

the week-end in which to examine the measures, and become well informed regarding them before the House meets again on Tuesday next.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Will one week-end be enough?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I suppose so.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The copies of the measures will be made available by the Clerk Assistant.

House adjourned at 3.37 p.m.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

Mr. SPEAKER: I beg to announce that, accompanied by hon. members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament. For the sake of greater accuracy, I have caused copies of the Speech to be distributed amongst members of this Chamber.

BILL—CATTLE TRESPASS, FENCING AND IMPOUNDING AMENDMENT.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [3.19]: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation, I move, without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend Section 34 of the Cattle Trespass, Fencing and Impounding Act, 1882-1932.

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th January, 1934.

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Adoption.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [3.20]: I wish formally to move—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament:—"May it please your Excellency. We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech that you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament."

MR. WANSBROUGH (Albany) [3.21]: I desire formally to second the motion.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-reply adopted.

MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at 3 p.m., pursuant to proclamation, which was read by the Clerk (Mr. F. G. Steere).

SUMMONS FROM THE LIEUT.-GOVERNOR.

The Speaker and members, in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber and, having heard His Excellency deliver the opening speech (vide Council report ante), they returned to the Assembly Chamber.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY.

Standing Orders Suspension.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [3.22]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to permit of the introduction and passing through all its stages of the Financial Emergency Bill at this sitting.

MR. LATHAM (York) [3.23]: I hope the Premier will afford us an opportunity to discuss the Bill at a later sitting if we desire to place some amendments on the Notice Paper. It would be very difficult, after having the Bill placed before us only this afternoon, to give an intelligent vote in the Committee stage. We are aware of the principles embodied in the Bill, but it may be necessary for members to move some amendments. I suggest that we might meet to-morrow in order to give us that opportunity.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder—in reply) [3.24]: Although the object of the motion is to enable the Bill to be passed through all its stages at this sitting, that will be done only if the circumstances make it possible. If we can make such progress as will permit of the Bill being passed through all its stages at this sitting, well and good, but if we cannot do that, we shall have to consider the Bill at a later stage. If the progress is such that we are able to get the Bill through at a reasonable hour, the motion will enable us to pass it.

MR. SPEAKER: I have counted the House and there is an absolute majority present.

Question put and passed.

First Reading.

Bill introduced by the Minister for Works and read a first time.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [3.26] in moving the second reading said: I wish to thank members for having agreed to the suspension of the Standing Orders to permit of the Bill being passed through all its stages, if that is found possible, at this sitting. I also wish to express the regret of the Government that it has been necessary to call members together after such a short respite, but the circumstances are such that members will agree it was impossible to

leave matters as they were. I think it will be generally conceded that the sooner we get to grips with the essentials of the situation, the better it will be. There is not much need to delay getting to the real kernel of the position. The Bill merely re-affirms the measure which the Government brought down last session, and it is made retrospective to the 1st January. The old law having lapsed, the drafting of this Bill had to be altered to meet the situation. The contents of the measure do not differ in any respect from the principles discussed here just before Christmas. A memorandum is attached to the Bill, and a perusal of it will enable members quickly to understand just how the clauses of the Bill relate to the expired Act and to the Bill that the Government introduced last session. I should not think members would require much time, as the Leader of the Opposition seems to think they might, to understand the situation. We are really discussing now a measure of similar import to that discussed just previous to the holidays.

MR. LATHAM: We are discussing that portion which we omitted to discuss last time.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That portion was on the statute-book. We are not introducing one syllable that is new. The Bill is made retrospective to the 1st January. The moment Cabinet had decided on the course it intended to pursue, the Premier announced through the Press that the measure would be made retrospective. That was done in order to inform the public, and particularly those people interested in the provisions dealing with finance—interest on mortgages—of the Government's intentions and it cannot be argued that the retrospective effect of the measure will inflict hardship, because it will not introduce any new situation. By that provision we shall merely be continuing something that was already in operation and we shall be continuing it in order not to cause a break. Nothing new is created by the Bill being made retrospective. The measure merely reaffirms what was before the House a month ago, and so there is not much fresh to be said, no new situation whatever having arisen. The position which now confronts us has been created by the Legislative Council's attitude in attempting to dictate policy to the Government. As we said prior to the holidays, we claim no one can deny that the Government had a clear mandate from

the people to give effect to the provisions of this measure. The Assembly represents three times as many electors as does the Legislative Council. Having obtained a mandate from three times the number of voters represented in the Legislative Council, no Government worth their salt would accept dictation on such a point from another place. It has been traditional in British Parliaments that the second Chamber should refrain from interfering with Government policy where it can be shown that the policy has received the endorsement of the people. That is traditional except as regards our second Chamber.

Mr. Latham: A special Act was passed at Home dealing with the House of Lords.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But not for a situation such as confronts us, the Government having just come with a clear mandate from the people on the point in difference between the two Houses.

The Premier: The British are six-year Parliaments, not three-year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The House of Lords surrendered powers. There was an alteration of the British Constitution taking away powers from the House of Lords.

Mr. Latham: It shows that the same thing existed there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But the situation there was not as it is here, the Government being fresh from the electors with a clear mandate on this point.

Mr. Doney: What has the other place done that is unconstitutional?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I repeat that it has been the traditional practice of second Chambers regarded as Houses of review not to interfere with Government policy when that policy has been approved by the people. I do not wish to enter into a discussion of constitutional powers now. Probably that feature of the situation may demand consideration a little later. I could, if necessary, cite instance after instance where Legislative Councils in other parts of this continent have altered Bills dealing with Government policy, but the moment the point has been taken by the Government that the subject matter of the Bill was contained in the policy speech of the Leader of the Government and that the Government were returned with a majority supporting that policy speech, the second Chamber has modified its attitude and agreed to pass the Bill. That has been the universal

practice. It is not the custom for any Government to accept dictation as to their policy when they are fresh from the people. Further I wish to remind this House, and some of those who have done so much talking outside the House, that with the single exception of little Tasmania no State Government responsible for the Premiers' Plan has survived an appeal to the people—not one. Our Legislative Council has not yet had an appeal to the people.

Mr. Latham: Neither have the present Government yet appealed to the people and come back.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We were not a party to the whole of the Premiers' Plan.

Mr. Latham: You will be when the Bill goes through.

Mr. Raphael: That Plan was not the Premiers' Plan, but the Mitchell-Davy plan.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Were it not for the fact that the preamble to the Bill was agreed upon by all the Governments concerned, and is included in other Acts on the statute-book, for the sake of that unity in Titles which the legal gentlemen asked for, it would count for nothing with us.

Mr. Latham: Nevertheless, it is nice to see you introducing the Bill.

The Premier: The preamble is merely a pious hope.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Even the late Attorney General, when introducing the original Act, apologised for it. There are other Acts on the statute-book of Western Australia with that preamble, and the legal advisers of the Government hold it to be most desirable that the preamble should remain. Of course the preamble counts for nothing when it comes to actual effect. We have deemed it necessary to call Parliament together to reconsider the position. We cannot accept what the Legislative Council proposed in their amendments to our Bill, because we regarded the action of another place as an unpardonable interference with the functions of the Government. Nothing new has arisen since this Chamber passed last session's Bill, and nothing new has been said, so far as I am aware, by members of this House on the situation: but it is true that a good deal has been said by the Press. Whether that can be regarded as new in the situation confronting us I do not know, but the "West Australian" has tried to whip itself into a fury

over the Government's attitude on the Bill. It appears that the journal's main objection to the Bill is that it does not apply to private enterprise. I do not know just how far I shall be permitted to go in dealing with that point, as the Bill contains no reference to private enterprise.

MR. SPEAKER: Then the hon. gentleman ought not to discuss private enterprise.

MR. LATHAM: Nor the Legislative Council either.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I wish to give some explanation why the Government have not included private enterprise in the Bill. That is the only phase of the subject with which I shall attempt to deal. Further, I wish to say that the "West Australian's" first leading article on this subject, published during the Christmas holidays, contained more untruths, more misrepresentations, and more distortions of fact to the square inch than any article I have ever read. I know it is little use endeavouring to correct a journalist in his own journal. In this respect the Premier discarded his usual caution. No doubt chafing under the injustice of the article, the Premier made a short reply on one point in it. But a rejoinder came back wherein the writer entirely shifted his ground. Therefore I say that it is not much use attempting to answer an article, no matter how infamous it may be, through the columns of the Press itself. I have read the statement from the Employers' Federation appearing in this morning's "West Australian." Let me recall that the employers' organisations of this State have not always favoured Federal industrial authority. There was a period—especially when the late Mr. Justice Higgins presided over the Commonwealth Arbitration Court—during which the employers' organisations of Western Australia spent scores of thousands of pounds to prevent the unions of this State from going to the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. The employers' organisations of this State then preached, as also did the Press, that the right authority to settle the wages and working conditions of Western Australian workers was our own State tribunal. The employers and the Press were never tired of propagating the idea that we were better left to ourselves instead of being dragged into the industrial turmoil and trouble in the East. That situation has now altered. In those days the Commonwealth wage was

higher than the State wage, and the employers then consistently advocated remaining with the State Arbitration Court. Now that the Commonwealth wage is lower than the State wage, the employers advocate that the Western Australian unions should approach the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. There can be no denying the volte-face made by the employers in that respect. The statement of the Employers' Federation appearing in this morning's "West Australian" if it has any merit, is as regards an amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act. It has no merit as dealing with the subject of the Bill before the House. It relates to the Arbitration Act, and that alone. No one would attempt to deny that wages have been reduced in the Eastern States, but we do deny that Parliaments have reduced wages in the Eastern States. No one can gainsay us in that respect. Wage reductions in the Eastern States have been made through the constitutional tribunals.

MR. LATHAM: So they were here.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: They were not. They were made by your Government.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Eastern States tribunals which brought about wage reductions did it without any direction whatever from any Parliament, without any new authority, without any direction in regard to percentages, as happened here. The Eastern States tribunals made reductions on the merits of the cases presented, on the strength of the evidence adduced, and not on account of any Parliamentary direction. No Eastern States Parliament passed a law laying down to its Arbitration Court a formula as to what should be done. This is the only Parliament that did such a thing. The article to which I refer goes on to state that all the reductions made so far have been made after inquiry. There is not a word of truth in that assertion.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If there were truth in it, we would not have a leg to stand on.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Every member of this House knows, the public know, everybody knows that thousands of men and women too have had their wages reduced without ever a case coming before the Arbitration Court.

THE PREMIER: Without any inquiry at all.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Without a tittle of evidence. Because one baker at Yarloop working in the timber industry

had his wages reduced, every baker in the State from Wyndham to Esperance had his wages reduced accordingly.

Mr. Latham: That is not right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is right.

Mr. Latham: Are you sure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know it is.

Mr. Latham: What about the appeal from that decision?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The decision was later upset, I know. One bricklayer, working for the City Council on man-holes in the sewers, had his wages reduced, and consequently every other bricklayer in the State had his wages reduced also. It is said that wages were reduced after inquiry. What inquiry was made into the wages of the men engaged in the oil industry before they were reduced? Was a case brought before the Arbitration Court in connection with those workers? There are many other instances that I could cite.

The Minister for Mines: What inquiry was made in regard to the reduction in wages of the men employed on the new Commonwealth Bank?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Their wages were reduced to conform with the reduction in the wages of the bricklayer working for the City Council. I could go on giving instances, but there is no need to do so. Members already are aware of them. What is the use of publishing the articles that are appearing in the Press? The Leader of the Opposition knows that at the time when the common rule decision was given by the Full Court of this State, the Arbitration Court asked the then Government to finance an appeal against the Full Court's decision. The Arbitration Court then stated that had they known, when they were giving relief to certain individuals, that their decision would be made a common rule, they would have treated the case in a different way. The Arbitration Court did not mean their decision to apply as a common rule. That matter was discussed on the floor of this Chamber, and the previous Government took the stand that it was no part of their duty to finance the proposed appeal.

Mr. Latham: That did not apply to the case of the baker employed by Millars?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, but the decision of the Full Court was attacked on that point. What is surprising is that

while all these protests are made by the Press against the Government's proposal, not a single representative employer in the State has made a personal protest. We know there are scores of large employers in the State, including the proprietors of big emporiums, who have refused to take advantage of the cut in wages. Neither the Employers' Federation in the article which they published in the Press nor the "West Australian" in its leading articles has the backing of the representative employers in the State. There has been no protest made on their behalf against our proposals. The big traders of this city are now convinced that the policy of deflation, whereby the purchasing power of the people is crippled, is wrong. Instead of helping trade, it is retarding trade. Instead of reviving industry, it has had the opposite effect. The big traders of Perth know that so long as the spending power is left in the hands of the few and taken away from the many there is very little hope of a revival in industry. I do not want to repeat what was said when we discussed the previous Bill a few weeks ago. This is exactly the same Bill, but I desire to remind members that if ever there were an incident that proved the contention we stood for was correct, it was the flotation of the last loan of £10,000,000. That loan was subscribed within 24 hours, thus indicating the large amount of money being hoarded and held by a few.

Mr. Latham: That is not all it shows.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The general public were not given a chance to secure any of that loan. It was snapped up by the big financial institutions of Australia. That incident occurred while hundreds of thousands of our own brothers and sisters did not have the wherewithal to keep body and soul in comfort. If that huge sum of money were spread over the community, it would flow through every channel of trade and commerce, instead of being hoarded up, and the effect would be to revive trade and industry in a way not possible under the so-called Premiers' Plan. As the Leader of the Opposition admits—as everyone admits—when the previous Bill was before the House last session, we took a stand against Parliament being made a wage-fixing machine. We say that that is fundamentally wrong. It is repugnant in whatever way one likes to examine it. I warn those who are advocates of that prin-

ciple that if they succeed in forcing it on the country at this stage, they will eat their words before very long. I do not doubt for a moment that members thoroughly understand the serious situation with which the Government of the country are faced, owing to the loss of the previous Bill. It means a loss to the Treasurer of about £355,000 a year, a very large sum of money indeed, especially when one bears in mind the heavy taxation in existence in the State at the moment. It cannot be expected, however, that any self-respecting Government will accept dictation on a matter of policy like this, particularly when it means a departure from constitutional custom. I want to strike another note. I express the hope that it will not be found necessary to go into conference on the Bill.

Mr. Sleeman: You will be wasting time if you do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In this State during recent years the system of conference has grown to a greater extent than in any other British Parliament. Elsewhere conferences are regarded as a last resort to meet extreme circumstances. Of recent years there seems to be considerable sparring to get into conference.

Mr. Doney: You have lent yourself to it.

The Premier: We have been forced into it by another place.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In order to try to save the country, we have been forced to ask for conferences.

Mr. Doney: That is not the way to get rid of the practice, is it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In my judgment, there are many things said and done in conferences, behind closed doors, that the people of the country have a right to know.

Members: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Those gentleman should be forced to let the people know what they say and do behind closed doors.

Mr. Doney: That is quite right; we agree with that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The people have a right to know what their representatives are doing. It is not right that what happens in conferences should be disclosed outside. If it were, one could understand it would not be much use going into conference; but there are essential points that the people have a right to know. They

have a right to know what their representatives in Parliament say and how they vote. The loss of this Bill will be fraught with the most serious consequences to the State. The Government will be compelled to take serious and drastic action. We do not want to do so, and I feel sure every member of the House desires to avoid it. Members will realise, however, that it is impossible for the Government to carry on with a reduction of £350,000 in existing revenue. Either additional money will have to be found, or increased taxation imposed, or services discontinued.

Mr. Doney: You were not threatened with the loss of that money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The loss of this Bill means the loss of £350,000 in revenue. The Government is not accepting dictation on its policy.

Mr. Doney: The re-enactment of the measure was given to you, but you did not accept it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government's policy has been endorsed by the people. The Government was returned with a substantial majority, one of the biggest majorities that any Government of Western Australia has had. Are the people to be thwarted by a House representing one-third of the electors that this House represents? I can only repeat that no self-respecting Government could accept that.

Mr. Sampson: The trouble was that neither side was prepared to concede anything.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member does not know what happened at the conference. He does know, or should know, that two members of that conference declared, before they went into it, that their policy was "No surrender."

Mr. Hegney: That is not mentioned in "Hansard."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That has been blazoned forth to the world. The hon. member does not know what happened at the conference, and therefore it is no use his trying to put words into my mouth, or to say something for public consumption. He is merely voicing, parrot-like, what the "West Australian" says, that it was the no-surrender attitude of the Government that caused the trouble. How does the "West Australian," or anyone else, know what was done at the conference? The hon. member does not know.

Mr. Raphael: If he did know, he would not be able to interpret it correctly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I repeat that I do not desire to delay the sitting. As I have stated, the sooner we get to grips with the situation, the better. The Bill is simply a copy of the one that was before the House last session, and it does not appear that much new can be said about it. I content myself with this brief statement, and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. LATHAM (York) [4.0]: The Minister in moving the second reading said this Bill was the same as the Bill of last session. Of course it is totally different, and the House has a different responsibility to carry this time. Last time it was a continuation Bill, with certain amendments to the Act, and even if those amendments had all been excised from the Bill there still remained in the Bill power to continue the Act. That is not so in this legislation; it is totally different in this Bill, because no compromise can be effected, no half-way measure; either we have to accept the Bill as it is or make certain amendments to it, but in either case it carries no power of continuation.

The Minister for Works: There is nothing to be continued.

Mr. LATHAM: Of course not, but there was last time. The Minister must admit that it is of no use thinking this is the only House having responsibility. Under the Constitution the other House has exactly the same responsibility as this House, with some exceptions set out in the Constitution Act Amendment Act of 1921. Another place has the same responsibility, irrespective altogether of whether we think the different franchise is right and proper.

The Premier: They have not the same responsibility, although they may have the same power.

Mr. LATHAM: That is admitted.

The Premier: There is not an equality of responsibility.

Mr. LATHAM: Under the Constitution they have the power.

The Premier: I am talking, not about power, but about the hon. member's word—responsibility.

Mr. LATHAM: Certainly they do not carry the same responsibility, as for instance the financial responsibility, but it is of no

use hiding the fact that if we want to make an alteration we must amend the Constitution Act.

The Premier: You would have to get those fellows to consent to it.

Mr. LATHAM: That is so. At one time there was in this State only the Legislative Council. It was that House which asked the Imperial Government to grant us Responsible Government.

The Minister for Works: Nonsense!

Mr. LATHAM: That is perfectly right.

Mr. Raphael: And they made a mess of it.

Mr. LATHAM: They made a mess of it when they so framed the Parliament that the hon. member could enter it. However, it was the action of another place that enabled this House to come into existence.

The Minister for Railways: They asked for Responsible Government, and it was set up in two Houses.

The Premier: Responsible Government means government by the people, not by a section of the people.

Mr. LATHAM: We have heard those arguments before.

The Premier: And you cannot combat them.

Mr. LATHAM: I can, but I cannot expect the Premier to agree.

The Minister for Lands interjected.

Mr. LATHAM: If members will let me get on, probably the Bill will advance farther at this sitting than it will if they persist in their interjections.

Mr. Raphael: We have plenty of time on this side.

Mr. LATHAM: Very well, and we have plenty of material on this side. I am going to support the second reading for the same reason as I supported it on the last occasion, namely that I do not think the finances of the State will permit the Government to give away even as much as they propose to give away under the Bill. I can only tell the story that I told before, which was that the proper thing for the Government to have done last session was to have brought in merely a continuance Bill. Because of the £350,000 required to remit the salary deductions, I think it was unwise for the Government to try to give effect to certain parts of their policy which will cost the State a lot of money.

The Premier: We have had a lead from the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes. I will agree with the Premier in that. Since the Prime Minister and the State Premiers agreed to a certain course of action, I cannot understand the Prime Minister making a remission of salary deductions to the extent of five per cent. without consulting the State Premiers.

The Minister for Railways: The Federal Government ought to have stuck to the ship.

Mr. LATHAM: Of course so. Because of that precedent set by the Prime Minister. I would have supported the Premier if he had done the same thing.

Mr. Raphael: Is it that you mean you are prepared to raise your own salary?

Mr. LATHAM: I should like to raise something in the hon. member. I was assured he would not be here to-day. I agree with the Premier that the precedent set by the Commonwealth Government was altogether wrong. It could only have been done with the purpose of gaining popularity. Alternatively they had so much surplus revenue that they did not know what to do with it, and so they disbursed it in that way, instead of following the advice of their experts and looking after the States. If they had looked after the States, probably we should have been able to make a fair and reasonable percentage of remission of salary deductions in this State. The Minister for Works upbraided another place for the stand they took on the previous Bill, but said very little about the Bill before us. By the courtesy of the Premier I was able to peruse this Bill earlier in the day and so get an idea of what it contains. It gives effect to the promised remission of deductions in all wages to men in the Government service and a remission of salary cuts to public servants between £205 and £240. That is in the first part of the Bill. The second part of the Bill repeals the whole of Part V. of the Act that has just expired. I do not know whether the Minister has given much consideration to Part V. One portion of it dealt with deductions in grants made by the Treasurer. Under the Bill certain people in high positions will be able to get a remission of their deductions, as for instance University professors.

The Minister for Works: I think not.

Mr. LATHAM: But I think they will; indeed I am sure of it. The Bill repeals the whole of Part V., portion of which dealt with grants. If we are to have sacrifices, the

sacrifices should be general. In Part V. of the expired Act, Section 12 dealt with contracts of service, and provided that they might be varied by the employer in certain cases. That concerns bodies corporate or incorporate receiving grants from the Crown. It seems to me the Government have overlooked that. It is unfair that by repealing this we should give to certain individuals a remission of the deductions made. What about the rest of the service?

The Premier: Take the University. There is no statutory obligation to pay the University that money at all. I could reduce the amount granted to the University by £10,000 if I thought fit. It is purely a voluntary grant.

Mr. LATHAM: Under an Act of Parliament.

The Premier: But only up to £13,000. Anything above that represents a voluntary increase by the Government.

Mr. LATHAM: But they will now have to pay their professors the old rate of salary. Moreover, there are other institutions receiving grants from the Crown.

The Premier: Most of them are not under statute.

Mr. LATHAM: Some of them are, although of course their officers are not paid under statute. The Government should have retained at least Section 12 of the parent Act. On the last occasion I urged that the Bill would force people to have their work done outside the State, instead of providing employment within the State. In this morning's "West Australian" I noticed certain statements by the Minister for Employment who declared that the use of local products had led to a considerable increase in the number of people employed in local production. But when this Bill goes through, instead of material being made up here, it will be made up in the Eastern States.

The Minister for Employment: You said that before.

Mr. LATHAM: And I believe it. Even to-day practically the whole of the furniture entering Kalgoorlie comes from the Eastern States.

The Premier: Well, that is being done in the face of the benefit of reduced wages, so the Bill will not alter the situation.

Mr. LATHAM: The Bill will aggravate it.

The Premier: Not if, as you say, the whole of the furniture is being brought from the Eastern States.

Mr. LATHAM: It is not only the furniture, but many other lines as well. It is of no use saying this Parliament in passing the parent Act did anything very different from what was done in the Eastern States. In New South Wales an Act was put through on practically the same lines as the Act in this State. Mr. Lang was Premier at the time, and he provided that on salaries and wages up to £250 there should be deductions of from 15 per cent. to 17½ per cent.; that from £251 to £1,000 the deduction should be from 17½ per cent. to 25 per cent.; that on amounts from £1,001 to £2,000 the deduction should be from 27 per cent. to 32½ per cent., and that on all amounts over £2,000 the deduction should be 32½ per cent. He proposed at one time to reduce all salaries to a maximum of £500, but this is what he gave effect to, and it included not only salaried officers but also the wages men.

The Premier: Do you think that policy was sound?

Mr. LATHAM: I am only saying that if we sinned we sinned in good company. In Victoria, where Mr. Hogan was Premier, on amounts up to £100 the deduction made was 6 per cent.; from £101 to £225 it was 11½ per cent.; from £226 to £250 it was 14½ per cent.; from £251 to £1,000 it was from 14½ per cent. to 21½ per cent., from £1,001 to £2,000 it was from 22 per cent. to 24 per cent., and for all amounts over £2,000 it was from 25 per cent. to 27 per cent. It will be noticed that in Victoria they started at £100, whereas here we made a minimum of £185 for a male worker's wages, of £205 for a salaried man, and of £100 for a female worker. In Queensland, where there was a Nationalist-Country Party Government, up to £250 the reduction was 15 per cent.; from £251 to £1,000, 15 to 18 per cent.; from £1,001 to £2,000, 18 to 20 per cent.; and over £2,000, 20 per cent. In South Australia, where there is a Labour Government, the reductions up to £1,000 were 19 per cent. That affected everybody. Over £1,000 the reduction was 20 per cent.

The Premier: Where is that Government now?

Mr. LATHAM: Just where this Government would be if they went to the people on the present Bill. I ask the Premier not to be too hasty in his remarks because there is always the risk that his Government may not always be occupying the Treasury bench. In Tasmania up to £800 the reduction made

was 20 per cent.; between £801 and £1,200, 22½ per cent.; and £1,201 and over, 25 per cent. The Commonwealth reductions were very similar to those made in this State. Up to £250 the reduction was 18 per cent.; between £251 and £1,000, 20 per cent.; between £1,001 and £2,000, 25½ per cent.; and over £2,000, 25½ per cent. Thus the averages are: New South Wales, 17.9 per cent.; Victoria, 17 per cent.; Queensland, 15½ per cent.; South Australia, 19 per cent.; Western Australia, 19.2 per cent.; Tasmania, 20 per cent.; and the Commonwealth, 19.5 per cent. After all, there is not a very great deal of difference between the Commonwealth deductions and ours. The Minister told us that this was the only State that had interfered with outside employees. Let us take the employees of the Midland Railway Company and those of our own Railway Department. Our men, with a reduction of 18 to 20 per cent., are still on higher wages. The same thing applies to the Sawmills. We shall have all the business coming to the Crown.

The Minister for Works: What will be wrong with that?

Mr. LATHAM: The Minister would soon find that it would have the effect of throwing many people out of employment. We have to average the position as well as we possibly can.

Mr. Raphael: That was not the position in the other States.

Mr. LATHAM: The Governments in the other States did not enter into competition with private enterprise, as has been done in Western Australia. In those States where socialistic Governments did establish enterprises, no time was lost in disposing of them. Unfortunately in this State we have not been able to dispose of ours.

Mr. Raphael: You would not suggest that Jack Scaddan's Government was socialistic?

Mr. Thorn: You are too young to know anything at all about the Scaddan Government.

Mr. LATHAM: If Western Australia did anything wrong, it did it in very good company. We were compelled to deal with outside employees just as we had to deal with our own. I honestly claim that there is no justification for altering the position. There is no difference in it at the present time from that which existed when I spoke previously. We have had the opportunity

recently of seeing the State's financial returns for the first half of the current year and to say the least of it they are very discouraging. The revenue for the half year ended 31st December last increased by £101,895 in comparison with the figures for the corresponding six months of the previous year. The revenue for the six months ended 31st December last was £3,773,000, whilst for the corresponding six months of 1932 the total was £3,671,105. The increase was made up almost of the additional amount of the financial emergency tax; so that if the Treasurer receives only the same revenue as the previous Government had, he will experience great difficulty in making ends meet. Now, in addition, he will have to find between £70,000 and £80,000. I will admit that the deficit for the first half of the current financial year is less than the deficit for the corresponding period of the previous year, though the difference is not very considerable. For the six months ended 31st December last the expenditure totalled £4,573,321, whilst the figures for the corresponding half year of 1932 were £4,544,768. Thus the increase was £28,553; and this, too, with the expenditure on unemployment relief down to the extent of £46,331. When winter falls upon us and unemployment increases, we can expect a substantial increase in this direction in comparison with the estimate. For the first half of the current year the deficit was £800,321, as against £873,663, which was the total for the corresponding period of the previous financial year. The deficit for the six months just ended was less by £73,342 than that for the corresponding six months of 1932, even though the Government received an increased amount of roughly £9,000 from the financial emergency tax. I admit that the Government went to the country with a policy, though there are many phases of that policy. The Premier made a statement as to what he was going to do for the unemployed.

The Premier: What did I say?

Mr. LATHAM: I contend that the Government have every right to give effect to their policy, but I believe the Premier would have been well advised to give effect to that part of his policy that affected the unemployed. There are very many people still out of work and experiencing great difficulty in making ends meet. It would have been far better, with the cash avail-

able, to distribute it amongst the class that needed it rather than to give it to those who are well provided for.

The Minister for Employment: We made substantial progress in that direction.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes, I admit the Government spent a great deal more from loan funds than was spent in the corresponding period of the previous year. It seems to me unsound to give additional money to men receiving 9s. above the basic wage while we have many people out of employment and others are on part-time work.

The Minister for Lands: You made the statement before that the farmers could not obtain farm labour.

Mr. LATHAM: And I will make the statement again. I could give the Minister the names of many farmers and their wives who sewed bags because they could not get the labour. Does the hon. member suggest that a married man with a wife and family should not be sent out to sew bags at from 8s. to 12s. 6d. per hundred?

The Minister for Lands: That was the old rate.

Mr. LATHAM: What is the difference between the old rate and the new rate? Any married man should be able to get sufficient work to assist him to keep his wife and family.

The Minister for Lands: Married men have done this for years.

Mr. LATHAM: There was a shortage of labour amongst farmers and the hon. member's colleague knows that. He released a lot of single men to try to meet the position.

The Minister for Employment: It shows that we are making progress.

Mr. LATHAM: Every year we have had to make labour available for farmers. I repeat that I would be very willing to help the Government to give effect to their policy, but I consider it unwise to give something additional to the man who is earning above the basic rate, whilst we have a number of people still on sustenance. The Minister knows that there are many people still on sustenance.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is under the impression that he is making a speech on the Address-in-reply.

Mr. LATHAM: The facts I am giving affect the finances of the State.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member had better get back to the Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: Of course if you rule that I am not to discuss these questions, I will have to obey the ruling.

The Premier: You are talking about matters that are not in the Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: They ought to be in the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot help that; I did not frame the Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, if you had done so, you would have included them. I admit that we cannot let the Treasury down to the extent of £350,000, and we cannot allow unreasonably high rates to be charged for mortgages. Therefore we must support the second reading of the Bill, though it falls short of what I should like to have seen introduced. We should have insisted on having a continuance Bill for another year, because the time is not yet ripe for the alteration proposed by the Government. The previous Government had to ask the people to make a sacrifice, and the people did so readily. If now they have to make another sacrifice, we shall be doing wrong by passing this legislation. Before I sit down I should like to draw the attention of the Minister for Justice, or the Minister in charge of the Bill, to the subject of interest. I have been approached by trustee companies who ask permission to reduce the rate of interest charged to some of their clients. They have good clients but they are controlled by the Trustees Act and they seek permission to reduce the rates of interest without violating any of the principles of that Act itself. I should like this question looked into to see whether it is possible to grant the assistance sought. Personally I think we shall have to amend the Act itself, to enable the companies to deal with trust accounts. It will be remembered that when the emergency legislation was going through, we amended the Trustees Act to enable trustees to convert bonds they were holding in trust.

The Minister for Works: You protected them.

Mr. LATHAM: They point out they cannot reduce the rates of interest to a fair and reasonable amount without statutory power. I do not think we can do it under the Bill we are now discussing, but I should like the Government to inquire whether it is possible in some form to give the relief sought.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [4.30]: I felt sure that some other members would take part in this debate.

Mr. Marshall: If they did, you would become disgusted and walk out.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not do so when the hon. member is addressing the House.

Mr. Marshall: You throw down your pencil and walk out.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. N. KEENAN: If I have done so I regret it. The measure before us, in effect, is meant to continue some of the provisions of the Financial Emergency Act of 1931. The first notable feature of it is that it retains the same flamboyant preamble, for which the Minister apologised, because he said he was informed it was legally necessary. If any member reads the preamble, he will see that it is nothing but very boastful attempts at prophesying what would happen if certain legislation were passed.

Mr. Latham: It was so nice that it was worth passing.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It was actually the work of Mr. Theodore; it was drafted by that gentleman.

Mr. Sleeman: A very clever man.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes, and he excelled himself in the phraseology he adopted for what I term this flamboyant preamble.

The Minister for Works: I do not think he even drafted it.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The late Mr. Davy informed me that every State had to accept the same preamble because it was brought down by the Commonwealth Government, then headed by Mr. Scullin and Mr. Theodore.

The Minister for Works: It was drafted by the legal committee of the Premiers' Conference.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Not the phraseology of the preamble. The Minister is quite right in saying that Mr. Davy explained that he was not responsible for it. Though he was chairman of the legal committee, he regretted the absurd language employed. We are all aware of the circumstances under which this Bill has become necessary. Those circumstances raise not merely the constitutional question, which was dealt with at some length by the Minister, but also the whole of the merits of the measure itself. When, at the end of last session, the question arose involving a constitutional issue, and when I assured the Ministry at that time of my

support on the constitutional issue, I distinctly made it clear that, whilst doing so, I entirely disapproved of the provisions of the Bill. I propose now to state the reasons for my strong disapproval. It has been suggested by the Premier that when the Bill was before the Chamber last session—the Bill to amend the then existing Act—only one member of the Opposition, and no one on the Government side, except the Minister in charge of the Bill, spoke on it. An examination of the circumstances attending that episode makes it very clear why that happened. The Minister introduced the second reading at one sitting of the House, and at the very next sitting the second reading of the Bill was set down almost at the top of the Notice Paper.

The Minister for Works: But a week-end elapsed.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes, but before members had received a copy of "Hansard" reporting the Minister's speech, or before his speech was in possession of any of them, the second reading was proceeded with.

The Premier: That is too thin.

Hon. N. KEENAN: We had only just received "Hansard" reporting the speech of the Minister when the second reading was proceeded with.

Mr. Marshall: You could have got a copy had you wanted it.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It was quite legitimate to ask for an adjournment in order that members might read in "Hansard" what the Minister had said.

Mr. Marshall: Why did not you listen to his speech?

Hon. N. KEENAN: An adjournment of the debate was refused, and all the House will recollect that at the time—

The Minister for Works: You should be the last member in the House to say that.

Mr. Marshall: Yes, he bobs in and out again and wants "Hansard" to give him the information.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If members will persist in interrupting me—

The Premier: You deserve to have the whole lot of them interrupting you.

The Minister for Works: You should be the last to say that. You have been granted special adjournments.

Mr. Marshall: Yes, and he throws down his pencil and walks out night after night.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Murchison will keep order.

Mr. Marshall: I will try to do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Keep order and never mind about the trying.

Hon. N. KEENAN: At that time there was nothing ahead of the House in the way of work. We had no loaded Notice Paper. On the contrary, there appeared to be ample time and more than ample time to deal with all the business that remained on the Notice Paper. In another place the Notice Paper was loaded with matters of the gravest importance, and it was not at all necessary that there should be any haste in sending the Financial Emergency Act Amendment Bill to them. However, the Minister refused the adjournment and, by his refusal, curtailed the discussion, and the second reading went through. The measure then before the House was really the same as is incorporated in this Bill. When bringing down the amending Bill last session, the Minister said it was introduced in furtherance of and in part performance of the policy on which the Government, of which he was a member, had been returned to power. It was one of the promises made by his party to the electors. Because it was placed before the electors and because the electors had accepted it, and had returned the party to power; therefore it was claimed the Government had a clear mandate to give effect to the proposals. I am quite prepared to concede that the proposals to restore the financial emergency cut to the public servants was put before the electors, and I am quite prepared to concede also that a great majority of the electors accepted and endorsed that policy and returned that party to power, no doubt because they accepted and endorsed the policy. If there were any doubt whether in fact that proposal was made to the electors and was accepted and endorsed by the electors, to what is that doubt to be attributed? To nothing more than to the fact that only in July last the Premier and the Minister for Works both denied that any such proposal was made. Consequently, if those who claim that there was any doubt about a mandate having been given to the Government desire to seek authority for their doubt, that is the best authority they can adduce. I myself am quite satisfied that the proposal was made in definite terms, and I am also quite satisfied that the electors returned the party to power, perhaps mainly so far as the public servants were concerned, because of that proposal. Therefore I admit for myself that the Government have a mandate to give

effect to that policy. That is all I desire to say on the constitutional aspect. At other times and in other places, I have made clear the views I hold on the proper working under the Constitution of the two Chambers, and I do not desire to take advantage of the indulgence of the House to repeat myself. Turning to the merits of the Bill, what are the main grounds on which the Minister recommends the House to accept the measure? He reiterated, as he has done on many occasions, that this was the only Parliament and the Mitchell Government were the only Government in Australia that had attempted to fix wages by Act of Parliament. He said it was a ruinous policy and a vicious proceeding for any Parliament to attempt to constitute itself a tribunal to fix wages. If the subject were not one of the very greatest importance, it might lead to some amusement to examine the travesty of facts that the Minister has placed before the House. The Financial Emergency Act of 1931 was divided into seven parts. Part II., Section 7, reduced wages or salaries by Act of Parliament.

Mr. Sleeman: Paid by private employers.

Hon. N. KEENAN: No, it reduced wages and salaries by Act of Parliament. No intervention was necessary by any other tribunal, authority or person. Specifically in the terms of the section it reduced wages payable to employees of the Crown. Provision for the reduction of salaries or wages—the two words mean the same thing—received by employees of the Crown is to be found repeated in exactly the same words in the statute passed by every State in Australia. Part V. dealt with the variation of contracts of service by parties other than employees of the Crown. Section 12 of that Part, which has been referred to by the Leader of the Opposition, dealt with an employer who was in receipt of a grant from the Crown and whose grant was reduced in consequence of the Financial Emergency Act. He was authorised to make a reduction in the remuneration payable to his employees, a reduction commensurate with the reduction made in the grant by the Treasury. But there was this safeguard, that where that affected the wages of any person working under industrial agreement or industrial award, then the employer could only make a reduction with the previous sanction of the Court of Arbitration. There was no provision, as in Section 7, to cut down the wages; the employer was merely authorised to apply to

the Court of Arbitration and, with the consent of the court, to make the limited reduction that corresponded exactly with the reduction made in his grant by the Treasury.

Mr. Needham interjected.

Hon. N. KEENAN: There is no possible reason for that construction, as I shall show. Section 14, Subsection 5, gave authority to the Court of Arbitration, on the application of an employer, to reduce wages. The language used was clear and concise.

Mr. Cross: As clear as mud!

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not know how clear the hon. member's mind is.

Mr. Cross: It is clearer than that Act.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I propose to read what the Act says, in Subsection 5 of Section 14—

If, on the hearing of the application, the court is satisfied that the national emergency with which the State is faced justifies it in making an order for a reduction of rates of salary, wages or remuneration prescribed in the award or industrial agreement in relation to which the application is made so as to bring them into accord with the reductions made under Part II. of the Act, the court may, notwithstanding the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912-25, or any amendment thereof, or of any other Act or of any award or industrial agreement made thereunder, or of any declared basic wage to the contrary, make an order that the award or industrial agreement in respect whereof the application is made shall forthwith be varied so that the rates of salary, wages or remuneration therein prescribed shall be reduced in accordance with the provisions of Part II. of this Act and the rates prescribed in the Schedule hereto.

What was the position in order that the court might be able to deal with the application of an employer if it thought fit to do so? The position was that except for Western Australia no industrial legislation contained the same restrictive provisions that ours did, restraining the court from taking any action at all. The effect of Sections 90, 120 and 121 was to tie the hands of the court entirely, which was not the case in respect of any industrial tribunal elsewhere in Australia. Either one of two things had to be done to give the court the same powers enjoyed by the industrial tribunals elsewhere in Australia, first to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act, secondly to include this provision in the Financial Emergency Act. What must be clearly understood is that it gave power to the court, and it remained for the court to exercise that power if on proper inquiry it thought fit to do so. How does

Subsection 5 of Section 14 warrant the statement that Parliament took upon itself to fix wages? All that the section accomplishes is to give to the Arbitration Court power if it sees fit to alter a wage. It is true, as pointed out by the Minister, that the construction placed upon the statute by the Full Court is to the effect that where the Arbitration Court had, on the application of one employer, granted a reduction in respect of some wages men employed by him, that constituted a common rule, and that any other employer, without making application, was entitled to avail himself of it.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: That was not the intention of the Legislature.

Hon. N. KEENAN: No. I contend it is not the proper construction to place upon the statute and that it never was part of the intent of the statute. If any measure had been brought down to cure that defect, and it could have been cured by the insertion of a few words restraining the benefit of the order to the person who obtained it, such a measure would have received universal support.

The Premier: Universal?

Hon. N. KEENAN: And the support of another place too, I think.

The Premier: You are very optimistic.

Hon. N. KEENAN: No one understood the statute to mean anything except that the employer should apply to and satisfy the court on inquiry that his application was worthy of acceptance, before he could obtain the benefit of the order.

The Premier: Having got the decision which suited their views, they would not agree to alter it.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Premier sometimes takes too pessimistic a view, and sometimes a view that is rather uncharitable.

The Premier: I know them.

Hon. N. KEENAN: We are told that the previous Government were guilty of a pernicious proceeding in fixing wages by Act of Parliament. It is certain that Parliament did fix wages under Section 6 of Part II. in respect to employees of the Crown. Strange to say, the Minister who declares that it was a pernicious proceeding for Parliament to fix wages, repeats in the Bill the very words contained in Section 6 of Part V. of the Act. I will read what it says.

The Minister for Works: Read the clause further on.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I would not like the Minister to imagine I think he does not understand his own Bill.

The Minister for Works: Read on to where it exempts all wages men.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Not all employees of the Crown.

The Minister for Works: All wages men.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Does the Minister differentiate between wages and salaries?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I make no such distinction. It is a mere synonym. Men are merely paid for their services. If they want to be very swagger, they call it a salary; otherwise they call it wages.

The Premier: Salaries are not fixed by the Arbitration Court.

Hon. N. KEENAN: They are fixed by other tribunals. Clause 6 of the Bill says—

Notwithstanding anything contained in any Act, regulation, or by-law, or in any State individual award or State industrial agreement, or in any other award determination or agreement to the contrary, but subject as in this section and in this Act hereinafter provided the rate of salary payable to every officer shall be reduced to a rate which will be either 18 per cent., 20 per cent., or 22½ per cent. as the case may be in accordance with the scale set forth in Part I. of the Schedule to this Act below the rate of salary prescribed or fixed for the position or for the work as on the 30th day of June, 1930.

That does fix wages and salaries by Act of Parliament.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: It does not fix wages.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It says "notwithstanding any industrial award or agreement." The Minister is in the position now of being the sponsor for this pernicious and utterly wrong principle of Parliament attempting to fix wages. I hope the Minister will regard himself as the sponsor of this vicious practice. As regards the Bill, undoubtedly the first matter that requires to be established is to show that the financial position of the State is so altered as to warrant the statute which is now proposed. By the financial position of the State I mean not only the financial position from the point of view of governmental finance but from the point of view of the position of industry generally. Dealing first of all with the financial position from the point of view of governmental finance, I would ask what knowledge this House or any member of it has of that position by

reason of any statement made by the Minister? The only knowledge we are in possession of is certainly in excess of the knowledge we had on the second reading of the Bill which was brought down last session to amend the law. The Minister then took the extraordinary stand that this House was not entitled to any such knowledge, that it was a piece of impertinence on our part to ask for it. No doubt influenced by some better guide, some person of more sane judgment, the Minister afterwards on the third reading, did disclose the burden the State would be called upon to carry if the measure were not passed.

The Minister for Works: I had not the information.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Minister assured us that this matter was discussed again and again in Cabinet over a period of several months.

Mr. Latham: Early in the session.

Hon. N. KEENAN: He had the information up his sleeve all the time, but thought he was giving too much away.

The Minister for Works: I do not concede now that it was any business of yours.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Then this House is here merely to receive orders from the Minister.

The Minister for Works: The finances of the country are for the Government.

Hon. N. KEENAN: And the House is merely to receive orders and give effect to them. That is not my conception of the duty of the House, or even of those who sit on the same side as the Government. The Minister subsequently informed the House that it would entail a burden of £110,000 to £115,000. There is no information before the House as to how this money is to be obtained. The whole extent of the information given to us is that it will involve a burden of £110,000 to £115,000, I presume per annum, although it may involve us in that amount for the balance of the financial year. It cannot be imagined that the money will be found out of Loan funds, because no Government could defend or justify such action. If the money is to come out of revenue, how is it to be found? Where is it provided for in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure which were before us recently, and were considered by this House at great length? Where is there anything we can turn to, and say, "Here is the source of the money that will be available for expenditure

in the direction required by this Bill?" So far as any member knows, every penny of revenue, including, of course, the deficit of £850,000, has been appropriated for some purpose. Is it proposed, if the Bill becomes law, to increase the deficit by £115,000? If that is so, some statement to that effect should be made. It would seriously influence the position of this State when it appears before the Grants Commission asking for additional money, and would seriously affect the position when the Treasurer next resorted to a Loan Council meeting. There remains a possibility that the Treasurer has under-estimated his revenue, and is going to collect a considerable amount more than he thought, particularly, I suggest, from the incidence of the financial emergency tax. All these considerations are only possibilities, and bare possibilities. Surely a measure of this kind should not be put before the House buttressed only by possibilities. But even if it can be shown that the moneys which are involved if the Bill becomes law are available, and that therefore from the point of view of governmental finance no objection can be taken to the measure, what consideration has been given to the effect the Bill will have on the financial position of industry in general? At the moment, as has been mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, a very creditable effort is being made to revive local secondary industries, and with some fair measure of success. But who can question even for a moment that there must be some increase in the cost of production of local industries as the result of this Bill becoming law? And if there is any increase in cost, it is always passed on to the consumer; and therefore it will mean an increase in the market prices of the products of our local industries.

The Minister for Employment: That would be an argument in favour of permanent reduction of wages.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is an argument only when one has to meet competition. If we can close the door against cheaper articles, of the same value or approximately the same value, coming in and being offered to the public, by all means let that be done; but we cannot close the door. We must let the articles in. What will be the result? Is it not absolutely certain that in the circumstances we all find ourselves in, having to make a shilling go as far as it possibly can, we shall buy the cheapest articles in the

market if it has at all the same relative value? So it will mean that our markets for secondary industries here will be destroyed.

The Minister for Employment: The secondary industries are not going to be made a stalking-horse for reduced wages.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The secondary industries will no longer exist. There will not be reduction of wages; there will be abolition of wages. There is a long way between reduction and abolition. The failure of the secondary industries would mean abolition of wages. I do not desire to pursue that point any further, because I have no doubt that other speakers, having a more intimate knowledge of the matter, will deal with it. Nor do I propose to deal with the intense feeling of dissatisfaction that the plan embodied in the Bill has produced in the Public Service. On a former occasion in this House, hon. members may recollect, I pointed out that there was a state of almost incipient rebellion in our Public Service, arising from a comparison of their lot with that of others doing exactly the same work at much higher remuneration in the service of the Commonwealth. I have no doubt that the passing of the Bill would accentuate and influence for the worse, that dangerous mood. Now I turn, lastly, to the consideration which was lightly dealt with by the Leader of the Opposition, and which I propose to deal with at some greater length—a consideration so important that, standing entirely by itself, apart from anything else that I have said, it would warrant the rejection of the Bill; and that is the position of the unemployed in this State. Assuming that the Government have this £115,000 available, before a single penny of it should be spent in augmenting the wage of a man who, in order to qualify for benefiting from the measure, must be in receipt of the basic wage and 9s. above the basic wage, the unemployed, or those who are only partially employed, should have the benefit of these moneys in order to find employment for them in the one case, or in the other case to find additional employment. Until every man in the State who is willing and anxious to work and who to-day is seeking for work without being able to get it is enabled to enjoy full time at the basic wage, there can be no justification whatever for adding to the reward of those who must have the full basic wage and 9s. above it before they can

qualify to receive the benefits of the Bill. I cannot imagine how it is possible for any of those who sit on the other side of the Chamber, or on this side, to go back to their electorates, where they know there are hundreds of men still out of employment or only partially employed, and state that they have voted away £115,000 which might be used to give those men employment, or at any rate to some extent give them employment—voted that money away to men who are already in receipt of the basic wage and of 9s. above the basic wage. That appears to me to be a proposition which it is wholly impossible to justify. For that reason, and that reason alone, I sincerely hope that the measure will be rejected. It is absolutely a travesty on all that is understood by human justice and human charity. I hope, therefore that the second reading will be taken to a division. If there is a division—and I shall certainly call for one—we shall see what are the views on that point alone of those who comprise the membership of this Chamber.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.9]: I listened attentively to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition and also to that of the Leader of the cross-bench party. I do not think we have heard anything really new, though certainly several points of novelty, some of them original, were raised by the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan). Dealing with the position of the Bill and the Act, I wish to call the attention of the people of this country to the fact that three members of another place whose votes were responsible for the defeat of last session's Bill are, after a period of six years, retiring from political life. I question at any rate the moral right of any member who has not been before his electors for a period of six years, and who is responsible to only a limited number of the people of this country, one-third of them, to vote for the rejection of a Bill put forward by a Government fresh from the country and returned by an overwhelming majority; a Government, too, coming from the electors after inflicting upon the previous Government the heaviest defeat that has ever been inflicted upon a Western Australian Government, in view of the fact that four of its leading Ministers lost their seats at the general election. What authority, I ask,

have those members, who are giving up public life and have not been before the country for six years, to set aside the will of the great majority of the people of this country as expressed at the recent election? I hope that that is an aspect of the question which will appeal at any rate to those hon. members' sense of fair play and moral obligation before they pass a vote on this Bill when it goes to another place. The Leader of the Opposition dealt with the present measure largely on the same lines as last session's Bill. I do not know that there is anything he has said calling for reply or comment that has not already been answered or dealt with by the Minister in charge of the Bill, either last session or in his speech of this afternoon. The Leader of the Opposition did say that the Government were compelled to deal with private employees as with Government employees. The present Government do not accept that view at all. There was no compulsion or obligation upon the previous Government to deal with the matter of private employment in the manner they did. I shall have a few words to say regarding the observations of the member for Nedlands on that point. The hon. member referred to the "flamboyant" preamble. It is the same flamboyant preamble as appeared in the Bill supported by the hon. member when it was introduced in 1931. Members of the then Government, now sitting in Opposition, drew attention to the rather absurd wording of the flamboyant preamble. I do not know that it is worth even a passing comment, because the hon. member knows that the preamble means nothing at all. It is merely a pious wish or hope that might create in the public mind an attitude assisting the people in the distressful times they are passing through. And so the flamboyant preamble is not of any consequence whatever. I rather imagine, also, that the hon. gentleman does not regret that the attitude of another place has resulted in the loss of last session's Bill, because its loss, and the consequent calling of this session and introduction of this Bill, have afforded the hon. member an opportunity of making a speech and expressing his views on the question, which he failed or neglected to do on last session's Bill. I have no doubt that this will reconcile a considerable number of those who support him in the country to his eleventh-hour stand, making

up in some degree for his neglect when last session's Bill was before the House. The hon. member said, in explanation of his failure and that of any member of his party to speak on the previous Bill, that there was no time to do so. The Minister, he said, introduced the Bill at one sitting, and the Bill was brought on at the next sitting. It would appear that but for an interjection from this bench the hon. member would have it believed that the next sitting was on the next day.

Hon. N. Keenan: No.

The PREMIER: But that was how the hon. member expressed it.

Hon. N. Keenan: I did not.

The PREMIER: I say the hon. member did. He said the Bill was introduced at one sitting and brought on at the very next sitting.

Hon. N. Keenan: The next sitting of the House. And so it was.

The PREMIER: Yes, but surely the hon. member's statement would convey a false impression to those who read it in the Press, because the hon. member did not say that between the date of the introduction of the Bill and that next sitting which he mentioned, a whole week-end intervened, from Thursday till Tuesday. The hon. member had the whole week-end to study the Bill. Now an explanation is offered which I venture to say will not deceive anybody. He said that members did not have time to read "Hansard." What member ever reads "Hansard"? The hon. member said he did not gain any knowledge of the contents of the Bill by listening to the speech of the Minister who moved its second reading; he did not gain any information as to the contents of the Bill by reading the very full report of the discussion upon it that appeared in the newspapers the following day. He would have no opportunity of finding out what was in the Bill until he read "Hansard" on the following day, and not having had that opportunity he was consequently unable to speak on the second reading.

Hon. N. Keenan: I asked for the adjournment for that purpose.

The PREMIER: To read "Hansard"?

Hon. N. Keenan: Yes.

The PREMIER: I do not wish to question the hon. member's statement, but I believe that is not the reason why he asked for the adjournment. In all the years I have been a member of this House, I have never yet known of a member, more particularly a

member of the standing of the hon. member, to ask for an adjournment to enable him to read "Hansard," when he has had a whole week-end in which to study the Bill and to read all about it in the newspaper. The hon. member would gain his knowledge of the Bill by studying the Bill itself. He is a member of the legal profession and would study the Bill quite apart from what the Minister might have had to say upon it. It is quite conceivable, and the hon. member will appreciate this, that the Minister might not make out the best case for the Bill: there might be important features of the Bill to which he might not refer, and he might stress others of minor importance. The hon. member, however, apparently would be guided by what the Minister said in introducing the Bill and not by studying the Bill itself. I venture to suggest that the explanation is altogether too thin.

The Minister for Employment: He does not do himself justice.

The PREMIER: He does not. He would ask us to have a lesser opinion of his knowledge and ability if he says that.

Hon. N. Keenan: Now will the Premier tell us what was the business to be done? We idled for two days after that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows that the Bill was late in reaching another place. Even though we were idling in this Chamber, it was necessary to get the Bill to another place. As a matter of fact, one of the grounds for complaint by another place was that the Bill was so late in reaching them that they did not have sufficient time to give it that consideration which its importance merited. I think a week-end was ample time for any member to study the Bill. There was no haste with regard to the Bill. As the hon. member says, discussion was not curtailed in any way. The hon. member says he agrees with the Government's view that a clear mandate was given at the elections so far as the public servants are concerned; but he goes further and says that this Bill has created intense dissatisfaction in the ranks of the Public Service. Is that because it gives relief to a section only, and not to all members of the Public Service?

Hon. N. Keenan: The Premier knows himself. It is all in the papers.

The PREMIER: Yes. I have had some experience and I know from correspondence I have received from those who are affected by the Bill; but I have never known of a

Bill of this importance that has aroused so little of what the hon. member is pleased to describe as intense dissatisfaction. Naturally, an executive of those concerned would meet and carry a resolution of protest. That is to be expected. Any body of men affected by this or similar legislation will carry motions of protest: but nothing beyond that has ever been suggested. I do not agree, therefore, that the Bill has created the intense dissatisfaction which the hon. member would have us believe exists. I will leave the Minister in charge of the Bill to reply to the hon. member's remarks with respect to the fixing of wages by Act of Parliament. So far as private employers are concerned, the hon. member argues that all that is conferred by the Act is a right to apply to the court, which will hear and determine the case on its merits. The whole position was, however, entirely upset by the common-rule decision of the Full Court.

Hon. N. Keenan: I admit that, but that can be amended.

The PREMIER: It can be amended?

Hon. N. Keenan: Yes, in the simplest of forms.

The PREMIER: We shall see. I shall refer to that presently. As the hon. member has stated, and as he knows full well, many employers, whose business did not warrant any reduction in wages, received the benefit of the common-rule decision and obtained a reduction in wages.

Hon. N. Keenan: The private employers of this State, because of the application of the common rule, received that reduction, but was that the intention of the Act?

The PREMIER: Certainly it was not.

Hon. N. Keenan: Of course it was.

The PREMIER: Of course it was not. Not one member of this House, when the previous Bill was under discussion, intended it to apply as it was interpreted by the Full Court. That being so, why did the Government of the day refuse the financial assistance for an appeal to the High Court? That was the only way in which the decision of the Full Court could be tested. The hon. member now says, and I agree, that no member of the House had that intention in mind. If that be so, surely there was an obligation on the part of the then Government to grant the request of the President of the Arbitration Court for financial assistance to appeal to the High Court against our Full Court's decision. Even if the Attorney General of the day, or the Government of the day, could

The PREMIER: I think it is the hon. member's argument.

Hon. N. Keenan: My argument is that the man on £500 a year should not have his salary cut restored until the unemployed have been provided for.

The PREMIER: The man on £500 per annum should not get his cut back?

Hon. N. Keenan: Not until the unemployed have been provided for.

The PREMIER: He is not getting it back. No man on that salary or even on half that salary, is getting the cut restored to him by the Bill. And if we get down to the logic of that argument, we might say, "Let us all be reduced to the basic wage until everyone is employed, and let the surplus above the basic wage go to the support of the unemployed."

Mr. Latham: We have not suggested that the margin for skill should be taken from those people, but we say the cut which has been made should not be restored yet.

The PREMIER: Is that to be the permanent basis?

Mr. Latham: No.

The PREMIER: It is not the policy of this Government, and it was made quite clear and definite at the elections that we did not stand for it. Surely with regard to this interference or the making of the Act apply to private employment, we were just as clear on that as the hon. member says we were in regard to the Public Service; because we resisted that for days and nights, through all-night sittings in this House when the Bill was going through; and ever since the Act came into operation we never ceased to challenge it on every platform in the State and again in this House when the Act came up for continuance. So that aspect of the Act must have been just as clearly impressed on the minds of the electors as was any other attitude we may have adopted in regard to the Public Service, which has been declared a drastic amendment or alteration.

Mr. Doney: Why not adopt the policy that those whose needs are greatest shall first be helped?

The PREMIER: What about men on £500, £700, £900 and £1,000 all coming down to the basic wage?

Mr. Doney: That is not an answer to the question I put to you.

The PREMIER: Neither the hon. member nor the member for Nedlands knows the

genuine unemployed in this country if he believes that those men would have their position relieved by the breaking down of wage standards. They do not ask for it and are not expecting it.

Mr. Doney: At all events that is not an answer to my question.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member will give notice of his question I may be able to answer it for him, although perhaps not in the way he desires. The Government are standing by the Bill because we are standing by what the people have asked us to do. There can be no question about that. I know it is sometimes arguable what really constitutes a mandate, because many factors enter into the minds of electors at election time; but if it is at all possible to say that any definite instruction was given by the electors to us in regard to this Bill, even allowing for other considerations that may have entered into the minds of electors at polling day, this was an outstanding question.

Mr. Latham: I did not see it posted up throughout the State, as something else was.

The Minister for Justice: The electors have not forgotten.

The PREMIER: Nor did they forget that the hon. member had said he would reduce their wages.

Mr. Latham: I did not say it.

The PREMIER: I am sorry if the hon. member did not say it, but at the same time it is a great pity the denial was not made until three weeks after the publication of the statement: and even then it came, not from the hon. member, but from his leader, and with one denial the matter was allowed to drop.

Mr. Latham: I saw many denials. We were not allowed to get up in the Trades Hall and deny it.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has his own avenues of publicity. He is like the member for Nedlands, who never once mentioned secession within the boundaries of his electorate. He made rousing speeches only a few hundred yards outside his electorate, but they of course had no influence on his election, for I am sure the people of Nedlands did not know what the hon. member was saying in the Perth Town Hall and did not read his speeches. However, all this is by the way. The Government intend to see the Bill carried through.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.35]: I regret the position which has arisen. The Government are putting up a statement which would suggest that they have done something noteworthy, something for which they should be commended. Actually, I think they should have met another place at least to some extent and done something to show that even if there was a spirit of no surrender on the other side, they at all events went to the conference with open minds.

Several members interjected.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope that those who are violently interjecting will interject at some length after I sit down. The failure of the passage of the Bill of last session has caused great confusion.

Mr. Raphael: Where?

Mr. SAMPSON: In many quarters, and the Government have suffered in reputation because of it.

The Premier: You must be sorry for that.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not bear any ill-will towards the Premier, but this afternoon the Minister for Works implied in that kindly way he adopts, what had happened behind closed doors. It sounds like a title to a penny novelette "Behind Closed Doors." Anyone reading his remarks would come to the conclusion there was something very unworthy, very improper, something which reflected discredit on another place because it was done behind closed doors.

The Minister for Mines: And it would have been so regarded had what was said at the conference been said in the House and published in "Hansard".

Mr. SAMPSON: After that, is there any need for me to say more?

Members: No!

Mr. SAMPSON: On that point perhaps not, but I am going to say a few words on the Bill. I think I am justified in offering some criticism of the action of the Government in failing to accept a continuation of the Act. On the matter of communications between the two Houses, I read in the Standing Orders that a conference desired by the Assembly with the Council shall in all cases be requested by message. That was done. Then in another Standing Order I learn that at all conferences the managers of the Assembly shall be at liberty to confer freely by word of mouth with the managers for the Council. But from what we have heard, one would imagine that the managers for the Council were of a class of Tanta-

noola tiger, some dreadfully ferocious animal that would swallow the kindly Minister for Works and those with him, and not allow them opportunity to place their arguments before the conference. In Standing Order No. 252 it is prescribed that the managers for the Assembly shall, when the conference has terminated, report their proceedings to the Assembly forthwith.

The Minister for Employment: Could not that all be taken as read?

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not wish to be personal to the Minister, but he himself is a great example of a reader, and I hope he will speak on the Bill; indeed it is an obligation on the Minister for Employment that he should speak.

The Premier: You objected when he spoke last time.

Mr. SAMPSON: Not at all, and I certainly think he should speak this time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Whether or not the Minister speaks, has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: But it will help me. If the Minister for Employment is concerned in getting men to work, as I know he is, he should speak on the Bill and indicate to the House where—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is quite out of order in discussing that aspect.

Mr. SAMPSON: Very well, I will not proceed on those lines.

Mr. Raphael: That is right; sit down.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am going to say what I desire to say on the Bill, although perhaps it has been beaten to a frazzle already. Still, to sit here and vote without having expressed an opinion would be unbecoming. When the Minister for Employment interrupted me, I was saying that the Minister for Works had gone along to the conference, apparently without being influenced by sweet reason. He went there, but only to get the whole Bill or nothing.

Mr. Hegney: What about no surrender?

Mr. SAMPSON: Apparently, from what the Minister said, each party was impressed with the same idea.

The Minister for Mines: How do you know that?

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Minister for Mines had been here at the time, he would know that the Minister for Works reported that two of the managers for the Council had previously stated in that House that if elected

to serve as managers their attitude would be one of no surrender.

The Minister for Mines: And they said it. I sat in the Council gallery and heard them, and the Leader of the Opposition also heard them.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister need not work himself up into a fury.

The Minister for Mines: Did anyone in this House say that?

Mr. SAMPSON: I told you it was reported by the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Mines: It was not said in this House.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister did not tell us when he went to the conference that he would not bend, that he was going to stand up to it and get 100 per cent. or nothing. He did not say that.

The Minister for Mines: The other people did.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister said that all this occurred behind closed doors. Of course it was behind closed doors; that is the custom and the rule.

The Minister for Mines: It is too much the custom, and it is time it was cut out.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister has considerable influence with the Government, so perhaps it would be possible to amend the Constitution.

The Minister for Mines: You use your influence with another place, and then we might be able to do it.

Mr. SAMPSON: This House requested a conference. If the Government had not wanted the conference they would not have requested it. As they requested it, they got it, and I regret the position which arose. It has done injury, not only to the Government, but to the State. It would have been possible to accept what was offered and, later on, when the financial position justified it, even though it meant the calling of a special session—as has happened—the matter could have been gone into once more and amendments brought forward. What is the position regarding mortgagees' interest? There is confusion. The Leader of the Opposition has mentioned what has happened regarding one or more of the trustee companies. It is unfortunate that that has happened. Judging by the Bill, there is no possibility of making the reduction of interest charges retrospective.

The Minister for Mines: Not so long as we have men like you who do not want them reduced.

Mr. SAMPSON: If I took the Minister more seriously, I would demand a withdrawal of that statement.

The Minister for Mines: You can take it seriously. You do not want a reduction.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister knows what is in my mind; it is a pity he does not know what is in his own. The Minister's statement is quite wrong. I am prepared without reservation or equivocation to support that part of the Bill. My only regret is that that part was allowed to lapse.

The Minister for Mines: Get the Bill passed, and have it restored.

Mr. SAMPSON: Certainly that must be passed, and I should like to see the reduction made retrospective to the end of December.

The Minister for Employment: That is provided for.

Mr. SAMPSON: I understand it is not provided for.

The Minister for Mines: It is provided for in the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have read the memorandum hurriedly, and I understand there is some question as to whether the interest reduction can be made retrospective to the 1st January.

Mr. Latham: It is provided for.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am glad of that, and hope it will be carried. This is the one occasion when the Minister for Mines has shown the slightest interest in the Bill.

The Minister for Mines: I have done my part elsewhere.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister should do it in the House; whatever the Minister has to say should be said here.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will not continue to discuss Ministers, but will discuss the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: The newspapers have discussed this matter at great length, and it would be difficult to deal with the Bill without repeating what has already been said.

Mr. Hegney: Are you opposing or supporting the Bill?

Mr. SAMPSON: The restoration of wages is a matter that everybody will welcome. It is an indication that conditions are perhaps better than some of us thought them: indeed, better than the financial

figures published this morning would lead us to believe. That is the perplexing part, that this should be possible in spite of the bad times and in spite of the hundreds of unemployed and the hundreds working part-time on relief work. At the same time, there is much to be said in favour of increasing wages and thus increasing the spending power of the people. With that aspect, however, I do not propose to deal. I hope the Minister for Employment will express his opinion on that phase before the vote on the second reading is taken. I think there is justification for complaint by members on the score of the late arrival of this Bill. It reached us on the 7th December, on which date the first reading was passed and the second reading was moved.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think this Bill has only just arrived.

Mr. SAMPSON: I meant the Bill that was before us last session.

Mr. Hegney: That Bill is dead.

Mr. SAMPSON: After the second reading had been moved, the debate was adjourned, and on the following Tuesday the Leader of the Opposition spoke. The Leader of the Nationalist Party did not ask too much in requesting an adjournment of the debate. The Bill needed consideration. An adjournment, however, was not permitted, and after the Bill had passed the Committee stage, on the same night, I believe, it reached the Legislative Council on the 19th December, and the second reading stage there was begun on the 20th December. It was a rushed measure. Members of both Houses were not treated with the respect to which they were entitled.

Mr. Hegney: What nonsense!

Mr. SAMPSON: They should have been given a fair opportunity to consider the Bill and not been asked to discuss it when frayed tempers and irritation probably resulted in the emphasising of the no-surrender attitude. The unreasonable delay that marked the advent of the Bill was followed by unreasonable haste in pushing it through, and then the Bill was lost.

Mr. Hegney: And now we are here again.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope the hon. member will do what he can to get the Bill passed on this occasion.

Mr. Hegney: I will do my best, anyhow.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Government did not hurry in presenting the Bill to the House. The Minister said he had given it the fullest consideration beforehand; the whole thing had been examined for weeks and months, and had received full consideration before the Premier delivered his Budget speech, which, I think, was on the 19th September. All those things lead me to say that, in my opinion, the Government did not proceed with the Bill in a way that was likely to secure success.

The Minister for Works: It was here for nearly a month.

Mr. SAMPSON: It was introduced on the 7th December and was reported with amendments on the 12th December.

The Minister for Works: There were only two points in it. Would it take a fortnight to consider two points?

Mr. SAMPSON: I think the Government made a mistake in introducing the Bill so late in the session, and in not helping members to give it the consideration that they might have given it in reasonable working hours.

The Minister for Employment: The hon. member must have awakened during the Christmas holidays to find that out. He did not mention it before.

Mr. SAMPSON: I was allowing the leaders of the parties to take charge. I kept quiet, and what happened? Had I had the assistance of the Minister for Employment, this wretched debacle might never have occurred. But no, he sat there and said nothing. I am hoping he will speak on this Bill.

The Minister for Works: Do not tempt him.

The Minister for Railways: Do not tempt the Speaker. He has already blocked the hon. member three times.

Mr. SAMPSON: Though everyone applauds the payment of higher wages, I suggest that it would have been wiser to make the distribution of the money available on a percentage basis, and extend the benefit to all employees in receipt of salaries or wages up to a certain amount. Those in receipt of high salaries could benefit later on, but those in receipt of lower salaries were justified in expecting consideration. However, that is a matter which may be considered in Committee.

The Minister for Employment: What would you term the lower salaries?

not justify that expenditure, why did not the Government of the day pass the simple little amendment to which the member for Nedlands has referred? The hon. member did not then raise his voice in the House, because he argued the case for the unions before the Full Court. He did not suggest afterwards in this House that because the Full Court had interpreted the Act in a way contrary to the wishes and views of every member who took part in passing it, that the then Government should pass that simple little amendment. The thousands of men who suffered an unjust reduction in wages were permitted to go on suffering; no action was taken to amend the Act in the way now suggested by the hon. member. I hope I am not uncharitable when I say again that the decision happened to fit in with the policy, the politics, and the views of members of another place, and consequently any such simple little amendment would have received no greater consideration than that which was given to the Bill which has just been rejected. The hon. member questioned the financial position. After all, the estimated deficit of £850,000 for the year is only an estimate. Members know that estimates are liable to be out, sometimes on the right side so far as the Treasurer is concerned, and sometimes on the wrong side. I remember not so very many years ago—it is within the last three years—where an estimate was presented to this House showing a surplus of £7,000, but when the year closed there was a deficit of 1½ million pounds. I recollect a somewhat similar miscalculation in the following year. Six months of the present year having now expired, the Treasurer is in a better position to-day to make a more accurate forecast of what the result will be at the end of the financial year than was the case when the Budget was compiled. By savings in expenditure and by increases in revenue, I consider that we shall be able this year to live within the estimated £850,000 as a deficit. It has not been my experience, when legislation of this kind is brought down, that there is an obligation on the Government, as the hon. member suggests, to give details showing where we expect to save £10,000 on expenditure here, and to increase our revenue by £5,000 there. It is quite sufficient to say that, taking the situation as a whole, we expect to be able to meet the amount involved in the Bill this year. It is not £70,000 or £80,000 for the

half year, as was suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, but at the most about £60,000 for the half year.

Mr. Latham: I think it will be more than that.

The PREMIER: It might be. The final point made by the member for Nedlands, and he was most emphatic about it, was that under no circumstances would any Government be justified in restoring wage cuts to those who are in receipt of a wage above the basic wage, whilst there is a single unemployed man in the State.

Hon. N. Keenan: While there are thousands of unemployed.

The PREMIER: We will say thousands. There are many thousands fewer to-day than there were six months ago. The hon. member suggests that the £115,000, or whatever the amount might be, should be utilised for the assistance of the unemployed. I think I have fairly stated what he said on this point. In reply, I say the Government do not stand for that policy. Those wage cuts, even though imposed upon men who are receiving above the basic wage, mean the breaking down of wages and labour standards that have been built up over the last 30 or 40 years.

Members: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The Government do not stand for a cut in the wages of a man who is a skilled worker, and who is just as much entitled to his £4 10s. a week for the work he is doing as the unskilled man is entitled to the basic wage of £3 8s. 9d. for the work he is doing. We might just as well say that while there are thousands of unemployed in the State, no worker in the State—not only those to whom the Bill refers—whether receiving £400, £500, or £600 a year, should get one penny above the basic wage whilst there is one unemployed man in the State. That is the logical conclusion of the hon. member's argument. Take the case of a responsible officer in the Public Service who is receiving, say, £500 a year. He is paid that amount because of the responsibility he undertakes.

The Minister for Employment: And his skill.

The PREMIER: And his special knowledge of his job. Why should not the wage earner, whose special skill and knowledge entitle him to 10s. or 15s. above the basic wage, receive that extra amount?

Hon. N. Keenan: That is not my argument.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister for Employment is seeking advice on industrial matters. I think I would be wise to keep to my notes.

The Minister for Employment: I think so, too.

Mr. SAMPSON: I still hope to hear from the Minister at a later stage. When the Minister for Works was asked the cost of the partial restoration of wages, he was unable to tell us.

Mr. Ferguson: Unwilling, not unable.

Mr. SAMPSON: That was stated as though it were something virtuous. I am pleased that, at a later stage, he realised the reasonableness of replying. There is just a possibility that the idea occurred to him that if he did not give the information, the Legislative Council might treat the Bill with some degree of roughness.

The Minister for Works: Rougher than they did treat it!

Mr. SPEAKER: I have given the hon. member a fair amount of latitude and I think he might now talk on the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Government are seeking special assistance from the Federal Treasurer. In that I consider they are justified. It is difficult to speak on this question and still keep within the four corners of the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid the hon. member is not trying.

Mr. SAMPSON: I shall endeavour to do so. When the Federal Treasurer is approached, we shall have to present an unanswerable case, and we should be careful not to injure our prospects beforehand. To acquiesce in the lapsing of the Act is impossible; the Act must be renewed as speedily as possible. My chief regret, which I cannot emphasise too strongly, is that the present difficulty was ever allowed to occur. It has brought criticism on the State, and the reputation of the Government has suffered. Perhaps it was one of those occasions when Jove nodded! Certainly the Government did not act with their usual sagacity, or with due consideration. They acted precipitately. Perhaps they were over-tired, and in a spirit of exasperation decided that unless the Bill were approved as submitted, it would be dropped. I hope this Bill will be passed. I shall support the second reading, but in Committee shall endeavour to secure some amendments.

MR. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore) [5.59]: In common with the great majority of people in Western Australia, I regret extremely the state of affairs that exists, due to the inability of the two Houses to reach finality on the Bill presented to us just before Christmas. I do not consider that it is worth while wasting much time in discussing the attitude adopted by another place.

Mr. Sleeman: You heard what was said.

Mr. FERGUSON: I did, and it was a source of great regret to me to hear it. The indications are that not only another place but the Government are inclined to be adamant in this regard. We have heard the Premier say this evening that the Government intend to stand by the Bill.

The Minister for Employment: He would not be worth his salt if he did not do so.

Mr. FERGUSON: If Parliament is going to be a success, there must be a fair spirit of compromise between the two Houses. That applies to this Bill as well as to any other legislation that is brought down. Without that spirit of compromise we are not likely to place on the statute-book legislation that is in the best interests of the State as a whole. That spirit has animated previous Parliaments in this State with consequent good results to Western Australia. The Government made a big mistake in declining to accept the amendment of the Legislative Council, providing for a continuance of the Act for another year. The Government claim they have a mandate from the people.

The Minister for Mines: Would that not have meant dropping our Bill altogether?

Mr. FERGUSON: It would have meant continuing the legislation existing at that time. The State was in a position to continue that legislation which had been operating for a couple of years.

The Minister for Mines: It would have meant dropping the Bill.

Mr. Doney: Except the portion that re-enacted the existing legislation.

Mr. FERGUSON: I should like to give my reasons for being in favour of continuing the old legislation. We have not reached a financial position where we can afford to give to any section the sum of £60,000 a year, as is proposed in the case of Government employees. There has been no turning of the corner so far as our main industries are concerned. They are the last people who should expect relief from the cuts that

were imposed as a result of the exigencies of the financial position of Australia a couple of years ago, when there are so many other people in the State much worse off. Butter fat prices are down to 8d. a pound, and wheat is selling at below 2s. a bushel. Everyone who is producing butter fat and wheat is in a worse position than those who are assured of jobs under the Crown, and are in receipt of over £205 a year. Pending the time when the rest of the community have an addition to their salary, wages or income, particularly in the case of those who are producing the wealth of the country, surely we have a right to expect that those who are doing Government work should be content to put up with the cuts imposed upon them for a little longer period. I would point out that employees of the Government are really being kept in employment by reason of the wealth that is created by our producers. Whether we take that view or not it is essential that these cuts should continue. It is my intention to vote for the second reading of the Bill, because half a loaf is better than no bread. It is essential that the clauses relating to interest on mortgages should be passed. It is impossible for people who are producing the wealth on which the whole community depends to pay the rates of interest they were trying to pay prior to the passage of the Financial Emergency Act. They must have even further relief in the near future than is provided by this Bill. Another important phase of the matter has not been touched upon. If the Bill is not passed in some form or other, the salaries of members will revert to the original £600 a year. It would be wrong in these days of financial stress, when our producers are having so wretched a time, for any member of Parliament to have his salary increased. I know this has been done in the case of the National Parliament of Australia, and I venture to say that 99 per cent. of the people were absolutely ashamed of the action that was taken by the Commonwealth Parliament.

Mr. Wilson: And yet they would put the same Parliament back again.

Mr. FERGUSON: If our Parliament adopted the same practice the people of this State would have been justified in expressing disgust. To govern the situation of salaries and interest on mortgages, legislation of some kind must be placed on the statute book

so that relief may be given to those who most deserve it. With respect to the salary cuts, if it is not possible to get all one would wish, pending the time when we shall return to normality, I shall have to be satisfied with the proposals contained in the Bill, and will vote for the second reading.

Mr. DONEY: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [6.7]: I moved for the adjournment of the debate because I relied upon information given to the House by the Premier, who indicated that if we made reasonable progress he would have no objection to the debate being adjourned until the morrow.

Mr. Wilson: He did not say that.

Mr. DONEY: I have not had time in which to digest all that the Bill contains. The memorandum may be easy for certain members to read, but I do not find it easy, nor can I gather exactly what the purport of the measure is. The Bill is one that intensifies the sectional incidence of the taxation imposed by the Financial Emergency Act. To my surprise it has been brought down by a Government whose experience of political tactics should have saved it from being foolish enough in April last to promise that which it has no chance of carrying into effect. Although members of the Government do not recognise it, they are at the moment in a cleft stick. Most members know that they have been pretty well squeezed on both sides by their supporters. It is fair to say that they are at this moment harassed by the knowledge that there is a great gulf between what they have promised and what they are now in a position to give. Their immediate perplexity is to ascertain how they are to get credit for making good their promises without actually making them good. No one likes taxation, no matter how it is served up. No one likes the taxation which arose through the financial emergency legislation, certainly not those who were under the painful necessity for introducing that legislation and seeing that it was carried into effect. The popular attitude towards any taxation measure is one of criticism. When the parent Act was before the Chamber the then Opposition practically to a man were critics of the Government and of the measure. On that occasion the

Leader of the Opposition, now the Premier, was very helpful, but the Minister for Works was in the forefront of a long and sustained attack upon the Bill. I recall the Minister saying on that occasion, that he could see nothing that was good in the Government's proposals. He warned the House at the time that should Labour be returned to office, one of the first things they would do would be to repeal that iniquitous taxation measure. He had the opportunity last July to carry out that promise, but he failed to do so. He had a similar opportunity in August, September, October, and November, but not until December did he elect to do it, and then did he only bring down a Bill to re-enact those very portions of the Act that he so intensely disliked. What value can be attached to his criticism? He threatened the House, and later on during the election campaign made definite promises to his supporters. He has neither carried out the threat nor honoured his promise. In April last, the Minister would not have re-enacted the measure at any price, but in December he pleads for re-enactment. Another place gave him what he asked for, that is the re-enactment of the Act, but he declined to accept it. To-day he is again asking for the same thing. I understand that £115,000 is involved in this Bill. I am doubtful if that money can be spared, and I should like the Government to say whether that is so or not. I fear it cannot be spared.

Mr. SPEAKER: No motion has yet been carried dealing with the sitting hours, but I will suspend the sitting from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. DONEY: Although before the tea adjournment I was asserting that the Government were not making the best use of the funds at their disposal, I do not assert that the proposed beneficiaries under the Bill do not deserve or do not need the small amount of relief accruing to them under the measure. On the contrary, I believe they do need it and do deserve it. The House knows what a wretchedly lean time these people have been having for three or four years past. I do not deny their need; but I suggest that if the Government have any money to spare, it would be more in the interests of the State if they gave a general and proportionate relief

from taxation. Or, far better still, they could give relief first of all to those whose need is greatest. I know the Premier does not accept that as the proper method of adjustment. Apparently he does not believe in the levelling-up process, but chooses rather to preserve present disparities. I suggest that the hon. gentleman has overlooked entirely the neediest people in the State, the part-time workers for instance, those whose jobs are most insecure, who have a job now but may not have one next week. It seems to me that the Premier has also overlooked the sustenance workers who, as everybody knows, are in many cases below the breadline. Certainly he has overlooked the farmers, who are now attempting to grow wheat at 3s. and sell it at 2s. per bushel. He has also overlooked the relief workers, who do not get £3 18s. 3d. per week or even half of that amount. Assuredly he is overlooking the claims of single men, many of whom at present have no hope of getting relief of any kind. I suggest that if money really is available, the Government would do better to re-open the farm labour scheme which the last Government at any rate found to be just about the most beneficial of all methods of relieving unemployment. Or the present Government might extend the prospecting scheme, and thereby absorb all or nearly all of the unfortunate single men to whom I have alluded. In the early part of the afternoon we heard from the Minister for Works a great deal about mandates and about thwarting the will of the people. At the last election the people certainly did not demand such legislation as we have before us now. If it is claimed that there was a mandate for the repeal of the whole of the financial emergency legislation, I would be inclined to agree that there was a mandate to that effect; but I hope the Government will not have the nerve to claim that they had a mandate for the utterly feeble proposal now before the Chamber. I imagine that had the Government gone to the country and let it be known that it was part of their platform, should they be returned to power, to press for the relief from taxation of, roughly, 300 out of the 1,500 men in the Public Service, or for the granting of some small amount of relief to those comparatively few basic-wage earners in receipt of between £3 18s. 3d. and £4 8s. 10d. per week, they would have been laughed at. If the Minister has the

information, I would like him to tell me something about the basis of distribution of the £70,000 to £75,000 which I understand is the amount being distributed through the State, and which is minus the amount going to the goldfields. I would like him to inform me just exactly the number of men in each of the various Government departments who will benefit, and the separate aggregate amount that will go to each such department. Especially would I like to have that information in regard to the Public Service, the Railway Department, and the Public Works Department. If possible, I would like to have the figures relating to the Railway Department subdivided so as to show separately the amounts relating to the Midland Junction Workshops, to railway workers in the metropolitan area, and railway workers in country districts. I own to a suspicion that on account of the large number of skilled workers in the Midland Junction Workshops an undue proportion of the relief to be afforded would go there, and that the country districts would be proportionately skimmed. The Premier and the Minister for Works do not seem to think that much of a protest is being raised in the State against these proposals. Only a couple of minutes ago I received from an important branch of the Western Australian Railway Officers' Union, which I think the House will admit is an important union, a communication embodying the following two resolutions:—

That this branch enters an emphatic protest against the provisions of the proposed Financial Emergency Act as it applies to railway officers, considering the treatment most unjust and inequitable.

This branch considers that if a Financial Emergency Act is an urgent necessity, it should be applied to all Government workers on a graduated scale of reduction, in order that some relief may be given to all workers from the provisions of the old Act.

Those resolutions are, possibly, of sufficient consequence to warrant some notice from the Government. In conclusion I have just to say that I shall support the second reading of the Bill, but shall do it most reluctantly, and only because it is absolutely essential that the taxation clauses be re-enacted. If I do not support the second reading, I shall, of course, find myself supporting a position which will make reversion to the old order of salaries for members of Parliament simply automatic. I wish to make it

clear that I could not support action of that kind.

The Premier: Are you worried about the railway officers?

Mr. DONEY: I am stressing some obvious inequalities.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [7.40]: In briefly supporting the Bill, I wish to say that its Title, at which criticism has been levelled by various members, irrespective of who was responsible for framing it, is certainly a bobby-dazzler. However, we had the same Title in previous sessions; and, as has been pointed out, it was compulsory to use the same Title again. If the measure does half of what the Title suggests, namely, restore industrial and general prosperity to the State, it will do much more than at present it seems to promise. The Premiers' Conference agreed that the Title of this legislation should be what it is, and there ought to be no going back on our word in that respect. There has been enough of going back on one's word already. The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) pointed out that the Premiers' Conference agreed that this should be the Title of the legislation, and he laid the blame for the flowery Title on the shoulders of Mr. Theodore. The hon. member said it was compulsory on the various States to adopt that Title.

Mr. Latham: This should be a monument to Mr. Theodore.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If the Bill did only half of what the Title suggests, we could look forward to the operation of the measure with great pride. Although I support the Bill, I do not think it will do anything like what its Title proclaims. In effect, the measure seeks to relieve certain people of wage cuts they have suffered under the Financial Emergency Act. In actual fact, we are discussing the taxing of certain people by a reduction of salaries and wages. I agree that at such a time as this taxation is necessary. The Government must get money from somewhere. I regret that people on the basic wage will not be benefited by the Bill. That is impossible, or it would have been done. If it is necessary to get money from certain quarters, it is also necessary to get it from the higher paid officials. Undoubtedly it would be very nice if the Leader of the Opposition and every other member of Parliament could get back to the former salary,

but I do not think even one hon. member would maintain that at the present time salaries should be restored. I hold that a member of Parliament is more entitled to the restoration of his salary than are the higher-paid public servants. I refer to public servants on the £600 or £700 mark, and those receiving upwards of £1,000. I quite agree with that method of taxation at the present juncture. Money has to be raised, and it should be raised from the people who can best afford to pay. What concerns me most is the manner in which the money raised will be spent. I appeal to the Government, when they get the money expected from the Bill, which I believe will be passed by both Houses—

Mr. Latham: The Government will get nothing from the Bill. That is certain.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It will save the Government from paying out money, and I hope that some of the money saved will be used in the direction of helping single men who are hard up and unable to obtain either work or sustenance. It is time something was done for them. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) suggested that the single men should be absorbed by some scheme of relief from farmers, under which they would be placed on farms. The hon. member should know that at present there is no work offering on the farms. For some time the Perth and Fremantle labour bureaux have not had a farm job to offer. They did have one job available. A man was sent from Fremantle to fill a position on a farm at Pithara.

Mr. Doney: What is the reason most of the farmers cannot employ labour? Inability to pay the wages.

Mr. SLEEMAN: When that man arrived at Pithara another man got out of a carriage of the same train and secured the position. That is the only job on a farm that I have known of for a good many weeks. There was another position available at the bureau—and I may say I have been watching the bureau carefully—and that was for a sleeper cutter. That is a trade by itself.

Mr. Doney: You are putting the Margaret River men on farms.

Mr. SLEEMAN: You said the men could be employed by the farmers of this State.

Mr. Doney: You are putting them on farms.

Mr. SLEEMAN: No. We are employing them clearing land.

Mr. Doney: Where? On abandoned farms.

Mr. SLEEMAN: There is much difference between sending people out to work on clearing land and sending them to work on farms. Those men are not being sent to work on farms, but are sent to different places to clear land.

Mr. Doney: You are putting them on abandoned farms.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I have given my opinion on the Bill, and the way in which I hope that at least some of the money saved will be used. I say most emphatically that I hope the time will never come when the Bill will go to conference with another place. Quite a lot has been said to-night about what happened in another place. We were present there the other evening and heard what was said. The Leader of the Opposition, the ex-Minister for Agriculture, the member for Guildford, and the member for Middle Swan were present. They heard most distinctly the words that were used and reported to this House. I see from notes that were taken in another place this afternoon that the hon. member who uttered those words has now repudiated them. What is the use of going to a conference with a man of that description who will make statements while calm, cool and collected, and without heat, and announce to the House that if appointed a manager he would assure the House that his policy would be one of no surrender?

Mr. Ferguson: "No compromise." They are the words he used.

Mr. SLEEMAN: He said "No surrender."

The Premier: It is the same thing.

Mr. SLEEMAN: He said so most emphatically and he was calm, cool and collected, and now he repudiates what he said. So far as conferences with another place are concerned, ever since I have been a member I cannot say that they have been of any use to this House at all. There has been plenty of giving, but no taking. I have never yet known another place to give anything away, but they will squeeze one to the last drop. I am glad the Government on this occasion stuck to their guns and called the bluff of another place. No matter what happens, if there is any opposition from another place I sincerely hope there will be no conference, when we

find men of that calibre making statements such as that I have mentioned. He even called upon the Premier to withdraw the statement he made. I can fancy the Premier doing so.

The Premier: He admitted over and over again that he used the words.

Mr. SLEEMAN: And now he has the cheek to ask the Premier to withdraw what he (the Premier) has said. The Premier is not a man who makes statements wildly. Even if the Premier were to quote a statement I had made, he would check it before he repeated it, and that is admitting quite a lot. The Premier made the statement he did after he had made the necessary inquiries and I am satisfied he is not the man who will withdraw what he has said. The member of another place made the statement he did while cool, calm and collected. Now he is sorry he made the statement because he has shown himself up to the public. He therefore wants to crawl out of it the best way he can. I hope we will not go to conference again with another place, especially on this Bill.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [7.49]: Some members opposite have expressed the opinion that members on the Government side of the House would refrain from speaking on the Bill. Do they wish to infer that we are mere dumb, driven cattle? I speak when I consider it is necessary, and as I consider it necessary to speak on the Bill that is why I am on my feet. Members opposite might take their own remarks to heart and not jump up and speak simply because there is a Bill before the House for discussion. Among business men in the community, both in a large and small way, and also among Ministers of the Crown, there is a very strong belief that considerable improvement has taken place in the economic condition of the State. I must confess I cannot see that improvement, nor can I see any reason to hope for it at present, because no nation, with the possible exception of America, has yet undertaken any definite scheme of solving the economic crisis. The Premiers' Plan is not a scheme for solving the economic crisis. It reminds me of a man who has gone bankrupt and paid a dividend of 16s. in the pound. That, in effect, is the result of the Premiers' Plan. The State contracted to pay certain salaries and wages and, as a result of the

Premiers' Plan, paid only 16s. in the pound. Private employers did the same thing. Therefore, the Premiers' Plan is not a scheme for solving the economic crisis. It is a remedy for the moment, to tide us over until better times arrive. If they do arrive, it will be as the result of some other action. So far as I can see, America is as yet the only country which has undertaken a scheme which might possibly solve the economic crisis. However, I cannot be altogether deaf to the opinions which are being expressed by business men, both in a large and small way. Just this week I had the pleasure of speaking to a director of Myers' Emporium, Melbourne. He told me that in their Melbourne and Adelaide organisations they have on their wages and salaried staff 8,000 employees, but what astounded me was the opinion he expressed that there was only one thing left for a complete recovery and that was an increase in wages. I say that he astounded me when he said that because he had already told me that they had 8,000 employees and were contemplating increasing the wages of each one of them. He believed that that was necessary for a complete restoration to normal conditions. I know that opinion is shared by other business men. They believe an increase in wages will help us towards prosperity. That is my own belief, too. If the improvement which we are told has taken place is an actual improvement, there is still, however, room for difference of opinion as to the cause of the improvement. I do not believe the Premiers' Plan was the cause. From those believers in the Premiers' Plan, many people have the idea that largely upon the nation-wide spread of adjustments, the progress of the past two years is due. They say that as the result of cuts in expenditure and reductions in wages a gradual improvement has been made, and that that improvement is founded upon the sacrifice which the people have made. Some people have undoubtedly gained by the Premiers' Plan because they have retained their jobs. That is the argument of those people who support the Plan. Their contention is that those now in work would not be in work had it not been for the Premiers' Plan. Whether we agree with that contention or not, there are still people who have not benefited from any plan, except possibly, as might be urged by the Minister for Employment, that some people are in receipt of sustenance on a higher scale than that which

would have been possible had there been no Premiers' Plan. Whether the Minister for Employment would argue in that way or not I cannot say, but it is possible he might do so. There are still married men out of work; they have had no work for years and are not in receipt of sustenance. No plan has benefited them. There are still single men out of work and not receiving sustenance. No plan has benefited them, nor will this Bill benefit them. Advantages have been obtained under the Premiers' Plan by some people who, in return, have made merely a negligible sacrifice. The Bill will get at those people, and to that extent I welcome it. If an illustration be wanted, let me refer to those contractors who had large contracts in hand when the financial emergency legislation was passed. The Act simply meant a present of thousands of pounds to those contractors, because they had taken their contracts at prices which included wages at the high level prevailing before the depression took place. The contractors reaped the benefit of the reduction effected in wages by the financial emergency legislation. They simply took the money out of the pockets of the workers and put it into their own. In effect, the Act said to the contractors, "Here is a fine present for you." The contractors pocketed that money without making any sacrifice whatever. The Bill will put a stop to that kind of thing so far as contracts to be made in the future are concerned. Of course, existing contracts will not be affected. I have already said that those people who are in employment have possibly gained under the Premiers' Plan. If the logic of the supporters of the Plan is sound, then those workers will get a further benefit by the restoration of the cut. Large numbers of unemployed who are not yet in receipt of sustenance (and in that category I place both married men and single men) will, however, not have any restoration of wages cuts, and it is quite possible that they may be jeopardised if the Bill is passed. At the present moment the Government are not providing sustenance for single men, probably owing to a shortage of funds. The passage of this Bill will, to my way of thinking, immediately cause to loom up in front of the Minister for Employment a loss of £100,000 in revenue. If it is not possible at the moment to make provision for the men I have mentioned, and this Bill passes, the

Minister for Employment will certainly turn his face in the opposite direction if he is approached for sustenance for them. I would be the last person to support a measure which would give further benefits to people already in employment, and who, although receiving a low wage, are at least receiving some wage. I would refrain from supporting a Bill which would give those workers further benefits while not providing benefits for hungry men out of employment. I would like an assurance from the Minister that the Bill will not jeopardise the chances of single men, practically destitute, receiving sustenance from the Government.

Mr. Latham: It may do so.

Mr. TONKIN: I do not think any man in employment to-day, no matter how small his wage may be, would desire a restoration of the wages cut if it meant reducing to starvation men and women of this State. I hope that aspect will be fully gone into before we pass the Bill. No one welcomes a Bill such as this, which is going to restore wages, more than I do, because I hold the opinion that the cuts and deductions should never have been imposed. From the outset I have held that a reduction in wages is no remedy for an economic crisis such as we have been experiencing. So far as the Bill will remove the burden, to that extent am I with the Government to put it through, but not at the expense of hungry and workless people, and I should like an assurance that it will not jeopardise the chances of those already in want. I will support the second reading.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [8.1]: I will support the Bill, for it will give relief to a large section of the people who had cuts applied to their wages when they could not afford them, and particularly because the operation of the Bill when it becomes an Act will be of benefit to many workers who have been reduced in wages and whose wages will now be determined by the Arbitration Court, not by the direction of an Act of Parliament. It was said that with the reduction in wages, the finances of the State would be restored; but during the past few years, with the continued cut in wages, prices have fallen accordingly and unemployment has increased. It is only because the Loan Council, through the several Governments, financing Australia by Treasury bills, have created a measure of inflation and made certain funds available for the unemployed that

the position has been improved somewhat. Previously, when the matter was under discussion by the Federal Labour Government, that policy was denounced, but the Loan Council and the present Federal Government have practically continued that policy of inflation by a system of Treasury bills. Fortunately, the Government of Western Australia, when it came into power, was successful in securing a greater amount from the Loan Council, and so has been able to give a large measure of employment to many workers who previously had been out of employment for two or three years, and so things have improved somewhat. The object of the Bill is to remove workers from the operation of a wage-cutting Act of Parliament and permit the Arbitration Court to determine what wages shall be paid in a given industry, with the result that workers who are receiving a 9s. margin for skill above the basic wage will get a benefit if the Bill be passed; because those workers will be excluded from the operations of the Financial Emergency Act that was in existence at the end of the year. The member for Williams-Narrogin in discussing the Bill wanted a lot of detailed information from the Minister, as to how much would be paid here and how much paid there; and he said a greater measure of benefit would be available to the workers in the Midland Junction workshops than to those at Narrogin. Of course that would follow, because there are more workers in the Midland Junction workshops than at Narrogin. As for the Midland Junction workshops, there will not be a great number of workers there to benefit under the Bill; there is a large section of employees on the basic wage, or getting margins up to 9s. above it, and there are the mechanics who are receiving 24s. and some even 27s. above the basic wage. Where there is a skilled mechanic employed, there are employed also two or three semi-skilled men or labourers. I do not know the exact figures, but there are at the Midland Junction workshops at present about 1,200 men, some of whom will benefit under this measure up to the extent of about 15s. per week.

The Minister for Railways: No, it will not be anything like that.

Mr. HEGNEY: The basic wage is £3 9s. 3d., and the margin for skill is 9s., and so for anybody getting a margin of 24s. the difference will be the measure of his benefit.

The Minister for Railways: No, no.

Mr. HEGNEY: No, I see; actually the benefit will be very small indeed.

The Minister for Railways: It might be up to 1s. 6d. per week.

Mr. Latham: More than that.

Mr. HEGNEY: In the aggregate the amount to be paid to the men will not exceed £100 per week. The workers who are receiving for skill more than the margin of 9s. will be removed from the scope of the Bill, and will be paid according to the Arbitration Court award. I think that is perfectly fair. There are very few single men in the Midland Junction workshops, and most of the married men have reasonably large families, and therefore the amount of benefit they will receive will not substantially help them in maintaining their families and paying rent.

Mr. Latham: What about the men now unemployed?

Mr. HEGNEY: I know more about the unemployed men and their difficulties than does the Leader of the Opposition, but I do not believe that by reducing the wages of men in employment we are going to solve the problem of finding further funds for the relief of the unemployed. However, I do believe the giving of better purchasing power to the workers will have a tendency to improve the economic life of the State. The Leader of the Nationalist Party suggested that we should adopt the attitude of bringing all higher salaries and wages down to the basic wage. If all the people desired that, I would be with them, but we know, of course, that the Nationalist Party does not stand for that principle, and so we cannot get support for it here or in another place.

Mr. Latham: You cannot seriously believe that the more money the workers have, the better it will be for the economic life of the State.

Mr. HEGNEY: I believe that the extension of the purchasing power of the workers will improve their position, and consequently the position of all the people in the State. Another suggestion made was that the farm labour scheme should be again adopted. The previous Government put that scheme into operation for a period, but withdrew it. I remember that on a number of occasions, with the member for Guildford-Midland and others, I waited on the ex-Minister for Employment, Mr. Scaddan, and discussed the scheme with him, asking him to

see that safeguards were made in respect to the money available for the scheme. It was found that there were many complaints against the operation of that scheme, and so I hope the present Government will not be tempted to re-introduce it. As for the prospecting scheme, the Minister for Mines is doing good work there, and it has been suggested that the scheme should be extended. I believe that if the Minister will make haste slowly in that direction and use the funds recouped to the Treasury for sending out others under that scheme, we shall find the scheme steadily extended. I do not propose to take up the time of the House, because we have discussed the Bill almost ad-nauseam during the last two or three weeks. The Government should stand firm on the Bill. I was in another place just before Christmas, when managers for that place were being appointed to confer with managers from this place, and I heard two members of the Council declare that if appointed as managers their attitude would be one of no surrender.

Mr. Cross: Now they have forgotten that they said it.

Mr. HEGNEY: Yes, and they are apologising to the public. The only regrettable part of it is that they cannot be forced to go to the country and support their attitude there, where it would get short shrift. The ex-leader of the Country Party was almost hysterical when declaring that his policy was one of no surrender.

Mr. Ferguson: He never made any reference to it.

Mr. HEGNEY: Yes, he did, although it does not appear in "Hansard."

Mr. Latham: You have no right to charge "Hansard" with that.

Mr. HEGNEY: You were there and heard it, and you cannot deny it.

Mr. Latham: I did not hear that member say it.

Mr. HEGNEY: There is no reference to it in the Parliamentary record; it has been excised from the records of Parliament. Since those people adopted the attitude of no surrender, I hope the Government will adopt the same attitude on this Bill.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [8.13]: Contrary to my original intention, I rise to address myself to the Bill before us. The Premiers' Plan has been frequently mentioned during the course of the debate, and there are some members in the Chamber who would

still like to see that Plan continued. My advice is to forget all about the Plan. An example has been set by the Federal Government, who have practically abandoned the Premiers' Plan. Their remission of £7,000,000 of taxation in land and income tax is an example of how far they have got away from the Premiers' Plan. It has been said they had no right to do that without consulting the six State Governments. There is another reason why we should forget all about that Plan. It will be remembered that financial experts were called in to advise the Governments of Australia when Australia was financially sick, and those experts prescribed certain financial medicine. They did so in the shape of reductions of salaries of 22½ per cent., 20 per cent., and so forth. Strange to say one of those experts. Professor Copland himself, has refused to take a dose of his own medicine.

Mr. McDonald: I think that is not so.

Mr. NEEDHAM: He has not contradicted it yet.

Mr. McDonald: It has been denied.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Until I see a denial I must attach to him the statement made in the Press.

Mr. McDonald: It has been denied officially.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I will await his denial. I am still under the impression that he declined to take a dose of his own medicine. If he did take it at all, he took it very reluctantly. The question of sacrifice has been freely mentioned, but the sacrifice has been borne largely by the workers of Australia. They are the people who have carried the burden. This Bill represents an attempt to give back a little of what was taken from them, and I hope the Government will stand firm on it. It is remarkable that another place should be so stubborn in their opposition to the measure. One could understand their attitude if they were elected on a similar franchise to members of this House. I have known the Upper House in the Federal arena take a very decided stand on money bills. Senators have taken a stand also on other bills—the fiduciary note issue and the central reserve bank. Whether or not one agrees with the stand they took, one must remember that members of the Federal Senate are elected on the same franchise as are members of the House of Representatives. On one occasion Senators cut down

the Supply Bill by 50 per cent., and the request for that reduction was accepted by the House of Representatives without any protest. In this State, however, a different condition of affairs prevails. As has been pointed out by the Minister for Works and the Premier, members of another place are elected on an entirely different franchise compared with members of this House, and that being so, I think they have overstepped their traditional authority, if not their constitutional authority, in the determined stand they have taken to oppose not only this Bill but the wishes of the people. There are many people in this State who will not benefit by the measure. I regret that that is so. I hope the time is not far distant when this blot on the statute-book will be removed. There is no need for it. It has not done the nation any good. No one has benefited by the Premiers' Plan legislation, and many people have suffered, and are still suffering. Although this Bill be passed, many people will still suffer, but as it will give relief to a few, I hope this Chamber will pass it, and that members of another place will show a more reasonable frame of mind and recognise that they cannot continue to defy the expressed wishes of the people.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle—in reply) [8.20]: I have not much to say by way of reply more than to answer one or two points raised during the debate. The first was that raised by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the University. He said there was no provision in the Bill for the continuance of the cuts in the salaries of the University professors. I would remind the hon. member that the University has been ruled by the Chief Justice to be a State instrumentality, and the professors will come under Clause 6 and the cut will apply. There is no doubt on that point. The member for Nedlands complained about the refusal of an adjournment to him on the second reading of the Bill of last session. It is true that he asked for an adjournment of the debate, and that I told him I could not agree to it. The Bill was introduced on a Thursday and members had the weekend in which to consider it. The debate was resumed on the following Tuesday, and apart from the Leader of the Opposition, no one was ready to speak. The hon. member argued that there was plenty of time in

which to send the Bill to the Legislative Council as their Notice Paper was full and we had practically completed the business on our paper. The hon. member knows full well that the Legislative Council insist upon a Bill remaining on their Notice Paper for some days on the ground that members desire time to consider it before they debate it. To meet that requirement, it was necessary that the Bill should be sent to the Council early. When the hon. member was speaking, I interjected that I thought he should be the last to complain of adjournments, and that in fairness to the Government he should have admitted that on a number of occasions we had given him special adjournments.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is true.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: This is the only instance I know of where he has asked for an adjournment that was not given, and it was refused because the Bill was in the hands of members from Thursday till Tuesday, and it was necessary to forward it to the Council as soon as possible. The hon. member again raised a point that he has put to the House on more than one occasion and that has been explained by both the Premier and me and has really been answered by his own case. He said the interpretation of the Premier's policy was a clear promise to restore all cuts to Government servants. The Premier said no such promise had been made; the promise was that the measure would not be re-enacted without drastic amendments. The hon. member said that we claimed to have a mandate from the people to introduce the Bill but were denying something he said was true in the first place. As a matter of fact we are simply re-affirming the stand we took when he first made the accusation against the Premier. He repeated the statement to-night. The position is perfectly clear. In the policy speech the declaration was made by the Leader of the party that the law would not be re-enacted without being drastically amended. That is the policy the Government are living up to at the moment. There has been no departure from it. If I interpret the case of members opposite correctly, it is that our suggestions are too drastic. I take that to be the hon. member's argument—that our proposals are too drastic, and that the State cannot afford to grant this relief. If his argument is that our proposals are too drastic, how can his accusa-

tion lie that we are not living up to our obligations? The hon. member cannot have it both ways. I cannot follow his reasoning when he accuses me of making a statement that is inaccurate and will not bear examination. I think he called it a travesty of the facts in referring to my statement that Parliament was being used and had been used as a wage-fixing tribunal. Yet, in the next breath, he admitted that it was a fact and applied to all Governments.

Hon. N. Keenan: And is included in this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I say that is incorrect. I proved it to be incorrect when the original measure was introduced. I do not know whether it is desired to reopen the whole issue, but if members will turn up "Hansard" of 1931, page 3962, they will find that I answered the then Attorney-General on the same point. He said that the Labour Governments in the Eastern States—and in that very week the Labour Government in South Australia—had introduced Bills to cut the wages of their employees. I denied it, and he maintained that it was correct. The member for Nedlands also said it was correct. I wired to the Premier of South Australia and read to the House a telegram received in reply. It read—

Financial Emergency Bill has now been introduced. It provides for reduction Ministers' salaries 20 per cent., members' salaries 10 per cent., reductions salaries certain public officers fixed by statute, reduction superannuation and police pensions by approximately 16 per cent. Judges and Governor voluntarily offered accept reductions. Government employees generally not dealt with in Bill. In my speech I said the policy of Government is arbitration, and we do not propose interfere with tribunals who are charged with duty fixing wages and salaries Government employees. Posting copy Bill, and will forward copy my speech as soon as available. Hill, Premier.

That was the attitude of every Government except the then Government of Western Australia.

Hon. N. Keenan: The Bill now before the House fixes wages.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will deal with that. I am not permitted to quote clauses of the Bill at this stage, but the hon. member quoted one subclause dealing with arbitration court awards and conditions. He, however, failed to quote a further subclause of the same clause that exempts every wages man. The only reason for that interpreta-

tion appearing is that certain police officers who receive over £400 a year still have their wages fixed by the arbitration court and are adjustable according to basic wage decisions. That is the only reason for its appearance there. Those men receive over £400 a year, and the provision was made to meet such cases. Later on in the same clause every wages man is exempted, except the few policemen indicated. I am not going to contend that this Bill represents our ideal or all we should like to do. We did not place one session's programme before the people at the election. No party would do that. We presented a programme for the term of the Parliament, and we are unable to do all we should like to do in our first short session. We are moving as fast as we are able to move, and the complaint of members opposite and of members in another place is that we are moving too fast. Before we leave the Treasury benches, I think we shall see the last of this measure on the statute book.

Mr. Latham: We hope you will, but you will have to get the money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have been able to proceed only a certain distance so far. The hon. member complains that it is the man who is receiving margins greater than 9s. over the basic wage who will profit under the Bill. He contends that those who are unemployed should get the money, and that it should not be given to those who are receiving margins over 9s. greater than the basic wage. He said that on that score he would vote against the Bill, divide the House, and would see that members were made to declare themselves. He wanted to see the Bill defeated. If it is defeated, everyone will get his cut restored, even the man earning £2,000 a year while the unemployed will get nothing. That is the hon. member's consistency! That would be the position if the Bill were defeated.

The Minister for Employment: And interest charges would go up.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Everyone who had received a cut in his salary, no matter what it amounted to, would have a legal claim to the full amount, and no restriction would be placed upon interest on mortgages. Does the hon. member complain that we are not able to do as much as we would like to do? Does he want the whole lot or nothing? Or are we doing something to which he objects and will he

not allow us to do anything? I cannot understand what is in his mind. He objects to my statement that Parliament has been turned into a wage-fixing machine. He cannot deny that that is so, as the legislation applies to Government employees. When the legislation first came down it applied automatically to private employees just as it applied to Government employees. It was owing to our objection that it was ultimately altered to the shape it finally took, when it provided that the court had to be approached.

Hon. N. Keenan: Originally the court could order any party to pay the full wage without any deduction. It could exempt any industry from the deduction.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the Bill first came down any employee or wages man was subject to the cut, just as was the case with Government employees, without reference to the court.

Hon. N. Keenan: In the case of Government employees, the reduction was final but in the case of anyone not a Government employee, the court could allow the cut to be restored.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The cut had to apply, and the employees then had the right to appeal to the court to show why it should not apply. It was owing to our protest that the original Bill was altered. The hon. member will agree that the Bill as it stands is practically an instruction to the court.

Hon. N. Keenan: No.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is, and it limits the powers of the court. The court may have found that 5 or 10 per cent. reduction would have met the full case the employer could put up, but the Act says that the cut shall be not less than 18, 20 or 22½ per cent., as the case may be. It fixes the amount of the reduction and sets the example right through the Government service. In the face of that I cannot understand how it could be argued that Parliament has not been turned into a wage-fixing machine, as it certainly has, right through the Government service. That is not so in the case of any other Government. The hon. member is wrong in the statement he made. A report has been made concerning the remarks of Mr. Holmes in another place this afternoon, wherein he denied that on the occasion of the conference last month his policy would be one of no surrender. I have been told

by at least seven members of this Chamber that he was heard to make that statement.

Mr. Ferguson: "Compromise" was the word he used.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not going to argue whether it was "compromise" or "surrender."

Mr. Ferguson: You might use the right word, at any rate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not hear the remark. I have, however, received notes of his speech this afternoon, wherein he makes reference to what happened at the conference, and makes certain accusations against the Premier. If he has broken the confidence of the conference, I do not propose to follow his bad example, except to state the facts relating to the point to which the hon. member himself referred. Mr. Holmes in his statement to-day said that when the conference met, the Premier challenged him with having made the statement that there would be no surrender, and he denied having made it. It is true that immediately the conference began the Premier challenged him with having made the statement, and also challenged Mr. Thomson. Both members then admitted having made the statement.

Mr. Hegney: They made it all right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: According to the notes handed to me, Mr. Holmes this afternoon denied having made that statement when the Premier taxed him with it. He also said that the Premier did not call for "Hansard" to prove the statement, but accepted the denial. The Premier challenged him with having made the statement, and asked of what use it was to go on with the conference if both members held the idea of "no surrender." These two members asked for an adjournment of the conference, and went away to consult with the President. They desired to ask him if they could resign from attendance at the conference, and if two other members could be elected who would be free to discuss the Bill.

The Premier: Because they had committed themselves not to accept any compromise.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Because they could not go on discussing the Bill with a free hand. They asked permission to resign, and that two other members of the Council should be elected in their place. We are told that they approached the President,

who berated them for their foolish statement, and suggested that it was a reflection on the Council, that there was no provision for their resignation to be accepted, and that they would have to go on with the conference. Accordingly the two members of another place came back to us. That cannot be denied.

Mr. Sleeman: They would deny anything.

The Premier: They admitted that their hands were tied, that they could not come to a compromise, and that it was no use their sitting there.

Mr. Stubbs: The position is most extraordinary.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When members of another place make statements like that, it will be understood how impossible it was for the conference to make any headway. That is how the position developed into the serious situation in which the country now finds itself. After the conference had lasted about four hours, the same two members came back to the point. They said, "We feel we are committed. Having made the statement we did on the floor of the House, we cannot depart from it." That is what broke up the conference.

The Premier: They stated they were bound by what they had said.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They also said that in the face of having made that statement the House had elected them as managers. Now we hear to-night that Mr. Holmes denied making that statement.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: It is the last refuge of the guilty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is a most extraordinary situation. I wonder what the President of the Council would have had to say if the question had been put to him, that he was approached by these two members, and asked whether they could not resign from the conference in view of what they had said on the floor of the House. They even came back and reported what had happened between them and the President.

The Premier: They said they were very sorry, that they were committed, that they could not do anything, and that they must stick to what the Council had done. They also said they would never go into conference again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They both gave their word they would never go into conference again. There is no fresh

ground to be broken with regard to this measure. Members have shown that they are in agreement with it. It is only a repetition of what occurred on the previous debate, and no good purpose can be served by prolonging the discussion.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Remaining Stages.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, and reported without amendment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the report be adopted.

Mr. LATHAM: I should like to have the Bill recommitted with a view to inserting a new clause for the re-enactment of Part V. of the old Act.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter for the Committee to decide. The hon. member had better move that the Bill be recommitted.

Mr. LATHAM: I move—

That the Bill be recommitted.

Motion put and negatived.

Question put and passed; the report adopted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. SAMPSON: Would it be in order at this stage to give consideration to the proposed new clause?

Mr. SPEAKER: No. That could be done only in Committee. It is too late now to recommit the Bill, the House having already decided against recommitment.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [8.47]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday next.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.48 p.m.