

gold mining industry was very adversely affected, especially in the district I represent. The Royal Commission have unanimously submitted certain recommendations as affording a solution of the difficulty, and these are embodied in the Bill. The measure contains an additional clause, which was added at the instance of one member of the Commission. This additional clause is likely to excite controversy in Committee. I welcome the Bill, and trust it will become an Act.

On motion by Hon. J. Cunningham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 9th November, 1921.

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

QUESTION—POLICE, PROMOTIONS.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, What are the names of sergeants and constables who have passed the promotional examination and date they passed? 2, What was the reason that sergeants and constables who studied hard and passed the examination over four years ago, have not been promoted, when sergeants and constables of later date who have passed the examination have been promoted over senior men? 3, Can the Commissioner of Police give his reason why sergeants and constables who have been 25 years in the force, have passed the examination, and been in charge of stations for

years, and have seniority on their side, have been passed over? If they are not fit for promotion why are they kept in charge of stations?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Mines) replied: 1, A list is attached of members of the force in question. 2, The passing of the examination is the minimum requirement. 3, The mere fact of a sergeant being in charge of a station does not necessarily qualify him for the very responsible position of a District Police Officer—a position requiring considerable administrative ability and a good knowledge of police administration, together with other necessary qualifications. All recommendations for advancement are made by a promotional board whose duty is to select, in order of merit, those members who in their opinion should be promoted, bearing in mind that efficiency in its truest sense must be their first consideration.

QUESTIONS (3)—RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Inaccurate Timetables.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that the time tables issued by the Railway Department are inaccurate? 2, Is it a fact that travellers to Geraldton could not continue the journey to Northampton, although the time table showed a connection? 3, Would he be surprised to know that it has cost one man nearly £20 for car hire owing to misleading information in the time table?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (for the Minister for Railways) replied: 1, No. 2, No. 3, Yes.

Mr. O'Loughlen: By Jove, that is the dizzy limit!

Acting Traffic Manager.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is the position of Acting Traffic Manager in the Railways now filled by Mr. Gallagher likely to be a permanent position? 2, Is a better Comptroller of Stores than Mr. Gallagher to be found in the Railway Department? 3, What special knowledge of transport and traffic work does Mr. Gallagher possess? 4, Is the Commissioner of Railways dissatisfied with the work of transport officers and other district traffic superintendents? 5, Can any department expect satisfactory results by denying competent officers the promotion they are entitled to? 6, If the traffic superintendents are not competent to become acting chief, why are they retained in the service?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (for the Minister for Railways) replied: 1, No. 2, No. 3, Experience in New South Wales, followed by 27 years' service in the W.A.G.R. 4, The Commissioner is always desirous of improvement. 5, No. 6, They are not incompetent.

Sleeping Cars.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (for Mr. Simons) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Are additional sleeping cars in course of construction or on order for the Railway Department? 2, If reply to question one is in the affirmative, are the cars of modern design or of the obsolete type at present in use?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (for the Minister for Railways) replied: 1, No. 2, A design has been prepared for a new type of sleeping car, of modern construction and appointments, which it is proposed to adopt when additional cars are built. A model of this was exhibited to hon. members on the occasion of the recent Parliamentary visit to the Midland Junction Workshops.

QUESTION—REPATRIATION.

Purchase of Doughboy Downs.

Mr. TEESDALE asked the Premier: Who were the persons responsible for the recommendation to purchase the property called Doughboy Downs, in the Onslow district, for two returned soldiers?

The PREMIER replied: C. W. Cumming and P. St. Barbe Ayliffe.

QUESTIONS (2)—ABORIGINAL PRISONERS.

Murder Trials.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Premier: 1, What is the number of native murder trials held in the North-West during the past 12 months? 2, What is the name of the Commissioner or judge who presided and the qualifications of such commissioner or judge? 3, What is the name of the counsel who defended the accused? 4, Have any trials of natives for murder been held in the North-West without counsel appearing on behalf of the natives?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Three. 2, Two cases by Dr. Hodge, Resident Magistrate, Derby, as Commissioner of the Supreme Court; one by Dr. Adams, Resident Magistrate, Wyndham, as Commissioner of the Supreme Court. Qualifications in accordance with Section 12 of the Supreme Court Act, 44 Vic., No. 10. 3, Prosecutions were conducted by the Officer-in-Charge of Police; the natives were defended by the Protector in accordance with Subsection (4) of Section 59a of the Aborigines Act, No. 14 of 1905 (Consolidated). 4, Counsel is not engaged to proceed to the North-West in tribal cases. The Acts quoted above are complied with, and the cases are reviewed subsequently in Perth.

Use of Chains.

Mr. TEESDALE asked the Premier: 1, On whose advice was the order given to chain natives in the North-West gaols? 2, Is he

aware that the last three escapees got away with the chains on? 3, Will he cancel the order to chain during the excessively hot weather, and in the meantime ascertain from those in charge of northern gaols what necessity there is for the alteration?

The PREMIER replied: 1, It has been the practice since the inception to chain native prisoners in the North-West gaols. In 1905 the matter was actively gone into as to the most humane method, and it was ultimately decided that the present system of chaining by the ankle affords the least discomfort. 2, The last two escapees have been advised from Roebourne by wire. Particulars are not yet available as to whether the prisoners were chained, but presumably they were, in accordance with instructions issued. The instructions regarding chaining of prisoners were again circulated in July last. Prior to that, for some years owing to a misunderstanding, the Roebourne gaoler had been using his discretion in not chaining native prisoners, and since 1911 seventeen natives escaped from Roebourne Gaol, where they were not usually chained, and during the same period four escaped from Broome Gaol, where they were chained. 3, No. The Superintendent, Fremantle Prison, who is known to be humane and considerate in dealing with prisoners, recently inspected the North-West gaols. As a result of his inspection he reported as follows: "I have had a good deal of experience with native prisoners. I have also discussed this question with various people in touch with, and who have handled, natives. I have formed the opinion that it is essential that a native prisoner be chained, and that the safest and most humane method is by the leg—the chain to be fastened, when on land, by a small shackle, and the prisoners worked in pairs." As a result of this report, instructions to North-West gaolers regarding chaining were re-established, in accordance with the Superintendent's advice.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Did you expect any other kind of report from a prison official?

Mr. Teesdale: They chain them there by the neck too.

QUESTION—FORESTS ACT, BREACHES.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Forests: 1, Is he aware that drastic penalties are being imposed under the Forests Act and regulations? 2, Is it the policy of the Government to withhold any leniency when bush workers are guilty of a first offence? 3, Has the Conservator of Forests been authorised to secure revenue by fines and confiscation from men who are unacquainted with the regulations and who commit a trivial breach?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (for the Minister for Forests) replied: 1, Heavy penalties are only pressed for in aggravated cases. Usually the minimum penalty provided under the Forests Act and Regula-

tions is imposed by the court. 2, No. 3, The Conservator is entrusted with the administration of the Forests Act and Regulations. Legal proceedings are not instituted with a view to collecting additional revenue, but to discourage the commission of forest offences by permit holders and their employees. When persons have taken forest produce without lawful authority it is not considered advisable to permit them to retain such property for their own use and benefit.

QUESTION—RIVER CRAFT.

Licenses to handle.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (for Mr. Simons) asked the Colonial Secretary: In view of the repeated river disasters, is it his intention to gazette regulations making it compulsory for persons in charge of all river craft to obtain licenses to handle sail or power-impelled vessels?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Present regulations provide that persons in charge of river craft plying for hire shall have licenses, but there is no statutory power to make such regulations extend to private boats. The matter is receiving attention.

QUESTION—SCHOOL TEACHERS' APPEAL BOARD.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Premier: What fees are being paid 1, To Mr. Bloxsome, the representative of the Government on the School Teachers' Appeal Board? 2, To Mr. Downing, K.C., who is appearing for the Government at the hearing of the appeals?

The PREMIER replied: 1, £3 per sitting, the same as the other members. 2, The usual fees payable to a legal practitioner engaged in the Supreme Court for similar periods.

SELECT COMMITTEE—GRATUITY BONDS DISPOSALS.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, the time for bringing up the report of the committee was extended to Wednesday, 30th November.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read, notifying assent to the under-mentioned Bills:—

- 1, Adoption of Children Act Amendment.
- 2, Coroners Act Amendment.
- 3, Supply (No. 3), £1,047,000.
- 4, Northam Municipal Ice Works.

BILL—PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Constitution of committee:

Mr. WILLCOCK: During the second reading it was suggested that as this House has control of moneys spent on public works, the committee should be constituted solely of members of this House. I am aware this is not the practice in other parts of Australia, but I do not think we should be altogether guided by that.

The Premier: Experience does not count?

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is not always desirable to follow the example of other States absolutely. I move an amendment—

That the word "joint" in line 3 of Subclause 1 be struck out.

The PREMIER: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. Both Chambers have a right to be represented on such a committee, because both Houses must approve of every Bill before it becomes law. I see no objection to having a joint committee. We have often appointed joint select committees. The principle of giving representation to both branches of the Legislature is followed in the case of similar bodies in the Eastern States. We want to ensure that complete inquiry will be made by representatives of both Houses.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I support the amendment, because I have no desire to see the Bill passed. I do not think it will accomplish any good and I am under the impression that it will do considerable harm. If members of another place are excluded from representation, the Council will be sure to turn the Bill down.

Mr. Teesdale: They will do so in any case.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If so, they will show their wisdom. I opposed a similar measure on a previous occasion. I am convinced that a committee of Parliamentarians could have little knowledge of public works construction. Such a committee would merely delay construction, and the members constituting the committee would not be competent to advise.

Mr. Willcock: They are competent to take evidence.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: What sort of evidence?

Mr. Willcock: The best of evidence.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: A jetty is badly needed at Onslow. If that work were referred to a public works committee, the members would decide to make an inspection. Although we have an administrator devoting the whole of his time to the study of these matters, ordinary members of Parliament would come on the scene and constitute themselves the judges. Notwithstanding the great intelligence possessed by members of Parliament—and to be elected they must possess a good deal—they have not the practical knowledge possessed by departmental officers. I might be appointed a member of the committee. There are some things I understand and there are other things I do not understand. Yet it would be my duty to check

the work of a man who knew definitely more about a particular proposal than I did.

Mr. Sampson: Technical knowledge is not essential.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is essential. I am only supporting the amendment in the hope that the Council will turn the Bill down, because no representative of the Chamber will be on the committee. We should not ask ordinary members of Parliament with their superficial knowledge to judge public works, when we have trained men to do it.

The Minister for Agriculture: A judge only goes on evidence.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Minister knows that he could get every resident in his electorate to make a solemn declaration that everything required for his district was warranted and should be provided.

Hon. P. Collier: That applies nowhere else in the State.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It applies to Pilbara. Evidence is not worth listening to. The inquiries of the committee would merely have the effect of disturbing people and bringing them down to give unreliable evidence. We are the elect of the people, the best fifty men in the country.

Mr. Angelo: Forty-nine men and one woman.

Hon. P. Collier: But man embraces woman.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Of the fifty we select six Ministers who should be supermen.

The Minister for Works: They are.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They should take the responsibility for doing things. We want them to do things.

The Minister for Works: And yet the whole system tends to prevent them from doing things, because it hampers and shackles them.

Hon. P. Collier: You will not say the Minister for Works does not do things.

The Minister for Works: I have never been so shackled in my life.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is the duty of Ministers to do the work. If they do wrong, we will put them out of office and put others in. It would be extremely foolish to appoint a committee of irresponsible members to judge public works.

The CHAIRMAN: I have no desire to burke discussion, but the principles of the Bill should have been debated on the second reading.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am stating my reasons for supporting the amendment.

Mr. J. THOMSON: I oppose the amendment. My opinion is that if we elect this committee we shall save a great deal of money. In fact, I think in the first year of the committee's existence we shall save at least £50,000. It is my intention later on to move a further amendment in the direction of reducing the number of members from five to three, and to provide that two shall be elected by this House and one by another place. The Premier is at last displaying statesmanship. This Bill and the last two or three that he has introduced are proof of that.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The members of the Legislative Assembly are those who do the work. I have no desire to make invidious distinctions, but everyone knows what the views of the Labour Party are with regard to the Legislative Council. We stand for the abolition of that Chamber because we think it is a useless body and an excrescence on Parliamentary life, and it is not my desire to assist in the passing of a measure which will give that Chamber any further importance than that which it possesses at the present time. It might be thought that we consider there is a justification for the continuance of the existence of the Legislative Council if we permit them to be represented on a committee of this description, a committee which will do valuable work. The members of the Assembly are those who come into contact with the electors. It would be impossible owing to the nature of the Legislative Council provinces for members of that body to keep in touch with their constituents in the same manner as the members of the Lower House do.

Mr. SAMPSON: I intend to vote against the amendment. The Legislative Council should be represented on this committee, if only for the reason that they should assist in carrying out this work. I have found that the position of a member of the Assembly calls for a considerable amount of concentration, and that it takes up a good deal more time than I ever thought it would do. The outside world has quite a false idea with regard to the duties of members of Parliament. There is an impression outside that the members of the Council are to an extent sacrosanct, and that they are not to be appealed to on matters of ordinary importance, and that when they are approached they must be approached with a good deal of caution. It is, therefore, in the best interests of all that that Chamber should be represented on this committee. I would like to do something towards the breaking down of the feeling that the members of the Council are not prepared to work just as hard in the interests of the community as are the members of the Assembly.

Mr. PICKERING: I would not go so far as to cut out the Legislative Council altogether, but the Premier might accept an amendment to the next paragraph to provide that one member be elected from the Council, that three be elected by the Assembly and that the fifth be elected by the Government. This was the proposal in the original Bill.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. J. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That in line 4, the word "five" be struck out with the view of inserting "three."

It will be sufficient if we appoint two from this Chamber and one from the Council. I wish to state now that by the time the next Parliament is elected I hope the Upper House will have passed out of existence. I cannot for the life of me see why we have that Upper House, and if any hon. member—I do not care whether it be the member for Geraldton, the

Leader of the Opposition, or even the Premier—brings in a Bill having for its object the abolition of the Legislative Council, I will support it. As it is the wish of members of this House, that the committee should be paid for their services, I think that three will carry out the duties better than five.

The PREMIER: I hope the committee will not agree to reduce the number below five. Of course, if we pass legislation to bring about the abolition of the Upper House then we can consider the question of the reduction from five to three. Until we do that, I hope the House will agree to let the number stand at five.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I intend to support the amendment to strike out five and if that word is deleted I shall move an amendment to insert seven. As it has been decided that the Council shall be represented, the Legislative Assembly is of sufficient importance to have five members on the committee. In all the Parliamentary standing committees in Australia the number is over five, and as Western Australia is the biggest State in the Commonwealth we may find it necessary to carry out more than one investigation at a time.

The Minister for Works: Five will be quite sufficient.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is a matter of opinion. The member for Claremont thinks that three will be sufficient. But we might cut out even that and make the number one. It is our desire, however, to get the collective judgment of capable men. It is not to be expected that at every meeting of the committee every member will be present.

Mr. J. Thomson: They should be present if they are paid fees for attendance.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It will be a case of no attendance, no money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope the member for Claremont will not persist in his amendment. If the two members of the Legislative Council are done away with, how is the quorum to be obtained? To increase the number from five to seven would be ridiculous. There should be two members from the Upper House and three from this Chamber. Let us bear in mind that some members of the Legislative Council represent provinces comprising two or three or even four Assembly electorates, and therefore have a wider knowledge of the State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I shall support the striking out of "five" with a view to the insertion of "seven." Five, in my opinion, would be sufficient if four members were appointed from this House and one from another place. But the proportion of three to two means over-representation of another place, having regard to its general relationship to this Chamber and to the people of this country. The electoral roll of another place contains 50,000 names, as against 160,000 names on the Assembly roll. We represent electors in the proportion of three to one as compared with another place, and yet another place is to be given representa-

tion in the proportion of two to three on the proposed committee. Another place would have no ground for feeling aggrieved if it secured one member on the committee. It is this House which will be mainly concerned with the work of the committee and the recommendations of the committee. If another place is to retain two members, the total number of the committee should be seven. In any case, seven will not be too many and the additional expense will amount to only £300 or £400 a year. The Federal Public Works Committee comprises seven members of the House of Representatives and four Senators.

Mr. Mann: They have to travel five States, though.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is correct; but the committee here proposed will have to travel over the very extensive areas of this State. Except at meetings in Perth, full attendances of the committee must necessarily be very rare; there would always be one or two absentees.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of Subclause 2 the word "Two" be struck out with the view of inserting "One."

The Upper House will be generously treated if given one member on the committee. I prefer the proposal which was contained in the original measure, as pointed out by the member for Sussex, that one member should be appointed from the Upper House by the members of that Chamber, that three should be appointed by the Assembly, and that one, to be the Chairman, and who must be a member of Parliament, should be appointed by the Governor. The Premier has come round to the view of the Government of 1912, and I ask him to agree to the appointment of the same sort of committee as was then proposed, thus rendering his conversion complete.

The PREMIER: I hope the Chamber will not agree to the amendment. Does the hon. member who has moved the amendment consider that the ability of members of another place is not equal to that of members of this Chamber?

Mr. Johnston: This is the House that represents the people.

The PREMIER: This House has a majority under the clause as it stands.

Mr. PICKERING: I support the amendment. I agree with the member of Williams-Narrogin that this Chamber, being the representative Chamber, should dominate the proposed committee. Members of the Lower House might, under the clause as it stands, lose control of the committee simply by reason of temporary absence arising from indisposition.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Functions of committee:

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That after "works" in line 3 of paragraph (b) "under the provisions of any Statute" be inserted.

During the discussion last night the provisions of the Bill were objected to so far as they relate to inquiries other than those on public works being constructed of a value of £20,000, or inquiries into departments which to some extent are removed by Statute from the control of Ministers, as, for instance, the Railways. The Commissioner of Railways has considerable power under Statute, whilst the Minister has but nominal control. It is here that we want the inquiry, and not into ordinary Government departments.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am pleased that the Premier should have moved the amendment. It is quite at variance with the speech he made on the second reading. The opinion I gained from his speech was that it was intended the proposed committee should inquire into any Government activities which it was thought they should inquire into.

The Premier: I had that in mind.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The tenor of the Premier's speech on the second reading was that it was intended that Government activity of any description should be inquired into. If there is to be an inquiry into any phase of our Government utilities controlled by a commissioner, I am prepared to agree to it. The amendment will limit the scope of the Bill in a way which I think desirable.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That after "thereby" in line 3 of paragraph (b) "or" be inserted.

This is merely consequential.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. TEESDALE: I move an amendment—

That after "inquiry" in paragraph (c) "with the exception of works in the North-West" be added.

We shall have up there a Commissioner attending to all work required, and it would be prejudicial to the progress of that work if it were necessary to send the proposed committee from Perth to conduct an inquiry. Such a committee would have but very little idea of the requirements of the North, and its visit would seriously hamper and delay the work of the Commissioner.

The PREMIER: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. It will not be necessary for the proposed committee to go to the North-West to make inquiries, for the matter could be comprehensively placed before them down here. The committee will not be engaged upon any unnecessary work.

Mr. Latham: Will the Commissioner for the North-West be carrying out work exceeding in value £20,000?

The PREMIER: Occasionally, but except in the case of a jetty that amount will not often be exceeded.

Mr. ANGELO: I am sorry I cannot support the amendment. I do not wish to see the North-West shut out from the benefits which will be conferred by the activities of the proposed committee.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I will oppose paragraph (c) altogether. All the matters upon which I want the proposed committee to report are previously defined.

The Premier: You can strike out the paragraph if you like. Personally I do not care.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am convinced that the paragraph is unnecessary.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Had there been a public works committee to inquire into the original erection of the Wyndham Meat Works, those works would never have been built, and the State would not have been faced with the present serious position in respect of those works. No portion of the State should be exempt from the inquiries of the committee. The sole justification for the proposed committee is that there shall be available to Parliament full information as to the advisability of any proposed work.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am sorry the Minister for Works launched out as he did in regard to the Wyndham Meat Works. It is quite possible that, had the matter been referred to a committee of this kind, the Wyndham Meat Works would never have been begun. But there are in the State other works which, had they been referred to such a committee, might never have been undertaken. For instance, it is quite possible that the £14,000 or £15,000 expended on the Rockingham-Mandurah road might never have been required had such a committee had a say in the matter. Again, the very large sum of money expended on the wild-cat proposition of a road from Brunswick to Collie might have been saved had the proposed committee sat in judgment upon that work. Also there are in existence other works not unconnected with the administration of the Public Works Department, and works not unconnected with the Water Supply Department which might never have been undertaken had this committee, or a similar committee, had a say in the matter. The Minister for Works might have made a comprehensive statement when he dealt with the possibilities of the saving of money by this committee, and not singled out the Wyndham Meat Works. A considerable proportion of the money which has been expended at Wyndham has been expended under the administration of the Minister himself—quite two-thirds of it.

The Minister for Works: Quite right.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is just as well to remind him of these facts. At every opportunity I will meet all the attacks that are

specially made upon State trading concerns. I am going to do it because of the fact that I know there is a conspiracy abroad in this State, a conspiracy of propaganda and of deliberate and malicious lying, to misrepresent the activities and the work of our State trading concerns. Not only is that so with people in this State, but it is a Commonwealth-wide movement. Members recently received a printed circular; whence it came we know not. The man who spent the money in having this printed was apparently afraid to attach his name to it. It was an extract from an article in the "Bulletin." I have never read a leaflet or pamphlet so crammed full of malicious lying and misrepresentation as that leaflet. It states that the wild-cat Wyndham Meat Works have cost this State one and a quarter million pounds. It was only half a million out. The cost has been somewhere in the vicinity of £750,000. That article in the "Bulletin" has doubtless been read from one end of Australia to the other. This miserable little leaflet is probably still floating around parts of Western Australia telling the ordinary man in the street, who cannot find out for himself, malicious lies about what these works have cost. I believe in the principle of State trading concerns, and I also appreciate the attitude of any member who takes an opposite view; but one does expect in a public controversy that outside people who hold different views will be honest enough to stick to facts. If the principle is not sound it can be downed on its merits.

Mr. Lambert: It is the propaganda of foreign interests.

Mr. Money: The "Bulletin" is very flattering to the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Even the most misguided journal is sometimes right. I understand paragraph (c) has been inserted in the Bill to permit of the Committee investigating matters which at present Parliament appoints Royal Commissions to investigate. Nearly every session a Royal Commission is appointed to inquire into one matter or another. One of the arguments put forward in support of the Bill was that the Committee would avoid the necessity for the appointment of so many select committees and Royal Commissions. If that assumption is correct it would be wise to allow this paragraph to remain in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am in accord with what the hon. member has said, but he has misunderstood me in regard to the Wyndham Meat Works, and thought I was making an attack upon his late Government. Had the Government, which started these works, received the assistance and advice of such a committee as this, I do not think the works would have been proceeded with.

The CHAIRMAN: No further discussion can take place upon the words preceding "inquiry," unless by consent of the Committee the member for Roebourne withdraws his amendment.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I called paragraph (c) at the same time as the hon. member. You gave precedence to him and I did not know in what direction he intended to move. My intention was to move to strike out the paragraph. If the hon. member will not withdraw his amendment, am I precluded from discussing paragraph (c)?

The CHAIRMAN: I regret to say that is so.

Mr. WILLCOCK: What remedy have I when one hon. member calls paragraph (c) and I do the same thing?

The CHAIRMAN: An hon. member who does the right thing will in the meantime ask for leave to withdraw his amendment so that the matter that is required to be dealt with by another hon. member can first be placed before the Committee.

Mr. Teesdale: I am going on with it. I am going to stand to my amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can move it again unless the paragraph is struck out.

Mr. Teesdale: If that is so I will withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (c) be struck out.

This is a Public Works Bill and we should restrict the committee to matters appertaining to public works. When it is necessary to appoint a select committee members are usually chosen who have a knowledge of the subject and are interested in it. The appointment of such select committees should still be possible, and the work should not come within the scope of the public works committee. I am opposed to any general matter being referred to the public works committee.

The Premier: I do not mind these words being struck out.

Mr. LATHAM: I hope the paragraph will not be deleted. The Premier assured me by interjection that the Bill would obviate the necessity for having so many select committees.

The PREMIER: Inquiries by this committee will be limited to inquiries by public works that come under Statutes. It will be quite unnecessary to have a Royal Commission or select committee to inquire into most matters affecting a great proportion of the activities of the Government. I have no objection to the amendment.

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

Clause 13—Conditions precedent to commencing public works:

Hon. P. COLLIER: Subclause 4 seems to have been badly drafted. It speaks of a motion by the Minister or any member of the Assembly.

The Premier: I think this is in conformity with the clause in the South Australian measure.

* Hon. P. COLLIER: The words "motion made" may be interpreted to mean "motion moved."

The Premier: You have to carry a motion to make it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In order to remove any doubt about the matter, I think the word "motion" should be altered to read "resolution."

The Premier: What does the member for Kanowna say about it?

Hon. T. Walker: Strictly speaking, the words have the meaning the Government place upon them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It goes beyond that however, because the subclause reads: "Upon motion made in the usual manner by the Minister or by any member of the Legislative Assembly," and so on. If the subclause were amended to provide that upon a resolution carried in the usual manner by the House, the proposed work should be referred to the committee for report, it would make the position clearer.

Several members interjected.

Hon. P. Collier resumed his seat.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Boulder has the floor.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In view of the interruptions, I will not bother to go on.

Mr. WILLCOCK: If the Leader of the Opposition has been interrupted so much that he cannot proceed—

The CHAIRMAN: That is a reflection upon the Chair. I desire to give every hon. member ample opportunity for discussion.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I withdraw any reflection upon the Chair. I think an amendment could be moved to omit the words "the Minister or by any member of" and that would rectify the position.

Hon. T. WALKER: If there is to be any attempt to improve the subclause to make it clear and specific, the amendment suggested by the Leader of the Opposition is the correct one, because the Legislative Assembly does not move a motion.

Mr. Willcock: It is made by the House.

The Minister for Agriculture: It must be completed to be "made."

Hon. T. WALKER: The subclause as it stands clearly means that the motion must be completed in the affirmative or, in other words, "made." No other meaning can be given to the subclause as it stands now. As the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, however, there is a certain amount of ambiguity about the subclause, because a motion may be amended and adopted in its amended form. There is room for some specious argument on the point. I move an amendment—

That in line 1 the words "motion made" be struck out, with a view to inserting other words.

Mr. MONEY: I take it that it is intended to refer resolutions passed by the Assembly or the Legislative Council to the Committee.

Hon. T. Walker: No, the report has to be made to this Chamber.

Mr. MONEY: Clause 12 provides for the committee to consider and report upon certain matters at the request of either House of Parliament by a specific resolution. Clause 13 refers to "Parliament."

Hon. P. Collier: The Bill further, however, sets out how such works must be initiated and that clearly shows that they must be initiated in the Legislative Assembly. Subclause 2 of Clause 13 provides that every such proposed work shall in the first place be submitted and explained in the Legislative Assembly by a Minister of the Crown.

Mr. MONEY: But Subclause 4 provides for a Minister or any member of the Legislative Assembly to take action.

Hon. T. WALKER: There is no contradiction, because Clause 13 defines what is the necessary precedent to any such action. It provides that any work, the estimated cost of which exceeds £20,000, shall be explained in the Legislative Assembly by the responsible Minister and may, by resolution of the House, be referred to the public works committee. Any such proposal must originate in this House.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. T. WALKER: I move an amendment—

That the words "resolution carried" be inserted in lieu of the words struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. T. WALKER: I move an amendment—

That after "by" in line 1, the words "the Minister or by any member of" be struck out.

The subclause will then provide that upon resolution carried in the usual manner by the Legislative Assembly the proposed work shall be referred to the committee for their report thereon.

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

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Clause 14—Circumstances under which negative proposals may be re-submitted:

Mr. WILLCOCK: It would be better to provide that a proposal should not be re-submitted during the same session rather than that a period of one year must elapse. A new Parliament might be elected and the Government, though having the confidence of the people, might be opposed to a certain proposal, and thus it would be possible for a desirable project to be held up for two years. I move an amendment—

That in line 5 the words "one year from the date of the resolution" be struck out with a view to inserting "the session in which the resolution was carried."

The PREMIER: The amendment is unnecessary. If the hon. member reads the clause carefully, he will find that it will meet

all requirements. If some material change did happen warranting the re-submission of a question, the Government, bound by a majority of the House, could have the matter re-opened.

Mr. Willcock: What is the objection to my amendment?

The PREMIER: Every work will be submitted by the Government.

Mr. Willcock: I hope not.

The PREMIER: Work involving such expenditure must be submitted by the Government.

Mr. Willcock: But the clause as worded might cause a certain work to be held up for nearly two years.

The PREMIER: Not if, in the opinion of the House, the work was desirable.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Premier has not combated my argument. If I introduced an important national proposal at the end of one session and it was negatived, it would be impossible for me to re-submit it until the end of the following session, notwithstanding that events meanwhile demonstrated that its re-submission was desirable.

Hon. T. WALKER: I support the amendment. Any member to get a majority of the House to vote for the re-submission of a public work would need to advance good reasons. The question is whether we should deprive even a private member of a right. Sometimes a single individual sees further than the collective minds, without information, on a particular question. His knowledge of or contact with the theme enables him to educate the House to an appreciation of the position. At the risk of raising a smiling sneer, I might instance the Esperance Railway. How many times did a single individual champion that work before it became a matter for the cognisance of the majority? One individual should have the opportunity of drawing the attention of the House and the country to the necessity for some great public work. I am a great believer in liberty, the right of every individual to draw attention to a grievance, or the necessity of a great undertaking for the public good. Anything that puts a check upon the right of an individual member is a retrograde step. What is to be gained by the interval of a year? Let us apply to this, the rule that applies to all other legislation, that it shall not be considered twice in the same session. That is all the hon. member asks. Circumstances may arise within 12 months to make a work rejected to-day necessary to-morrow.

The Premier: I do not think we should put the country to the expense of two inquiries.

Hon. T. WALKER: We shall not do that. Unless the matter was backed up by very forcible and convincing argument, there would be no chance of putting the country to the expense of an inquiry. What chance would there be of any private member carrying a resolution in this Chamber with the Government against him, and with the committee who would speak authoritatively on the subject?

Mr. Davies: He may bring up the matter and take up a lot of time.

Hon. T. WALKER: And if he has convincing arguments, and can show a majority in the Chamber that times have altered, that circumstances have arisen to show that what was unnecessary yesterday is necessary to-day, why should he not be able to do so?

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 15—During recess the Governor may refer matters to the committee:

Mr. PICKERING: I would like to ask whether the proviso of this clause conflicts with Clause 12. The proviso sets out that the committee "shall not report on any matter of inquiry under paragraph (a) of Subsection 1 of Section 12 . . . until such matter shall have been referred to them by one of the Houses of Parliament." Should not the closing words be "Legislative Assembly."

The PREMIER: Clause 12 provides that the report shall be made ultimately to Parliament. Either House may refer a matter to the committee and the report must be submitted to Parliament. The proviso is in perfect order.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 16 to 23—agreed to.

Clause 29—Expenses of members of committee:

The PREMIER: It will be remembered that during the second reading discussion various members pointed out that similar committees to this received fees in all the other States of the Commonwealth having such legislation. A general opinion was expressed that the members of this committee should receive some small remuneration. I thought it wise to adopt the wish of the House and move an amendment accordingly. My proposal is that each ordinary member of the committee shall receive one guinea for each sitting, and the chairman 1½ guineas for each sitting, but that there shall not be more than one sitting of the committee on one day, and that there shall be limits of 200 guineas which may be earned by the members of the committee and of 300 guineas which may be earned by the chairman in any one year. I do not expect, of course, that the committee will sit 200 days per annum, or anything like it. Neither do I think it will be necessary for the committee to sit for any great number of days during the year; certainly not after the first couple of years of the committee's life. I move an amendment—

That the following subclauses be inserted, to stand as (1) and (2) and (4) respectively:—“(1) The chairman of the committee shall be entitled to receive by way of remuneration for his services an attendance fee of £1 11s. 6d. for his attendance at any duly summoned meet-

ing of the committee at which a quorum is present. Every member of the committee other than the chairman shall be entitled to receive by way of remuneration for his services an attendance fee of £1 1s. for his attendance at any duly summoned meeting of the committee at which a quorum is present. Provided that no member shall be entitled to receive more than one attendance fee in respect of the same day, notwithstanding that he attends more than one meeting on such day. (2) Notwithstanding anything in this section, the total amount payable for attendance fees shall not exceed in any one year 300 guineas in the case of the chairman or 200 guineas in the case of any other member, and in respect of the financial year ending on the 30th day of June, 1922, shall not exceed 150 guineas in the case of the chairman or 100 guineas in the case of any other member. (4) The office of chairman or of member of the committee shall not on account of any payment received pursuant to this Act be deemed to be an office of profit within the meaning of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1899, and the chairman or a member of the committee shall not on account of any such payment be deemed to undertake, execute, hold, enjoy, enter into, or accept any contract, agreement or commission made or entered into with, under or from any person for or on account of the Government of the said State within the meaning of the said Act so as to render vacant or void the seat in Parliament of such chairman or member, or to render null his election to Parliament, or to render him incapable of sitting or voting as a member of Parliament, or liable to any forfeiture or penalty for so sitting or voting."

Mr. TEESDALE: I regret indeed that the Premier has allowed hon. members to sway him from his personal intentions regarding the Bill. A member of Parliament is paid a reasonable salary for what he does; and I contend that under the Bill, as now proposed to be amended, members of Parliament will be receiving more salary than was intended at the time they were elected. At the risk of being charged with seeking a cheap advertisement, I say we are being paid now the full amount which we were sent here to earn. Therefore it is inconsistent on the part of the Premier to attach these salaries to the members of the proposed committee. There is no reason for it whatever. We are paid at so much per annum for our work in Parliament; and the members of the committee will not be working in the Assembly or in the Council when engaged on the work of the committee, and therefore they will be earning double salaries, which I contend the State is not at the present time in a position to pay. I regret that in this connection the

Premier should have exposed himself to a very reasonable charge of inconsistency. Moreover, it is absurd to lay down that the work of expert officers shall be judged by members of this committee, who have no special knowledge of the particular work of such officers. Why should an official be harassed in regard to the construction, for instance, of a jetty in the North-West by laymen who at most know something of the construction of a fowl-house? I ask the Premier to reconsider his intention to tack this additional thousand a year on to a salary list which is already very high. It is merely giving further opportunity to a public that already has sufficient against us. I wish to stop the abuse and insult to which every member of Parliament is subjected by the Press of Western Australia. A member of Parliament cannot travel to-day without being called a deadhead; he cannot even ride second class without some silly ass charging him with not having paid his fare. Personally I am quite content to take the salary which was fixed when I was elected as representative of Roebourne. I trust the Premier will withdraw the amendment.

Mr. ANGELO: I do not favour the amendment. If members who were here two years ago will cast their memories back to the debate on the increase of Parliamentary salaries, they will recollect that nearly every member who spoke in favour of an increase contended that members of Parliament had to devote all their time to the duties of the position. That was one of the chief reasons why the increase of £100 was given to members.

Hon. P. Collier: Oh, no!

Mr. ANGELO: It is there in "Hansard."

Mr. O'Loughlen: Only five members spoke on that subject.

Hon. P. Collier: There was a judicious silence on that occasion.

Mr. ANGELO: We all came here on a salary of £400 per annum, pledged to do our utmost for the State and to give our time to its advancement. Members representing distant electorates are already giving up all their time to the business of Parliament.

Hon. P. Collier: Not many are doing so.

Mr. ANGELO: It is not a hardship on members willing to serve on such a committee as this to be asked to give up their time, especially bearing in mind that all their expenses will be paid. We know that the Wheat Marketing Royal Commission sat for eight solid months, and did excellent work, and were not even reimbursed their expenses. Yet they did not ask for any extra remuneration. There was also the select committee which inquired into lunacy administration. The committee sat for three or four months, and the members thereof were out of pocket over the matter. Any member who is appointed to this committee and then finds that he cannot spare the time required, will be at liberty to resign. I am not in favour of increasing the cost of Parliament.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not agree that only those in a position to afford the luxury should have seats on this proposed committee. We were returned by our electors, not as potential members of such a committee, but as members of Parliament.

Mr. Angelo: Returned to give our time to the services of the country.

Mr. PICKERING: That is right, but the country appreciates the fact that our work as members of Parliament is not too well remunerated, and that it was not intended that we should give extra time to the work of the proposed committee, at all events not without due remuneration. Nobody will contend that the suggested guinea per sitting is too much remuneration.

Mr. LAMBERT: I support the amendment. Of course the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) has no time for the amendment, nor indeed for even the appointment of the proposed committee. Avowedly his one object is to provide jetties which will allow the pastoralists to get their wool away.

The Minister for Works: He wants to get their wool off.

Mr. LAMBERT: Well, not even a jetty would be required to get the Minister's wool off at times. It is time the member for Roebourne learnt that there is more to be done for the State than the making of provision for a few squatters who are peopling it with their black-gins. One requirement of the North is representatives in Parliament who will take a broad view of the many complex questions with which Parliament has to deal. It is to be hoped that, irrespective of the cry for economy, hon. members will take the view that Parliament requires instruction in the many public undertakings essential to the economic life of the State. Had we had such a committee years ago, probably there would have been no deficit to-day. We have railways earning less than axle grease, railways which should be promptly removed to localities where they could earn a handsome profit.

The CHAIRMAN: What has that to do with the payment of fees to the members of the proposed committee?

Mr. LAMBERT: This: that if a man be worth employing, he is worth paying. It applies to even the position of Chairman of Committees. If the Chairman be worth electing to the post, surely he is worth paying! I hope the members of the proposed committee will be fittingly recompensed for their services.

Hon. T. Walker: To be economical, sometimes we have to spend money.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is so. Parliament requires a competent committee, such as that proposed, to instruct it in respect of the many important undertakings which it has to decide upon. Parliament should no longer be the playground of party politics. The sooner a curb is put upon the game by a competent tribunal the better. Those who play to the gallery profess to believe that the number of members of Parliament should be reduced.

The saving effected by such a mistaken policy would be a mere bagatelle.

Mr. Latham: Suppose 30 members were cut out?

Mr. LAMBERT: Then the hon. member would have more than a nodding acquaintance with his farm. I hope members will recognise that to make the proposed committee an effective body devoting their energy and ability to the instruction of Parliament on all important public works, it is advisable that such a committee be duly remunerated.

Mrs. COWAN: I am not in favour of members being paid for work which should be rendered as part of their ordinary parliamentary duties. We were not brought here in the expectation of receiving extra pay for work that will amount to that of ordinary select committee work. I support the member for Roebourne and the member for Gascoyne in their attitude on this question. If members have the necessary ability and are competent to do the work they should be allowed to do it for out of pocket expenses, at all events for the first 12 months, or until they have proved that they have suffered such a pecuniary loss as a result of the services they have rendered that they cannot do it further without payment.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If this committee is to perform the services which the Premier hopes it will perform, and which this Chamber expects of it, it will mean the saving of thousands of pounds to Western Australia. Those members who are appointed to serve on the committee will have to devote practically the whole of their time during the year to carrying out their duties. They are expected to do this for their parliamentary allowance of £400 a year, whereas Ministers, because they are employed the whole of their time, receive from £1,500 a year downwards. If Ministers receive this amount of extra remuneration the sum of £1 1s. a day should not be too much for those members who serve on this committee.

Mr. Teesdale: What about deducting the money from Ministers' salaries, because this committee will relieve them of a good deal of work?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The State should be prepared to pay for the services which members are called upon to do in this special way.

Mr. TROY: I do not propose to vote against the amendment. The argument used against it by certain members would be feasible if every member took a turn in serving upon the committee, but it is proposed that the whole of the work should be done by three members who will be asked to carry the whole of the responsibility upon their shoulders. It is unfair to ask three members to accept all this work without some recompense.

Mr. Teesdale: Could not every member take a share in it?

Mr. TROY: The Bill does not make provision for that. I am surprised at members taking up the allegedly lofty attitude that they are paid to do a certain thing and ought

to do it. Let them do the work, provided that every member takes a turn in serving the country in this way.

Mr. Angelo: A member could resign after six months on the committee.

Mr. TROY: Members do not receive a salary; it is a parliamentary allowance. It is true the amount is £400 a year, but when travelling expenses, electioneering expenses and so forth are taken into account it does not leave anything more than £200 a year. The public should understand that members of Parliament do not draw £400 a year for their services. For my part, I have never drawn a single penny from the House except my salary, during the 20 years I have been here, for any work that I have done on select committees. I do not like this Bill at all.

Mrs. Cowan: Members are not bound to take on the work if they do not want it.

Hon. P. Collier: If you take up that attitude, there will be no committee.

Mrs. Cowan: There will be some members who will take it.

Mr. TROY: It has been suggested that metropolitan members should do the work. Are they the only competent people in the House? Do not members already attend to their own business as well as their parliamentary duties? Why should we pretend that we are here to devote the whole of our time to the country when fully 80 per cent. of us have other business to carry on? If Parliament is going to place all this responsibility upon three members, some additional remuneration should be provided for them. There must be a continuity of office on this committee if the work is to be a success. The whole value of the work lies in the continuity of knowledge that is gained by service over an extended period.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a stepping stone to greater things.

Mrs. Cowan: Why not let the committee do all the work and abolish Parliament?

Mr. TROY: If the hon. member will move that the Bill be read this day six months, I will support her. But the member for West Perth wants the measure. She wants members to do this work but she knows that only a certain number of them will be able to do it. If that is so, they should be paid.

Mrs. Cowan: Only three can do the work.

Mr. TROY: At any rate, I will express my opinion to that effect, because I cannot conscientiously vote for members to be compelled to do certain work under the Bill and receive no payment, while others escape such an obligation.

Mr. SAMPSON: The work of the proposed committee will call for special ability and undivided concentration. The duties will be in addition to those of the ordinary member. Since I have been a member of the House, I have been surprised at the hours the work of Parliament demands from a member.

Mrs. Cowan: I agree with you; there is plenty of work for members of Parliament.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am of opinion that the payment suggested is reasonable and proper.

No far-seeing elector will find fault with the proposal. We are fully aware that members of Parliament are supposed to give their time to the service of the country, and the work of the committee will make additional demands upon the members appointed. The amendment is justified and I am prepared to face my electors on the question, because I am thoroughly convinced that not one per cent. of the electors will not realise that the duties imposed upon the committee call for special ability, for which they will be prepared to pay.

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

Clauses 30, 31—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—PERMANENT RESERVE (POINT WALTER).

Council's Message.

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the Bill subject to an amendment, in which the Council desired the concurrence of the Assembly.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

Council's Requested Amendments.

Schedule of nine amendments requested by the Legislative Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 5, Subclause 1, paragraph 6.—After the word "advances" insert "not exceeding three shillings per bushel," and add the words "and may charge the wheat acquired under this Act and the proceeds with the repayment of advances."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I intend to move that the Council's amendment be agreed to with the following modifications: (1) Omit the words proposed to be inserted, namely, "not exceeding 3s. per bushel," and (2) That after the word "charges" in line 4 of paragraph (b) of Clause 5, insert the following:—"But so far as advances are required for the interim payments to the vendors of wheat, the amount of such advance shall not exceed a sum equal to 3s. per bushel net to the vendors." The reason I desire the modification is that the amendment suggested by the Legislative Council to insert the words "not exceeding 3s. per bushel," will practically limit the liability of the Government to 3s. It will mean that the Government will not be able to advance a greater sum than 2s. 4d. on wheat delivered at the siding, because handling charges on wheat, after delivery from the siding, will mean a further 8d., which will bring the amount up to 3s., at which figure the Council proposes to limit the liability of

the Government. The proceeds from the sale of the wheat this season are likely to be fairly slow. It may be that during the course of three or four months, it will be found advisable to make a further interim payment to the farmers. The proposed amendment of the Legislative Council would preclude any such action because, until the money was actually in hand, no further payment could be made.

Hon. P. Collier: You are rejecting the amendment; it is not a modification.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The only part I am rejecting is that referring to "exceeding 3s. per bushel." The Council's amendment also includes the words "and may charge." I move an amendment—

That the Council's amendment be modified by omitting the words "not exceeding 3s. per bushel."

Hon. P. Collier: I am not sure that it is possible to move as you suggest.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have taken the best advice available, and I am advised that I can do it in that form.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know who advised the Minister that the proposed variation is in order. It seems to me it is distinctly out of order. The first amendment suggested by the Council is to insert certain words after "advance" in paragraph 6 of Subclause 1 of Clause 5. The Minister does not propose to amend that portion of the amendment but moves to disagree with it entirely. Then we come to the end of paragraph (b), where another place has added the words "and may charge the wheat acquired under this Act and proceeds with the repayment of advances." There are two distinct amendments made by another place. The Minister disagrees entirely with the first, and his proposed modification disagrees entirely with the second also. So, in effect the Minister disagrees with both the amendments made in another place, and proposes to insert an entirely new amendment. I submit that it is not competent for the Minister to do that.

The Minister for Agriculture: I do not propose to strike out the second part of the amendment.

Hon. P. COLLIER: From the reading by the Chairman of the proposed modification, I understood that the Minister did propose to strike out the second part of the Council's amendment. If the Minister merely wishes to add words to the Council's amendment, of course he will be in order in so doing. But, whereas the Council has added certain words to the end of the paragraph, the Minister certainly proposes to take those words and insert them in the middle of the paragraph.

The CHAIRMAN: The Constitution Act provides that in the case of a Bill which originated in the Assembly, the Council may at any stage return it to the Assembly with a message requesting the omission or amendment of any of the items or provisions therein, and the Assembly may, if it thinks fit, make

such amendments with or without modification. Therefore, in my opinion, the Minister is quite in order in moving for the modification of the Council's amendment, and I think the words proposed by the Minister are a fair modification of the Council's amendment.

Mr. PICKERING: The Council has added—not inserted—certain words to paragraph (b). Is the Minister in order in moving that, instead of those words being added where the Council has put them, they shall be inserted in the middle of the clause?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, certainly.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That the Council's amendment be further modified by adding the following words at the end of paragraph (b): "But so far as advances are required for the interim payments to the vendors of wheat the amount of such advances shall not exceed a sum equal to 3s. per bushel net to the vendors."

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment, as modified, made.

No. 2. Clause 6, Subclause (4).—Strike out the word "may," in line 1, and insert "shall."

No. 3. Clause 11.—After the word "wheat," in line 5, insert the words "subject to such section."

On motions by the Minister for Agriculture, the foregoing amendments were made.

No. 4. Clause 13.—Strike out the words "Provided that such price shall not exceed seven shillings a bushel."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This amendment deals with the fixing of the price of wheat for local consumption on the basis of London parity with a maximum of 7s. a bushel. Although I recognise that this House passed the proposal by a fairly substantial majority, I ask the Committee to make this amendment. At the moment it does not seem likely that this maximum will be reached.

Mr. A. Thomson: Unfortunately for the State.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes; at the moment, it seems that the market has collapsed.

Hon. P. Collier: It has not collapsed locally; consumers here are still paying 9s. a bushel.

Mr. A. Thomson: They have only six weeks more to go.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The present position is not due so much to the wheat afloat not being absorbed as to the incapacity of the Continental countries to buy wheat, and it has been brought about by the sudden exportation of American wheat which has had to be absorbed on the London market alone, and by the speculation in the Chicago wheat pit. Speculation there recently has apparently been almost as great as specula-

tion with regard to the German mark which, as members know, is now worth less than a farthing. At present the mark is quoted at 1,050 to the pound sterling. Chicago speculators gamble in wheat and sell and buy thirteen times more than the whole of the production of the United States, which is the biggest wheat-producing country in the world. That gambling has tended to bring about the present position. How long it will operate or how long it will be before the market recovers, I cannot say. The basis in South Australia to-day is equivalent to about 4s. 11d. per bushel f.o.b., which would mean about 4s. 3d. net to farmers at sidings. Therefore, it does not seem that the maximum for local consumption, if fixed at 7s., is likely to be reached. I recognise, however, that this Chamber fixed that amount by a substantial majority, and I will leave it to the judgment of the Committee as to whether they make the amendment. I move—

That the amendment be made.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I ask the Committee to resist the requested amendment. I recognise that it is quite possible, and indeed probable, that the operation of this provision will have no effect during the next 12 months. Members of another place must have had some reason for requesting the striking out of these words. They must have been of opinion that there was a possibility of the price of wheat again rising during next year so that the provision would operate.

The Minister for Agriculture: I think their line of argument was that, if it was fair to fix a maximum, it would be fair to fix a minimum.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Were members of another place unable to see that the Bill does provide a minimum price and, having regard to the price of wheat in the world's markets to-day, a very fair minimum too?

Mr. Mann: They suggested 5s. a bushel.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They are very generous with other people's money. The parity value is about 4s. 9d.; it certainly would not exceed 5s. The Government guarantee of 3s. a bushel at sidings represents a minimum of about 3s. 8d. a bushel at the seaboard. Surely that is a fair minimum, having regard to the present price of wheat throughout the world. Yet members of another place say it would not be fair to fix a maximum when no minimum is fixed. They amended the very clause in which the Government fixed the minimum by guaranteeing 3s. a bushel at sidings.

The Premier: They only did that to prevent the Government from advancing more than 3s.

Mr. Harrison interjected.

Hon. P. COLLIER: To be consistent they should have struck out the provision guaranteeing 3s. a bushel at sidings. The Committee would stultify itself if it made the amendment. This is a money Bill. The Council has insisted on suggesting amendments to Bills of this class for years past, although the Standing Orders and the Con-

stitution do not permit them to do so. If only on principle, members should stand by their decision. The Minister has told us that the world's market for wheat has collapsed. I want to remind him again, as I have already done by interjection, that it has not collapsed for the consumer in Western Australia. The member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) said something about a living wage. Farmers are not entitled to much consideration from the consumers when the world's parity price is not more than 4s. 6d. and yet, right up to the 31st December, consumers of this State will be compelled to pay 9s. a bushel. It is an absolute scandal that such a condition of things should be permitted by the Government. How can the Government maintain the price of 9s. till the end of the year? Do they intend to withhold sales in the local market of new season's wheat in order that they may be able to obtain their pound of flesh in the shape of 9s. a bushel till the end of the year? It can only be done by withholding sales of new season's wheat from the local market. In ordinary circumstances the new season's wheat should be available shortly.

Mr. Latham: It is of no use for flour, anyhow.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Government, backed by Parliamentary authority, propose to hold it off the market till the end of the year in order to get 9s. a bushel from local consumers.

Mr. Harrison: Our consumers have been on a rattling good wicket for a number of years.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member prefers this year to see the Germans on a good wicket rather than the people of Western Australia on a fair wicket.

Mr. Latham: At the rate of the mark, they are.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The value of the German mark has nothing to do with it. We are not concerned with the question of what our wheat costs the Germans. What we are concerned with is the price the grower gets for wheat sold to the Germans and to the Asiatics. The grower is getting about 5s. a bushel for wheat for export, and 9s. a bushel is being exacted from the consumers of this State. Yet, when we insert a fair and reasonable provision that the price of wheat for the next 12 months, taking all the chances of the market, shall not exceed 7s. a bushel, another place requests us to strike it out. I hope the Committee will be consistent in the vote they gave when the matter was last before us. The manner in which the consuming public of Western Australia has been treated by the local wheat board, which has stood out to the last hour for 9s. a bushel, is nothing short of a scandal. I tell members who represent the primary producers that, when in time to come they are under the necessity of approaching the House for financial assistance, the attitude they have adopted on this question will go against them.

The PREMIER: I desire to correct the impression that may have been created by the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. The consumers of this State have had a tremendous advantage as a result of the pool. I think this has amounted to over £300,000, representing the difference between the price paid for local consumption and the parity price.

Hon. P. Collier: You are going back several years.

The PREMIER: Last year the farmer sold his wheat at 7s. 8d., about 4s. less than the world's price. This year the price has fallen, and to-day the consumer is paying more than its world value.

Hon. P. Collier: It is robbery.

The PREMIER: If it is robbery, the farmer was robbed last year and in previous years. To-day wheat is worth about 5s. a bushel. An endeavour was made in this House to fix the maximum price at 7s. Although the market has collapsed, I do not think the price will remain as low as it is. If flour were sent into this State from South Australia, made from free wheat, it would create an awkward position. It is possible that the free-selling wheat in the Eastern States will alter the position in this State.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The law regulating the price of wheat is subject to alteration according to circumstances. The Premier has offered no argument to prove that we should give way on this matter. The majority of the people concur in the decision arrived at by this Chamber. Because another place, prompted by avarice and greed, has eliminated this provision, which aimed at giving the people a fair deal, we find the Minister tamely submitting to the dictates of that place.

The Minister for Agriculture: I am not tamely submitting.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Why not take a stand against another place, and say that we who represent the consuming public are prepared to stand by the measure as we sent it forth? There will be a lot of trouble confronting the Minister when the other States try to capture this market. How is the Minister going to maintain this artificial price and persevere the alleged benefits of the pool against the free selling wheat of the Eastern States? I regret the attitude of the people of South Australia and Victoria in regard to the pool. Apparently the Government of this State is in favour of keeping up an artificial price.

The Minister for Agriculture: We are keeping an honourable agreement, and we are going to meet the situation when it arises.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The situation for the consumer arose long ago.

The Minister for Agriculture: Just as the other States are going to do.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: An agreement ceases to be an honourable agreement when it represents extortion from the bulk of the people.

Mr. Latham: Why did you not apply that to the farmer last year?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Members talk about the farmer giving so much benefit to the consumer last year. Did the farmer ever anticipate getting the price he did get?

Mr. Latham: No, but he sold a lot of his wheat at a rotten price previously for the benefit of the public.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Because he had no community backing. Where would he be without that?

Mr. Latham: And brought his wife and children to slavery, which you people are supposed to prevent.

Hon. P. Collier: We have done more than the crowd you are associated with.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The hon. member need not try to score a point by bringing in the sentimental plea. Judging from the statistics the farmers are in a happier and more financial position than any other body of people in Australia.

Mr. A. Thomson: I wish you could prove that to the I.A.B.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The I.A.B. has discharged many hundreds of clients.

Mr. Troy: There are men on the I.A.B. who have big bank balances.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That is so. When the advocates of the farmers plead poverty for the class they represent, their plea will not go down. Their poverty is nothing in comparison with that of the people who have such difficulty in making ends meet because of the cost of living. Because the privileged Chamber, representing but a handful of the people of Western Australia, has eliminated a provision inserted by this Chamber the Government will not stand up against it. We should be lacking in our duty to the people if we did not insist upon this. I am not prepared to accept the dictates of another place. The great bulk of the people are being very hard hit as a result of this artificial price of 9s. Many of them have had to go out of the pig raising and poultry industries, while the dairy industry has received a reeling blow.

Mr. Harrison: The price of wheat was not fixed by this House.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We have power to vary the price. The hon. member is not a simpleton, even if he looks one. He knows that the Wheat Board fixed the price at 9s. He knows the House has to ratify the agreement and could have varied the price.

Mr. Harrison: The agreement was a fair one. Do you not stick to agreements made under Arbitration awards?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: When circumstances alter, one side or the other asks for the position to be reviewed. If an agreement is unfair either party has the right to request a review of the case.

Mr. Harrison: The price of wheat has been reviewed.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No, it is a hard and fast price until the 31st December, notwithstanding that wheat has been sold to the Germans at 6s. a bushel.

The Minister for Agriculture: And agreed to by every Government in Australia.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That does not make it right. But for the primary producers the pool would not have been established. It is wonderful to see a handful of men dictating the policy of this country—just a handful of men from the wheat areas. If the great body of the consuming public had an opportunity to-morrow, they would speak in a very different tone from that adopted by Ministers to-day. Our wheat is being sold to the Germans and to Asiatics at a price a couple of shillings below that which is charged to our own people. The artificial position which has been created should no longer be maintained; it should be reviewed by Parliament. Farmers in the wheat growing districts, those at Dowerin, for instance, have expressed their agreement in that proposition. A great many of the farmers do not concur in the exhibitions of exorbitant greed given here by members of the Country Party. Had it not been for the assistance rendered by the people as a whole to the wheat growers in the past, those wheat growers would have been driven off their holdings, and much of the wheat areas would now be a desert.

Mr. Latham: And where would the State be then?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The people look for a little gratitude from the wheat growers.

Mr. Latham: We showed it last year.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Gratitude is being shown in charging to the local consumer and the local poultry farmer a price of 9s. per bushel, whilst our wheat is being sold at much lower rates for export to Germany and Asia. The price of 9s. for local consumption was fixed by the Australian Wheat Board at the instance of the wheatgrowers. The consumers of Australia had not one representative on that board. I hope the Committee will adopt a tolerant attitude on this matter. The farming community to-day are in a fairly good position, thanks to State aid in the past, and thanks to recent abnormal prices. Let us stick to our decision of a couple of weeks ago; let us tell the members of another place that the great consuming public of this country must have their aspirations made articulate.

Mr. MANN: I mean to be consistent, and therefore I shall oppose the exclusion of the clause, if in so speaking I put the position correctly. From my entry into this Chamber I have striven for cheaper prices in behalf of the consumers. I voted for the inclusion of the clause in the original Bill, and my feeling is that it should remain. We ought not to permit the unfortunate position which obtained in the past to be re-created.

Mr. LATHAM: I also have to be consistent. In my opinion it is most unfair to fix a maximum without fixing a reasonable minimum. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would not have the Committee believe that 3s. per bushel at sidings is a reasonable price.

Members: That 3s. is only an advance.

Mr. LATHAM: I know that; but if the wheat market collapses, that 3s. may prove the total, the maximum. I heard the statement made by the Premier that there are still 15,000 clients on the books of the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank.

Members: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. LATHAM: I understood the Premier to say so.

Hon. P. Collier: The number is under 3,000.

Mr. A. Thomson: The member for York is including Agricultural Bank clients—the whole of the clients of the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board, good and bad.

Mr. LATHAM: Anyhow, the fact is that the farmers are not in the condition of prosperity the member for Forrest would have us believe.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Many of the clients of the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board are soldiers.

Mr. LATHAM: All the more reason for supporting them. The prosperity of the farmers, what there is of it, has been caused by the high price of wool.

Mr. O'Loghlen: In the eastern districts hardly a farmer has sheep; there is no fencing there.

Mr. LATHAM: Quite a number of farmers in this State to-day are unable to make ends meet. I hate to say it, but we have some land on which it is not possible to produce wheat profitably, and that land is held by men in our agricultural areas. These men must receive some consideration. The farmers do not want the consumers to carry them on their backs; I do not think any farmer has ever suggested such a thing. There are no harder working people in the State than the farmer and his family.

Mr. O'Loghlen: They are building up an asset, and it improves while they sleep.

Mr. LATHAM: A beautiful asset, which may easily come to ruin, if the predictions of the Leader of the Opposition come true.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Compare the position of the farmer with that of the wages man.

Mr. LATHAM: I acknowledge that some years ago, when a Labour Government was in power, the farmers did receive consideration in this Chamber. But do we farmers owe the State anything?

Mr. O'Loghlen: Yes.

Mr. LATHAM: No. The State owes something to the men who remained out in the wheat areas. If this Chamber is not prepared to fix a decent minimum wage for the wheatgrowers, this Chamber has no right to fix a maximum price for their wheat. I am not asking for a minimum price for wheat. I do not want it. But neither do I want a maximum.

Mr. Boyland: You want a pool.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes; and the State wants it even more than the farmer does.

Mr. O'Loghlen: What about South Australia?

Mr. LATHAM: South Australia is already realising what it means to have no pool.

Mr. Corboy: So will you probably.

Mr. Marshall: A wheat pool is one of the advantages of socialisation.

Mr. LATHAM: With reference to feed for poultry and pigs, I followed the market pretty closely during the year; and I know that oats, which are a very good feed, have been obtainable at a very reasonable price. Moreover, the poultry and pig farmers could have bought from the wheatgrower direct five bags of wheat. Did they ever avail themselves of that opportunity? I know there has been some difficulty as regards the by-products of wheat; but, after all is said and done, the inconvenience has not been so great as some hon. members would have the Committee believe.

Mr. MULLANY: I regretted to hear the Minister announce that he was prepared to accept the Council's amendment to delete the clause providing that the price of wheat shall not exceed 7s. per bushel for local consumption. The Government have a duty to this House, seeing that they are not representative of wheat growers alone. I represent some of the consumers of Western Australia and in my opinion 7s. per bushel, should the price reach that figure next year, will be a very fair price for the wheatgrowers to receive.

Hon. P. Collier: Only greedy people would not accept it.

Mr. MULLANY: Another place is within its rights in attempting to amend any legislation which this Chamber forwards for consideration, but members of this Chamber would stultify themselves if they agreed to the amendment. I will not deal with the aspect raised by the member for Forrest regarding the price of 9s. per bushel, for that has no bearing on the proposed amendment. I trust that the majority of the members will adhere to the decision arrived at on a previous occasion when they made it clear that the people should not be called upon to pay more than 7s. a bushel for wheat for local consumption next year. I do not see why we should not endeavour to set up some stability in this industry and enable people embarking in industries other than wheatgrowing to know what they will be called upon to pay for their wheat during the next 12 months. We have been told that the lack of industrial stability has adversely affected the interests of Australia. At the present time, there is no approximate knowledge of what we shall be called upon to pay for wheat next year. We should not be called upon to suffer because of what is happening in other parts of the world. Is it fair to inflict a hardship upon the people concerned in the mining industry, in order to benefit another section, because there is trouble in another part of the world? The wheatgrowers are adopting a most unreasonable attitude, and I believe some members representing that section of the community, realise the reasonableness of that contention. I hope

members will re-affirm the decision arrived at during the earlier stages of the session.

Mr. A. THOMSON: As a matter of principle, I must protest against certain statements that have been made in this House. It is grossly unfair for members to say that the farming community are adopting an unreasonable and unwarranted attitude. I do not think such a statement will influence the vote of any member of the House on this particular question. We know the result of the division which was taken some time ago. It is certainly unjust to say that the farming community want something which is not reasonable. The member for Menzies contends that it is time we had stability in connection with our markets. That, unfortunately, is impossible, because we have no control over the markets of the world. If we were producing only sufficient wheat for our own requirements, we might be in a position to stabilise the markets. When members like the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Forrest state that an overwhelming majority of the people of the metropolitan area are in favour of the action taken by the House regarding the price of wheat, I have no doubt that what they state is correct. The farming community, however, have no control over the markets. That section of the community are compelled by awards of the Arbitration Court to pay certain rates of wages, and by the imposition of a high tariff by the Commonwealth authority, are also compelled to pay high rates for machinery. What has happened is that this House says: "You shall pay all we impose upon you, but we will not permit you to take advantage of the full market value for your products." The farmers have been charged with being unreasonable.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: What about the freight concessions on the railways?

Mr. A. THOMSON: We can deal with that question when we come to the Railway Estimates.

Mr. Mann: You should be consistent.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I intend to be consistent. One of the reasons why the railways are not paying to-day is that the country is not producing sufficient freight for the railways. That is a phase I desire to stress. The farming community have no desire to wax fat and get rich at the expense of any other section of the community. I contend, however, that the farming community are entitled to the full market value for the commodity produced.

Hon. P. Collier: That is rubbish, when we consider the farmers are getting Government assistance.

Mr. A. THOMSON: They are not getting Government assistance.

Hon. P. Collier: They would not have a pool if that were not so.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I oppose price fixing on principle and I hope the Committee will accept the amendment moved by the Legislative Council. It is not fair for the House to say that while the prices are low, the farmers can get the world's market value for their

product, and at the same time say that if those prices increase, they cannot gain the additional advantage. Such an attitude is not consistent.

Mr. BOYLAND: I am not aware of anything that has happened to alter my opinion when the last vote on the price of wheat was taken in this Chamber. The fact that the Legislative Council objects to an amendment made by this Chamber, does not mean that we should accept the Council's proposal. The member for York stated deliberately that the people wanted the wheat pool. Goldfields members, on both sides of the House, can tell the Committee that public bodies in that part of the State have considered the question and passed motions opposing the pool. Those members, however, decided that, considering all these circumstances, it was only right that the pool should continue. They supported the continuance of the pool, but for the member for York to say that the people as a whole want the pool, is not correct. If the people considered they would be hood-winked into paying high prices for wheat, they would quickly make their opinions manifest. It is said that it would be unfair to fix the price at 7s. What about those who are charging 9s. per bushel when the wheat is worth about 4s. per bushel in South Australia with flour at £12 per ton? With those prices operating it is possible to land wheat from South Australia in Kalgoorlie at a cheaper rate than the wheat can be supplied within Western Australia. Is that fair and just? It has been acknowledged by members during the Address-in-reply debate that the price of wheat is too high. That admission was made by the farmers' representatives. Only a few minutes ago an interjection was made by one of the leading farmers that he agreed with the statement of the member for Forrest that the farmers had been helped during a very trying period. Why should not the general public receive consideration from the farmers, seeing that the general public have backed the wheat pool? The farmers would never have received the prices they have got for their wheat, if the Commonwealth Government had not backed the pool. Even the Prime Minister himself stated that the people of Australia should be fed first at a reasonable price and that the farmers could receive what they could get for the rest. In the House of Representatives in May, 1920, Mr. Hill, one of the leading members of the Country Party and member for Echuca, set out to show what an enemy William Morris Hughes was to the farmer, and stated certain things that had happened regarding the wheat pool. On that occasion the Federal "Hansard" of the 22nd May, 1920, shows that Mr. Hughes said—

My own view is that we should postpone it if you are not in favour of 6s. 6d. Personally, I cannot agree to any increase in the price of bread until we have exhausted every means of preventing it. There is a way of preventing it. We have tried that.

Later on Mr. Hughes said—

That is a matter you must please yourself about. The only thing I want to point out is that the question in dispute is not the sale of wheat overseas. You can get whatever price you can. If you can get 200s. per bushel, so much the better. The point is, at what price are you Australian farmers going to sell the wheat to your own people?

That shows conclusively that had it not been for force of circumstances, the people would have received wheat at a lower price—but Mr. Hughes had to alter his opinion.

The Minister for Agriculture: Let me tell you that to-day the Prime Minister is one of those who are advocating the payment of 9s. a bushel as a specific agreement, continuing till the end of December.

Mr. BOYLAND: Yes, but it was at the point of the pistol presented by the Country Party in the Federal House. The Country Party forced him to accept that position.

Hon. P. Collier: With one vote in the balance.

Mr. McCallum: And one man could not get in to vote in time for the division.

Mr. BOYLAND: Last year the Federal Government, for the benefit of the farmers, advanced through the wheat pool £33,000,000. Should not the people who backed that advance get some recompense for it? The local consumption represents but a small percentage of the combined harvest, and after all the sacrifices the people have made they are entitled to more consideration than they have been getting. In consequence of the price of wheat for local consumption the prices of poultry and eggs have become prohibitive. During the Address-in-reply I pointed out the injury inflicted on the mining and other industries by the price of wheat for local consumption; yet the farmer contends that the working man ought to accept less money for his labour.

Mr. Hickmott: The farmer works 16 hours a day.

Mr. BOYLAND: That may be, but I have been battling in the mining industry for 27 years, and for the past eight years it has been steadily killing me; whereas the hon. member derives his health and strength from his avocation. It must be remembered, too, that it was the gold, and those who battled to win it, that opened up the State. The price of wheat was fixed by a board consisting solely of representatives of wheat growers; the consumer had no say whatever in it. The member for York (Mr. Latham) declared that 3s. was not a reasonable price for wheat, and asked why we should not fix a price that would afford a living wage. If 7s. is not a reasonable price, I do not know what is. While lower prices obtained elsewhere in Australia, we have been charged 9s. a bushel for our wheat, and the growers are demanding 9s. till the end of the year. I hope the amendment will be sent back to the Council.

Mr. TROY: The question is not deserving of all the attention we are giving to it.

Mrs. Cowan: Then why not vote, instead of wasting so much time talking?

Mr. TROY: The hon. lady's short experience in the House makes her intolerant.

Mrs. Cowan: I would never agree to talk as much as some hon. members do.

Mr. TROY: The Minister, in moving that we accept the Council's amendment, is merely doing his duty as a farming representative. In my opinion there is no possible chance of wheat reaching 7s. a bushel next season. I grow wheat, and I get as big a price as I can for it. Yet I agree that, inasmuch as the community have guaranteed the payments the wheat growers have received, we ought to show consideration for the community. If the wheat growers insist upon getting the top price from the community, the community in turn will insist upon getting top prices from the wheat growers. I should be sorry to see wheat sold at less than 5s. because, in existing circumstances, it would not pay at a lower price, unless the average yield were much heavier than it is at present. While I sympathise with those members who complain of the heavy cost of machinery, I remind them that they are mainly responsible for it. The Customs duties on machinery have been enormously increased by a Government which hold office only with the support of the Country party in the Federal Parliament. If the Country Party had been sincere in their protestations the Federal Government could not have raised the Customs duty on machinery. Those duties have been raised, not for the purpose of affording protection for Australian manufacturers, but with a view to securing revenue. The Federal Government have to raise 60 millions. They can raise not more than from 18 to 20 millions by direct taxation, and so they elect to raise the remainder through the Customs. If the farmers desire the help of the community, they will have to recognise the claims of the community as consumers of wheat.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for York expressed doubt as to the prejudicial effect the high price of wheat has had on the pig and poultry raising industry. I refer the hon. member to a report from the Agricultural Department dated 30th June, 1921. There he will find a report by the poultry expert, showing clearly that in consequence of the high price of wheat the poultry industry has been pretty severely hit. Also, a few pages further on, the hon. member will find a report from the dairy and pig expert attached to the department. That officer states unequivocally that the high prices ruling for wheat and offal have seriously affected the pig-raising industry. It is shown in the report that in 1916 there were 90,000 pigs in the State, that in 1917 the number had increased to 111,000, whereas last year it had fallen to 60,000. Thus it will be seen that this very important industry has been threatened with extinction in consequence of the high prices of wheat and offal. Since both these industries are allied with that of wheat growing, one would expect some show

of sympathy with them on the part of the wheat grower. While considerable benefit has been derived by the wheat grower from the high price of wheat, it has been merely at the expense of other allied industries. Apart altogether from the question of the price of wheat, on the constitutional principle it is the duty of this House, representing 150,000 electors, to resist the attempt of another place, representing only 40,000 privileged electors, to dictate the legislation formulated in this House in response to the wishes of the people of the State. I hope we shall make it clear to the Council that they cannot have all their own way in shaping the legislation of this State.

Question put and negatived; the council's amendment not made.

No. 5. Schedule, definition of no private dealing.—Strike out the words "except with the written consent of the Minister," and insert the words "directly or indirectly."

No. 6. Definition of damages for certain breaches.—In line eight strike out "ten pounds (£10)," and insert "one hundred pounds (£100)."

No. 7. Insert a new line after line eight as follows:—"For every breach of Clause 4 the sum of ten pounds (£10)."

No. 8.—Strike out "4," in line nine, and insert "5."

On motions by the Minister for Agriculture, the foregoing amendments made.

No. 9. Insert a new clause, to stand as No. 15:—Supply of Cornsacks: (1.) The Minister may make advances to any wheat grower whose wheat is or is intended to be acquired to enable such wheat grower to purchase cornsacks; and such advances shall be repayable to the Minister on demand, with interest at the prescribed rate, and shall be a charge on the wheat in priority to all other encumbrances. (2) The amount of such advances, with interest, to be certified by the Minister, may be deducted from the certificate to be issued in respect of the wheat acquired, and a certificate may be issued to the Minister for the amount so deducted.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This proposal is a very reasonable one and I move—

That the amendment be made.

Mr. LATHAM: Is it intended to make the advance to the wheatgrowers for the payment of cornsacks prior to the delivery of the wheat?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, we intended to take an order in the usual way and we will then have priority on the certificate.

Mr. Latham: Will you pay for the bags so that the grower will be able to save 3d. a dozen?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We will undertake the business in the usual way in order that the grower may receive the maximum benefit.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment made.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Legislative Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1921-22.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 27th October; Mr. Angelo in the Chair.

Department of Agriculture (Hon. H. K. Mahey, Minister).

Vote—Agriculture generally, £59,833:

Mr. LATHAM (York) [10.39]: I am pleased that the Government have not reduced this vote to any great extent. Seeing that it is the intention of the Government to settle the South-West country, a still larger vote will probably be necessary. We have a considerable number of experts attached to the Department of Agriculture, but I am of opinion that the expert knowledge does not reach the people it is intended to benefit. For instance, the time of the Director of Agriculture is so much occupied with departmental duties that it is impossible for him to get out among the people as he should do. I hope that the farming community will not suffer as a result of Mr. Sutton's appointment to the position of director. It would be better if we could get his advice out to the farming community. I suggest that the expert knowledge he has might be transmitted to the farmers through the inspectors of the I.A.B. or the Agricultural Bank. I recently visited the farm at Nangeenan and was surprised at the lack of information afforded to the gathering there present. It would be advisable for the Minister to take into consideration the best means of passing out to the farmer the knowledge held by the departmental experts.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [10.42]: I regret that the vote has been reduced. Members will agree that the Minister has a big order to fill, inasmuch as the progress of the State depends almost wholly upon the development of agriculture. Its hope lies in the land. The greatest benefit can only be derived from agriculture with the aid of the fullest knowledge that can be brought to bear upon it. So-called practical men have shown a great lack of knowledge in doing things. There are many small orchardists along the Lion Mill valley who have wasted thousands of pounds because of the manner in which they have planted their trees, but who could have been saved this money had they possessed the requisite knowledge. It is the duty of the department to have sufficient practical experts to guide the people in these matters. The Government thought fit to dispense with the services of the Fruit Commissioner, Mr. Moody. No doubt it would be possible to obtain his services again if the Government would pay the salary required. If we had

a good man in this position it would mean an increase in the output of fruit and greater profits to those engaged in the industry. I am astonished that so little is done to advertise the resources of Western Australia as a vine-growing country. There is no country in the world better suited to the growth of the vine than this State. It offers the greatest of prospects for anyone who will engage in that industry. If we only had competent men to guide the people in this matter, we should have greater production and a larger population. If only the world knew what fine prospects we had here in this direction we should soon be able to attract people to our shores.

Mr. Lambert: Could we get a dozen De Garis's?

Mr. PIESSE: It certainly pays to give big salaries to competent men. I believe Mr. De Garis gets £2,000 a year out of the £30,000 paid for publicity by the dried-fruit industry of Mildura. The services rendered to that industry by Mr. De Garis have been of enormous value to Australia. If we had men of the De Garis type we should be able to attract thousands of people here who would represent a great asset to the country. In other lines of agriculture there is room for improvement in the methods of the department. More attention should be paid to the question of water supply. This is very essential in the wheat-growing areas and in connection with other branches of agriculture. A little while ago a good deal of success was achieved by water diviners. In one case a diviner was successful in locating water in the wheat belt. A vote for this purpose alone would pay the State. There is a wide field open to this department. My sympathies are with the Minister in that he has not at his disposal as much money as is required to give all the assistance that is necessary to people the land. Mention was made by one member of the American agricultural bulletins. Those bulletins are not always applicable to Western Australia. Though the booklets are certainly of high value generally speaking, yet their application here is not serviceable because of the wide difference in local conditions. During the last 12 months there has been a material increase in the production of cream; a reliable authority I learn that the increase represents approximately 30 per cent. I am quite with the member for Coolgardie in his statement that fertilisers are not nearly as much used as they should be.

Mr. Troy: They are too expensive.

Mr. PIESSE: Yes. Their proper use can only be ascertained by careful experiments. Certain soils require certain fertilisers, and then comes the question of quantity, and finally the question of price. Formerly the farmer could buy Thomas's superphosphate at £4, and even £3 7s. 6d. per ton; to-day the price is £7. As a whole, farming costs have become much greater; and it is not possible for every man to apply to his land the quantity of superphosphate he would like

to apply. Reference was made to the cost of grain for poultry feed. That difficulty could be overcome by growing fodder for the poultry. Practical demonstration is required to enable each little homestead to have its poultry run and produce its own fodder for the poultry. Reference was also made to the short supply of grain for pigs. In again comes the Agricultural Department with an absolutely misleading report, which says, or hints, that owing to the high price of grain pig production has fallen away. The cause of the decrease in pig production is the high price growers could obtain for pigs in the market. Enormous prices have ruled; hence the haste to sell pigs. Now on the question of potato growing and potato storage. I feel sure that we do not want a repetition of the low prices which ruled last year. But that can only be avoided by a proper system of storage.

Mr. Lambert: And dehydration.

Mr. PIESSE: And dehydration; but we could save the expense of dehydration if provision were made for the use of second-hand apple cases for storing potatoes. Refrigerators cannot possibly store potatoes in bags; there is too much moisture, and that method of storage would require very large space. Second-hand apple cases would give very satisfactory results. We have tens of thousands of these cases, which have cost the grower from 1s. to 1s. 6d. apiece, but which he is forbidden to use a second time. Those cases are cast into the furnace, or used as firewood, which represents absolute waste. In all sincerity I say there is a great prospect of successful storage of potatoes in those second-hand cases, which would not require very much in the way of repairs. I hope the Minister will see his way clear to authorise the use of the cases for that purpose. I also trust that the Minister will give further consideration to the question of rendering expert assistance in the various branches of agriculture.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 10th November, 1921.

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

QUESTION—TRAMWAYS, PERTH.

Repairs, renewals, and extensions.

Hon. J. DUFFELL asked the Minister for Education:—1, What portion of the amount of £100,000 authorised on the Loan Estimates for the last financial year for Perth electric tramways and extensions has been expended? 2, How much has been expended in general repairs and renewals? 3, Why have no extensions been started during the financial year? 4, Is it the intention of the Government to start any, and, if so, what extensions forthwith, so as to provide work for the unemployed?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, The total amount provided on the Loan Estimates for Tramways for the year 1920-21 was £87,000. Of this £33,640 was expended during the financial year. 2, Loan money is not expended in repairs and renewals. 3, Extensions have been deferred pending the appointment of the Public Works Committee contemplated by the Bill now before the Legislative Assembly. 4, See reply to No. 3.

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day; Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 62—Protection of existing certificates:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This morning I had an opportunity of discussing the matter with the Chief Inspector of Machinery and the Solicitor General. Consideration was given to the amendments proposed by Mr. Harris. It was agreed that an additional subclause to this clause would serve the purpose. In regard particularly to internal combustion engines, any person can drive them at present. That is an undesirable state of affairs. But there are certain persons who drive them now who are not fully certificated, and it is not desired to take that right away from them. I, therefore, move an amendment—

That a subclause be added to stand as Subclause 4 as follows:—'Notwithstanding