned a satisfactory reply to the effect that under the Bill the standard of milk rested with the Health Department.

Mr. Marshall: Where is that in the Bill?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Not more than two days after the Minister moved the second reading I knew that the Health Department was still to have control in regard to the standard of milk in the metropolitan area. But to-day the Health Department has the inspection of dairies, which under the Bill will be taken from them. That should not be so.

The Premier: But we have the veterinary officers to do that.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Of what use are they?

Mr. J. I. Mann: Is not a veterinary officer more competent than a health inspector?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No. With one exception I do not think any of our veterinary officers have passed the examination as health inspectors.

The Premier: What do you want for the Health Department?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: That it should still have control.

The Premier: But what inspection do you require at the dairy?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: That it be inspected from a health and sanitary point of view. Why is the Minister taking the inspection of dairies from the Health Department?

The Minister for Agriculture: Because one man can do it instead of two.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Within a 17-mile radius of Perth it is compulsory under the existing law that a veterinary officer inspects the cattle for T.B. Many of the men doing that inspection know nothing about cattle inspection.

The Minister for Agriculture: There are only a couple of them.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: And neither of them knows anything about it. While those veterinary officers are doing that work, we still have within that radius the absolute right of the Health Department to inspect and, if necessary, condemn dairies. Under the law the Minister's veterinary officer cannot condemn a beast without the authority of a health inspector. It is wrong to take away that authority from the Health Department.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not quite understand why heat should be generated on this clause. If the clause were to be eliminated, the position would be that wherever there was a clash between this Bill and some existing law, the Bill would operate, and that part of the existing law with which it clashed would be deemed to have been repealed. The object of the clause is to say that any existing law which clashes with the Bill shall not be deemed to be repealed, but shall be subordinate to this clause. So if we were to eliminate the clause altogether, the position would be even worse.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I do not want to eliminate the clause altogether.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The objections which make the hon. member so indignant are objections which should be raised on other clauses when we meet them,

as for instance Clause 17. The time to raise an objection should be when we come to a clash between a clause in the Bill and some part of an existing law. I do not understand why we should get all worked up over Clause 2.

Mr. Marshall: Then what is Clause 2 in the Bill for? What does it mean?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The member for Hannans gave an admirable exposition to the Committee of what the clause means. When he read it clearly and emphatically it was perfectly apparent what it means.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: It is as clear as mud now.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Then the hon. member could not have heard the member for Hannans read it. I suggest that we reserve our emphasis until we reach a clause to which we may have objections.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

Mr. Marshall: If we pass the clause, this measure will take precedence.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: And if we do not pass it and the Bill operates in a way divergent to the Health Act, it will amount to a repeal.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We object to this clause and we want you to report progress in order that something better may be devised.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: If I had had an assurance that on reaching Clause 17 the Minister would agree to make the inspection of dairies and of milk the responsibility of the Health Department, I would not have raised the question, but if Clause 17 becomes law, the Health Act will be over-ridden. If we pass this clause, it will be too late to raise the objection when we reach Clause 17.

The PREMIER: There are two points of inspection—the inspection of the cows by the veterinary inspector and the inspection of the dairy for cleanliness, etc., by the health inspector. Subsequently the milk is inspected within the metropolitan area after it reaches the distributor. The inspection of the cows and of the dairy could be done by one official instead of two. Surely a veterinary inspector would be qualified to do all that was necessary.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Some may be, but a lot would not be.

The PREMIER: The two inspections should be considered separately—the inspection on the dairy farm and the inspection in the city. We want to protect the health of the people, but it would be undesirable to have a duplication of inspectors.

Mr. PANTON: Rarely is milk inspected at the dairies. Invariably inspectors take samples from carts, shops, etc. If the Minister's proposal is adopted, the milk will be inspected at the dairy. I do not think the Minister intends that the veterinary officers should inspect the cattle and the dairies and then take samples in the metropolis.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, they will not have power to do so.

Mr. PANTON: Quite so; they will inspect at the dairies and will probably not possess the qualifications required under the Health Act. In these days of economy the Health Department would not be likely to duplicate the inspection. They would say that the Department of Agriculture were inspecting at the dairy, and consequently there was no occasion for them to employ the same number of inspectors to do the inspection now being carried out in Perth. The milk would therefore be inspected at the dairy.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: And adulterated before it reached the consumer.

Mr. PANTON: The safeguard at present is that the milkman never knows when he may be called upon to give a sample.

The Premier: That will not be altered.

Mr. PANTON: I cannot imagine the Health Department continuing their inspections if the Department of Agriculture have efficient officers inspecting the milk at the dairies. Some efficient service will be required to prevent milk from being adulterated before it reaches the consumers. We must have inspections in the city, for instance.

The Premier: You are going to get them.

Mr. PANTON: There is no necessity for the proposed duplication, which will only lead to a slackening off on the part of the Health Department. There is great danger in this proposal. Arrangements have already been made for the supply of large quantities of milk to schools. If the proposals of the Government are proceeded with, all kinds of adulterations may take place with regard to these supplies.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Milk will not be any better inspected at the dairies under this Bill than under any

Act, but it is necessary that the board should have power to inspect it if necessary. The Health Department will continue their inspections of milk in the course of delivery.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Veterinary officers are administering the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act. These have to be maintained. Why have another staff of the same kind?

The Minister for Agriculture: They would inspect the dairies too.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Then why the necessity for this clause? Inspectors under this Bill are not required. It is wrong that interested parties should be able to appoint their own officers.

The Premier: Who inspects the dairies outside the 17 mile radius?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: They are inspected by the officers of the Health Department.

Mr. Panton: Over 8,000 gallons of milk are being used daily within the 17 mile radius.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It should not be necessary to go outside that radius for all the milk required by the metropolitan area.

The Premier: Do you believe in monopolies?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We must draw the line somewhere, provided we can get from the area declared all the milk required. Within that radius we have a veterinary staff which must be maintained for various purposes, and there is no need to create another. It would only be necessary to extend the functions of that staff to cover this extra work. The health inspectors would then discharge their special duties.

The Premier: I think that is what is proposed.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Not at all. The inspectors appointed under this Bill will take precedence over the health inspectors. This is not the right time in which to multiply staffs. I suggest that the Minister report progress and go into this question. The Premier will realise that we must reject the clause because, instead of economising, this will mean additional expense on account of the duplication of inspection.

The Minister for Agriculture: The board will do what the Treasury has to pay for now.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Government do not propose to appoint veterinary in-

pectors to do the dairy cattle compensation work and health inspection as well.

The Minister for Agriculture: Of course we do; I have explained that several times.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The veterinary staff of the Agricultural Department will have to be retained, and the staff under the board will be additional.

The Minister for Agriculture: No; they will really be the same officers. They will be officers of the board, if required by the board. The inspections under the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act will no longer be carried out by the Agricultural Department, but by the inspectors as officers of the board.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: And the board may refuse to allow their officers to do it. This is a dangerous proposal, and we should have further information.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister's last interjection shows that his position is untenable. First he said that the board would have the right to appoint inspectors and attend to health matters, and that those inspectors would be veterinary officers. Now he says that the departmental inspectors, who now carry out the inspections under the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act, will be under the board. What that means is that the inspectors under the board will have to inspect the dairies and the milk of their employers on the board, and will have to, perhaps, condemn some of their cattle as being tubercular. It is an impossible position.

The Minister for Agriculture: There is a clause later on dealing with that matter.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: If that is to be the position, the public confidence in the purity of the milk supply will be completely shattered. Why not continue the methods of inspection obtaining now, respecting which there have been no complaints? Under the Minister's proposal, the inspectors will not be in a position to exercise their own judgment, and the public will lose confidence.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: The member for Hannans is right, and I shall support him. I cannot see the sense of dispensing with the services of the Health Department regarding the inspection of milk. Ours is the best conducted Health Department in Australia, and we should not place another staff of inspectors above the Health Depart-

ment inspectors. The Minister places great reliance upon veterinary inspectors, but I know from past experience that in this State we have a record of ghastly mistakes made by veterinary inspectors. I think everyone knows the veterinary inspectors have failed in many cases. We have but to carry our minds back to the rinderpest scare in the State some years ago. Why appoint other inspectors, who presumably will be highly paid? Who will pay the present health inspectors for doing the work they now do? The Minister says they will not be entitled to the fees which they receive at present. The Minister would be well advised to leave out any reference to inspectors at all. If he insists upon having inspectors, then he should provide that they be qualified inspectors. We ought, however, to avail ourselves of the services of our present fine staff.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There will be no harm done if the clause is passed. After the Bill was printed I sent it to both the Commissioner for Health and the Under Secretary for Health. As the Minister for Agriculture has told the Committee, the Commissioner for Health did raise one question, and that was whether the Bill would override the Health Act. I hope, when we get to Clause 17, to get the Minister to agree to the present system, if Clause 2 is not perfectly clear.

Hon. A. McCallum: What is the object of inserting this provision?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is customary.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I have never seen one like it in any other Bill.

Hon. A. McCallum: If it is not going to override the Health Act and the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act, why keep it in the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Can members tell me where there is a conflict between this Bill and the Health Act?

Hon. A. McCallum: Yes, in the provisions dealing with inspectors.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Clause 17 does not refer to health inspectors.

Mr. Panton: You are not allowed to discuss Clause 17.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When we come to Clause 17, cannot we say that the inspectors are to be the inspectors under the Health Act? I, as Minister for Health, would not dare to hand over to irresponsible persons the health of the people of the State.

We will make that quite clear when we get to Clause 17.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	..	19

Majority for 1

AYES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Parker
Mr. Church	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Davy	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Doney	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Thora
Mr. J. I. Mann	Mr. Wells
Mr. McLarty	Mr. North

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Miss Holman	Mr. P. C. L. Smith
Mr. Johnson	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Troy
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Munroe	

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. Collier
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Lamond
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Withers
Mr. H. W. Mann	Mr. Corboy

Clause thus passed.

12 o'clock midnight.

Clause 3—Interpretation:

Mr. PANTON: Regarding the definition of "contract milk," is the board to have the supervision of all contracts? The Perth Hospital gets all its milk under a 12 months' contract. Will the board have the right to approve or disapprove of any contract made by the executive of the Perth Hospital with a dairyman?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If desired by the parties to the contract, the board will do so. In the past many unfair contracts have been made, and dairy-men have signed contracts, not knowing what was in them.

Mr. PANTON: But the Perth Hospital calls tenders for a 12 months' supply of milk. If the executive of the hospital were to accept a tender, I take it the board would not have control over that?

The Minister for Agriculture: No, that is so.

Mr. PANTON: In the interpretation of "dairy" we find that it is a place where animals are kept for the purpose of producing milk for sale. Does the word "animals" include goats?

The Minister for Agriculture: No, the hon. member is not included in the Bill.

Mr. PANTON: I asked a civil question, and there was no warrant for the Minister's rudeness. Of the two of us, the Minister is the bigger goat for having produced such a Bill as this. I want to know whether goats are included in that definition.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not intend to hurt the hon. member's feelings. I cannot say offhand whether or not goats are included, but if the milk of goats is being sold, I should say they would be included in the definition.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I am concerned about the Minister's reply to the question regarding contracts. Is the board to have control over all contracts?

The Attorney General: This deals only with contracts for supplying milk to vendors, whereas the member for Leederville inquired about milk supplied to a hospital under contract.

Mr. KENNEALLY: But the Minister for Agriculture said the board would have control over all contracts.

The Attorney General: Only where the milk is supplied to a vendor.

Mr. MILLINGTON: On the definition of "dairy area," is it proposed to declare one comprehensive area, or several areas?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is entirely for the board to determine. I do not know what may be done, but certainly dairy areas will be declared in which dairymen may obtain licenses for supplying milk to the metropolitan area. I do not know how many dairy areas will be declared.

Mr. MILLINGTON: It would be possible for different conditions to apply within the dairy area. Some dairymen would be subject to the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act and would have to be licensed and pay certain fees, while other dairymen alongside them would not need to be licensed.

The Minister for Agriculture: A man supplying to a butter factory would not come under this measure.

Mr. MILLINGTON: But different conditions would obtain within the area, and how

would it be possible to enforce the provisions of the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act? All dairymen in the metropolitan area are subject to that Act.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: "Dairy area" is defined more clearly in Clauses 19 and 20. I do not think there would be any difficulty in policing the measure unless a dairyman purchased milk from an unlicensed dairyman in order to complete a contract. I anticipate that the dairymen themselves will do much of the policing. This legislation is designed to help the dairymen and they must assist us to ensure that it is enforced.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Clauses 19 and 20 appear to be dangerous.

The CHAIRMAN: We have not yet reached those clauses.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: But we are dealing with the interpretation clause, and those clauses deal more elaborately with the definition of dairy area. Would there be any likelihood of licenses being denied to dairymen who desired to supply whole milk to the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There would be no attempt to prevent licenses being issued for supplying whole milk to the metropolitan area. I would do my utmost to ensure that the dairy area proclaimed was wide enough to include everyone who wished to supply milk. To-day it extends from Muchea to Brunswick, and if the amendment of which I have given notice is carried and I have the deciding of the point, that is the area which will be proclaimed. The hon. member need have no fear that anyone who wishes to be licensed will be shut out.

Mr. SLEEMAN: "Inspector" is defined as an inspector appointed or acting under the authority of this measure. Should not that definition be amended?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This is not the place to make an amendment because any inspector appointed would have to be appointed under this measure. If, on reaching Clause 17, it is desired to provide that inspectors shall be approved by the Health Department or shall inspect cattle only, that will be the time to move an amendment.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Metropolitan area:

Mr. MILLINGTON: Is it intended that the metropolitan area shall be what we understand as the greater metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The metropolitan area includes all the districts within a 12-mile radius of the G.P.O. Whenever the metropolitan area has been declared, it has been the greater metropolitan area.

Clause put and passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—BULK HANDLING.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 6th December. Mr. Richardson in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—Constitution and powers of trust:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on an amendment moved by the member for Nelson, that the following words be inserted to stand as paragraph (a)—

That the Trust shall consist of five persons, three of whom shall be bona fide wheat growers and who are not themselves associated with any wheat buying partnership or organisation connected with the purchase of wheat; one member to be a nominee of the Commissioner of Railways and a chairman to be appointed by the Government.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I move—

That progress be reported.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I protest against members being asked to consider this Bill at so late an hour, especially when we have not had an opportunity to study the amendments the Minister proposes to move.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out that there is before the Chair a motion, which cannot be debated.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	21
Noes	..	..	..	..	17
					—
Majority for	..	..	..	..	4
					—

AYES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Piesse
Miss Holman	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Troy
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Millington	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Munsie	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Nulsen	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Church	Mr. Parker
Mr. Davy	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Doney	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thoru
Mr. Latham	Mr. Wells
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. North
Mr. J. I. Mann	

(Teller.)

Motion thus passed; progress reported.

The Speaker resumed the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question now is—
That leave be given to sit again.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	22
Noes	..	..	..	..	18
					—
Majority for	..	..	..	..	4
					—

AYES

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Parker
Mr. Brown	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Church	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Davy	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Doney	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Thoru
Mr. J. I. Mann	Mr. Wells
Mr. McLarty	Mr. North

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Pantou
Miss Holman	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Thoru
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

AYES.

Sir James Mitchell	Mr. Collier
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Lamond
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Withers
Mr. H. W. Mann	Mr. Corboy

Question thus passed.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th November.

HON. J. C. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [12.32]: If we are really to finish up the session shortly, I suppose we shall have to

go on with the business at this early hour of the morning.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We do silly things in the silly season.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask hon. members to keep order. The member for Geraldton has the floor.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I do not think anyone will be able to hear me!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The Bill is important, and the objection taken by the Leader of the Opposition to the Bill to amend the Land Act applies equally to the Electoral Act Amendment Bill. If there is one thing that is important in the political life of the country, it is the electoral law. Usually when this law is altered, Governments do not wait until the last week or two. Exactly the same remarks could be made regarding the Bill as the Leader of the Opposition made regarding the Land Act Amendment Bill. Although mention was made in the Governor's Speech of the intention of the Government to introduce legislation to amend the Electoral Act, four months have gone by before the House has come into possession of the details of the Bill. That is not fair to Parliament, or to the citizens who will be affected by the amended legislation. The Bill contains many details, but the only matter of real importance relates to the alteration in the postal voting arrangements. That is a serious alteration that will affect a large number of people. If the Bill had been introduced in the second session of Parliament, the people would have had plenty of time to ascertain what the amendments were, but that is not possible in this instance. When the last Federal election was held it was all over before many people knew it was to be held. Many who usually record postal votes will not know anything about this alteration in the electoral laws, until the election is over. They will not know anything about the changed arrangements until it is too late. The public have displayed much feeling on occasions when Governments have sought to tinker with the electoral laws on the eve of an election. The result has been that when the opportunity offered, they showed their resentment against any such alterations to the electoral arrangements. Plenty of notice should be given to the people. Take the position in the Kimberley electorate. The Bill, if it becomes law, will not be proclaimed until about the first week

in January. The measure is bound to call for much discussion in this Chamber and in the Legislative Council, because so many people are interested in this phase of our political life. Members will be anxious to preserve the rights of their constituents. The mail to the North will probably leave two or three weeks after the Bill is proclaimed and, at this time of the year, will probably not proceed beyond Derby. Consequently many people in the Kimberley electorate will not know that there has been any alteration in the law. They will go to the nearest polling place to record their votes, and they will then find that they are too late and that under the amended law they should have sent in their applications for a postal vote form, had it posted to them, filled it in and returned it to the Registrar. The result will be that many people in that part of the State will be disfranchised. Then again there are probably 2,000 or 3,000 prospectors scattered about the State. Those men are enrolled in various electorates and they will repair to the nearest town for the purpose of recording their votes. Only then will they learn of the change in the law, with the result that they will not be able to record their votes. The amendments embodied in the Bill have apparently been copied from the Federal Electoral Act. Objection has always been taken in the outer areas to the effect of the Federal electoral laws, and, in fact, there has been a distinct grievance manifested in many parts of the State. The last Federal election was all over in three or four weeks. The Federal law was enacted by those who were mainly concerned about the people in the large centres of population, with the result that considerable resentment was shown in the outer areas. Even in Geraldton, which is an important centre with a considerable population, many people were unable to get their applications in in time to record their votes at the last Federal election. This provision has been taken from the Federal law, and it is proposed that we should adopt it in place of our postal voting system, which possibly has not given the utmost satisfaction; but I suggest that with a widely scattered population such as this State has, many people will be disfranchised if the Bill becomes law. We should preserve to our people in the out-back areas their civic rights. We do not want to take away from them the oppor-

tunity they now have of voting. There was some criticism of the Electoral Department when the Estimates were before the House.

Mr. Panton drew attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I was saying there had been some criticism of the Electoral Department when the House was considering the Estimates. It was said the administration of the department was such that electors were denied the right to get on the roll. The idea was to clean the roll, to take people off the roll, but not to take any steps to put them on. The Bill, if passed, will have the effect of denying people the opportunity which they now have of voting by post. We must remember—and this is a rather serious difference—that when the Federal law was enacted, the provision for postal voting was accompanied by another provision whereby a person could record a vote at any booth on the day of the election. Nothing of the kind is proposed in the Bill, so far as I can see. At present, while unemployment is rife, people are scattered all over the State in an endeavour to obtain work. They are prospecting and doing jobs in the back country away from their homes. If they happen to be in Menzies, Cue or Leonora, their homes being in Bunbury, Perth or Geraldton, under the present law they can walk into a booth and exercise their franchise. That would be more convenient to them than finding out a week or so prior to the election that a new law is in operation. If the Bill passes, they will be told when they ask for a postal officer that there are no postal officers. They will then have to send to the part of the State where their home is for a voting paper, which they may not receive prior to the date of the election. As I say, there are numbers of people now in the back country. I noticed in the paper the other day that there were 4,000 or 5,000 additional men working in the mining industry. All those men are not working in Kalgoorlie, but are scattered over the goldfields. They have not settled down on the fields. They have gone there during the past 12 or 18 months and probably have not changed their enrolment. Prospectors particularly are here, there and everywhere; they do

not stop long enough in one place to become entitled to have their names put on the roll for the district in which they are temporarily residing. Their name is on the roll in the metropolitan area. I know people who were living in Geraldton and who, because of unemployment, have gone away prospecting. Numbers of them are still on the roll for the Geraldton district. If a man living at Northam and out of employment decides to try his luck prospecting on the fields, he may be three weeks here, a month there and a month somewhere else; he does not stop in one place long enough to get on the roll for the district. Surely, such a man should not be deprived of his vote. If the proposed law comes into force and that man applies for a ballot paper, he will be told that he will have to send to Northam for a postal vote form and after waiting for a week or two for it to be sent to him, he probably will not wait any longer, but will go back to his prospecting. He would, however, be deprived of his vote. If this law were made well-known before the elections, possibly such men could make arrangements accordingly; but they will only find out what the law is when the election is on. That will cause very serious discontent. People will object to being deprived of their franchise.

The Attorney General: My experience is that people have to be told at each election what the electoral law is.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: But those people are used to the present law, which has been in existence for 10 or 15 years. It is only reasonable for them to assume that that law is still in force. Apart altogether from the merits of the Bill, I think this provision will result in fewer people having the right to vote. Surely we do not want that. We want as many people as possible to vote, including those scattered all over the State, so that whatever Government is elected they will know they have been put in power through people being given the opportunity to vote.

The Premier: We should have a perfect roll and everyone should vote.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The perfect system is where a person goes to a polling booth and records his vote. We know in practice that that is impossible. We therefore inserted postal voting provisions in our law. Now we are going to alter those pro-

visions without giving the people very much notice of the alteration.

Mr. Coverley: On the eve of an election.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: That is what I say. The people will resent this tinkering with the electoral law unless we make provision for absentee voting. I do not think it an exaggeration to say that if the Bill passes thousands of people will be disfranchised. The Premier will, of course, agree that voting should be made as simple as possible. A man should be able to go into a polling booth and record his vote. Similarly in regard to postal voting, an elector should be able to record his vote simply and quickly. But under this new provision he will have to write a letter, send in a form, wait about for a week or a fortnight until the mail comes back, and then record his vote and send it in. People will not submit to all that delay, and so thousands of them will be disfranchised. For the law to be altered within a month or two of an election is grossly unfair. It would not have been so bad if the Bill had been brought down much earlier in the session so that its contents could become known to the people. That could have been done, because obviously the Government for some time past have known exactly what they were going to put into the Bill. In the circumstances, people in the back country will not know anything about this new law when the next elections arrive. That is what I mean when I speak of its being grossly unfair. The existing law in regard to postal voting is quite all right. In isolated instances it may have been abused, but there is no warrant for the proposed drastic alterations in it. Instead of amending the law, we should see to it that it is properly administered. It should be somebody's business to insist upon a reasonable law being strictly observed. But we are to alter the law, which is quite fair in principle, and substitute for it something that will impose considerable inconvenience on the electors. Again, it is proposed not to allow canvassers to assist people in voting postally. Why should not a canvasser be permitted to witness the signature on an application form? Surely there is no good reason for that. Yet the Attorney General would prohibit all that sort of thing. If there is good reason for one person not witnessing another person's signature on a form, there is very much greater reason why canvassing should not be permitted at all. But we know that on

election day there will be thousands of motor cars flying about all over the country, taking people to the poll. That is utterly inconsistent with preventing a canvasser from witnessing a signature on a form. I am not giving away any secrets of political organisations, but in Geraldton people who vote Labour know where the head office of the organisation is located. If an elector falls sick, the secretary is informed and asked if he will arrange to take a postal vote. The man who takes the vote might be termed a canvasser, and under this measure he would have to say, "The law has been changed. You will have to sign a declaration, but someone else will have to witness it." If the person called in to witness it had happened to discuss politics with someone else during the previous fortnight, he too could be termed a canvasser, and if he witnessed the declaration, he would be liable to prosecution. What is the meaning of "canvasser?" Hundreds of people talk politics and discuss the chances of candidates and ask others to vote in a certain way. Would those persons be canvassers? If anybody asked another person simply to exercise his vote, would he be a canvasser? A friend of the Attorney General might remark that he had served the district well. Those might be the only words used, but if in the following week a signature was required, because that man had mentioned something regarding politics, his action in witnessing the declaration could be construed as an offence. I hope the Attorney General will indicate what he means by a canvasser. I say that a canvasser is anybody who asks somebody else to vote. Under this measure, such a person would be disqualified from witnessing a declaration, and I am afraid that half the people in the country would be disqualified, because they are interested in politics, and they could be termed canvassers. If they witnessed signatures, they would be committing an offence against the measure, and would be subject to the penalties. I do not know whether this is one of the Attorney General's little cross-word puzzles, or whether it is one of the provisions he intends to amend in Committee.

The Attorney General: I invited you to make suggestions.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I hope this is not going to be the law, but if it is to be the law, we shall need to have a reasonable interpretation of "canvasser." Previously

the word has not been legally defined. We know that many people do engage in canvassing. Some are paid for their services; some give their services in an honorary capacity. Some of them canvass one or two people; some canvass a dozen in a street, and some undertake canvassing throughout an election campaign. It is essential to make clear exactly what "canvasser" implies. I wish members on the cross-benches would hold their conversation outside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask members to observe the rules of the House.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I should like to know who will assist the sick and old if this Bill becomes law. To whom will they apply when they want declarations witnessed? I cannot imagine to whom they would apply other than to someone interested in the election, and that person would be disqualified. Such people will be seriously inconvenienced. I think the declaration in question should be treated similarly to any other declaration; any person eligible to be on the roll should be entitled to witness a signature. There should be no interference with people who endeavour to secure a representative roll. That is all that people who would sign such cards would be doing. I think it is a laudable object. It is quite reasonable that anyone should assist, persuade or urge people to exercise their civic rights in the manner considered to be in the best interests of the State, and I see no reason why they should be debarred from so doing. There should be no interference with people who do only that. The requirements of this provision might be complied with in an hour or two in the thickly-populated centres, but in the outback country compliance might involve a space of three or four weeks. That would be differentiating against the people in the outback country. We should encourage the people who live in the outback parts and are developing the country. We should not impose upon them special disabilities. If a man in Perth falls sick two or three days before an election, he can make arrangements to vote, but if he happened to be living at a distance from a town where an electoral registrar resided, and he fell sick within a week of the election, under the Bill it would be practically impossible for him to record his vote. There would be considerable circumlocution, because we could not expect electoral

registrars to treat these matters as they would treat telegrams.

The Attorney General: It is not a question of sickness in the outback places, because the people there would vote postally, whether sick or not.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Take Northam, which is a small compact electorate; someone at Grass Valley might fall sick two or three days before the election, and he would have to send to Northam, and the Northam registrar would have to send the voting paper back.

The Attorney General: How does it operate under the Federal law?

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Very badly. The Federal law was enacted by people, the majority of whom were concerned with elections only in large cities. That has been the difficulty during the last five or six years. If the Attorney General had been in the back country when Federal elections were being held, he would have known that there was a distinct grievance against the law. It has resulted in the disfranchisement of hundreds of people. I believe, without exaggerating, I could say it has resulted in the disfranchisement of thousands of people. I have given an instance regarding my home town, which is a compact one. People fell ill within a week of the election, and could not exercise their votes. The iniquity of the whole thing was that, under the Federal system of compulsory voting, they were asked for reasons why they had not voted. They have to make a declaration in regard to that. They are denied the right to exercise a vote in the ordinary way because they are sick. They do what they can to record their vote, and insult is added to injury when they are asked to explain why they did not vote. That is all right for people who are used to these things, but it is very disturbing to old and infirm people, who receive threatening letters suggesting that a penalty will be imposed upon them unless they afford satisfactory explanations. I have assisted many people, who were disfranchised on that account, to give a reasonable excuse why they did not vote. The law operates detrimentally to many people in a scattered State like ours. Of course there is the safeguard that a person can go to any booth in the State to record his vote. That should remove most of the grounds for grievance. We should not be dealing with this Bill at the present juncture. It should be postponed, and an undertaking given that

if it is passed it should not operate for the forthcoming elections. The electors will not have an opportunity to understand it. On the occasion of the last Federal elections no one in the North-West could exercise a postal vote unless he lived on the route of the air mail.

Mr. Patrick: It takes a fortnight to get in a postal vote in my district.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: This works out very badly in actual practice in a scattered State like Western Australia. I suppose it is necessary in the interests of economy that a cheese-paring policy should be adopted in the opening of booths. If, however, the proposed policy is to be adopted, many more booths will be required to cope with the situation. The alternative is to appoint postal vote officers to receive the postal votes and send them on. An application was made for a polling booth at Cossack. In that case three postal vote officers might have been appointed to deal with the postal votes. It would be necessary only to send them to Roebourne, but they might have to be lodged a fortnight before the elections.

Mr. Church: That is only seven miles away.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I thought it was much further. It should not, therefore, be necessary to have a booth there. What we have done in the interests of economy in the past will have to be altered in the future. In Perth there are sometimes six polling booths within half a mile of each other, but in the out-back centres people may have to travel many miles before they can avail themselves of the postal vote provisions. It is not reasonable that so much circumlocution should have to be gone through in cases of this sort. If there were a little delay in the receipt of postal votes, it would not greatly matter. What course does the Attorney General intend to pursue to let the public know about these alterations to the Act? It is very unfair to alter it at this stage. Because there have been some malpractices in regard to postal votes, I might be inclined to support an alteration of the law, but not just now.

Mr. Patrick: More polling places will be required.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Considerably more. We do conduct elections more cheaply than other parts of Australia, but I suppose we shall have to incur additional

expense if it is necessary to establish more polling booths. As a rule the Electoral Department, in common with other departments, has to keep within the amount allowed by the Treasurer. The Treasurer would probably say there was no more money available and that would be the end of it. The extra polling places would not be provided. I am not prepared to support that alteration of the law. It is not wise, in a State like Western Australia, to do that at this stage because it will be unsatisfactory and unjust to the people. Then, again, I do not see any necessity for an alteration regarding the status of the Chief Electoral Officer. He is not under the control of the Government with regard to the conditions of his employment. We passed a law placing the control of the Public Service under the Public Service Commissioner. There has been no suggestion that we should alter the status of the Chief Electoral Officer because of the possibility of victimisation at the hands of a political party of whom he may have run foul. Nothing of that sort has ever occurred in Western Australia. The electoral officers have carried out their duties fearlessly and without interference and no Government has ever taken action against a Chief Electoral Officer. During my time as Minister for Justice, the Chief Electoral Officer wanted to resign and I remonstrated with him. I endeavoured to make him reconsider his position so that he would not act hastily. He insisted and resigned absolutely of his own volition. I suppose he was sorry afterwards. As there is no suggestion of any Government having taken action detrimental to an individual occupying such a position, why introduce the ponderous method of having motions introduced and passed in Parliament before a Chief Electoral Officer can be removed? There may come a time when, although no specific charge can be laid against an officer holding that position, it may be expedient to transfer him to another post. If that officer should choose to stand on his legal rights, a definite charge would have to be laid against him and a specific motion carried by both Houses of Parliament before he could be removed to some other position. That is not reasonable. Does it mean that the Chief Electoral Officer must regard his post as his life's work and that he must not be available for promotion to another position. I do not

desire to deal with the merits of the officer who occupies the position at present, but if the Under Secretaryship of the Crown Law Department should become vacant, I do not know of anyone else who could fill it so satisfactorily as the officer who is now Chief Electoral Officer. Does this mean that he is to be denied promotion to that higher office, which carries larger emoluments? Is he to be withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commissioner? Does it mean that he will be under the Commissioner in one respect and under Parliament from another standpoint? In the course of his remarks, the Attorney General made statements on the basis of "in my opinion," but more than that is required in substantiation. From my experience of the situation during the last 15 years, I consider the present position is quite satisfactory and that there is no necessity for this particular amendment. Nor do I see the need for the amendment proposed with regard to receipts to be given by canvassers when they take claim cards from electors. A few unscrupulous persons may have withheld claim cards secured from people who should have been enrolled, but that fact should not necessitate such an amendment. Certainly it would not be required if the law regarding compulsory enrolment were enforced. At this stage there could be an understanding between the several political parties that, irrespective of what Government might be in power after the general elections, the compulsory enrolment provisions of the Electoral Act would be rigidly enforced. If that were done, it would not be long before the people, after a few of their number had been fined for neglect to carry out their duties as citizens, were brought to a sense of their responsibilities. There would then be no need for canvassers or any other busy-bodies, for the electors themselves would see to it that they were enrolled. When the Federal Government enforced strictly the compulsory enrolment provisions of their Electoral Act and instituted a number of prosecutions, it was not long before the people recognised the responsibility that devolved upon them to see that their names appeared on the rolls, and acted accordingly. If an agreement such as I suggest were arrived at, the present law

could be enforced and there would be no need for the amendment suggested.

The Premier: The trouble is that people will not enrol.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: In times such as the present when men are scattered all over the State in a search for work, hardship might result from a general attempt to secure convictions for failure to enrol, but in ordinary times it will be different. I know some people who have been off the rolls for two years or more and have made no attempt whatever to be enrolled. I guarantee that if a systematic canvass in some of the metropolitan constituencies were undertaken, it would be found that thousands of people were not enrolled. If it were appreciated that the law was to be administered stringently but sympathetically, the necessity for canvassers would disappear and everyone would be enrolled. On the other hand, should someone assist an elector, who was too lazy to attend to the matter himself, to fill in his claim card and subsequently the card should disappear, I do not see that the former should be penalised. What I desire is the rigid enforcement of the compulsory enrolment provisions of the Act. If that were carried out, the necessity for this amendment would disappear altogether. The Attorney General has outlined the procedure regarding objections to claim cards. As he said, I do not think it will make much difference in actual practice. As the member for South Fremantle said, I prefer that 20 people should be improperly on the roll rather than that one or two who are entitled to be on the roll should be denied the opportunity to record their votes. There is further evidence of a desire to keep people off the rolls instead of encouraging them by every possible means to get on the rolls. A firm in the city sent out to the persons on the electoral roll a circular. If a circular was returned through the Dead Letter Office, immediate objection was lodged at the Electoral Office and the name of the addressee was struck off the roll. I do not think we should be so energetic in striking people off the rolls. There are some individuals in the Government service who have red tape wrapped right round them. If they can take any possible objection to something which they consider is not right, they will do so. Fifty claim cards may be lodged the day before an election and

an energetic, enthusiastic red-tape official of the type I have mentioned may reject them because he considers the people are not entitled to be put on the roll. His action may affect an election. There might be an unscrupulous partisan in some position in the Electoral Department who perhaps would use his position to disfranchise numbers of people. We do not want to give anyone that opportunity. I do not think the Bill should be discussed further at this early hour of the morning. I shall conclude by saying that there is no hope of the measure passing this session. I notice there are already two pages of amendments on the Notice Paper. The proposed alteration of the law does not affect the members of this House so much as it does the members of another place, but they no doubt will also make amendments. In the unlikely event of the Bill being passed this session, then it will become law within five or six weeks of the issue of writs for the elections. It is not right to alter the law at this stage, particularly in view of the nearness of the forthcoming elections. I shall vote against the Bill.

On motion by Mr. Panton, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 1.36 a.m. (Friday).

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 13th December, 1932.

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